FOR THE DURATION: GLOBAL WAR AND SATIRE IN ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

“For the Duration” moves to unsettle some regnant assumptions about the ways in which historical experience shaped the formal choices and political investments of modernist writers. While recent critical work has focused on the influence of the Great War either on non-combatant authors or on minor memoirists and poets of the trenches, little attention has been given to the war’s effect on modernist authors who saw combat and thereafter crafted narratives distinguished by their satirical innovation. In the first three chapters of this dissertation, I concentrate on works by Ford Madox Ford, Wyndham Lewis, and Evelyn Waugh to suggest that these soldier-authors’ experience of temporal duration in war led them not, as one might expect, to emphasize Bergsonian durée in the novelistic presentation of experience but rather to reject it. Concerned that Bergsonism and its literary offshoots offered no foothold for critical engagement with post-war reality, these writers dwelt on the importance of clock-time, causality, and material reality in providing a grounding for historical responsibility; moreover, they strove to exploit the political potential of satire, a genre that has a peculiarly temporal character.

Satire was especially attractive to these writers, I argue, not only because they saw in the interwar world a dispiriting unconcern with the causes and consequences of World War I but also because the genre’s dependence on barbed, multi-front attacks mimicked a key feature of modern combat. Relying on recent psychiatric and psychological studies concerning Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the human perception of duration, I argue that soldier-authors’ attention to elapsing clock-time reflects a protective hypervigilance that, when redeployed in satirical form, enables the meticulous exposure of contemporary social and political vices. Noting as well the extreme length of these works, which I classify as “durational satires,” I suggest that their effectiveness largely depends upon their ability to import the experience of wartime duration into their structures and thus to make the act of reading an exercise in maintaining critical attention while managing personal exhaustion. In my final chapter, I demonstrate that this correlation
between the duration of combat and the duration of the reading experience extends beyond
English satires written in the wake of World War I. Turning to the novels of American authors
such as Joseph Heller and Kurt Vonnegut, I argue that durational satires also appeared in the
United States in the aftermath of World War II.

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My final thanks go to my parents, Rebecca (Becky) and Wheeler Kimball (Kim) Steedley. My mother has been my best friend and laughing buddy throughout my graduate studies. What’s more, any time I remotely begin to doubt myself, she (not entirely accurately) assures me that I am the best thing that has ever happened to academia. Who am I to argue?

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INTRODUCTION

How to Do Things with Wars: Turning Against Bergson and Toward Satire

To note the influence of World War I on modernist literature is to restate a commonplace. Indeed, to note the existence of that commonplace is itself a commonplace. Yet, in most accounts of modernism, critics seem to assume that they need not elaborate on the specific ways in which the Great War influenced the direction of twentieth-century English poetry and prose. Even those critics who do examine in detail the relationship between modernism and the war tend to limit their analysis of that relationship in one of two ways: either they concentrate on the memoirs and poetry of lesser-known writers who served in the trenches or they focus on the poetry and novels of high modernists who never saw combat. This dissertation aims to begin to fill the gap in critical accounts of modernism by considering the memoirs and novels of authors who not only served in the war but also secured a place at the frontlines of literary modernism before or after the war. More than just considering soldier-authors who are regularly overlooked, however, I argue in this dissertation that those soldier-authors’ experiences of combat directly affected the content and form of their works and did so in a way that challenges traditional understandings of modernism’s concern with time. While many critics have drawn attention to the influence of Henri Bergson’s influence on modernist representations of temporality, the soldier-authors of World War I (and, later, World War II) rejected Bergsonian characterizations of time and consciousness and, in some cases, offered a scathing critique of Bergson’s concept of *durée* in their nonfictional works. This antipathy toward Bergson and the literary techniques, including interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness, that seem to owe a debt to his philosophy might

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1 Vincent Sherry makes a similar point in *The Great War and the Language of Modernism*: “Indeed, these sayings [i.e., “The Lost Generation,” “The Men of 1914”] have gained the status of numinous rubrics. They have been used routinely in a sort of ritual invocation, which serves to silence, not to stimulate and certainly not to organize, further inquiry. The actual dearth of commentary on the modernist war—as a *historical* subject, as an event reconstructed from its record in contemporary political and intellectual culture—is remarkable. How easily these formulas are set aside by critics unwilling to grant their major premise, in fact, indicates all too clearly that ‘the modernist war’ owns a coherence that is wholly rhetorical, or plaintive. It has established no solid scholarship, no language of factual basis and rational elaboration, no thickness of intellectual resistance” (7).
at first appear counterintuitive, especially since those techniques seem suited to capturing the minute-to-minute uncertainties of combat and the lasting effects of war trauma. Nevertheless, as I argue throughout this dissertation, soldier-authors such as Ford Madox Ford, Wynham Lewis, and Evelyn Waugh used their post-war works to underscore the limitations of Bergson’s philosophy, which, on their understanding, dangerously privileged the time of the mind over the socially agreed-upon time of the world. What’s more, these authors reconceived the genre of satire along anti-Bergsonian lines by penning long or multi-volume works that strove to encourage in their readers both a critical attitude toward war-torn England and a temporal vigilance that depended on paying attention to the clock, not to the temporal peculiarities of consciousness.

Before I say more about my arguments in this dissertation, it might be helpful to offer an overview of existing accounts of modernism’s relation to the Great War and its representations of temporality. Though published nearly forty years ago, Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975) continues to be cited by nearly every scholar who addresses the intersection of World War I and modernism. A combination of historical survey and literary analysis, Fussell’s book attempts to get as near as possible to the daily experience of soldiers in the trenches of Western Europe, and to that end, it supplements discussions of diary entries and troop newsletters with analyses of the memoirs and poetry of typically overlooked authors. Yet if the virtue of Fussell’s account is that it concentrates on unknown or little-known soldiers’ literary productions, that virtue is also to some degree the book’s shortcoming. Concentrating almost entirely on the poetry and memoirs of lesser-known British authors, *The Great War and Modern Memory* neglects the memoirs and novels written by soldier-authors such as Lewis and Ford. Within his three hundred pages, for instance, Fussell includes only two brief quotations from Lewis’s remarkable post-war memoir, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, and he provides brief quotations from Ford’s masterpiece, the *Parade’s End* tetralogy, only when he wishes to describe English
soldiers’ reading material and their perceptions of sunrise, sunset, and German helmets.\textsuperscript{2} In fact, even when he does consider authors who are relatively well known, including Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, and Edmund Blunden, Fussell tends to characterize them and their works as “second rank” and thus suggests that the trenches, though producing much art and many artists, failed to produce either art or artist of the first order (314).

In more recent years, several critics have attempted to counteract just these biases in Fussell’s account by considering the effects of World War I on the literary productions of high modernist authors. In \textit{The Great War and the Language of Modernism} (2003), for example, Vincent Sherry begins by calling into question both Fussell’s “combat gnosticism”\textsuperscript{3} and his reliance on the “minor traditions” of Edwardian and Georgian literature (7, 8). According to Sherry, Fussell’s concentration on such traditions undermines his attempt to characterize World War I as the event by which a “dominant modern sensibility” was forged, since those traditions “appear...immune from the sensibility usually attached to the label and category of modernism” (8). Arguing that Fussell’s larger claims would be valid only if \textit{The Great War and Modern Memory} took account of “the public, civilian culture of the English war,” the culture in which “the cause and meaning of the war were first projected,” Sherry sets himself the task of investigating representations of the war in the novels and poetry of non-combatant high modernists, including T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Virginia Woolf. In particular, he turns to \textit{Homage to Sextus Propertius}, \textit{The Waste Land}, and \textit{Jacob’s Room} in order to demonstrate how Pound, Eliot, and Woolf “reenact[ed] the disestablishment of a [Liberal] rationalistic attitude and practice in language” by foregrounding the “interrupted functions of imaginative reason and poetic statement” (14, 13).

\textsuperscript{2} Fussell’s longest (and only other) comment about \textit{Parade’s End} appears in his very brief discussion of Evelyn Waugh’s post-World-War-II \textit{Sword of Honour} trilogy. As he remarks, “To derive Waugh’s trilogy, one would superadd the farce in \textit{Good-bye to All That} to the moral predicament of Ford’s Tietjens in \textit{Parade’s End}” (220).

\textsuperscript{3} Sherry borrows the phrase “combat gnosticism” from an article by James Campbell. By that phrase, he means to draw attention to Fussell’s implicit suggestion that combat is “a rite of passage into some exceptional understanding, the awareness shared by a literary clergy, baptized by fire” (7).
While many of Sherry’s arguments about the decline of Liberalism are compelling and provide a much-needed counterpoint to casual overviews of the relationship between modernism and World War I, his work moves away from Fussell’s only to err in the opposite direction. For where Fussell concentrates exclusively on the literary output of soldiers who had few if any ties to modernism, Sherry examines the relationship between modernism and World War I by focusing entirely on the novels and poetry of highbrow noncombatants. As if recognizing that this shift toward writers such as Pound, Eliot, and Woolf might seem odd—especially since they are said to reject Liberal reason during and after the Great War while retaining Liberal ties in London—Sherry attempts to distance those authors from the Liberal establishment by underscoring their status as “relative aliens” (77). More specifically, he argues that Eliot and Pound’s “Anglo-American[ness]” and Woolf’s gender allowed them to be “positioned sufficiently off-angle to the central political and cultural institutions of British Liberalism” and therefore enabled them “to hear the increasing weakness in the once easy authority of [Liberal] language” (81). Because Sherry never lets us know how one determines the “sufficiency” of any off-angled position, however, and because he does not explain why “relative aliens” living in the metropolis are more “sufficiently off-angle” than soldiers undergoing the immediate consequences of Liberal policies on the battlefield, his decision to concentrate on Pound, Eliot, and Woolf seems to result more from those figures’ canonical importance than from their representative status. Thus, with the exception of its introductory chapters, where Sherry concentrates on Liberalism’s shifting and shifty use of the language of reason, The Great War and the Language of Modernism ultimately suffers from the same charge it levels against Fussell’s work: namely, a “too narrow” focus on a hand-picked group of authors who do not, in fact, represent whole swaths of the population as claimed.

What should be added here is that a reliance on “big names” in discussions of war and modernism is not peculiar to Sherry’s book; nor is it confined to works about modernism and World War I. Writing about late modernism and World War II, for instance, Marina MacKay
strives “to give a context for [the period’s] experimental form and political impurity” and to
demonstrate “how the consensus politics of the Second World War were productive of acutely
self-aware literary forms” (14). To achieve these goals, she devotes a chapter each to Virginia
Woolf, Rebecca West, Henry Green, and Evelyn Waugh; yet when she turns to Waugh, the only
veteran of the bunch, she chooses to forego an analysis of his post-war Sword of Honour trilogy
in favor of discussions of Put Out More Flags and Brideshead Revisited, novels that were
published or nearly completed before Waugh had seen any significant combat. Although
MacKay’s concentration on the fictional and non-fictional works of noncombatants might be
explained by her insistence that World War II was “a conflict in which the civilian experience
was paramount,” her decision to include Waugh without discussing those novels of his that are
most tied to the war remains difficult to understand (6). Equally difficult to understand is
Lyndsey Stonebridge’s book, The Writing of Anxiety: Imagining Wartime in Mid-Century British
Culture (2007), which includes chapters on the writings of Henry Green, Rose Macaulay,
Penelope Fitzgerald, and Muriel Spark. Unlike MacKay, who at least obliquely Justifies her
focus on the works of noncombatants, Stonebridge never once mentions why her book centers
entirely on civilian authors. This omission becomes all the more striking when one considers that
her characterization of “the writing of anxiety” has clear relevance for many of the post-war
works written by soldier-authors: “The writing of anxiety...can be read as describing a kind of
historiography of trauma; a writing which treats history not so much as enigmatic or
unrepresentable...as a form of imaginative provocation” (5). We might also note the oddity of
Stonebridge’s decision to exclude the work of soldier-authors while simultaneously relying on the
psychoanalytic theories of Wilfred Bion, a veteran of World War I and a physician to traumatized
soldiers during World War II.

If one of my aims in this dissertation is to fill the gap between accounts like Fussell’s and
accounts like Stonebridge’s, MacKay’s, and Sherry’s, another is to reevaluate existing critical
treatments of modernism’s representations of temporality. Traditionally, literary critics have
emphasized that the experience of World War I caused modernist authors, among others, to lose all faith in narratives of progress and, in consequence, to do away with linear representations of time in their fiction and poetry. In the place of such linear representations, critics generally contend, the modernists relied on cyclical and organic notions of time or on descriptions of time as it is perceived by consciousness. Moreover, in recharacterizing time in such fashions, these authors are usually said to be indebted to Henri Bergson, whose philosophical works became extremely popular in England during the early 1910s. As Mary Ann Gillies explains, “The period of 1909-1911 saw over two hundred articles published on Bergson in English journals, newspapers, and books,” and by 1912, Bergson had not only completed a lecture tour of England but had also seen four of his philosophical volumes translated into English (28, 29). According to Gillies, the attractiveness of Bergson’s philosophy during the early 1910s lay in its “direct challenge to the lingering Enlightenment notions of the power of reason and the primacy accorded the intellect”; what’s more, Bergson proved popular with English audiences because “[a]ll of [his] major concepts—durée, élan vital, consciousness, memory, and free will—emphasize[d] the process of living [rather than] the product of life” (31, 67).

Among the pre-war modernists, Bergson had his closest ties to T.E. Hulme, who first met the philosopher in 1907 and for several years thereafter saw him as “an ally in the contest between freedom and mechanistic determinism” (Levenson 82). Although Hulme eventually disassociated himself from Bergsonian philosophy after discovering its “romantic implications,” his centrality to the modernist movement in its infancy meant that his early celebrations of Bergson were heard by the likes of, among others, Pound, Eliot, and Lewis. Even outside of Hulme’s immediate circle, however, Bergson’s philosophy proved appealing to many would-be modernists, who continued to subscribe to that philosophy after the post-war decline in Bergson’s reputation. Indeed, according to Richard Lehan, had Bergson never existed, the modernists “would have had to invent him” to “[undo] the notions of mechanism and teleology, [to] undercut both Enlightenment and Darwinian assumptions, [and to give] weight to the modernist belief that
art is the highest function of our activity” (311). As Lehan explains, “The modernists were not yet willing to write off mythic and symbolic reality, could not reconcile theories of cyclical time and history with a belief in linear evolution and mechanical progress, could not accept a mechanistic reality that gave priority to the realm of science at the expense of art and mind, and could not accept the notion of man based upon a purely rational theory of cognition and motives” (307). Thus, when Bergson’s philosophy reached England’s shores, many modernist authors, for however fleeting a time, welcomed it precisely because it depended on the rejection of teleology and mechanism and the elevation of the time of consciousness, or durée, over the time of the clock.

While there is no doubt that many modernists were drawn to Bergson both before and after World War I and tended to rely in their fiction on imitations of the conscious mind’s workings or on cyclical or organic notions of temporality, there were others who pushed back against the perceived anti-intellectualism of Bergson’s philosophy. Bertrand Russell, for instance, took issue with Bergson’s elevation of intuition over intellect and insisted that the popularity of Bergsonian thought was due to the fact that it “[did] not depend upon argument” and “[could not] be upset by argument”: “[Bergon’s] imaginative picture of the world, regarded as a poetic effort, is in the main not capable of either proof or disproof” (Russell as qtd. in Gillies 34). Although Russell, along with many other English philosophers, took his stance against Bergson before the outbreak of World War I, most modernists authors who developed an anti-Bergsonian position usually did so after the Great War. Indeed, as I indicated above, the modernists who rejected Bergson’s philosophy during the 1920s and 1930s also tended to be those who had actually served in the First World War.

In the next section of this introduction, then, I want to consider the reasons why soldier-authors decided to push back against Bergson’s philosophy in the aftermath of the war. In particular, I wish to consider why soldier-authors implicitly and explicitly challenged Bergson’s privileging of the lived time of the mind (durée) and how they underscored the relationship
among personal responsibility, national integrity, and an attention to the time of the clock. This latter kind of attention is one that I henceforth describe as “durational,” an adjective that is designed to play upon the military phrase “for the duration” and to echo many combatants’ suspicion that World War I (and, later, World War II) might be an endless affair in the face of which one could do little but count the elapsing minutes, hours, days, months, and years. My analysis of soldier-authors’ anti-Bergsonian turn relies principally on Wyndham Lewis’s Time and Western Man (1927), which offers a brutal critique of Bergson’s philosophy and links the acceptance of that philosophy to a decline in English life and letters. To supplement Lewis’s account of the ills of Bergsonism, I also consider combatants’ perception of passing time more generally by discussing recent psychiatric and psychological studies of temporal awareness.

Arguing that soldier-authors were compelled to cultivate a temporal and spatial hypervigilance on the battlefield—a hypervigilance that seems to have had lasting mental and physiological effects—I suggest that those same authors, once returned home, came to perceive that the civilian population was suffering from what psychologists Barbara L. Frederickson and Daniel Kahnemann have called “duration neglect.” The literary works those authors subsequently produced were therefore aimed at reversing such neglect and encouraging temporal attentiveness.

Where the next section of this introduction concentrates on soldier-author’s post-war valuation of duration, not durée, the final part focuses on the specific ways in which those authors translated their experience of wartime duration into their fictions and memoirs by selecting perhaps the most temporally dependent of genres: satire. Although I will say more about satire’s relationship to time in the pages that follow, I should emphasize here that the authors whose satirical works I consider adopt certain traditional features of the satiric genre while downplaying others. In particular, they play up satire’s critical register—that is, its tendency to attack social and political ills—and minimize its corrective function—that is, its tendency to include implicit or explicit solutions to the problems it diagnoses. This emphasis on criticism without correction might initially appear to drain the genre of its force and to make the soldier-authors themselves
seem like participants in a futile exercise. Yet the unwillingness of these authors—whom I will henceforth call “durational satirists”—to offer concrete solutions is, I argue, a consequence of their realization that post-war society, with its tendency toward duration neglect and its fondness for Bergsonian durée, will remain incapable of reformation until an interest and investment in socially agreed-upon conceptions of time—and in the political responsibility that accompanies such temporal attention—replace the fascination with the lived time of consciousness. Rather than setting themselves the unrealizable goal of overhauling contemporary society and politics, then, the durational satirists aim to train their readers in temporal attentiveness and to do so through long or multi-volume satires that, aside from considering the origins and effects of the World Wars on the level of content, attempt to make the duration of the reading experience an exercise in maintaining attention and managing exhaustion. In their efforts to align the duration of the reading experience with the combatant’s experience of the duration of world war, the durational satirists, I contend, not only follow in the footsteps of nineteenth-century physiological theorists, whose work has recently been discussed by Nicholas Dames, but also anticipate the reader-response theories of the last several decades of the twentieth century. Moreover, in their simultaneous avoidance of concrete plans for reform and their extensive critique of modern society, the soldier-authors of the World Wars practice nearly a century in advance what Wendy Brown has recently characterized as “untimely critique.”

Before proceeding further, I should perhaps provide a working definition of durational satire. In shorthand, then, a durational satire is a work that displays the following four characteristics:

1. A rejection of Bergsonian philosophy, especially Bergsonian durée. Simultaneously, a rejection of the literary strategies, including stream-of-consciousness, that are meant to mimic the lived time of the mind.
2. An attention to clock-time and its passage on the level of plot or as a prominent theme.

3. A tendency to heighten the critical function of satire and to minimize the genre’s corrective function.

4a. An investment in the length of a text, including the collective length of multi-volume works.

4b. An investment in the notion of reading (long texts) as an exercise by which one regains a sense of clock-time and thereby prepares oneself for the possibility of social or political change.

**Duration and Its Neglect: The Experience of War and the Rejection of Bergsonism**

To appreciate the complexity and nuances of post-war durational satires, we might best begin by considering the nonfictional work of a practitioner of such satire, Wyndham Lewis. In the second book of *Time and Western Man* (1927), Lewis offers an extensive critique of contemporary philosophers, behaviorists, and historians, all of whom supposedly share an indebtedness to Henri Bergson. Though he initially declares that Bergson is read “[by] students of philosophy…but by no one else,” Lewis goes on to conclude that Bergson’s ideas have provided the bedrock for a pervasive modern privileging of time and a corresponding devaluing of space (159). More specifically, Lewis claims that men such as Alfred North Whitehead, Samuel Alexander, and Oswald Spengler have, in the aftermath of World War I, continued to partake of “the sickly ecstasies of *élan vital,*” which were formerly the preferred pre-war “drugs” of “the first (continental) wave of the High-Bohemia” (204). For Lewis, this survival of Bergsonian philosophy presents serious problems for both society and the individual, since the valuation of the abstract at the expense of the concrete, the exaltation of the unconscious at the
expense of conscious attention to the outer world, and the favoring of the past at the expense of the present and future result in a fatalistic world view and a sense of personal futility. From a popular point of view,” he explains,

the main feature of the [modern] space-time doctrines (and with Bergson it was precisely the same thing) is that they offer, with the gestures of a saviour, something (that they call ‘organism,’ and they assure us tallies with the great theory of Evolution—just to cheer us up!)—something alive, in place of ‘mechanism’: ‘organism’ in place of ‘matter.’ But the more you examine them (and the same applies to the doctrines of Bergson), the more you will feel that you are being fooled. For what the benefit to you, in this famous change from matter to mind, from ‘matter’ to ‘organism,’ is going to be, it is very difficult to discover. For it is not you who become ‘organic’; you have been organic all along, no one has ever questioned that….But something does happen to you as well—the ‘you’ that is the counterpart of what formerly has been for you a material object. You become no longer one, but many. What you pay for the pantheistic immanent oneness of ‘creative,’ ‘evolutionary’ substance, into which you are invited to merge, is that you become a phalanstery of selves…So, as you proceed in your examination of these doctrines, it becomes more and more evident that, although it is by no means clear that you gain anything….it is very clear what you lose. By this proposed transfer from the beautiful objective, material world of common-sense, over to the ‘organic’ world of chronological mentalism, you lose not only the clearness of outline, the static beauty, of the things you commonly apprehend; you lose also the clearness of outline of your own individuality which apprehends them. (166-7, original emphasis)

While Lewis’s concerns about the preservation of individuality clearly have a political register in Time and Western Man and other of his works, these concerns are based primarily on his perception that “chronological mentalism” poses risks to his own artistic and intellectual position. Elsewhere remarking that intelligent and artistic individuals should be allowed to form an elite class in a future world government, Lewis insists that creation and innovation rely on

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4 The privileging of values I describe in this sentence does not necessarily apply to Bergson’s philosophy as elucidated in his own writing. Rather, I am outlining derivative philosophies and beliefs that Lewis identifies and examines in Time and Western Man.
freedom and personality. In consequence, the elaboration and espousal of Bergson’s thought, which has resulted in the “instinctive substitution of Time for any other values,” including those of the intellectual and the artist, represents “the deadest system, productive of least freedom, that you could imagine” (241, 217). More than just limiting freedom, this system, precisely by relying on intuition and flux, ultimately undermines reality and stability by denying causality. Agreeing with Hume that “the notion of cause and effect is necessary for any human belief” and arguing that “[t]he melting of the causal ties of habit…reached its climax in Bergson,” Lewis suggests that by privileging abstractions and images over sensations and perceptions, we do away with habit, including the habit of causation, and thereby also do away with a socially meaningful agreement about the nature of the objective world (357, 359). As Lewis writes, “the cutting up of the ideal, public, one, exterior, reality of human tradition, into manifold spaces and times, leads to a fundamental ‘subjectivity’ of one sort or the other” (394, original emphasis). Perhaps more problematic still, such a Bergsonian vision results in the cutting up of the single self into multiple selves and thus heralds the end of responsibility: “In a man’s way of regarding himself, it is socially of capital importance that he should regard himself as one person…If yesterday’s self is not today’s, then also the obligations contracted yesterday are no concern of today’s self” (341-2, original emphasis).

As Lewis’s extended criticism of modern time-philosophies makes clear, his issue with Bergsonian durée is precisely that it does not endure: upsetting both the stability of the real world and the stability of individual identity, the notion of durée, on Lewis’s account, forecloses the possibility of meaningful and lasting action and meaningful and lasting art. Yet as Mark Muldoon has noted, Bergson’s insistence on durée as a description of consciousness and its relation to matter is designed to do exactly what Lewis claims it does not: to provide us with creative freedom. Interested in proving that “[t]he flow of life is not irrevocably patterned and ready-made, devoid of any creative potential on our part,” Bergson arrives at the concept of durée

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to demonstrate that “we can forge our own freedom despite the seemingly endless web of
determinate or causal factors in which we each seem enchained” (92). For Bergson to circumvent
necessity and contingency in this fashion, he must first show “that time exists, ‘purely,’ on its
own, unsupported by the supposed structure of Newtonian physics,” and that “[t]here can no
longer just be a ‘before’ and ‘after’ because no longer does any cause determine any effect
whatsoever” (73, 82, original emphasis). Instead of emphasizing causal laws, homogeneity, and
the quantifications of space, Bergson insists that “pure change” is “the seamless endurance of the
inner life” and that “the passage of time as duration [is] the touchstone of human individuality”
(80, 82).  

While Lewis remains doubtful that “pure change” can provide any inner life worth the
name, Muldoon locates the problem of Bergson’s philosophy in its movement from the time of
the individual to the time of the world. Describing how the notion of durée “becomes more and
more encompassing” over the course of Bergson’s career, Muldoon contends that by 1896, with
the publication of Matter and Memory, Bergson “no longer conceive[d] of there being a time of
the world and time of the individual but rather, an infinite scale of times to accommodate the
tension of duration in every existent possible” (94). Yet this movement from the particular to the
universal does not, on Muldoon’s account, occur without a “lapse in logic” (94). Indeed,
analyzing Bergson’s works in relation to Paul Ricoeur’s Time and Narrative, Muldoon contends
that Bergson, as much as Husserl, Heidegger, and St. Augustine, multiplies the aporias of time
and “transcend[s] the necessity of taking the historical past seriously” (95). In response to the

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6 Throughout his account of Bergson’s philosophy, Muldoon translates “durée” as “duration.” This quite literal
translation not only fails to capture the complexity of Bergson’s use of durée but also presents obstacles for the
English-language speaker who will understand “duration” to mean “the continuance or length of time; the time during
which a thing, action, or state continues” (OED def. 1a, emphasis added). Since Bergson repeatedly argues throughout
Time and Free Will that durée is not quantifiable—that it has no “length”—Muldoon’s (and other scholars’) replacement of “duration” for “durée” is troublesome. In the remainder of this dissertation and for purposes of clarity,
I will, outside of quotations of others’ work, leave “durée” in the French in order to separate it from my own use of
“duration” and “durational,” both of which are intended to underscore just that quantifiability of time that Bergson
found incompatible with durée.
question of whether Bergson’s “leap from the psychological to the cosmic [is] credible,”

Muldoon concentrates on several problems:

First, Bergson does not detail how reflection or attention sustains itself ‘in’ duration. It is hard to imagine how concentrated intellectual effort and attention, as he calls it, can have the cosmic dimensions he purports it to have...Second,...[i]f pure change is more exigent than matter, then what is the purpose of ordinary or scientific time? In arguing that ‘consciousness is essentially free; it is freedom itself,’...Bergson fails to explain, positively, the purpose of the immobile, the static, and inert elements in the material world. Why must consciousness pass through matter?...In giving priority to duration over clock time, he overlooks the fact that the former exists only relative to the latter. Bergson does not recognize that his elucidation of a ‘durational’ consciousness is completely dependent on his understanding of the world as material and geometric. He fails to remember that succession and seriality had to be overcome to discover duration. This oversight leads to a contradiction. If attention to duration is the reestablishing of our grounding in pure change, what is the purpose of remembering, recollecting, preserving artifacts, or pursuing memorial efforts? Does not the possible attainment of pure change negate the necessity of history and time-marking in general? (94-5, emphasis added)

As these last two questions suggest, Muldoon senses the insufficiency of Bergson’s doctrine most clearly in its unconcern with history and memorialization. As he notes elsewhere, “Bergson never reckons with the discordance of life revealed...in laments and other elegies of the human condition” and sees “no need for testaments of struggle and the recognition of suffering” (116). Instead, with the exception of his last work, which was published in 1932, “the misery of time is only rejected and never confronted” in Bergson’s philosophy.

At this point, we might do well to recall Lewis’s claim that the pre-war edicts of Bergson were adopted by post-war society and adapted to its “time-philosophies.” A veteran of the war, Lewis clearly sees this Bergsonian revival as a sign that the war and its consequences have either been ignored or forgotten, and he finds this lack of memory particularly troubling, since he blames time-philosophies and their offshoot, the “historic mind,” for the advent of the war. As Lewis explains, “Memory...is a thing Bergson does not like to think about very much, as memory,
for the simple reason that, with it *stretched out behind us*, we have a sort of *Space*” (409, original emphasis). Moreover, the “clock” in Bergson’s philosophy “is not a clock that says, ‘Esto Memor! Souviens-toi!’” but rather “a metal object whose pendulum cuts up ‘mathematical time’ into neat little parcels” and thereby denies the individual’s “qualitied...heterogeneous, psychological states” (412, 413). This rejection of clock-time and acceptance of the time of *durée*, however, also occurs alongside Bergson’s privileging of the organism or “the organic view,” which, according to Lewis, “involves the stressing of a regular time-pulsation of things, and a periodic re-enacting and repetitive pattern, in everything” (265). In other words, “a fatal, mechanical periodicity” exists “in the working of the empirical Flux” and leads to a belief that the world is governed by cycles, including the cycle of rising and falling empires. For Lewis, this belief in world-cycles, which is especially evident in the work of Oswald Spengler, is both false and dangerous: “The Great War and the wars that are now threatened are the result of the historic mind. It is the time-mind at work: indeed, it is peculiarly useful to promoters of wars, hence its popularity. It says, ‘It’s time for another war’” (267, original emphasis).

In its downplaying of traditional understandings of memory and its implicit valuation of repetition, Bergsonian *durée* can be seen as ultimately ceding more power to “vital forces” than it gives to the individual. That such a philosophy would reemerge with greater strength after World War I, however, is perhaps as troubling for Lewis as the content of the doctrine itself. As

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I use the phrase “implicit valuation of repetition” here, since, as Muldoon has noted, Bergson believed his philosophy did away with repetition: “In short, if the causal relation still holds good in the realm of inner states, it cannot resemble in any way causality in nature. The relation of ‘before’ and ‘after’ can no longer hold because complete novelty has no antecedent...This is duration—‘the same moment does not occur twice.’ Said otherwise, homogeneous elements do not bear the mark of time that has elapsed and thus, in spite of the difference in time, the physicist can encounter identical elementary conditions;’ duration, on the other hand, ‘is something real for consciousness that preserves the trace of it’ such that identical conditions do not exist...” (Muldoon 82). While Bergson may have felt that he had overcome natural causality in his characterization of *durée*, Lewis suggests that such causality reemerges in Bergson’s insistence on *durée*’s organicity. According to Lewis, such organicity implies mechanism, and mechanism, in its turn, implies periodicity: “For locomotion and movement, ‘organism’ in the making, or becoming, not become, what is that but a machine?...The ‘organism’ of Bergson, Whitehead, and Alexander is perfectly *mechanical*—or at all events what ‘the thought of educated men’ would term ‘mechanical.’ And it is far more ‘materialistic’ (as the ‘thought of educated men’ understands that word) than is the philosophy of Plato or Aristotle” (*TWM* 170, 174, original emphasis).

Lewis is not alone in his belief that Bergsonism and related theories took on new life after World War I. In *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, Georg Lukács argues that the ideology of modernism results in both the privileging of subjective time as “authentic” time and in the characterization of “social and historical phenomena as static” (37, 35).
Muldoon suggests, an active sense of memory is necessary for addressing human suffering, especially the intense suffering that accompanies war. In consequence, the popularity of Bergsonian thought in the aftermath of an event as significant as World War I could seem to signal the abandonment of collective memory when it is most socially and politically relevant. Furthermore, the espousal of a doctrine that privileges subjective understandings of time at the expense of objective understandings of time, space, and matter points not only to an ignorance of the unprecedented nature of the war in terms of both geographical space and military matériel; it also suggests an unconcern with the psychic and physiological conditions of soldiers whose symptoms of shell-shock attest to a fundamental, shared experience of clock-time.

In a moment, I will elucidate the relation between these symptoms and clock-time. Here, however, I should emphasize that while Bergsonism might have seemed liberating for the individual before the war, the global experience of the war would presumably have underscored the limitations of that philosophy. Yet according to Lewis in Time and Western Man, quite the contrary happens. Instead of considering the significance of physical space in causing the start and determining the proceedings of the war; instead of reflecting on the quantity of injured bodies and traumatized minds; instead of recognizing the use of new technologies that make men victims of matter, the post-war “time-philosophers” retreat to the anti-space of the mind, devalue number and measure, and continue to assert that man can overcome the duration of matter by subordinating it to durée.

Although Ian Hacking does not mention Bergson in his essay “Memory Sciences, Memory Politics,” his discussion of what he calls the “memoro-politics of the human soul” might easily have included the notion of durée. Taking his lead from Foucault’s concepts of anatamo- and bio-politics, Hacking argues that “new sciences of memory” emerged in the late nineteenth

Citing Bergson as a key figure in cementing “the rift between [subjective] time and that of the objective world,” Lukács also suggests that modernists’ static view of history persists regardless of “sudden [historical] catastrophes,” including World War I. To make this point, Lukács draws on Robert Musil’s characterization of “the catastrophe of 1914” and contends that, despite the war, the “static apprehension of reality [was] no passing fashion” in Musil’s work or in the works of other modernists.
century as “surrogate sciences of the soul, empirical sciences, positive sciences that would provide new kinds of knowledge in terms of which to cure, help, and control the one aspect of human beings that had hitherto been resistant to positivist science” (70). Describing the development of these memory sciences in the fields of neurology, statistics, and pathology, Hacking contends that by the turn of the century scientists and physiologists had come to the conclusion that memory was foundational to personhood but not necessarily “positive” or recallable. Instead, “systematic forgetting” became as integral to identity as positive memory, and the language of trauma, which had previously been used only in connection with physical wounds, came to signify a “psychic wound” whose antecedents were potentially recoverable (85). As Hacking notes, psychologists such as Théodule Ribot and Pierre Janet emphasized that “memory…would teach us about the unhappy soul in terms of forgetting,” and their theories, once institutionalized, led to the rise of memoro-politics: “[By the end of the nineteenth century], [t]he way to have information about and control over individuals was to operate at the surface level of facts about what those individuals forgot.”

At first glance, Hacking’s ideas may seem far removed from Bergson’s. Certainly, Bergson was not interested in gaining power over individuals through either memory or forgetting. Nevertheless, in accounting for consciousness as he does, Bergson ultimately explains memory in the manner of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century psychologists and psychiatrists whom Hacking discusses. That is, he allies mental memory with the unconscious and conceives of action as a correspondence between bodily memory, or habit, and those particular mental memories that are required by and recalled to consciousness in order to achieve a desired effect upon the world of matter. As Muldoon explains when discussing Bergson’s distinction between pure memory (souvenir pur) and bodily memory (la mémoire du corps),

>[P]ure memory is inextensive, powerless, and does not share in any degree the nature of sensation, yet preserves all past experiences; its very nature is to be unconscious and to precede images. On the other hand, the bodily memory is made up of the sum of the sensori-motor systems organized by habit; it is a
quasi-instantaneous memory to which pure memory, unextended and unconscious, serves as a base. Bodily memory operates at the point of action such that the memory of the past offers to the sensori-motor mechanism all the recollections capable of guiding it in its task of giving to the motor reaction the direction suggested by the lessons of experience…The body is an advancing boundary between the future and the past—a point where the past drives into the future. The present becomes, therefore, an attentive recognition, a kind of circuit between matter, perception, and memory that ceaselessly summons the conscious being to action. (87)

Although Bergson may not explicitly privilege forgetting, his insistence on the preservation of “all past experiences” in the unconscious of pure memory does suggest that selective remembering, or, as Hacking might say, systematic forgetting, underlies his claims about durational consciousness’s activity in the world. Yet what is shocking about the similarities between Bergson’s characterization of memory and that of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century psychologists and psychiatrist is that this latter characterization gained especial currency during and after World War I, when shell-shocked soldiers began to receive treatment for their war-induced traumas. In other words, while Bergson describes memory before the war in much the same way as the early psychiatrists and psychologists do, he does not, during or after the war, consider that his characterization of the relation between bodily memory and pure memory depends upon something like systematic forgetting; nor does he alter his conception of *durée* to account for the thousands of soldiers whose time of service affected both their memories of past time and their experience and understanding of historical and lived time.⁹

⁹ My remarks about Bergson’s failure to reevaluate his philosophy during or after World War I might seem unfair if it were not that Bergson did publicly comment on the war’s meaning and significance. Indeed, not just commenting on the war, Bergson seemed to see it as confirmation of his career-long theory that matter had problematically been elevated over the spirit. In a speech he gave as the President of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques in December 1914, he offered an account of the negative influence of Prussian militarism on Germany’s development: “For a long period [before the ascendancy of Otto von Bismarck] Germany devoted herself to poetry, to art, to metaphysic...[W]hile Germany was thus working out the task of her *organic self-development* there was within her, or rather by her side, a people with whom every process tended to take a *mechanical* form. *Artificiality* marked the creation of Prussia...Her administration was mechanical; it did its work with the regularity of a well-appointed machine. Not less mechanical—extreme in both precision in power—was the [Prussian] army...Whether it was that the [Prussian] people had been drilled for centuries to mechanical obedience; or that an elemental instinct for conquest and plunder...had simplified its aims and reduced them to materialism; or that the Prussian character was originally so made—it is certain that the idea of Prussia always evoked a vision of rudeness, of rigidity, of automatism, as if everything within her went by clockwork, from the gesture of her kings to the step of her soldiers” (*The Meaning of the*
Discussing the debates about psychology and psychotherapy that did arise in response to the war, Ruth Leys describes the treatment shell-shocked soldiers received at the front and at home. Noting how psychotherapists such as William Brown “argued that the characteristic signs of ‘shell-shock’…were all bodily expressions of obstructed or ‘repressed’ emotion,” Leys explains that “[d]issociation or amnesia was therefore the hallmark of the war neuroses” (104, original emphasis). As a result of this belief, those working with traumatized soldiers were forced to re-evaluate the merits of hypnosis as a means of recovering emotional memory and were compelled to consider whether such a thing as “emotional memory” even existed to be recalled. As Leys observes, what becomes “decisive” for the subject and psychoanalysis in the 1910s “is precisely what cannot be remembered,” and this development, in its turn, leads to the belief “that, if narration [of trauma] cures, it does so not because it infallibly gives the patient access to a primordially personal truth but because it makes possible a form of self-understanding even in the absence of empirical verification” (120, 130, original emphasis).

The developments that Leys charts in post-war psychotherapy continued to have currency after the 1910s. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, when “shell-shock” had been rechristened Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and described in the DSM-III (1980), the unremembered, and perhaps the unrememorable, remained the basic object of psychological and psychiatric treatment. Describing the “cultivation” of PTSD at VA hospitals, for instance, Hacking writes,

At first the VA itself was totally opposed to PTSD. But then it created career niches for whole units of psychiatrists and psychologists. They turned trauma outside-in. Their mission was not so much to help the combat veteran with ghastly memories. On the contrary, the vet who is unable to get on with his life, but

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*War 17-20, emphasis added. According to Bergson, after the rise of Bismarck, Germany ultimately accepted Prussian mechanization, one result of which was World War I, a war that demonstrated the costs of “the mechanization of spirit instead of the spiritualization of matter” (36, emphasis added). Echoing this last remark in his 1915 Introduction to Bergson’s speech, H. Wildon Carr remarks that the speech itself not only “goes to the very heart of the problem of the future of humanity” but also pushes us to ask ourselves the following question: “Shall the splendid material progress which has marked the scientific achievement of the last century be the forging of a sword to destroy the freedom which life has won with it [i.e., scientific achievement] from matter?” (12).*
who can *not* remember what made him that way, is the victim to be helped. In many cases a man obtained treatment and a special pension only if he could not, except in therapy, remember what had happened to him. And if he still could not remember, he could get even more help. The men who remembered very well the god-awful things that happened were sometimes less able to benefit under this program, because PTSD was made to essentially involve not remembering but forgetting. (78, original emphasis)

Although Hacking goes on to claim that he is “not a critic of the VA and its use of PTSD,” he continues to insist on the rise of “the politics of memory” and PTSD’s pivotal role in securing further control over the individual soul. Indeed, his conceptualization of memoro-politics seems as much indebted to the work of Allan Young, which concentrates on the history of PTSD, as it does to the late-nineteenth-century work of psychologists and physiologists.

For his part, Young charts the development and institutionalization of PTSD as a disorder and relies on a distinction that we have already encountered: that between “mental memory” and “bodily memory.” As he explains, PTSD is above all else “a *disease of time* in the etiological sense,” and its peculiarity is that it can allow time to run in two ways, depending on the type of memory in question (97, original emphasis). In the case of bodily memory, especially in instances of acute PTSD, the individual’s physiological symptoms of arousal, irritability, and hypervigilance can all be seen as after-effects of an earlier experience of trauma. In cases of chronic PTSD, however, mental memory can play a significant role in reversing cause and effect. According to Young, “[C]hronic cases of PTSD can be explained just as plausibly if we supposed that time is moving in the opposite direction, that is, from the present (symptoms) back to the past (event).” In other words, those individuals who have pre-existing depression or anxiety disorders may find in PTSD a means of retroactively establishing the cause of those disorders and the source of unpalatable memories and emotions: “Individuals ‘choose’ PTSD for this purpose, to

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10 As opposed to chronic PTSD, which is usually accompanied by other psychiatric disorders and may appear “years after the etiological event,” acute PTSD lasts less than six months and tends to occur “very soon after the traumatic experience” (Young 97).
reorganize their life-worlds, because it is a widely known and ready-made construct, it is sanctioned by the highest medical authority, it is said to originate in external circumstances rather than personal flaws or weakness, and (in some situations) it earns compensation” (98). Thus, while “bodily memory”s particularity is that it gets traumatic time to run unequivocally in one direction, from trauma to syndromal effects,” mental memory “is notoriously reviseable and permits time to move in two directions.”

In considering the temporal multi-directionality of PTSD, Young wishes to suggest that the revisional aspect of mental memory comes with important moral consequences. Whereas bodily memory provides a “narrative” based on “survival rather than virtue,” mental memory tends to have a moral register and often refuses to exclude recollections of “acts in which the individual is not a victim of terror and atrocity, but a perpetrator” (99). Because individuals may wish to avoid or downplay those memories in which they figure as perpetrators rather than victims, a diagnosis of PTSD can come to seem a blessing, a way of excusing otherwise inexcusable behavior. Using bodily memory and its narrative of survival to justify immoral or unethical acts, the PTSD patient can “connect heaps of heterogeneous, stigmatizing, and self-defacing memories into a unitary and satisfying account and self-representation” (99). In such cases, Young argues, the “bio-logic” of bodily memory “may, in the [hands of those who wish to deny their moral culpability], challenge the mental memory”s moral logic.”

Looking at Young’s 1995 account of PTSD, we might seem to have reentered a debate from nearly a century earlier. For what other than a “heap of heterogeneous…memories” or images is Bergsonian durée, and what is Lewis’s problem with durée if not that it prohibits the assignment of moral responsibility? Here again, in other words, the concern seems to be that, like Bergsonism, psychoanalysis and the sciences of the mind encourage a notion of identity premised on a multiplicity of temporal selves and that they thereby privilege self-accountability and self-understanding over social accountability and attention to objective reality. Indeed, one could imagine Lewis expressing as much dislike for the modern diagnosis and treatment of PTSD as he
did for the concept of *durée*. This is not to say that Lewis denied the reality of shell-shock or other war-time traumas; rather, I mean to emphasize that, once having acknowledged the psychical and physiological effects of the war, Lewis felt even more strongly the need to return to something concrete and stable, something verifiable in objective, not subjective, space and time. What should be added is that Lewis was not alone in wishing for something that endures. Like him, many other modernist authors who served in the world wars evinced a desire in their fiction and nonfiction for a stable social or political order that would guarantee the flourishing of reason and art and would ensure the preservation of individuality. Yet in searching for something stable, these authors also realized that hopes for reviving a previous social or political order were unrealistic; in consequence, they channeled their desire for durability in the real world into the duration of their fictional worlds.

In the next section of this introduction, I will discuss at greater length the role of duration in post-war fictions. Here, I wish to address the possible objection that, in underscoring the importance of enduring time in Lewis’s *oeuvre*, I am working against my previous characterization of his dislike of time-philosophies. Moreover, I would like to address some possible questions relating to my alignment of military experience, as opposed to, say, urban growth or increasing technologization, with soldier-authors’ heightened concern for the duration of time. With regard to the first objection, I should emphasize that Lewis is not opposed to *any* discussion of time or its merits and demerits; rather, he is responding to a particular vein of philosophical and historical thought that essentially de-spatializes and de-chronologizes time by gathering up each individual’s heterogeneous thoughts, memories, perceptions, and emotions into a constantly changing, yet still somehow indivisible, consciousness. For Lewis, this particular emphasis on the time of consciousness results in the neglect of history, matter, and reality, all of which play an important role in the construction of individual identity and the production of great works of art. By privileging subjective time above all else, Lewis suggests, we irresponsibly abandon the space that provides not only the material for perceptions but also the basis of a
shared social order. As opposed to Bergsonian *durée*, which saps the individual of his identity and power and offers him, in the words of Yeats, “a mess of shadows,”¹¹ Lewis advocates an attention to the exterior world in all its concreteness, including the concrete divisions of clock-time, in order to encourage meaningful art and action. Indeed, the first book of *Time and Western Man*, which considers the flaws of modern literature, including those in the works of Stein and Joyce, is designed to show the nefarious effects of a particular “romantic” and Bergsonian conception of time on art. As Lewis explains at the end of that book, “What I am concerned with here, first of all, is not whether the great *time-philosophy* that overshadows all contemporary thought is viable as a system of abstract truth, but if in its application it helps or destroys our human arts” (110, original emphasis). As the remaining parts of *Time and Western Man* make clear, Lewis does not find a symbiotic relationship between time-philosophies and art, and in consequence, he declares that, whatever the abstract values of Bergsonism, he “[is] for the physical world.”

As regards my alignment of the experience of veterans with an increased desire for durable or enduring time, I should stress that my conclusions are based on the numerous descriptions of and reflections on the experience of war that color soldier-authors’ post-war nonfictional works and memoirs. Two tendencies in these authors’ post-war fictions reinforce my contention that their participation in the wars fundamentally altered their understanding of both objective space and time: first, these authors usually dedicate their narratives to the progression of the wars and treat that progression from a soldier’s perspective; second, they drastically extend the length of their novels in an attempt to present the moral and political complexities of global warfare and to mirror the soldier’s experience of wartime duration. While authors who did not participate in the wars certainly composed works about the conflicts and their repercussions, they tend to write considerably shorter novels and to make the wars a sort of recurring bass-line motif

¹¹ Yeats is not talking about Bergson in this line from “Among School Children.” Nevertheless, the quotation seems fitting since Bergson himself uses the language of “shadows” repeatedly in *Time and Free Will* when describing literary attempts to capture *durée*. I discuss such language in greater detail toward the end of this introduction.
instead of a dominant concern of the plot. Yet it is not only the combination of plot-interest and novelistic length that leads me to insist on the distinctiveness of post-war works by former combatants. Recent psychiatric studies of PTSD and psychological studies of the mind’s perception of temporal duration suggest that the experience of combat has lasting effects not only on the chemistry of the body but also on the standard ways in which the conscious mind calculates the passage of time. Because each of the authors addressed in this dissertation fought in World War I or World War II and afterwards offered a fictional account of his time of service, such psychiatric and psychological studies enable us to consider how the experience of combat may have influenced literary representations of time in the novels of authors such as Ford, Lewis, and Waugh. It is to those studies that I now turn.

Although it has long been known that PTSD influences the functioning of bodily mechanisms, research on the two areas most affected by the disorder—the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis—has shown that PTSD has more lasting physiological implications than previously believed. As Steven M. Southwick and his collaborators have reported, patients with PTSD tend to have increased levels of catecholamines (epinephrine, norepinephrine, and dopamine), which can lead to higher blood pressure, heart rate, and levels of anxiety (245, 247). Furthermore, provocation or challenge studies of PTSD patients—that is, studies involving the application of pharmacological, visual, or auditory stimuli—have pointed to the hypersensitivity of the noradrenergic system, which produces and is affected by the release of stress hormones (249). As regards the HPA axis, Rachel Yehuda and her co-authors have demonstrated that PTSD patients experience not only low cortisol levels but also “an upregulation or increased number of [glucocorticoid] receptors” (250). Since cortisol is a stress-released hormone that increases blood sugar, suppresses the autoimmune system, and speeds up metabolism, lower levels of cortisol might initially be taken as a sign of the body’s adaptation to repeated trauma. However, the corresponding increase of glucocorticoid receptors suggests that PTSD patients have “a more dynamic HPA axis,” one that
is “overly responsive (sensitised) to stress rather than…adapted [to it]” (Southwick et al. 250, Lundbeck Institute). Finally, outside of the SNS and HPA axis, researchers have discovered that PTSD patients experience greater stress-analgesia than non-PTSD patients, have a heightened sensitivity of serotonergic receptors, and show elevated thyroid\(^{12}\) and testosterone levels (254, 255). Taken together, these symptoms suggest that exposure to trauma has significant physiological consequences, consequences that do not necessarily abate with time. As Southwick and his fellow researchers note, “For many patients with PTSD, symptoms do not diminish over time; instead, they increase in magnitude” (257).

Examining the autobiographical accounts of soldier-authors such as Ford Madox Ford and Robert Graves,\(^{13}\) we might begin to establish a link between PTSD and the increased interest in time and its duration that characterizes much post-war fiction. For instance, hypervigilance, a primary symptom of the disorder that causes heightened attention to the environment and extreme responsiveness to stimuli, can be seen as a direct result of the increased level of stress hormones in the body. Although we might typically imagine hypervigilance as a greater attention to space, the testimony of veterans also suggests the temporal dimension of the symptom. As many soldiers during the world wars reported, the sound of an incoming mortar shell differed from the

\(^{12}\) In my second chapter, I return to combat’s effects on the thyroid in my discussion of Robert Graves’s *Good-bye to All That*. A relative of the discoverer of the thyroid condition known as Graves Disease and an acquaintance of W.H.R Rivers, a doctor who treated shell-shocked officers during World War I, Graves describes how too much time spent in combat can cause hypothyroidism. In the same chapter, I also consider Wyndham Lewis’s suggestion in *The Apes of God* that civilians in the post-war period suffered from irregularities in the thyroid and thymus. Within *The Apes of God*, Lewis has his principal character, Horace Zagreus, suffer from “thyroid-surplus,” a condition that, among other things, causes Zagreus to insist on “the great importance of everything” (168).

\(^{13}\) According to Arthur Mizener, Ford “was knocked down by the concussion of a near-miss” in July 1915. His front teeth were damaged in this incident, and when he went to have them looked at, he “found he had lost his memory”: “[F]or thirty-six hours he could not even recall his own name; for at least a month after, he could remember very little, and he later said that he did not get ‘over the nerve tangle of the war’ until 1923” (286). Ford himself wrote to Charles Masterson in 1916 about the state of his nerves: “I am in short rather ill & sometimes doubt my own sanity—indeed, quite frequently I do…” (291). Although Graves does not claim to have experienced shell shock, his description of his experiences in the aftermath of the war accords with characterizations of PTSD in scientific literature and first-hand accounts. Like Ford, Graves reports that it took him “years to rid [him]self of the poison of war memories,” and he describes how visions of the war would flood his mind when he was taking classes at Oxford in the 1920s: “In the middle of a lecture I would have a sudden very clear experience of men on the march up the Béthune-La Bassée road… Or it would be in Laventie High Street, passing a company billet… Or I would be in a barn with my first platoon of the Welsh Regiment… These day-dreams persisted as an alternate life and did not leave me until well in 1928. The scenes were nearly always recollections of my first four months in France; the emotion-recording apparatus seemed to have failed after Loos” (321, 293).
sounds of incoming rifle-fire, howitzer shells, and field-gun shells.\footnote{14} Extended time at the front thus resulted in increased sensitivity to particular sounds and would enable soldiers to determine what kind of shell was arriving and where it was most likely to hit. In hearing an incoming shell, however, the soldier could not only infer where it would most likely land in space but could also estimate his degree of personal danger and the time that remained to avoid death or injury. While this mental estimation of space and time was clearly fallible and did not prohibit shelling casualties, the possibility of avoiding annihilation by attention to clock-time nevertheless encouraged soldiers to learn to differentiate artillery sounds as quickly as possible. Indeed, one of the set pieces of war literature involves a newer soldier ducking for cover at the sound of an incoming shell, while an older soldier or officer remains upright.\footnote{15} In these cases, readers might tend to identify with the younger soldier, whose behavior seems meet to the incident, and to respond in disbelief at the actions of the elder, whose response appears out of line with the perceived threat. Yet to find the older soldier’s behavior inappropriate or careless ignores one of the underlying battle-truths of the world wars: namely, the experienced soldier’s ability to use sound in calculating time and distance and, as a result, his ability to respond appropriately to the perception of danger.

\footnote{14} In a journal entry marked May 28, 1915, Graves describes his Company’s response to “Sausages,” a type of German mortar-bomb, as follows: “‘Sausages’ are easy to see and dodge, but they make a terrible noise when they drop…I find that my reactions to danger are extraordinarily quick; but everyone gets like that. We can sort out all the different explosions and disregard whichever don’t concern us—such as the artillery duel, machine-gun fire at the next company to us, desultory rifle-fire. But we pick out at once the faint plop! of the mortar that sends off a sausage, or the muffled rifle noise when a grenade is fired” (112). In a similar fashion, Lewis describes high-velocity shells and compares them to other kinds of shells: “To look at, a high velocity shell is elegant compared with its more pedestrian fellows. It’s what a Hock bottle is to a Burgundy bottle, beside the latter. Instead of the heavy arc of sound, reminiscent of a whoop, which gives you a fair warning, a high velocity shell just swishes over. They were swishing overhead all night at this place” (168).

\footnote{15} Perhaps the most memorable take on this set piece is Robert Duvall’s performance as the aptly named Lt. Col. Bill Kilgore in *Apocalypse Now*. As the Air Cav starts napalming the country surrounding the Mekong and as soldiers and civilians run, shoot, and cower in the near distance, Kilgore calmly describes his fondness for the “smell of napalm in the morning” and laments that the war will one day end. Less sinister and cynical versions of this scene occur in World War II literature, including in Irwin Shaw’s *The Young Lions*. Meanwhile, Lewis describes a similar event that occurred just after he was transferred to his first “six-inch How” battery during World War I: “Like most military novices I had innocently supposed that a dugout—any dugout—was there to keep out shell-fire…But [‘my brother officer’] rapidly disabused me….As he spoke another shell plunged down outside, very much nearer this time. Indeed it seemed to me that it had come down a few feet off—for at first it is very difficult to judge the distance of a ‘burst’, from the sound, if you do not see it but only hear it. ‘That was pretty near wasn’t it?’ I asked. ‘No, [he said,] they most of them fall in the next field. But it’s quite near enough.’ ‘Quite,’ I said. ‘Oughtn’t we to go out and see what’s happening?’ ‘Nothing’s happening,’ he said. ‘This goes on all the time’” (118-9).
That there is a difference between combatants’ and noncombatants’ perceptions of time and its passing also finds support in psychological studies done to test the mind’s understanding of duration. Examining retrospective duration timing, or remembered duration, researchers have largely discounted what is known as the “utility model,” a model that predicts a correlation between an individual’s assessment of duration and his or her evaluation of an experience’s usefulness (Block and Zakay 382). Instead, they have discovered that most people evaluate their experiences by considering the “hedonic value” of them—that is, by considering the pain or pleasure felt during and remembered after those experiences. Furthermore, researchers have discovered that most people establish the hedonic value of an experience by making use of “a heuristic called the peak-and-end-rule,” which relies on an evaluation of two factors: first, the maximum level of pain or pleasure experienced during a sequence of time; and second, the level of pain or pleasure experienced at the end of that sequence. Concentrating on only two moments and the affective states corresponding to them, individuals who implicitly rely on the peak-and-end rule pay less attention to the duration of an event than they do to its trend and rate of change. For this reason, Barbara L. Frederickson and Daniel Kathneman in 1993 coined the term “duration neglect,” which refers to individuals’ “systematic bias towards ignoring the duration of a past experience” when that experience is evaluated in retrospect. This tendency to neglect duration has been confirmed in many additional studies, all of which have shown that retrospective evaluations of a sequence’s hedonic value—as opposed to attempts to gauge the amount of time that is passing as it passes—consistently result in the “underweight[ing] [of] the duration of an experience.”

Important in understanding the nature of duration neglect is the fact that it occurs only when the “temporal relevance” of an experience is low (383). In other words, whenever the passing of time is integral to “interpreting the meaning of a situation or for making optimal decisions in terms of adaptation to a relative environment,” individuals will show less of a tendency to neglect or underestimate retrospective duration. A similar effect also happens when
the duration of a present moment (i.e., prospective duration) is being estimated: “If a person is able to allocate relatively more attentional resources to processing temporal information, experienced duration increases” (385). Furthermore, if the individual perceives multiple changes during a period of time—even if these changes have nothing to do with a conscious attention to time’s passing—the length of that time appears to increase.

Given the temporal attention required of the average soldier, the number of changes he witnesses during any moment of combat, and the consistently high hedonic value of his experience, we can easily see why combatants might experience not only little or no duration neglect but also an overweighting or exaggeration of a time’s prospective duration. In the case of retrospective estimates of the duration of combat, however, the issue becomes even more complex. First, researchers have repeatedly discovered that “people tend to overestimate the duration of their affective reactions to negative events” (383). Second, studies of duration-estimation have led to the creation of what is known as a contextual-change model. According to this model, an individual not only “encodes events into memory” but also “automatically encode[s]” contextual associations and their variety (371). In consequence, when a memory is retrieved or reactivated, that same individual bases his estimate of duration on three remembered factors: the actual events remembered, the contextual associations that accompany the event, and the number of those associations. In instances where the contextual associations are especially numerous, the retrospective duration of the event comes to seem longer.

Finally, Douglas Hinzman and his collaborators have coined the phrase “recursive reminding” to describe the way in which memories formed during periods of heightened attention

16 While the term “hedonic value” might seem to suggest only the pleasurable aspects of an experience, it is important to keep in mind that the term actually refers to both pleasure and pain. In emphasizing the “high” hedonic value of the soldier’s experience, then, I am drawing attention to the extreme unpleasantness of it. Moreover, in noting the “consistency” of these unpleasant experiences, I mean to underscore the comparative ineffectualness of the peak-and-end heuristic for the average soldier. Although many combatants certainly perceived some moments as more dangerous or threatening than others, the frequency with which the average soldier is placed in harm’s way would make a single hedonic “peak” harder to identify. And without having a single point in time to which to refer retrospectively, the average soldier would be less inclined to underweight the duration of his experience. To rephrase: With fewer hedonic peaks in his wartime experience, the soldier is less likely to consider trend and rate of change in retrospectively assessing that experience than he is to concentrate on temporal duration.
to time influence the perception of the length of a present or future period of time. Arguing that the very act of attending to time becomes one of the contextual associations automatically encoded into memory, these researchers concluded that the retrieval of the memory of an event necessarily results in the retrieval of the experience of that event's duration: “[W]hen a person attends to time, that action will automatically retrieve information about the previous action of attending to time” (386). Therefore, if a person regularly attends to time, his prospective experience of time’s duration will increase, since the extent of present duration is the sum of all previous memories of duration that have been stored in the memory and recursively retrieved. Simply put, for Hinzman and his co-authors, the sense of duration is cumulative: regular attention to time over time results in the feeling of increased duration at any subsequent moment when attention to time is once more relevant.

Using the psychological research done on the perception of duration, we can gain a fresh perspective on the average soldier’s experience of temporal measurement both during and after war. On the one hand, the soldier’s estimation of prospective duration would tend to be heightened, since the combatant not only needs to attend to time to prevent injury or death but also exists in a situation whose changing and multifaceted context produces temporally significant associations. On the other hand, when dealing with retrospective duration, the combatant’s estimation of duration would lengthen not only as a result of the revival of numerous contextual associations; it would also increase because memories of temporal attentiveness produce a cumulative effect in the present moment. In other words, the soldier who has seen combat would be more likely to overestimate the duration of present and past time than the noncombatant, a tendency that would be heightened still further if the soldier in question had PTSD. In these latter cases, the mind’s habits of estimating duration would be reinforced by the body’s altered physiology, which responds to certain stimuli by reactivating a pattern of hormone-release acquired during periods of trauma. Thus, whether we agree or disagree with Allan Young about the moral consequences of reviseable mental memory, we can nevertheless
conclude that a PTSD patient’s bodily memory and mental perception should encourage him to attend to time and its duration in an atypical way.

Equally important to consider is the possibility that veterans’ tendencies to overweigh duration might compound some of their difficulties in reintegrating into society. Perhaps with the exception of those American soldiers who returned from World War II, veterans of war regularly report that they are disillusioned with the attitude of the general populace, who seem to understand neither the severity of combat experience nor its lasting consequences. In the case of the Vietnam War, for instance, both historians and writers of fiction have attested to the lack of ceremony and respect that soldiers received when coming back to “the World.”

Moreover, Vietnam veterans have described not only the apathy of the population but also their hostility. As Olson and Roberts note, “[T]he Vietnam veteran…loomed large in American popular culture [after the war]”; yet as a symbol of a war “that the nation wished to forget,” the veteran was not “portrayed as a hero…but was transformed into a villain” (264).

Because the Vietnam War was particularly unpopular and because images of combat were shown nightly on television news programs, the public’s hostile or insensitive responses to the returning soldiers might seem predictable. In the case of World War I, however, neither of these factors impinged. As many scholars have noted, the beginning of World War I was met with nearly universal enthusiasm in England. According to Niall Ferguson, nearly 2.5 million British men volunteered to fight over the course of the war, a number that represented a shocking 25 percent of the eligible population; moreover, 29 percent of these volunteers enlisted during the first eight weeks of the war (198). Indeed, so many volunteers attempted to enlist that the British army lacked sufficient uniforms and was forced to turn away those with minor physical disabilities, some of whom “committed suicide in despair” (Morrow 38). As for the civilian population, historians have repeatedly drawn attention to the crowds that eagerly responded to the news of war and cheered the soldiers off to battle. While recent studies have shown that these

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17 “The World” in this instance is the phrase returning Vietnam veterans used to refer to the United States.
crowds also consisted of panic-stricken adults and looting youths, “ardently patriotic middle-class professionals and students” became “caught up in the moment…mobb[ed] the squares and troops, and then rush[ed] off to volunteer themselves” (39). In fact, even as the war continued to drag on and take the lives of young men, such fervor never entirely disappeared. Robert Graves, for instance, describes the war enthusiasm he witnessed on leave during the fall of 1916, when the Battle of the Somme was still ongoing: “England looked strange to us returned soldiers. We could not understand the war madness that ran about everywhere, looking for a pseudo-military outlet. The civilians talked a foreign language; and it was newspaper language” (228).

Although Graves remains mystified at the general population’s continued enthusiasm for the war as it was being fought, he, like many other authors, registers even stronger concern at the indifference soldiers met after the war’s conclusion. Explaining how “nobody cared” that the Treaty of Versailles was “destined to cause another war some day,” Graves notes that the English public was more concerned with Lady Diana Manners’s marriage than with the “ex-service men [who had been] refused reinstatement in the jobs they had left when War broke out” (288). Similarly, Wyndham Lewis describes a conversation he had with Ford Madox Ford in 1915 about the probable fate of veterans after the war. Initially shocked at Ford’s prognostication that, a year after the war’s conclusion, “disbanded ‘heroes’ [would] be selling matches in the gutter,” Lewis goes on to note that Ford’s “worldly forecast was verified to the letter”:

There is no better propaganda against war, I think, than to broadcast such information as this (though that was not Ford’s intention: he was very keen on the War). The callousness of men and women, once the fit of hysteria is over, has to be seen to be believed—if you are prone to give humanity the benefit of the doubt, and expect some ‘decency’ where you won’t find it. They regard as positive enemies those whom a war has left broken and penniless. The ‘saviours’ and ‘heroes’ get short shift, upon the Peace Front. No prisoners are taken there! (185)

Considering Lewis’s response to post-war society, as well as the response of other authors who served at the front, we might perhaps apply the research done on duration neglect to
the civilian population. Having experienced the war secondhand, the civilians that Lewis and Graves describe seem to be assessing the war only in terms of its hedonic value—that is, they appear to be relying on the heuristic of the peak-and-end rule, which would cause them to assess the length of the war’s duration and their affective response to it by way of their moment of maximum pain or pleasure during the war and their degree of pain or pleasure at the news of the Armistice. Indeed, even for those civilians who were most affected by air raids and bombings, the peak-and-end rule would seem to apply more than it does for the average soldier, since temporal alertness or attention was not generally required of the civilian during daytime and, if in play at night, had little consequence in preventing the randomness of bombing. On the level of perceptual experience, then, the civilian would be more likely to suffer from duration neglect than the combatant, but from the viewpoint of returned veterans, this civilian tendency might have seemed less a result of a particular experience of the war than a moral shortcoming. No longer a perceptual fact, in other words, duration neglect might have looked like a willful ignorance of the past. To put it another way: Conditioned as a result of his service to overestimate the duration of time, the returned soldier may have perceived the general population’s apathetic response to the legacy of the war in much the same way that psychologists and physiologists conceived of shell-shock: namely, as selective amnesia or dissociation.

That this was the case becomes evident in those post-war fictional and nonfictional works that concentrate on the war and urge their readers to remember both the political variables that led to its start and the incompetence and self-interest that allowed its bloody prolongation. For this reason, too, former conscientious objectors become especially favored objects of ridicule in the works of soldier-authors. Relocated in space for the duration of the war, and usually in the unmolested and seemingly timeless English countryside, the conscientious objectors represented for the former soldier the arch-neglectors of duration. Indeed, much of Wyndham Lewis’s critique of particular authors in the first book of *Time and Western Man* might usefully be viewed through this lens. While it is common to accuse Lewis of misogyny and homophobia, his
response to writers such as Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein may equally reflect the discrepancy between their civilian perception of wartime and his experience of war’s duration. Also striking is the fact that none of the male authors whom Lewis attacks, including Marcel Proust, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and T.S. Eliot, fought in the war. Yet even if Lewis did not make a direct connection between these authors’ noncombatant status and their supposed shortcomings, his abhorrence of modern time-philosophies and the modernist styles of writing that emerged in response to them may stem at least in part from the particular way of perceiving time and its duration that he gained as a result of the war. For if duration neglect is the predominant characteristic of the post-war populace, stream-of-consciousness—which, on Lewis’s account, neglects duration, but not durée, by absorbing the past, the present, and the future into one conscious moment—is the hallmark of much post-war high modernism.

If we understand Lewis’s dislike of narratives of consciousness as a sign of his experience of the war, his critique of this narrative mode in *Time and Western Man* becomes even more remarkable than it might seem on first appearance, especially when it is set alongside more recent literary criticism of modernism. Linking a series of events in philosophical, social, and literary history and arguing that they signify a post-war re-adoption of Bergsonism, Lewis not only denigrates the work of authors who remained civilians during the war but also disparages just those literary innovations that are normally regarded as the prime examples of post-war modernism. Whereas literary critics have tried to establish modernists’ engagement with and creative re-imagining of reality through narrative modes such as stream-of-consciousness, Lewis identifies stream-of-consciousness as a deliberate refusal to acknowledge reality. In his critical introduction to the modernist novel, for instance, Stephen Kern argues that modernists used “[formal] innovations to capture the political, social, and economic history of [their] period”

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18 To be more precise: Lewis does not make such a connection in *Time and Western Man*. In *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937), however, he does suggest that members of the Bloomsbury Group were unlikable not only because of their artistic productions but also because of their pacifism. I address Lewis’s comments about the Bloomsbury Group in Chapter 2.
while also trying to “subvert” and “rework” certain available master narratives (1, 2). Among those narratives to be overturned, Kern contends, was the narrative of progress, which relied on a chronological understanding of time. As he goes on to explain, Bergson’s philosophy, among others, contributed to the emergence of a literature that valued consciousness “as the most stable, or at least most centered, locus of experience” (92). Moreover, it was this literature of consciousness that enabled modernists to engage most effectively with the world around them.

Chronology is the central metaphysical scaffolding of the master narratives. Achronology, like discontinuity, negates the root word. By themselves, these words convey a nihilistic message. But modernists’ subversions always implied a positive reworking, and thus their resistance to chronology was complemented by an affirmation of techniques for ordering experience based on the workings of consciousness including stream of consciousness, spatial form, interpolations, numerous techniques to capture simultaneity, and Faulkner’s way of creating aesthetic order by replicating ripples on the water (125).

While Kern here presents a case for the modernists’ creative response to the time in which they lived, what is most striking about this passage is its position in Kern’s chapter on time. For immediately prior to discussing the virtues of achronology, Kern remarks that “[t]he continuity of the national master narrative [of national progress] was snapped by the disastrous role that nationalism played in the outbreak of World War I, which exploded the idea that the history of nations was ultimately a story of progress” (125). Like Lewis, then, Kern locates the origins of narratives of consciousness not only in a desire to rise above a particular master narrative of time but also in a desire to transcend, and one might equally say forget, a particular experience in time. What remains odd in Kern’s account of this war-induced literature, however, is that his insistence on the “affirmative” nature of achronology relies almost wholly on the works of authors who saw no combat.\footnote{Kern does discuss Ford and Parade’s End in his chapter on time. Concentrating on Ford’s use of “impressionistic fragments, time shift, multiple perspectives, and ellipsis dots denoting breaks in individual thought,” Kern argues that “Ford does not just describe the irrationality of the nationalist narrative objectively… but dramatizes it repeatedly… in this impressionist rendering of Tietjens’ mixed-up thoughts” (111, 85). While Kern may be correct in noting that Ford’s tetralogy considers the “irrationality of the nationalist narrative” and treats “the war as a desperate last gasp of a dying aristocratic society,” he does not remark that the tetralogy’s increasing use of interior monologue and “mixed-up
excusable at first glance, it becomes problematic when Kern not only discusses trauma but also describes it as a time-related phenomenon. Arguing, for instance, that “traumas close off experience…alter the time orientation of characters toward the past and necessitate achronological ordering of text time,” Kern concentrates on *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!* both of which follow the Freudian paradigm of “temporary forgetting” in childhood and the subsequent revival of traumatic memories in adulthood (119, 121). One might also note that these novels were written by Faulkner, who romanticized the glories of flying aces and military uniform during the war, lied his way into the RAF in June 1918, and feigned a limp for years after the war, even though he had not completed basic training by the time of the Armistice (Parini 42).

Faulkner aside, one should also acknowledge that in aligning not only trauma and narratives of consciousness but also trauma and childhood, Kern is emphasizing, and nearly a century later, the same set of relationships that Lewis first identified in *Time and Western Man*. Yet where Kern applauds innovation, Lewis derides what he sees as the modernists’ attempt to avoid history and reality in the aftermath of the war. Ridiculing Joyce and Stein as “‘time’-doctrinaires,” whose “habit of speech” runs rampant “like a stuttering infection” in their narratives of consciousness, Lewis explains that a “sudden malady of childhood…has mysteriously overtaken all our world, from the hoariest veteran down to the veritable child” (49, 50). More specifically, he contends that the “cult of childhood” has become a “strange fashion” in post-war society, one which finds its origin in Bergsonism and its outlet in modern literature:

> [I]t is essential, if you wish to understand at all a great deal of contemporary art and thought, even the developments of positive science, not only to gather up all the dispersed manifestations of this strange fashion, but—having done so—to trace this impulse to its source in the terrible and generally hidden disturbances that have broken the back of our will in the thoughts” is a sign of the frustration and futility created by the war. As I argue in Chapter 1, far from being “affirmative,” Ford’s deviations from chronology and his formal decision to move from direct dialogue to something like stream-of-consciousness across the tetralogy represent his characters’, and perhaps his own, resignation and sense of uselessness during and after the war.
While many aspects of this passage are worthy of comment, Lewis’s characterization of World War I, among other events, as a catastrophic symptom of viral-like “disturbances” within the body politic deserves particular attention. Having lost his mother to pneumonia in the 1918 influenza epidemic and having suffered from double pneumonia himself during the same period, Lewis was certainly aware that the influenza virus had originated in the trenches and that it tended most violently to affect young adults in the civilian population. In consequence, his description of the spreading of the post-war “child-cult” as if it were Spanish flu further connects the war, narratives of consciousness, and Bergsonian time-philosophies. Yet even as Lewis suggests that modern artists have caught a virus from the outside world, he insists that they are not interested in finding solutions or antidotes in the outside world. Instead, Lewis argues that by focusing on the “time-paradise” of the mind and by finding “the Heaven of Childhood inside [themselves],” these artists refuse to consider the social, historical, and political causes of their condition. Indeed, even when modernist authors use their narratives of consciousness to chart the origins and subsequent manifestations of childhood traumas, they remain inadequately attuned to the world: for by confining themselves to the subjective traumas of the distant past, they deny the mature and empathetic mind that would enable them to reflect on the more recent global traumas occasioned by war.
Contrary to what Kern describes as “a positive reworking” of the master narrative of time, then, the post-war modernists’ subversion of chronology and “celebration of present moments” are, at least from the perspective of some soldier-authors, signs of temporal inattentiveness and a failure to address reality. Furthermore, the “decelerations of text time” that Kern charts in modernist fiction are equally problematic for soldier-authors, who experienced the slowing-down and extension of time at the front (124). Although novels about a single day or those involving frequent shifts in temporal pace might, at first glance, seem to reflect what it is like to endure in time, the duration they account for is, from the vantage point of authors who saw combat, that of the isolated consciousness, not that of a social and historical world governed by cause and effect and the tickings of the clock. Simply put, while Kern may be correct that writers such as Woolf, Stein, Conrad, Faulkner, Joyce, and Proust showed the falsity of particular master narratives of time, soldier-authors continued to insist in both their fiction and nonfiction that scientific and social notions of causality and temporal unidirectionality were central to individual experience and needed to be relied on more than ever in the aftermath of the war.

À la Reprise du Temps Perdu: Satire as Temporal Training Ground

Because those authors who served in World War I tended, like Wyndham Lewis, to reject the Bergsonesque fictional strategies aligned with the high modernism of Proust, Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot, they sought in writing post-war memoirs and novels to select those genres and narrative modes that would reinforce the necessity of attending to the time of the real world. Satire thus became one of the preferred tools of soldier-authors, since it enabled them to establish a connection between their literary works and the English political and social scenes that had been fundamentally altered by world war. The allure of satire appears to have been twofold. On the one hand, the genre, which has traditionally been seen to rely on attack, allowed soldier-authors to criticize those forces and institutions that had led to the start of the war, had enabled its
extreme prolongation, and had made the post-war world seem uninhabitable. On the other hand, the genre’s inherently temporal character permitted soldier-authors to combat the “duration neglect” that they believed characterized post-war literature and society. In referring to satire’s temporal character, I mean to underscore the genre’s extreme referentiality, its commitment to a critique directed at ongoing problems outside of the text itself. As Edward W. Rosenheim, Jr. explains in Swift and the Satirist’s Art, “[a]ll satire is not only an attack; it is an attack upon discernible historic particulars” (317, original emphasis). Moreover, Rosenheim locates the fundamental difference between satire and comedy precisely in the former’s dependence on “both the historically authentic and the historically particular”: “the satiric [character of a work] is lost when the object of attack is entirely imaginary (or ‘false’ with respect to historical reality) or when, as a phenomenon so persistently recurrent and widespread as to be regarded as ‘universal,’ it cannot, without further qualification, be assigned specific historical identity” (318, original emphasis).

In emphasizing satire’s investment in a specific historical time, Rosenheim is not alone. Leon Guilhamet, for instance, argues that “satire is more timebound than comedy” and that “[p]art of the danger inherent in the satiric object stems from the threat of time,” while Charles A. Knight contends that “[s]atire straddles the historical world of experience and the contrived world of creative literature” and “insists on the necessity of both” (Guilhamet 8; Knight 35). Indeed, as each of these critics suggests, the intimate relationship between satiric texts and the historical world accounts for satire’s seemingly short shelf-life as a source of entertainment or an object of critical interest. Rosenheim, for example, notes that “when...the historical identity of a satiric victim pales or disappears with time, the satiric quality of the work diminishes accordingly and its continued survival comes to depend upon facts, whether accidental or artistic, which are extrinsic to its original satiric character” (318). Because one generation of readers may fail to see the satiric quality of an earlier generation’s literary works, the study of satire qua satire involves bringing a certain historical knowledge to bear on particular satirical texts, a knowledge that
enables the revivification of their original satirical purpose. Rather than calling for “‘autotelic’ analyses”—that is, analyses that locate no place in literary criticism for extra-literary concerns—satire demands that readers strive to “becom[e] vicarious members of [the satirist’s] original audience” and that they accept as “legitimate” any source that “can disclose relevant historical fact” (325, 326).

If the extreme referentiality of satirical texts has made examinations of satire an unattractive pursuit for certain kinds of literary criticism, the bias against satire has been reinforced by the inability of scholars of satire to agree on the constitution of the genre. Indeed, the very notion of satire as a genre has been the subject of debate at least since the publication of Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). In that work, Frye argues that “there [are] narrative categories of literature broader than, or logically prior to, the ordinary literary genres” (162). Labeling these “pregeneric elements of literature” as “mythoi,” he goes on to place satire, as well as irony, under the heading of “The Mythos of Winter” and describes the three phases satire undergoes within that mythos. Although Frye’s descriptions of satire’s three phases have influenced subsequent satirical theory, those descriptions have proven less exportable than his basic contention that satire is not a genre at all. Somewhat bewilderingly, however, those critics who have followed Frye in refusing satire generic status also tend to overlook the fact that he classifies satire as a series of variations within a particular mythos; instead, these critics, while usually citing Frye directly, erroneously import the term “mode” from the opening chapters of the *Anatomy* into their characterization of satire. This unexplained categorization of satire as modal

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20 In their introduction to *Theorizing Satire*, Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe address the ways in which the autotelic analyses encouraged by the New Criticism resulted in the disappearance of satire as an object worthy of critical attention. As they explain, “satire’s insistence upon its historical specificity, its torrential references to the peculiarities of the particular individuals in the society that it represents...worked to exclude it from the consideration of those who insisted on the self-containment of literary texts” (4). Indeed, only when the satirical register of a work was no longer immediately accessible to readers did satires become suitable texts for the New Criticism: “[S]atire transforms itself into art when the belief in its power to hurt has dissipated. While this declaration of satire’s inefficacy makes it acceptable to New Critics, it also denies satire’s self-proclaimed purpose, which is social rather than aesthetic” (5). Because all the works examined in this dissertation had the misfortune of appearing during the period when T.S. Eliot’s strictures on impersonality were beginning to take root in the minds of the soon-to-be New Critics, it is not surprising that they have received little attention in academic circles, which continue to be influenced by New Critical practice.
has, since the 1960s, gathered considerable steam and resulted in many critical volumes that foreground without conclusively resolving the genre-mode debate.  

Resolution or no, those critics who characterize satire as a mode rather than as a genre also tend to be those who are interested in considering the satirical character of novels, not poetry. Because novels are considerably longer than poems, including formal verse satires, and because their length and variety make applying any one label to them a risky affair, critics have tried to avoid the charge of too rashly characterizing an entire novel as a satire by contending, in Rosenheim’s words, that satire “can be a matter of moments” (305). Speaking directly to the relation between the novel and satire, for instance, Matthew Hodgart offers the following description, which effectively privileges conceiving of satire as a mode, though the word “mode” does not appear:

Whereas the novelist aims at understanding the complexities of life, satire aims at simplification, at a pretence of misunderstanding and at denunciation. The sheer size of the open-ended form of the novel has also much to do with the difficulty that satirists have in using it: satire seems to require a light and closed form which helps to make a simple point effective—the form is itself a component of the wit without which satire is unbearable. It follows that no full-length novel is likely to be satirical throughout, and indeed not one example among the classics comes to mind. Satirical fiction if it is to be successful needs to be short... (215-6).

In looking at this passage, we can, I believe, agree with Hodgart that no novel “is likely to be satirical throughout” without rushing to the conclusion that all “successful” satirical fiction “needs to be short.” Indeed, one of the key purposes of this dissertation is to demonstrate that the soldier-authors who wrote in the aftermath of the World Wars understood the extreme length of their novels as part and parcel of their satirical agenda. Leaving aside that particular argument for the moment, however, I wish to stress here that the genre-mode debate, though becoming more prominent as the novel itself has become more prominent in literature and literary criticism,  

21 For works that discuss the modal and/or generic status of satire, see Spacks, Connery and Combe, Griffin, Guilhamet, and Rosenheim.
offers little help in demonstrating how satire works effectively within specific novels. More often than not, in fact, the conception of satire as a mode results in a certain critical laziness: not having to account for an entire novel’s status as a satire, critics make free use of the adjective “satirical” in describing specific sentences or passages without clarifying what they mean by that term. In such cases, agreement about the nature of satire is assumed and the task of illustrating how satire works is avoided.

That no such agreement does exist becomes clear in yet another debate that has long dogged the theorization of satire: namely, whether satire aims at or succeeds in reformation. This matter is intimately linked to the question of whether satire is or should be moral—that is, whether the author of satire implicitly or explicitly endorses or should endorse a particular moral position. While most critics agree that the Old Comedy of the Greeks and the verse satires of the Romans depended on a notion of satire as a “reforming agent” with “moral intent,” it was not until the publication of Dryden’s “Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire” in 1693 that arguments about satire’s moral agenda took center stage in discussions of English literature (Hendrickson 40; Spacks 360). Citing Dryden’s claim that “[t]he Poet is bound, and that ex Officio, to give his Reader some one Precept of Moral Virtue; and to caution him against some one particular Vice or Folly,” Dustin Griffin explains that this “rule,” along with Dryden’s insistence on a single subject or theme in satire, has been “the most influential of all modern pronouncements about satire” and has been “[q]uoted more often, by both eighteenth-century and present-day theorists and critics, than any other statements [concerning the genre]” (Dryden as qtd. in Griffin 19; Griffin 20). Yet if Dryden’s rules for satire remain the most quotable, the prominence of the view of satire as a moralizing art owes its largest debt to critics and satirists of the eighteenth century, who found themselves confronted by popular characterizations of satire as “malevolent and destructive, an affront to the dignity of human nature and a threat to the commonwealth” (24). “Thrown on the defensive,” Griffin notes, “[those in favor of satire] largely repressed or suppressed any notion that satire could be subversive or even disruptive of
public order or private peace”; at the same time, “they were driven to insist not only that satire was a moralizing art but that it was clearly and explicitly didactic and moralizing: it told you what was good and what was bad and why” (25).

By the opening of the twentieth century, when the theorization of satire recommenced after nearly a century of silence, the eighteenth-century notion that satire had to be “explicitly didactic and moralizing” began to be disputed or downplayed in discussions of the genre. As early as 1930, for instance, Wyndham Lewis was arguing not only that “non-ethical satire” was possible but also that “the greatest satire cannot be moralistic at all” (70). Although Lewis’s aim in separating morality from satire was to carve out a space for the genre “as a recognized philosophic and artistic human activity” independent of non-artistic and non-philosophical judgments, subsequent critics have since averred both that definitions of satire need no longer rely upon notions of moral purpose and that satirists themselves rarely if ever have an interest in reform. Patricia M. Spacks, for example, notes that “twentieth-century definitions [of satire], abandoning the idea of [the genre]’s necessary moral purpose, try to locate its special techniques”; meanwhile, Edward and Lillian Bloom insist that the “punitive intention [of] satire seldom if ever resolves itself in measurable reform” and that “[m]ost satirists are realistic enough to understand that public response to their complaints may be painfully long in coming, if it comes at all” (Spacks 361; Bloom 18, 33).

In considering Spacks’s and the Blooms’ claims about satire and satirists, one should take note of their works’ publication dates. Appearing in 1968 and 1979, respectively, Spacks’s article and the Blooms’ book, both of which address the modern novel, were attempting to respond to developments in recent satirical fictions, fictions that had fundamental differences from the satirical poetry of Dryden or Donne and from the satirical novels of Thackeray or Fielding. To put the matter a different way: By the late 1960s and the 1970s, an understanding of satire that downplayed the genre’s moral intent and reformative aims was needed to respond to the new kinds of satirical novels actually appearing on the literary scene. What should be
stressed, however, is that at the same time Spacks and the Blooms were suggesting that satire could exist without a clear moral position or a clear program for reform, “black humor” was coming into vogue as a catch-all term for those works that, while looking like satires, lacked an identifiable moral stance and a belief in the possibility of reformation. Indeed, rather than following the lead of critics who were interested in broadening the definition of satire, the majority of scholars avoided debates about satire altogether by relying on the descriptor “black humor”—whose definition was, if anything, less clear than the earlier term’s. The consequences of this shift toward “black humor” as a classificatory tool are visible not only in the literary criticism of the late twentieth century but also in twenty-first-century scholarly publications. In *Dark Humor and Social Satire in the Modern British Novel* (2003), for instance, Lisa Colletta marshals forth a stunning array of terms (“dark humor,” “Modernist social satires,” “dark humor satires,” “the dark humor of Modernist satire,” “Modernist dark humor,” “comedy,” “gallows humor”), all of which, though seemingly in conflict with one another, are used to argue that novels as diverse as *Mrs. Dalloway*, *Vile Bodies*, and *Afternoon Men* are works in which “comedy no longer serves a corrective satirical function but instead offers the pleasurable—if only momentary—protection of laughter in the face of injustice and brutality” (5).

While it is difficult to believe that any reader of *Mrs. Dalloway* has felt encouraged to “[laugh] in the face of injustice and brutality,” Colletta’s struggle to navigate between the terms “satire” and “dark humor” reflects a larger critical concern: namely, whether the twentieth century itself worked against the emergence of satire. Colletta does not consider this question in her book, but her hesitance in defining satire and in applying the term without attaching “dark humor” to it does seem to link her work to other projects that question satire’s viability. Perhaps the first person to consider the impossibility of satire in the twentieth century was W.H. Auden, who argued in 1952 that “[s]atire flourishes in a homogeneous society...and in times of relative stability and contentment” (202). Remarking that the genre is incapable of “deal[ing] with serious evil and suffering” and that it succeeds only when “satirist and audience...agree as to how
normal people can be expected to behave,” Auden concluded that, “[i]n an age like our own,” one that is beset by “serious evils,” satire “cannot flourish except in private circles as an expression of private feuds.” This last point is one that Dustin Griffin also makes when, having emphasized satire’s dependence on “the presence of a fairly small, compact, and homogenous reading audience,” he suggests that the “brief recovery [of satire] in the London of the 1930s—with W.H. Auden, Wyndham Lewis, and Roy Campbell—perhaps [occurred] because some of the old coterie conditions were temporarily reestablished” (138).

Although the absence of “coterie conditions” described by Auden and Griffin might have contributed to the limited presence of satire in the twentieth century, such an absence becomes a small concern if one considers that the century itself seemed to have conspired against the genre. Here, for instance, is Matthew Hodgart at the end of his 1969 book on satire describing the bleak future of the genre:

It is not clear, however, that we can have the same confidence in the future of literary satire. In this survey I have not taken the history of literature up to the present day...if I had done so, I should have been hard put to it to find many great satirists still alive and producing. But this is also true of other kinds of literature: there is currently also a shortage of first-class poets and novelists. We have passed through a great age, which reached its peak about 1910 to 1940, the age of Yeats, Rilke, Joyce, Kafka, Mann and Proust; and the contemporary scene in Europe is one of imaginative exhaustion and the exploitation of minor talents. Since this kind of trough has appeared many times before in history, it would be absurd to speak of the present or future death of literature. The printed word, in the service of art and the human spirit, is potent and will revive. But will satire also revive? As journalistic comment on the absurdities of politics and manners it has never been in danger of dying out except when political freedom has been in danger, and in the open society it should have as permanent a future as caricature and cartoon. But that satire will again cross the frontier into the enchanted realm of imaginative literature, as it has done many times in the past, is difficult to predict. It may be that the modern world makes too great demands on the writers; demands, that is, for understanding the ever more rapidly increasing changes caused by science and technology, and for flexibility in dealing with these changes....Just as hot war has become too expensive a luxury for mankind, so the war of words may become too great an expenditure of effort for the writer. (247-8)
In an age like our own, to borrow Auden’s phrase, when satire is most frequently aligned with Jon Stewart’s, John Oliver’s, and Stephen Colbert’s “journalistic comment[s] on the absurdities of politics and manners,” Hodgart’s remarks about literary satire’s lackluster future may seem to have been prophetic. Whether we agree that satire was or is on the verge of extinction, however, Hodgart’s concluding analogy between “hot war” and “the war of words” deserves further comment, if only because it re-establishes the age-old connection between satire and violence. This connection has been repeated in the works of other twentieth-century theoreticians, including Northrop Frye, Alvin Kernan, and Michael Seidel. Frye, for instance, not only characterizes satire as “militant irony” but also describes irony itself as “a kind of intellectual tear-gas that breaks the nerves and paralyses the muscles of everyone in its vicinity” (23). For his part, Kernan considers how satire may be one of the cultural tools that constrains our biological tendency toward aggression, while Seidel, relying on René Girard’s contention that “legal and ritual systems...are codifications of originally violent acts or impulses,” argues that satire answers history’s “encoding of violence” with its own “decoding” activity: “In the penetrations of satire all actions are never too far from the original violations they harbor: ambition is parricide; schism is fratricide; the denial of posterity is infanticide; inheritance is usurpation....Or, to put it another way, satire blows history’s cover” (Kernan 118; Seidel 17, 19).

In mentioning those critics who foreground the relationship between satire and violence, I am laying the groundwork for one of the central claims of this dissertation: namely, that the experience of total war seems to have driven soldier-authors to embrace the genre that most resembles war. More specifically, the experience of combat appears to have made satire an attractive tool for combating both global combat and its consequences. Yet if the post-war period witnessed a satiric call-to-arms, those authors who took up the satiric mantle rarely if ever advocated a clear moral stance or a recognizable program for reform. Indeed, in the wake of the World Wars, satirists opposed to the wars and their after-effects somewhat paradoxically
privileged the violent critique characteristic of satire over the genre’s other traditional attribute: its implicit or explicit commitment to reformation. If this preference for virulent critique sans social and political solutions initially seems contradictory or counter-intuitive, the absence of clear-cut reformative agendas in post-war satires nevertheless has an identifiable origin in the satirists’ experience of the *time* of war. As I suggested in the previous section, combat encourages both a temporal and spatial hypervigilance that, in large measure, depends on the critical activity of the brain in identifying sources of danger. Because the only two means of eliminating the need for such hypervigilance are death and desertion—and even in the case of desertion, those who suffer from PTSD will still be physiologically prone to hypervigilance—those soldiers who choose to stay alive, even if that means staying in war, can control their situations only by refining their critical skills. For the soldier-authors of the world wars, who had cultivated critical judgment as an end in itself on the battlefield, the wartime practice of improving the mind’s critical capacity seems to have been translated in the aftermath of the wars into a type of satire that elevated the genre’s critical function over its corrective one.

Although the experience of combat might of itself account for post-war satirists’ rigorous criticism of social and political ills and their corresponding failure to provide correctives, of equal importance was the returned soldier’s perception of the post-war environment and the possibilities it offered for reformation. As mentioned previously, Wyndham Lewis returned from World War I only to discover the reemergence and ascendancy of a Bergsonian characterization of time as continuous flux. Insisting that such a conception of time denied the individual a consistent identity and resulted in the end of responsibility, Lewis must simultaneously have sensed the futility of advancing a program for reform based on a now *passé* understanding of time. Indeed, his first post-war work, *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926), testifies even in its title to Lewis’s suspicion that absolute escape from the current system was impossible; practicing the art of being ruled, after all, still entails being ruled, even if Lewis believed that select individuals, including
himself, could develop behaviors or establish positions that would decrease their degree of subjugation.

Whether or not Lewis’s arguments about the prominence of Bergsonian thought in post-war society are accurate—indeed, whether or not his characterization of Bergson’s philosophy did that philosophy justice—there is no question that he repeated *ad nauseam* his suspicion that the notion of *durée* had dramatically foreshortened the possibilities for political action. What is perhaps most striking about Lewis’s insistence on the connection between political paralysis and a philosophy of constant change, however, is that it anticipates by more than half a century those Marxist critiques of late capitalism that identify a relationship in postmodern society between ceaseless novelty and political stasis. In *The Seeds of Time*, for instance, Fredric Jameson characterizes the postmodern period as the age of the antinomy, an age in which dialectical categories are replaced by “antitheses that turn out to be, somehow, the same” (7). Among these antitheses are time and space, on the one hand, and utopian and anti-utopian thinking, on the other. With regard to the collapse of distinction between time and space, Jameson contends that time in the postmodern era is “a function of speed, and evidently perceptible only in terms of its rate”; in consequence, a “conception of change” emerges that depends on the disintegration of the distinction between space and time and between subject and object (8, 9). In such a situation, Jameson suggests, “absolute change [begins to equal] stasis,” and the only conceivable way of

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22 As one has come to expect from Jameson, his formulation of the collapse of the distinction between space and time is dense and hard to follow in its smaller steps. A rough paraphrase of his claims would run something like this: Traditionally, time has been understood on two levels: on the one hand, there is the lived time of consciousness, which is not quantifiable or spatializable, and on the other hand, there is the time of the clock, which is a spatialized, and therefore inaccurate, representation of lived time. By postmodernity, however, these two understandings of time have been dismissed, and in their stead, a notion of time as rate of change has emerged. When rate of change becomes our standard for measuring time, time and space are no longer clearly defined categories. Furthermore, the categories of subject and object are no longer distinct, since, on Jameson’s account, all “binary oppositions” disappear in postmodernity as a result of that period’s insistence on “perpetual change”; “The foundational antinomy of postmodern description lies then in the fact that this former binary opposition [between space and time], *along with identity and difference themselves*, no longer is an opposition as such” (17, 21, emphasis added). To put the matter differently: The lived time of consciousness, which was formerly aligned with the “subject,” becomes indistinguishable from spatialized (“objective”) representations of time, including the spatialized representation of time as constant change. In consequence, individuals in postmodernity attempt to access what used to be the inner time of consciousness by looking to material objects, objects that are now assumed to reflect that inner time.
imagining “radical change” involves the notion of “putting an end to change itself,” a notion that “result[s] in the blocking or paralysis of thought, since the impossibility of thinking another system except by way of the cancellation of this one ends up discrediting the Utopian imagination itself” (19, 18).

In arguing that “perpetual change...at some outer limit seems stable and motionless” and that the spatialization of time has resulted in a homogeneity that nevertheless tries to pass itself off as heterogeneity, Jameson ultimately aims to illustrate how late capitalism is responsible for fostering those antinomies that close off philosophical thought, in general, and utopian thought, in particular. Precisely because the target of his critique is late capitalism, which he seems to align with at least the last three decades of the twentieth century, Jameson is invested in distinguishing pre-World-War-II modernism and its promises from postmodernism and its assurances. Although Jameson’s descriptions of the workings of postmodern antinomies are compelling, his commitment to diagnosing the antinomy as a problem peculiar to late capitalism causes him if not to idealize the modernist period then at least to characterize it as comparatively rosy. More specifically, I would argue that his neat division between modernism and postmodernism is less factually confirmable than it is consequent on his already established stance against contemporary capitalism, which he sees as fueling “abstract violence” and encouraging “homogeneity” in the postmodern period (25). That the separation between

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23 With The Seeds of Time, Jameson never dates the period of postmodernity. In Postmodernism (1991), however, he suggests that the “American Century (1945-1973)” was the “hothouse, or forcing ground,” for late capitalism, the mode of production with which he always aligns postmodernism (xx). He also adds his belief that “infrastructure and superstructures—the economic structure and the cultural ‘structure of feeling’—somehow crystallized in the great shock of the crises of 1973.”

24 Arguing, for instance, that contemporary celebrations of heterogeneity and difference could only occur after homogeneity “[had] historically emerged” and “conferred upon [those celebrations] the value and the force of oppositional tactics,” Jameson traces the ascendency of homogeneity to the development of capitalism: “The violence [implicit in the Western system of private property in real estate—which displaced various systems of land tenure—] was no doubt always implicit in the very conception of ownership as such when applied to the land; it is a peculiarly ambivalent mystery that mortal beings, generations of dying organisms, should have imagined they could somehow own parts of the earth in the first place. The older forms of land tenure...at least posited the collectivity as the immortal governor into whose stewardship portions of the soil are given over...The point is, however, that where the thematic opposition of heterogeneity and homogeneity is invoked, it can only be this brutal process [by which land tenure is replaced by land ownership] that is the ultimate referent: the effects that result from the power of commerce and then capitalism proper—which is to say, sheer number as such, number now reduced to equivalencies—to seize upon a
modernism and postmodernism is not so clear-cut should already be apparent from the descriptions of Lewis’s oeuvre provided in the last section. For what, in Time and Western Man, is Lewis protesting if not that an emphasis on constant change, which he places under the heading of Bergsonism, results in political and artistic stasis and the paralysis of thought? Indeed, the following passage, with which Jameson concludes his first essay in The Seeds of Time, might have been written by Lewis (mutatis mutandis) some seventy years earlier:

Of the antinomies, perhaps we can conclude a bit more, namely that their ceaseless alternation between Identity and Difference is to be attributed to a blocked mechanism, whereby in our episteme these categories fail to develop, fail to transform themselves by way of their own interaction, as they have seemed able to do in other moments of the past (and not only in the Hegelian dialectic). If so, that blockage can only have something to do with the absence of any sense of an immediate future and of imaginable change...[F]or our time consists in an eternal present and, much further away, an inevitable catastrophe, these two moments showing up distinctly on the registering apparatus without overlapping or transitional stages. It is the next instant of time that falls out; we are like people only able to remember their distant pasts, who have lost the whole dimension of the recent and the most familiar. As much as a cause, indeed, this incapacity to imagine change (which itself must be imagined as the paralysis of one lobe of the collective brain) also stands as the very allegory of the dilemmas we have outlined here: the Identity of a present confronting the immense unthinkable Difference of an impossible future, these two coexisting like eyeballs that each register a different kind of spectrum. It is a situation that endows the waiting with a kind of breathlessness, as we listen for the missing next tick of the clock, the absent first step of renewed praxis. (70-1, emphasis added)

The overlap between Jameson’s description of the postmodern moment and Lewis’s characterization of his own moment in the modern, post-war period becomes evident in this passage. Writing in the 1920s and 1930s, Lewis, too, felt that change had come to appear...
unimaginable and that the recent past—especially the recent past of World War I—no longer seemed available to his countrymen. Yet unlike Jameson, who attributes the experience of waiting for “the missing next tick of the clock” to the logic of late capitalism, Lewis believed that that “missing next tick” owed its existence to a Bergsonian philosophy that, in insisting on durée, had disposed of clocks and their tickings altogether. Far from agreeing with Jameson that the “Bergsonian opposition between measurement and life, clock time and lived time” preceded the notion of perpetual change as stasis, in other words, Lewis insisted that stasis was the necessary consequence of prioritizing the perpetual change of durée (8).

If Lewis recognized the ramifications of prioritizing durée, he was nevertheless unable to escape the society in which he lived, a society that, in celebrating lived time at the expense of clock-time, had made political action or political change difficult to conceive. For just this reason, the satiric works he wrote in the post-war period do not offer implicit or explicit programs for reform, even though they diagnose the social and political ills of his time at length. In failing to offer concrete solutions in his satires, however, Lewis, along with the other durational satirists of the World Wars, did not believe that his works were without consequence; instead, he seems to have set himself the limited goal of encouraging his readers to attend once more to clock-time and to dampen the effects of a rampant Bergsonism by participating in an extensive critique of the English nation. To return to Jameson’s phrasing for a moment, Lewis’s aim, which other post-war satirists shared, was to teach his readers to recover “the missing next tick of the clock” through exhaustive and, at times, exhausting criticism.

In setting themselves this goal, Lewis and other durational satirists were participating avant la lettre in what Wendy Brown has called “untimely critique.” Responding to the charge that critical theory has no place during times that are considered politically unstable or volatile, Brown argues that “[c]ritical theory is essential in dark times not for the sake of sustaining utopian hopes, making flamboyant interventions, or staging irreverent protests, but rather to contest the very senses of time invoked to declare critique untimely” (4, emphasis added). As she
goes on to explain, the “practice of critical theory inherently invokes a set of concerns with time,”
since the crises that provoke critique “[signal] a rupture of temporal continuity, which is at the
same time a rupture in a political imaginary” (7). For Brown, who cites approvingly Jameson’s
claim that the perpetual change of late capitalism has resulted in “the loss of future possibility,”
the only solution to the “unmoving present” is to cultivate “an ethic of timeliness and
untimeliness in critical theory, one that involves both close attunement to the times and
aggressive violation of their self-conception” (14, original emphasis). In describing how such an
ethic would manifest itself in critical theory, Brown suggests that the historical materialism of
Benjamin, which sought to “to fracture a seamless present” and “to lift that present from seamless
time,” needs to be combined with an “untimely critique [that] insists on alternative possibilities
and perspectives in a seemingly closed political and epistemological universe” (13, 14).
Moreover, such an ethic would entail that critical theory “[not] let itself be bound by political
efficacy” and that it recognize its commitment “not only to speak to the times but also to affirm
them”:

In its historical-mindedness, critical theory is distinct both from
normative moral theory, in its general refusal of historical
specificity for its norms, and from utopian intellectual exercises,
which attempt to leap out of history. But critical theory focused
on political life is not negation, destruction, or nihilism; rather,
critical theory aims to render crisis into knowledge, and to orient
us in the darkness. Critique that does not affirm life, affirm value,
and above all affirm possibilities in the present and the future,
while certainly possible, is not making a bid for political power
and hence cannot be understood as political. This does not mean
that critiques must carry a full-blown political vision, declare
‘what is to be done,’ or advance transcendental or universal
norms. But critical theory as political theory cannot get off the
block without affirming contestable and contingent values,
values that are themselves an affirmation of this world, and this
time. (15-6, emphasis added)

Although Brown’s notion of untimely critique clearly has its origins in political theory,
her characterization of such critique aligns in crucial ways with the agenda of the soldier-authors
who turned to satire in the aftermath of the World Wars. Like Brown’s untimely critic, those
authors strove “to render crisis into knowledge” and to do so through a genre that depends on both historical specificity and a critical bent; like Brown’s untimely critic, as well, those authors, though not offering “full-blown political vision[s]” or advocating “transcendental or universal norms,” engaged in a critique designed to alter the current state of affairs. Perhaps the most striking similarity between the untimely critic and the durational satirist, however, is that both privilege the act of reading as a practice that “may not be discounted in acting [politically]” (14-5). As Brown explains in the concluding paragraph of her essay, “critique [is] a practice of affirming the text it contests,” of “passionately reengag[ing] the text, reread[ing] and reconsider[ing] [its] truth claim” (16, emphasis added). Indeed, precisely through its “insistent rereading,” critique, on Brown’s account, distinguishes itself from refutation or dismissal, since it “reasserts the importance of the text under consideration (whether a law, nation, principle, practice, or treatise), its power to organize and contain us, its right to govern us.”

Because Brown’s discussion of affirmation as a component of critique might at first seem to distance her project from the durational satirists’, I should add here that her use of “affirmation” might more productively be considered as something like “commitment.” More specifically, it might be aligned with a commitment to the health of the social body, even if a survey of that body at a particular moment in time suggests little that should be applauded or retained. Brown’s tendency to align critique with affirmation or, in other essays, with “love” derives, I would argue, from the post-September-11th context in which she writes. Recognizing that any kind of criticism offered in that context is likely to be construed as disloyalty or treachery, she seems to amp up the affective (and affectionate) registers of her characterization of critique in order to forestall certain kinds of objections. Thus when Brown suggests that “dissent from existing practices, even wholesale critique of the regime, is not merely compatible with love and loyalty to a political community, but rather is the supreme form of such love and loyalty,” we should, I believe, recognize that her description of critique is as dependent on her awareness of
the particular political climate in which she writes as it is on her reading of Socrates, whom she cites (21).

If we reconsider what Brown calls “affirmation” as a commitment to improving, even minimally, the social and political situation in which one finds oneself, her description of untimely critique as a practice of reading and re-reading comes to have a clearer connection to the projects of the durational satirists in the wake of the World Wars. For by writing extremely long or multi-volume satires about wartime and its aftermath, those satirists foreground the act of reading as a process that always already has political consequences, no matter how small. Indeed, precisely by constructing long works—works that, by virtue of their length, demand heightened attentiveness and strategies for managing exhaustion—the durational satirists suggest that their own experience of time on the battlefield might, when mimicked in their satires, compel their readers to adopt an attitude toward time and its duration that diverges from popular post-war understandings of temporality. To put the matter somewhat differently: Having discovered that surviving global combat depended in large measure on hypervigilance and the cultivation of methods for dealing with fatigue, post-war satirists sought, by way of lengthy fictions about global combat and its effects, to produce a body of readers who, through the act of reading, might develop the perceptual faculties needed to redress those social and political ills arising from the problematic privileging of durée over duration.

In conceiving of the reading process as a training ground for the development of certain perceptual faculties, the durational satirists, wittingly or no, followed a path sketched out by scholars and critics of the previous century. As Nicholas Dames has argued, despite the “persistent illusion that the Victorians had no theory of the novel at all,” the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of a “physiological novel theory” that combined experimental science and novel criticism by considering the “consumption rather than [the] production [of texts]...the reception of texts rather than the text-as-object” (2, 10). In particular, conceiving that “form, particularly novelistic form, must be defined temporally, as a rhythm or time signature, rather
than a synchronic structure,” practitioners of physiological novel theory sought to uncover how the novel “condition[ed] the physiological apparatus of the reader for the temporal rhythms of modernity” (10). Unlike twentieth-century theories of the novel, then, which tended to concentrate on texts as organic wholes, nineteenth-century physiological theories viewed “the novel as a process rather than a structure” and characterized “the act of novel-reading...[as] a performance—a performance enacted in and by the nerves” (11). Moreover, physiological novel theorists “imagined [that] novelistic form [was] produced by reading in time, particularly in the rhythms of attention and inattention, slow comprehension and rapid skipping ahead, buildups and discharges of affect,” and in consequence, they sought “to make form (literary or otherwise) experimentally, physically present, even quantifiable” (11, 49).

Although Dames describes in detail the different approaches of particular theorists, the theories he discusses tend to have two points in common, both of which link those nineteenth-century inquiries to the satiric practices of soldier-authors in the first half of the twentieth century. First, physiological novel theorists were concerned to determine whether “the history of reading could be discovered not (solely) in records of individual reading acts...but ossified in the very form of texts themselves, in the genetic code, so to speak, of genre itself” (29, emphasis added). Second, contending that “the variable times of actual reading...[were] less important than the unarguably temporal process of any reading,” those theorists insisted on “the pure seriality” of the reading act and on “the moment-to-moment affects and processes” occurring during that act (48, 13, 12, original emphasis). In this last respect, Dames explains, theorists such as G.H. Lewes and Alexander Bain also had a larger goal in mind: namely, to demonstrate that the “periodic process” of reading was matched by the periodic process of consciousness itself (50). Lewes, for instance, started from a “wave theory” of consciousness, which relied on a notion of consciousness as “trapped in time, as a creature of passing units of sensation,” and ultimately concluded that the novel, as a result of its dependence on seriality, was the “technology” best suited to the “unidirectional and sequential” workings of the mind (52). For his part, Bain argued that both
consciousness in general and “aesthetic reception” in particular were characterized by periodicity, and he therefore concentrated on novels’ and novel-readers’ alternations between moments of intensity and relaxation. According to Bain, readers, though caught up “in a state of thrilling expectation” during the major “struggles” of a text, also benefited from novels’ “inner plots and minor catastrophes,” since those small-scale affairs “serve[d] to discharge at intervals the pent-up currents, and vary the direction of the [reader’s] outlook” (Bain as qtd. in Dames 54).

In the chapters following his discussion of theorists such as Lewes and Bain, Dames illustrates the ways in which nineteenth-century novelists, while not necessarily physiologists themselves, relied on the arguments of physiological novel theory to achieve certain effects on their reading public. While the obsolescence of that theory toward the end of the nineteenth century makes it unlikely that twentieth-century authors were familiar with its precepts, I would argue that post-war satirists nevertheless adopted a program similar to that of the physiological novel theorists insofar as they attempted to compel certain readerly responses through literary form. What’s more, the durational satirists seem to have anticipated the non-physiological reception theory of the 1960s and 1970s in their belief that their texts could alter readers’ perceptions of the world outside their novels. Writing in 1969, for instance, Hans Robert Jauss, though not speaking of satirists such as Ford, Lewis, and Waugh, seems to echo those authors’ assumptions about reading when he writes that “[t]he experience of reading can liberate one from adaptations, prejudices, and predicaments of a lived praxis”: “The horizon of expectations of literature distinguishes itself before the horizon of expectations of historical lived praxis in that it not only preserves actual experiences, but also anticipates unrealized possibility, broadens the limited space of social behavior for new desires, claims, and goals, and thereby opens paths of future experience” (41). Similarly, in From Text to Action, Paul Ricoeur echoes the durational satirists’ program when he suggests that “[f]iction has the power to ‘remake’ reality and, within the framework of narrative fiction in particular, to remake real praxis to the extent that the text intentionally aims at a horizon of a new reality that we may call a world” (10). According to
Ricoeur, “It is this world of the text that intervenes in the world of action in order to give a new configuration or, as we might say, in order to transfigure it.”

Like the theorists of the twentieth century, then, the durational satirists envisioned their texts “interven[ing] in the world of action,” and like the nineteenth-century physiological theorists, they associated a particular genre— in this case, satire— with certain receptive practices. More specifically, understanding satire as a critical activity dependent on attentiveness to historical particulars, they created long works that, in the very process of being read, might encourage readers to develop a vigilant and critical attitude toward contemporary society and politics. Meanwhile, on the level of plot, they foregrounded the temporal experience of soldiers engaged in combat and thus strove to supplement the seriality of the reading act with storylines that directly linked wartime survival to the perception of seriality—that is, to the perception of successive and quantifiable moments of clock-time. Yet in striving to align the reading experience with the experience of the wars’ duration, the durational satirists also felt the need to rely on a hallmark of the genre that I have not previously mentioned: its humor. As scholars of satire have long noted, the genre succeeds in maintaining an audience only when its commitment to attack or critique is counterbalanced by the incorporation of humor or wit. Because a humorless critique opens its author up to charges of didacticism or excessive vitriol, the prominence of wit in satire serves not only to defuse a reader’s possible objections but also to keep that reader reading. In the case of post-war satires, this defusing power of humor—or, in the language of the physiological novel theorists, this potential for “discharging” tension—becomes all the more important: aiming to cultivate their readers’ temporal attentiveness through long works about attending to time, the durational satirists nevertheless recognized that they could encourage critical hypervigilance only if readers remained interested enough in a work to finish it. Irruptions of humor within durational satires were thus necessary to break up the demanding and, at times, exhausting experience of reading as an exercise in duration.

25 For varying accounts of the role of humor and/or wit in satire, see Frye, Knox, Lewis, Nilsen, and Aden.
By characterizing the reading of post-war satires as an exercise in duration, I mean fundamentally to separate it from notions of reading as an experience of Bergsonian *durée*. Especially with the rise of technologies that have seemed to curtail the individual’s attention span, literary critics, among others, have championed reading, especially the reading of novels, as an ethical activity, one that, by demanding patience and attention from the reader, somehow breeds tolerance. In *The Gutenberg Elegies* (1994), for instance, Sven Birkerts bemoans the “influx of electronic communications” that have resulted in the “displacement of the page by the screen” and argues that “the experience of literature”—especially the experience acquired through “the old act of slowly reading a serious book”—“offers a kind of wisdom that cannot be discovered elsewhere” (3, 6). Although Birkerts initially seems to resemble the durational satirists by claiming that “read[ing] perseveringly” allows us to “hold in our hands a way to cut against the momentum of the times,” it soon becomes clear that his idea of reading depends on a denial of any time that is not related to Bergsonian *durée* (76). In a chapter entitled “The Death of Literature,” for example, he writes that “[t]he time of the self is deep time, duration time, time that is essentially characterized by our obliviousness to it,” and in his final chapter, he first laments that “the slow conventions of narrative will be overwhelmed by simultaneity” and then argues that technological advances have resulted in the destruction of Bergsonian *durée* (193, 214): 26

To put it another way, being on-line and having the subjective experience of depth, of existential coherence, are mutually exclusive situations...Electricity and inwardness are fundamentally discordant. Electricity—and the whole circulatory network predicated upon it—is about immediacy; it is in the nature of the current to surmount impedances. Electricity is, implicitly, of the moment—*now*. Depth, meaning, and the narrative structurings of subjectivity—these are *not* now; they flourish only in that order of time Henri Bergson called ‘duration.’ Duration is deep time, time experienced without the awareness of time passing. Until quite recently, people on the planet lived mainly in terms of duration time. Time not artificially broken,

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26 As was the case with Muldoon, Birkerts translates “*durée*” as “duration” throughout his book.
but shaped around natural rhythmic cycles; time bound to the
integrated function of the senses, the perceptions.
We have destroyed that duration...We have fractured the
flow of time, layered it into competing simultaneities... (219)

Although one could (and should) take issue with the claim that “people on the planet”
lived in terms of Bergsonian durée until the 1980s or 1990s, the more important point to make
is that Birkerts misrepresents Bergson’s own characterization of the act of reading. As early as
Time and Free Will (1889), Bergson was insisting not only that durée was mistakenly thought of
in terms of space but also that sociality, including the social practice of speech, necessitated just
that spatial misrepresentation. Describing, for instance, the “two aspects of conscious life”—that
is, a “self with well-defined states” and a deeper “self in which succeeding each other means
melting into one another and forming an organic whole”—Bergson explains that “we are
generally content with the first [self], i.e., with the shadow of the self projected into homogenous
space,” since that self “is much better adapted to the requirements of social life in general and
language in particular” (128, last emphasis added). While he maintains that one can succeed in
“recover[ing]” the deeper, or more “fundamental,” self, Bergson also insists that one can never do
so through language, because “language cannot get hold of [that self] without arresting its
mobility”: “We instinctively tend to solidify our impressions in order to express them in language.
Hence we confuse the feeling itself, which is in a perpetual state of becoming, with its permanent
external object, and especially with the word which expresses this object” (129).

If Bergson’s characterization of language as a sort of stun-gun directed at durée did not
sufficiently undermine Birkerts’s claims about the act of reading, his discussion of novel-reading

27 In Time and Free Will, Bergson explicitly argues that no one can or has ever wholly lived the time of durée. Indeed,
this is why he repeatedly encourages reflection or introspection as a process by which one can “get back into” or
“recover” durée: “Hence there are finally two different selves, one of which is, as it were, the external projection of the
other, its spatial and, so to speak, social representation. We reach the former by deep introspection...But the moments
at which we thus grasp ourselves are rare, and that is just why we are rarely free. The greater part of the time we live
outside ourselves, hardly perceiving anything of ourselves but our own ghost, a colourless shadow which pure duration
[i.e., durée] projects into homogenous space. Hence our life unfolds in space rather than in time; we live for the
external world rather than for ourselves; we speak rather than think; we ‘are acted’ rather than act ourselves. To act
freely is to recover possession of oneself, and to get back into pure duration” (231-2).
in *Time and Free Will* would finish the job. Beginning this discussion by describing how the description and analysis of feelings leads to the replacement of those feelings with “a juxtaposition of lifeless states which can be translated into words,” Bergson goes on to demonstrate how fiction, though seeming at times to give us access to *durée*, does no such thing:

> Now, if some bold novelist, tearing aside the cleverly woven curtain of our conventional ego, shows us under this appearance of logic a fundamental absurdity, under this juxtaposition of simple states an infinite permeation of a thousand different impressions which have already ceased to exist the instant they are named, we commend him for having known us better than we knew ourselves. *This is not the case, however, and the very fact that he spreads out our feeling in a homogeneous time, and expresses its elements by words, shows that he in his turn is only offering us its shadow*; but he has arranged this shadow in such a way as to make us suspect the extraordinary and illogical nature of the object which projects it; he has made us reflect by giving outward expression to something of that contradiction, that interpretation, which is the very essence of the elements expressed. Encouraged by him, we have put aside for an instant the veil which we interposed between our consciousness and ourselves. He has brought us back into our own presence. (134, emphasis added)

Although the second half of this paragraph might initially seem to support Birkerts’s contention that reading returns us to the time of *durée*, closer examination of the passage demonstrates that reading, if it does anything, only leads us to consider *durée* as somehow different from our normal perception of the world. Far from granting us access to *durée*, in other words, the “bold novelist” offers us just another “shadow” of it, a “shadow” as insufficient as the “shadow of the self [that we project] into homogenous space.” Indeed, properly considered, the “bold novelist”’s achievement in “put[ting] aside for an instant the veil” is simply to have presented us with a more defined shadow than our day-to-day one and thus to have caused us to doubt the validity of all shadows, including those created through every instance of writing or speech. On Bergson’s account, then, reading may at times push us to “reflect” on the possibility of penetrating our shadowy representations and accessing *durée* directly, but the actual texts we
read, inasmuch as they themselves are shadowy representations, always also serve as monuments to the incommensurability of *durée* and (read) language.

At this point, it may seem as if I have moved far afield from my discussion of the durational satirists’ conception of the act of reading. In taking a detour through Birkerts and Bergson, however, I have been preparing the ground for a more radical claim: namely, that Bergson and the durational satirists actually agree on the fundamental nature of the reading process. Bergson, as we have seen, insists that language, including written language, approaches *durée* only to freeze its movement; in consequence, both the written text and the spoken word offer us nothing more than a further spatialization of *durée*, a spatialization that resembles in kind our attempts to measure *durée* in the incrementalized units of the clock. While none of the durational satirists calls attention to Bergson’s characterization of reading, their satiric project nevertheless stems from a shared presupposition about what reading does or can do. Finding fault with Bergson’s privileging of *durée* at the expense of socially agreed-upon notions of time, the durational satirists embed a bid for clock-time in their works, works that quite literally take up space and a good deal of it in talking about time. What’s more, choosing the form of the novel and, in some cases, choosing to write multiple novels on the same theme, the post-war satirists play upon the seriality, not the simultaneity, of the act of reading. Finally, to heighten the temporal character of the reading process even further, these authors choose the genre of satire, which, as noted previously, depends at its core on referentiality and dateability. By “dateability,” I mean not only to reemphasize that the force of satiric attacks tends to disappear for readers who come to satires long after their publication dates; I also mean to stress that the concept of “dating” itself derives from social norms relating to the division of time into the spatialized representations of the calendar (years, months, days) and the spatialized representations of the clock (hours, minutes, seconds). By inscribing the date at which their texts were written so thoroughly into their novels, the durational satirists emphasize the larger social process by which time, whether in the form of the calendar or the clock, has become writeable.
If Bergson considered the writeability of time to be both a necessary condition of sociality and a blow to the integrity of durée, the durational satirists countered his position by suggesting that the notion of durée undermined individual integrity at the same time that it challenged the temporal agreement according to which society traditionally functioned. Yet, as noted previously, such satirists opposed Bergsonian philosophy not simply because they found it unattractive but also because they viewed it as socially and politically irresponsible in the aftermath of the World Wars. Recognizing that those wars, their origins, and their consequences had been generally ignored or forgotten, the durational satirists sensed that future wars would be unavoidable unless society began to attend once more to cause and effect. Moreover, since the deeper “self” privileged by Bergson supposedly operated independently of cause and effect, the durational satirists believed that the memory of the wars and their after-effects could be resuscitated only by subordinating that deeper self to what Bergson referred to as the “habitual” self—that is, the self that not only spatialized time by relying on measurable units but that did so in accordance with traditional standards of temporal measurement. To this end, authors such as Ford, Lewis, and Waugh focused on how their texts would be received by readers, readers who needed to be led in the direction of an ethical politics.

My use of the word “ethical” in the last sentence may appear odd, especially since I have already suggested that the durational satirists placed more weight on the critical rather than the corrective function characteristic of satire as a genre. I should stress here, however, that the genre’s corrective prerogative does survive in post-war satires, although it does so in a drastically limited fashion. More specifically, I want to argue that the durational satirists, while failing to provide concrete solutions to social and political problems, do wish to intervene in contemporary situations by offering something like a corrective vision. Understanding that no program of reform is likely to be adopted immediately or carried out with success, they set themselves the task of redirecting readers’ vision toward the clock and away from durée, and they do so with the aim of preparing those readers for a future time when more radical political change might be
possible. In attempting to redirect the reader’s eyes toward the clock, of course, the post-war satirists first have to direct his or her eyes toward the page, and in consequence, they conceive of the page itself as a transitional vehicle that develops the reader’s potential for future political engagement. Indeed, the satiric text might better be conceived as a membrane through which the reader passes and from which he or she gains ethical sustenance before reentering the world.

The remainder of this dissertation will be divided into four chapters, two of which consider the durational satires that appeared in the wake of World War I and two of which consider the durational satires that emerged in the aftermath of World War II. Chapter 1 concerns the novels of Ford Madox Ford. Beginning with an analysis of Ford’s *The Good Soldier* (1915), which the author wrote before enlisting in the army, I suggest that this novel demonstrates Ford’s early satirical inclinations by corresponding to what Northrop Frye has called “second-phase” satire. Arguing that the novel is regularly overlooked as a satire because of its reliance on an impressionist and supposedly subjectivist aesthetics, I contend that Ford actually uses his impressionist techniques to call attention to his satirical targets: namely, his characters’ reliance on social and religious stereotypes and their unawareness of and isolation within the political present. In contending that *The Good Soldier* is an example of Ford’s pre-combat experimentation with satire, I lay the groundwork for my subsequent argument that the author’s experience of World War I caused him to revisit the satiric genre in the aftermath of the war but to do so to durational ends. In the second part of the chapter, I thus turn to the *Parade’s End* tetralogy in order to consider how Ford’s pre-combat alignment of isolation and impressionism becomes a central thematic and technical concern. In particular, I examine the way in which *Parade’s End* meticulously charts its protagonist’s experience of the duration of war by increasingly relying on impressionist narrative techniques, including interior monologue. This shift toward interior monologue, I argue, allows Ford to depict the ways in which World War I stifled social and political criticism and even, in a certain sense, drove individuals further into the
recesses of their minds. In addition, I suggest that Ford uses interior monologue to underscore the mood of anxiety created by the war, a mood that, on the author’s account, had become so rampant in the post-war period that individuals no longer saw the possibility of meaningful social or political action. This constant and seemingly irreversible anxiety, I argue, becomes most pronounced in the final volume of the tetralogy, *The Last Post*, a novel in which Ford’s characters have so internalized the dynamics of World War I that they end up waging silent and unproductive battles against both friends and enemies. By drawing attention to his characters’ war-torn consciousnesses in this fashion, Ford, I contend, demonstrates that Bergsonesque explorations of the conscious mind’s workings do not provide a meaningful alternative to pre-war traditions and social norms but rather point up the impoverishment of post-war existence.

In the chapter following my examination of *The Good Soldier* and *Parade’s End*, I concentrate on Wyndham Lewis’s post-war durational satire, *The Apes of God* (1930). Before examining that gargantuan novel, however, I offer readings of three post-war memoirs, including Lewis’s *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937), Robert Graves’s *Good-bye to All That* (1929), and Geoffrey Keynes’s *The Gates of Memory* (1981). My aim in considering these memoirs is twofold: on the one hand, I wish to underscore how they trouble standard conceptions of autobiography by combining conventions of the memoir with conventions of satire; on the other hand, I wish to examine their characterizations of the Great War’s effects on the poetry and prose of combatant and non-combatant authors. In fulfilling this last aim, I draw attention to the ways in which all three memoirists establish a clear dividing line between war poets such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen and authors who saw little or no combat, including Rupert Brooke, Clive Bell, and Lytton Strachey. My discussion of this feature of the three memoirs prepares the way for the subsequent section of the chapter, in which I consider Lewis’s diagnosis of the ills of the post-war period in *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926) and *Time and Western Man* (1927). Examining the social and political obstacles that Lewis saw standing in the way of the production of meaningful art, I demonstrate that the author incorporated many of his polemics from *The Art
of Being Ruled and Time and Western Man into The Apes of God, his satirical portrait of the post-war art world. Yet Lewis repeats his previous arguments in The Apes of God only to call into question their effectiveness. Sensing that the positions he had advanced in the mid-1920s had done little to alter the complexion of England’s artistic and political scenes, Lewis uses The Apes of God, I contend, to satirize not only literary cliques such as the Bloomsbury Group and the Sitwells but also his own earlier optimism about effecting social change. To validate this last claim, I conclude the chapter by examining Rude Assignment (1950), Lewis’s second autobiographical endeavor, which picks up where Blasting and Bombardiering leaves off and shows the author reevaluating his political beliefs after not one but two world wars.

In my third chapter, I turn to the mid- and post-World-War-II novels of Evelyn Waugh. Emphasizing that Waugh was familiar not only with Lewis’s conception of satire but also with his anti-Bergsonian diatribes, I read Put Out More Flags (1942) as a novel that points up the insufficiency of Decadent, Leftist, and Bergsonesque approaches to literature, none of which, on Waugh’s account, is capable of adequately representing the nature of existence after the outbreak of World War II. Moving from Put Out More Flags to Waugh’s post-war trilogy, Sword of Honour, I contend that the volumes that make up that work (Men at Arms (1952), Officers and Gentlemen (1955), and The End of the Battle (1961)) embrace the conventions of durational satire by addressing the lunacy of the war and by contrasting the soldier’s minute-to-minute uncertainty and fear with politicians’ dilatory response to military unpreparedness and wasted lives. In particular, I read Officers and Gentlemen’s extensive account of the Crete evacuation as evidence of Waugh’s understanding that an awareness of time and an accurate measurement of its passing not only increase the chances of physical survival but also provide the foundation for meaningful action and spiritual growth. To support this last point, I concentrate on The End of the Battle’s characterization of religious vocation, which, I argue, shows Waugh establishing a link between temporal attention and spiritual salvation. Despite this connection, however, Waugh’s bleak epilogue to The End of the Battle ultimately undercuts that novel’s earlier spiritual optimism. As
I suggest, much like his predecessors in the aftermath of the Great War, Waugh saw in the post-World War II period little to reassure him that his novels had done anything to encourage the kind of political or economic security for the English nation that he so desired. In consequence, the Sword of Honour trilogy hints at its own ineffectiveness even as it offers a scathing critique of the English nation’s conduct during and after World War II.

Finally, in the last chapter of this dissertation, I shift focus from English durational satires to American ones. Suggesting that the United States’ limited participation in World War I accounts for the lack of American durational satires during the 1920s and 1930s, I contend that such satires did appear in the aftermath of World War II, a conflict that, for Americans, resembled in duration and devastation England’s experience of World War I. To make this point, I concentrate on the novels of three authors who fought the war on separate fronts: Norman Mailer in the Pacific, Joseph Heller in Italy, and Kurt Vonnegut in Germany. Beginning with Mailer’s The Naked and the Dead (1948), I suggest that that novel, while arguably the most influential to come out of World War II, differs from Heller’s and Vonnegut’s later works by relying on Spenglerian and Bergsonian notions of time, notions that Mailer later made central to his theorization of hipster existentialism. Precisely because Heller and Vonnegut reacted against the realism and romanticism of The Naked and the Dead when they began writing their own novels, I argue that Catch-22 (1961) and Slaughterhouse-Five (1969) should not be viewed through the lens of Mailer’s 1950s existentialism and 1960s politics but should rather be considered as durational satires akin to the anti-Bergsonian works of an earlier generation of English satirists. Turning to the novels themselves, I draw particular attention to Heller’s insistence that his characters put themselves at physical and psychological risk by attempting to stop time or ignore its passing, and I consider Vonnegut’s similar message that individuals who strive to thwart temporal linearity and cause and effect not only endanger their mental well-being but also deny the validity of personal and collective memory. Emphasizing both authors’ encouragement of temporal attention, I strive to counter the tendency to read Catch-22 and
Slaughterhouse-Five as celebrations of the imagination in the face of war trauma. Rather than indiscriminately endorsing the imagination, Vonnegut and Heller, I argue, repeatedly suggest in their novels that that faculty can be dangerous when used to circumvent time and responsibility to the self and others.
CHAPTER ONE

Impressionist Impoverishment: The Pre- and Post-War Satires of Ford Madox Ford

In the Dedicatory Letter to Stella Bowen, which he added to the front of The Good Soldier (1915) in 1927, Ford Madox Ford remarks that, upon beginning to write the novel on his fortieth birthday, he “fully intended it to be [his] last book” (xx). Although he goes on to explain that his motive was to “stand aside in favour of...Ezra [Pound], [T.S.] Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, H.D. and all the rest of the clamorous young writers who were then knocking at the door,” this account contradicts his subsequent statements about the relationship between this novel and World War I. As Arthur Mizener notes in his biography of the author, “In later years [Ford] often said that everyone expected to be killed in the war and that he had given his all in The Good Soldier because he believed it would be the last book he would live to write” (380).

Despite the fact that Ford had already completed the manuscript of the novel long before he decided to enlist, his remarks about the war’s bearing on The Good Soldier should not be rejected out of hand, especially since he seems to have foreseen the enormous consequences of the Great War prior to England’s entrance into the conflict.1 Within the novel itself, which he finished writing soon after the outbreak of hostilities, Ford chose to foreground the date of August 4—the date, that is, when the British did declare war on Germany in 1914—and he also opted to have the protagonist of the novel, Edward Ashburnham, insist in late December 1913 or early January 1914 on “the necessity of getting the number of the Hampshire territorials up...to two thousand three hundred and fifty” (276). Indeed, one of the greater ironies of The Good Soldier is that the only character who sees conflict on the horizon is the one who, despite being the good soldier of the novel’s title, commits suicide before World War I breaks out.

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1 Speaking to Mary Turner and Wyndham Lewis at the beginning of August 1914, Ford reportedly responded to their claims that England’s Liberal government would never enter the war by saying, “It is because it is a Liberal Government that it will declare war” (Lewis 59).
Ford’s suspicion in the summer of 1914 that the upcoming war would take a disastrous toll on England was more than confirmed after his enlistment the following year. Receiving his commission in July 1915, he arrived in France in July 1916 and was attached to the 9th Welch Battalion, which fought at the battle of the Somme in that same year. Although he “did not go into the line then or at any time” and although “he was [n]ever wounded or gassed,” Ford was, as Mizener explains, “under constant fire with the first line transport of the battalion” and had, by the end of his ten days on the Somme and as a result of a concussion, temporarily lost his memory (285). From that point on, he remained either in hospital or in office jobs farther removed from the front line until he was finally gazetted out of the army on January 1, 1919. On his own admission, however, he “sometimes doubt[ed] [his]...sanity” and was unable to get “over the nerve tangle of the war” until 1923 (Ford as qtd. in Mizener 291, 286). The lasting effects of the war on Ford were also attested to by H.G. Wells, a friend who suffered at Ford’s pen in Thus to Revisit (1921) following the cessation of hostilities. Writing to Douglas Goldring in 1945, Wells noted that Ford had suffered “a bad case of shell-shock from which he never recovered”: “The pre-war F.M.H. was tortuous but understandable, the post-war F.M.H. was incurably crazy. He got crazier and crazier” (Wells as qtd. in Mizener 292-3, original emphasis).

Wells’s remarks aside, Ford’s sense that World War I had proven a watershed event in English history seems to have compelled him to revisit some of his earlier characters in his post-war tetralogy Parade’s End (1924-28). As Robert Green observes, “The stock character of Ford’s fiction between 1910 and 1915 [was] the honourable man beset by rogues; the saint suffers before he is saved through love”; moreover, “[t]he suicides and sadism of.[pre-war] novels [like A Call and The Good Soldier]” demonstrated that Ford’s pre-war characters were “frightened, frustrated people, unable to understand their own circle or the [social] changes around them” (54, 58). Although Green limits these remarks to Ford’s Georgian fiction, what should be stressed is that Christopher Tietjens, the protagonist of Parade’s End, is built along the same lines as Ford’s earlier characters. Like Ford’s Georgian heroes, including The Good Soldier’s Edward
Ashburnham, Christopher, “the last surviving Tory,” believes that honor and decency are being threatened by “a crowd of boodlers,” and like those heroes, as well, Christopher ponders both sainthood and suicide before deciding that his love for a young woman, Valentine Wannop, might redeem his life in the wake of World War I (PE 598, 236). If the similarities between Ford’s pre- and post-war protagonists are pronounced, however, the novels in which those protagonists figure also illustrate the ways in which the Great War foreclosed certain possibilities of action. Whereas the feudal, sentimental Edward is, in 1913, set down in an English countryside slowly going to ruin and to the Americans, the feudal and sentimental Christopher is, in 1912, set down in that same countryside only quickly to be removed to the front lines of World War I—a global conflict that, at least from Ford’s perspective, resulted in the extinction of English country life. What’s more, where Edward is said to kill himself in late 1913 or early 1914 because he saw “nothing left…but a dreary, dreary succession of days in which he could be of no public service,” Christopher contemplates suicide at the front lines in 1917 only to recognize that, with feudalism and decorum dead, there is no longer any shame in being “reprehensible”: “For God’s sake let us be reprehensible! And have done with it!” (TGS 214; PE 636).

If the end of the war and the beginning of the post-war period encouraged Ford to resuscitate old characters in new guise, such resuscitations were only part of his larger attempt to reevaluate the techniques upon which his pre-war fictions had relied. Prior to the war, Ford had pioneered and then championed what came to be known as literary impressionism, a form of writing that, on the author’s account, “exists to render those queer effects of real life that are like so many views seen through bright glass” (CW 41). According to Ford, literary impressionism aimed to create “an illusion of reality,” an illusion that could succeed only when “a sort of rounded, annotated record of a set of circumstances” was avoided in favor of capturing “the impression of the moment” (43, 41). Within The Good Soldier, Ford had tried to approach his impressionist ideal by creating John Dowell, who, as the narrator of that first-person novel, struggles in retrospect to piece together the story of his decade-long interaction with Edward and
Leonora Ashburnham. Yet in making Dowell the mouthpiece of his chronologically jumbled narrative, Ford also created a dilemma for critics who have since approached his work. For while most critics agree that the structure of *The Good Soldier* forces the reader to learn things as Dowell does and, with him, to reevaluate certain perceptions and impressions as the novel proceeds, no critical agreement exists on how Dowell himself should be understood. Indeed, because critics have different understandings of Dowell, they ultimately arrive at different generic classifications for the novel as a whole. Responding to Mark Schorer’s 1951 claim that Dowell is a “simple, infatuated character” and that *The Good Soldier* is “a comedy of humor,” for instance, John A. Meixner argues that the novel “is, at its core, a tragedy,” since it is related by a “severely neurotic” narrator who has a consciousness…peculiarly receptive to the ache in the universe” (xv, 318, 320, 321). Similarly opposed to Schorer, David Eggenschwiler contends that Dowell “is an exact and extensive interpreter of what has happened” and that the novel, though starting out as a “sexual farce,” ultimately “transform[s]” into a “romantic tragedy” (347).

Aside from noting the way these critical opinions move from an understanding of character to absolute statements about genre, we should also recognize that they overlook the possibility that tragedy and comedy can overlap. Indeed, because tragedy and comedy are not only genres but also modes that can coexist, *The Good Soldier* is perhaps best understood as a satire that accommodates both the tragic and comic by relying on irony to convey its criticism and achieve its humor. That critics have regularly overlooked the novel’s satirical character depends, at least in part, on the general consensus that literary impressionism is a subjectivist aesthetic, one that privileges individual perceptions at the expense of social and political awareness. Although critics such as Mark Wollaeger have attempted to demonstrate that Fordian impressionism should not be understood as a preference for subjectivity over objectivity or as a choice of feeling over fact, the dominant trend in criticism of Ford’s *oeuvre* is to insist on impressionism’s commitment

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2 Criticizing Michael Levenson’s account of Fordian impressionism along just these lines, Wollaeger rightly contends that an “emphasis on the impression as the final atomistic stage of ever more immediate renderings of the real fails to
to a sort of blindered subjectivity. In his influential *Genealogy of Modernism*, for instance, Michael Levenson argues that Ford’s characterization of impressionism, though beginning with an endorsement of “civic realism”—that is, a realism “in which the artist assumes, as it were, the responsibilities of citizenship in the modern world”—ultimately “collapses into an egoism which no longer attempts to establish shared norms of reality” (108, 115, original emphasis). Indeed, on Levenson’s account, Ford’s investment in the perceiving subject is so great that, carried to its logical extreme, impressionism results in the destabilization of subjectivity itself:

Nothing, of course, is plainer by now than Ford’s commitment to a subjectivist aesthetic: the insistence on personality as the chief thing in art, the relativism, the scepticism, the tendency toward solipsism, the assertion that art is an egoism. That is not only subjectivism; it is an extreme version of the position. Indeed it is precisely the extremism that accounts for the confusion. Ford is so intent on limiting art to immediacy that the attitudes and sentiments of the artist are refined away; no trace of the artistic self remains; there is only what the self perceives. Nonetheless, as Ford continually insists, the work remains an individual and personal expression—simply in virtue of its constituting a distinct point of view, a single egoistic perspective. Ford’s Impressionism, then, is a subjectivity in which the subject has disappeared. (119)

To conceive of Ford’s impressionism as Levenson does in this passage is not only to cut the fictional subject off from the outside world but also, and more fundamentally, to cut that subject off from himself. What should be added, however, is that by subscribing to this characterization of Fordian impressionism, critics such as Levenson make it nearly impossible to consider Ford’s impressionist fictions as works of satire. A highly referential genre—one that, in Edward Rosenheim’s words, depends on “both the historically authentic and the historically particular”—satire cannot exist when both the real world and the subjects who inhabit it have “disappeared” (26). Little wonder, then, that *The Good Soldier*, which is seen as Ford’s...
impressionist novel *par excellence* and which is narrated by a character who is as unsure of himself as he is of others, is rarely classified as a satire.

The remainder of this chapter will be grounded upon the claim that *The Good Soldier* should be considered a satire. More specifically, I will be suggesting that that novel corresponds to Northrop Frye’s characterization of “second-phase” satire—that is, a satire that attempts to “[break] up the lumber of stereotypes” and the “fossilized beliefs...that impede the free movement of society” (233). As I will argue in the next section of this chapter, Ford’s satirical concern in *The Good Soldier* is to demonstrate how an over-reliance on stereotypes, especially religious ones, can have a disastrous effect on interpersonal relations and, when combined with political unawareness and historical ignorance, can result in a disturbing isolation from contemporary society. In underscoring that *The Good Soldier* is a second-phase satire, however, I will also be attempting to pave the way for my discussion of *Parade’s End* in the final section of this chapter. For what is striking about *Parade’s End* is that it seems to pick up where *The Good Soldier* leaves off only to enter uncharted satiric territory. To be more precise: Between the drafting of *The Good Soldier* and the final volume of *Parade’s End*, Ford seems to have realized that the kind of satire he had first written was no longer viable in the post-war world; for that reason, he began to reconceive the genre along the lines that, in my introduction, I called “durational.”

The shift that takes place in Ford’s satiric practice during and after the war is pronounced in several keys features of *Parade’s End*. First, where Ford seems to aim at a certain economy in *The Good Soldier*—that is, to produce “an enormous impression on his reader’s mind by the use of two or three words,” rather than a thousand—he apparently has no such concern in *Parade’s End*, which, coming in at 836 pages, begins to seem as endless as the war itself (CW 46). Second, where Ford implies throughout *The Good Soldier* that his characters could have avoided their disastrous fate by dismissing stereotypes and confronting social and political change, he offers no hint in *Parade’s End* that his major characters could have acted differently or better. Indeed, in
the case of Christopher Tietjens, it is precisely his honorable, if outdated, approach to the world at war that results in his isolation by the end of the tetralogy. Finally, where Ford uses impressionist techniques in The Good Soldier to underscore Dowell’s personal confusion in sorting out dates, times, and motivations, he returns to those same techniques in Parade’s End but does so to illustrate that the experience of war itself causes time to expand and contract in unpredictable ways and leads individuals—and often without their awareness—to retreat into the confines of their minds. Unlike Dowell, for instance, who chooses to isolate himself and to piece together his jumbled thoughts, Christopher, both during and after the war, is regularly silenced when he objects to political and military policies and procedures and is thereafter left to brood over his mental state and the state of his country.

Although I will discuss each of these features at greater length in the pages that follow, I wish to underscore here that even those critics who have noted Parade’s End increasing reliance on impressionist techniques ultimately arrive at the same troublesome conclusions that Levenson advances when discussing Ford’s pre-war impressionism. Observing, for instance, that “the overall movement of the tetralogy [is to place] less emphasis on omniscient narrative and more emphasis on dramatic, focused, and interior narrative,” James M. Heldman argues that by moving “away from the broad, detached, public view of the Victorian novel,” Parade’s End “takes us not only into the twentieth century but into the twentieth-century novel as well” (274). Yet, when Heldman turns to the final volume of the tetralogy, The Last Post, he does not consider that the experience of the Great War, which, on Ford’s view, stifled debate and spread anxiety, has compelled Ford’s characters to retreat inwards; instead, he argues that, in its insistence on “individual needs, individual responses, and individual values,” The Last Post ultimately suggests that “the only reality is the reality of individual consciousness” (283). Like Levenson, then, who argues that “[r]éalism and egoism...converge” in Ford’s impressionist aesthetic, Heldman contends that Parade’s End, a work published more than twenty years after Ford’s earliest essays
on literary impressionism, ultimately denies objective reality in favor of individual perceptions (116).

Implicit in Heldman’s account of Parade’s End and explicit in Levenson’s account of Fordian impressionism is the assumption that Ford not only approved of the reduction of reality to subjectivity but also owed Henri Bergson, among others, a debt for that position. Mentioning Ford’s endorsement of “an increasingly radical egoism,” for instance, Levenson claims that Ford “shared a fundamental outlook” with Walter Pater, Henri Bergson, Max Stirner, and Allen Upward, all of whom supposedly “offered a sceptical critique of traditional beliefs and institutions, and a renewal through retreat to the self” (132). That this is a questionable representation of Ford’s position becomes clear when we consider that not a single character in either The Good Soldier or Parade’s End actually manages to find any kind of “renewal” when he or she retreats inward.3 Even if we bracket the characters’ particular predicaments, however, Ford’s decision to have his novels’ use of interior monologue and achronology increase as World War I progresses suggests that he does not value subjectivity as a good in itself but rather wishes to expose modern war’s devastating effects on individual integrity. Far, then, from endorsing narrative techniques that might seem to prioritize the time of the mind (durée) at the expense of the socially agreed-upon time of the world, Ford implies that the ascendancy of durée in the post-war period and in post-war fiction is a sign of an impoverished existence. That he chose to make this point in Parade’s End by relying on interior monologue, achronology, and time shifts—all of

3 We might also add that Ford himself failed to feel renewed when, in the aftermath of the war and with an eye toward recuperating from his shell-shock, he retreated to the Sussex countryside only to discover that, with his memory deficient and his health poor, he was unfit for a life of raising pigs, cows, and chickens. According to Stella Bowen, who first met her future lover in the spring on 1918, Ford “revealed himself as a lonely and very tired person who wanted to dig potatoes and raise pigs and never write another book” (Bowen as qtd. in Mizener 299). By the winter of 1919-20, however, Ford’s plans about living peacefully in the English countryside had begun to backfire. As Mizener explains, “It soon became clear that Ford was conducting a very uneconomical operation [at his and Stella’s cottage in Sussex]—‘Two litters of pigs, thirty hens, twenty ducks, three goats and the old mare’ were eating them out of house and home. Ford ‘imagined that the possession of ten acres was a guarantee of monetary profit and talked grandly and reassuringly about [their] becoming self-supporting,’ but in fact they were operating at a loss. The worst of this for Stella was that she had to bear it alone; Ford’s vision of himself as the skillful Small Producer was so important to him that if he was forced to contemplate the truth ‘he would collapse into such a misery of despair that [their] entire lives became paralysed’” (314).
which are often seen as the literary manifestations of Bergson’s philosophy—does not undermine that point so much as illustrate it with a striking degree of exactitude. For by having his characters’ social, political, and personal woes increase in direct proportion to his narratives’ dependence on interior monologue, he establishes a sort of causal link between those woes and the narrative techniques used to describe them. Indeed, the element of futility in the tetralogy—a futility that increases as the volumes come to rely on interior monologue—illustrates not only, to borrow a phrase from R.D. Lid, that “Ford is no Bergsonian,” but also that his most complex post-war work is a durational satire (64).

**Fordian Confiteor: Reading *The Good Soldier* as “Second-Phase” Satire**

Toward the beginning of *The Good Soldier*, when the narrator, John Dowell, is describing his first meeting with Leonora Ashburnham, he remarks that while “[c]ertain women’s lines guide your eyes to their necks, their eyelashes, their lips, their breasts,” Leonora’s “[lines] seemed to conduct your gaze always to her wrist” (36). Although Dowell finds the shape of Leonora’s wrist attractive in its own right, especially when set off by “a black or dogskin glove,” he also suggests that the viewer’s eye is drawn to her wrist because of her choice of jewelry and that jewelry’s possible significance. As he explains, “[T]here was always [on Leonora’s wrist] a gold circlet with a little chain supporting a very small golden key to a dispatch box. Perhaps it was that [box] in which she locked up her heart and her feelings.”

This early suspicion that Leonora secrets away her emotions—that she wears not her heart but the key to its hiding place at the end of her sleeve—provides the basis for Dowell’s characterizations of her throughout the novel. Yet even more striking than Dowell’s repeated references to Leonora’s emotional detachment is his tendency to explain her “coldness” as a consequence of her religious upbringing (65). Observing throughout the novel that Catholics “always [have] reservations and queer spots of secrecy” and that they “think thoughts alien to ours and keep them to themselves,” Dowell hazards that Leonora and her co-religionists have
been driven to concealment and frigidity because of their traditional position in English society (143, 144). Moreover, he suggests that the similarities he perceives among the “strong, cold conscience...[of] English Catholics,” “the Nonconformist temperament,” and “the New England conscience” are the result of English Catholics’ experience of religious persecution: “The centuries that they have gone through—centuries of blind and malignant oppression, of ostracism from public employment, of being, as it were, a small beleaguered garrison in a hostile country, and therefore having to act with great formality—all these things have combined to perform that conjuring trick” (143, 144, 65).4

In his insistence that Leonora’s behavior is best explained by her religion, Dowell to some degree mirrors his creator, who, in addition to foregrounding Catholicism in The Good Soldier, chose to present that religion as a major source of conflict in the post-war Parade’s End. Ford himself came from a Catholic family and had a complex relationship to his faith. As Arthur Mizener notes in his biography of the author, throughout his life, Ford “remain[ed] nominally a Catholic and, when it suited the image of himself that for the moment dominated his mind, an active one” (20).

The kind of Catholicism that appealed most strongly to [Ford’s] imagination was the Albigensian variety...But Ford’s Catholicism was essentially a by-product of his social and political views rather than a religious attitude. When, just before the war, he worked out his Tory radical attitude with its devotion to feudal values or when he was imagining himself as a good south German during the time he was trying to divorce Elsie [his first wife], he would become enthusiastically Catholic, energetic in religious observations and full of scorn for ‘Prots.’...The rest of the time he was scarcely Catholic in either feeling or conduct. (20)

Ford employed Catholicism in his fiction much as he did in his personal life. Relying on strategies of misdirection familiar to the magician, Ford at first draws his reader’s attention to the prominence of Catholicism in his novels only to suggest that religious conflict is not the main

4 In making all these comparisons, Dowell, of course, forgets that Leonora is not an English Catholic by birth, but an Irish one.
cause of his characters’ woes but rather one of the more obvious symptoms of the political and social problems facing the individual and the nation-state at precise moments in time. Indeed, because Ford so skillfully performs a “conjuror’s trick” of his own in *The Good Soldier*—because he offers a critique of social and political unawareness precisely by creating a cast of characters who fixate on the Catholic religion to the exclusion of most other matters—the critical tendency has been to view that novel as proof of the author’s endorsement of a subjectivist impressionism and his unconcern with history and politics. Yet, if we reflect on the frequency with which Dowell, in particular, examines his myriad impressions only to find Catholicism at the root of every problem, we begin to understand that Ford was as invested in exploring the limitations of impressions—that is, in exploring what impressions obscure—as he was in considering how those impressions develop in the first place. Careful examination of the text reveals that Dowell’s regular characterizations of Catholicism as a *bête noire* cause him both to underestimate the strength of the social, economic, and political variables affecting the Asburnhams’ conduct and to reinforce the troublesome trend toward isolation depicted within the novel.

That Ford’s interest in *The Good Soldier* was to show the consequences of such isolation becomes apparent when we consider the novel’s recurrence to the date of August 4th. Although the book’s insistence on this date continues to fuel debate, critics less often note that the chronology of the novel ultimately ends with Dowell inhabiting Branshaw Manor and writing his “saddest story” during late 1915 or early 1916. At the very moment that Nancy Rufford is oscillating between exclamations on the nature of the Godhead and on badminton equipment, ...
other words, the second battle of Ypres, the battle of Festubert, and the battle of Loos are over, the spring offensive along the Somme is in preparation, and the battle of Verdun may be taking place in hearing distance of Branshaw Manor.\(^7\)

Though not speaking directly to *The Good Soldier*’s timeline or its final setting during the war years, R.D. Lid does take account of Ford’s use of the time-shift—that is, the impressionist technique upon which Dowell’s chronologically confused narrative depends. Noting that “Ford’s sense of time...is almost wholly an artistic rather than a philosophical concern,” Lid argues that Ford’s use of the time-shift is not designed to privilege subjectivity over objectivity but rather to suggest “the transience of man’s life” and “the structure of values man erects in his hope of warding off change” (64). Moreover, on Lid’s account, the structure of *The Good Soldier* is intended to illustrate “that life is a long series of connecting mirrors before which we move, from panel to panel, never able to see the image behind us and never seeing the image of the next frame. The exclusive present is all we have, and that is specious.” In drawing attention to Ford’s interest in representing Dowell’s mirror-like consciousness, however, Lid fails to recognize that Ford is highly critical of his narrator’s unwillingness to acknowledge both the historical past and the fullness of the political present, no matter how “specious” that present may be. While thus closer to the mark than many subsequent critics, who have associated Ford’s technical accomplishments with his supposed support of a particular philosophical position, Lid nevertheless resembles those critics in overlooking Ford’s active satirization of both the content and procedures of Dowell’s mind.

\(^{7}\) The second battle of Ypres took place from April 22, 1915 to May 25, 1915. The battle of Festubert took place from May 15 to May 27 of 1915, and the battle of Loos took place from September 24, 1915 to October 14, 1915. Combined, these battles resulted in nearly 175,000 Allied casualties. If Dowell is writing in early 1916, which seems probable, the battle of the Somme, which resulted in over half a million Allied casualties, is only a few months away (July 1, 1916 to November 18, 1916). Moreover, since Branshaw Teleragh is said to sit in Hampshire, it is probable that Dowell, like many inhabitants along the west cost of England, could hear the fighting on the French front across the Channel.
That Ford did intend his narrator to be one of the novel’s satirical targets becomes clear at various points in *The Good Soldier*, including at those moments when Dowell problematically returns to Catholicism as the cause of every conflict. Although I will say more in the pages that follow about Dowell’s troublesome dependence on Catholicism as an explanatory tool, I should emphasize here that Ford’s foregrounding of that dependence allows us not only to understand *The Good Soldier* as a satire but also to classify it as the particular kind of satire that Northrop Frye identified in 1951 as “second-phase” (203). According to Frye, second-phase satire demonstrates “the preference of practice to theory, experience to metaphysics” and sets “generalizations and theories and dogmas over against the life they are supposed to explain” (230). Moreover, second-phase satires show “literature assuming a special function of analysis, of breaking up the lumber of stereotypes, fossilized beliefs, superstitious terrors, crank theories, pedantic dogmatisms, oppressive fashions, and all other things that impede the free movement…of society” (233). Because Dowell’s narration depends almost entirely on his use of “fossilized beliefs” and “superstitious terrors” to explain the Ashburnhams’ history and because his reliance on Catholic stereotypes obscures his awareness of the changing state of pre-war English society, *The Good Soldier* corresponds to Frye’s characterization of second-phase satire and strives, as such satires do, “to bring [the reader] to the point at which [he or she] can escape from an incorrect procedure.” What’s more, Ford uses his impressionist techniques to underscore that Dowell’s over-reliance on stereotypes coincides with his and other characters’ ignorance of history and their refusal to confront social and political change, a refusal that results in those characters’ perilous isolation by the end of the novel.

In an attempt to show that Dowell’s dependence on stereotypes does coincide with his and other characters’ historical ignorance, Ford peppers *The Good Soldier* with historical allusions that go over Dowell’s (and Edward Ashburnham’s) head. Furthermore, Ford suggests that by failing to learn the lessons of history, his characters are ill-equipped to navigate the contemporary world, a world that ultimately becomes as blurry as the historical past. The
principal means by which Ford achieves this feat is through his careful imbrication of the personal histories of Edward Ashburnham, a modern English landlord, and Henry VIII, the sixteenth-century lord of the land. Ford’s familiarity with the biography of Henry VIII developed during the first decade of the twentieth century, when he set out to write The Fifth Queen trilogy (1906-8), which fictionalized the arrival, life, and death of Katherine Howard at Henry VIII’s court. In addition to mastering the more minor details of Henry VIII’s life during his research for the trilogy, Ford gained extensive knowledge of the monarch’s pivotal role in the English Reformation, a knowledge that he brought to bear on The Good Soldier. Within the first fifty pages of the novel, for instance, Ford regularly offsets Dowell’s misguided beliefs about Catholics with snippets of reported conversations about the Reformation, in general, and the English Reformation, in particular. Yet in having Dowell report these conversations, all of which take place between Leonora Ashburnham and Florence Dowell, Ford makes it clear that neither Dowell nor Edward Ashburnham understand exactly what they signify. The result is that Dowell’s narrative, though riddled with references to the English Reformation, never makes a direct connection between that event and Edward’s personal history. A sort of blind spot in full view, the Reformation thus works within the novel to illuminate its satirical bent: because none of the characters is able to supply the missing links between the story of the Reformation and Edward’s story, Ford’s references to the Reformation seem designed for the benefit of the more knowledgeable reader, who, understanding the references’ significance, might join the author in criticizing the characters’ behavior and conduct.

The task of piecing together the relationship between Dowell’s prejudice against Catholicism and his and Edward’s ignorance of the Reformation begins early in the novel during the famous “Protest” scene, which is set in Prussia in 1904. In that scene, Dowell’s wife, Florence, hints at her romantic control over Edward Ashburnham when, having pointed to a

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8 According to Ford, he “spent a great part of ten years grubbing up facts about Henry VIII,” “worry[ing] about [the monarch’s] parentage, his diseases, the size of his shoes, the price he gave for his kitchen implements, his relation to his wives, his knowledge of music, [and] his proficiency with the bow” (CW 38).
document by Martin Luther, she declares that Edward’s many virtues are attributable to Protestantism and that his religion fundamentally separates him from the Irish, the Italians, and the Poles, “but particularly the Irish” (48). Witnessing Florence’s interaction with Edward, as well as the “absolute panic” that appears on her husband’s face, Leonora Ashburnham rushes with Dowell from the room, tells him “that that’s the cause of the whole miserable affair; of the whole sorrow of the world...[a]nd of the eternal damnation of you and me and them,” and, without clarifying her referent, explains, or explains away, her outburst by informing Dowell that she herself is Irish Catholic (49, my emphasis). According to Dowell, who records Leonora’s speech eleven or twelve years after the fact, “[t]hose words gave [him] the greatest relief that [he] ever had in [his] life” (50). Yet when Dowell explains the reason for his relief some twenty pages later, it proves misplaced; for having mistakenly shelved the idea that Leonora is jealous of Florence and her relationship with Edward, Dowell assumes he can maintain his friendship with the Ashburnhams by “apologiz[ing] out of existence” Florence’s “mere silly gibes at the Irish and at the Catholics” (72).

In the moments following Dowell’s apology, the reader, of course, senses what Dowell does not: namely, that Catholicism, if an issue at all, is only tangentially related to Leonora’s knowledge of her husband’s latest infidelity. Indeed, as Dowell’s twenty-page summary of the Ashburnhams’ married life suggests, the indeterminate “that” in Leonora’s statement about “the cause of the whole miserable affair” might refer less to a particular creed than to the event that led to all denominations of Christianity: the temptation in the garden of Eden, the fall of man, and the advent of human sexuality. That this is a valid interpretation of Leonora’s earlier comment also becomes clear in her response to Dowell’s apology. As Dowell explains, he “fix[ed] up [Florence’s faux pas] in two minutes or so”; yet as he proffers that apology, he notes that Leonora “looked at [him] for a long time rather fixedly and queerly” (72). Contrary to what Dowell believes, Leonora does not stare at him in this scene because of his forgiving nature or his ability to perceive complexities beneath the veneer of social relationships; rather, Leonora stares at
Dowell precisely because she cannot fathom his ignorance. Thus when Dowell next urges
Leonora to “accept the situation” and to acknowledge his “fond[ness]” for her and her husband,
Leonora agrees to Dowell’s proposition but does so with the understanding that she alone knows
of Florence and Edward’s affair.

While Dowell’s naïveté about his wife and friend’s affair might seem incredible to the
reader, the twenty-page digression he makes while relaying his conversation with Leonora
heightens the absurdity of his conclusions first by drawing attention to Edward’s sexual history
and then by excusing it with Leonora’s Catholicism. In a two-page discussion of how Leonora
has mishandled Edward’s infidelities, Dowell argues that “Leonora’s English Catholic conscience,
her rigid principles, her coldness, even her very patience were…all wrong in this special case”
(65). Instead of Leonora’s Catholic “mismanagement” of Edward’s infidelities, Dowell suggests
that Edward would have been better served by becoming “a tramp of gentlemanly address, having,
maybe, chance love affairs upon the highways” or by “marr[y]ing a barmaid who would have
made him such frightful scenes in public places…that he would have been faithful to her for the
rest of his days” (65). That Dowell believes these two shocking scenarios would have
“redeem[ed]” Edward illustrates the profound distrust he, not Florence, has of Catholics. Indeed,
aside from mentioning that he “cannot, [him]self, help disliking this religion,” since “there is
always, at the bottom of [his] mind…the feeling of shuddering at the Scarlet Woman” that he first
felt in the Quaker meeting houses of Philadelphia, Dowell also notes his dislike of Catholicism at
the exact moment he apologizes for Florence’s prejudicial remarks about Irish Catholics. As he
tells Leonora, “‘Do accept the situation. I confess that I do not like your religion. But I like you
so intensely’” (64, 73).9

9 If Dowell’s Quaker background prohibits him from correctly assessing the role Catholicism plays in the decline of the
Ashburnhams’ marriage, Leonora and Edward also contribute to his confusion by attributing “the first real trouble” in
their marriage to a religious dispute. Remarking towards the middle of The Good Soldier that the pair remained happy
for the first “five or six years” of their union and that Leonora saw in her husband the equivalent of a “pastor and
guide,” Dowell goes on to explain that Edward eventually managed to alienate his wife first by being “much too
generous with his tenants” and then by offering “to honour [her]” by building a Roman Catholic chapel at Branshaw
(154, 155). Although Dowell reveals that Leonora declined the latter offer both because she viewed the chapel as
Although Dowell’s personal history seems to prevent him from understanding the nuances of the Catholic religion, Ford also suggests that Dowell, in relying on familiar if inaccurate stereotypes about Catholics, willfully ignores the social and economic concerns that influence Leonora’s actions. Despite noting, for instance, that the 1890s were “very bad for farming” in England, that “[w]heat was fetching only a few shillings the hundred,” and “that the price of meat was so low that cattle hardly paid for raising,” Dowell ultimately attributes Leonora’s practical decision to economize at Branshaw to her religious beliefs (157). As he explains, Leonora “was not a Catholic for nothing” and would have been more than prepared, regardless of a promise to the contrary, to “[s]p[y] upon [Edward’s] bank accounts in secret” (213, 214). Similarly, when he begins to provide the details of Edward's romantic liaisons, Dowell cites Leonora’s conduct and the religious motivations for it as the cause of her husband’s infidelities. Arguing that Edward's involvement in the Kilsyte affair was the result of his desire to show Leonora that he “was capable of economies,” since “[n]ursemaids do not travel first-class and, that day, Edward travelled in a third-class carriage,” Dowell goes on to explain that, in the wake of the Kilsyte affair, Edward was so awed by his wife’s gracefulness and graciousness that he subsequently found her “cold in other matters that were near his heart” and therefore sought “moral support at the hands of some [other] female” (163, 164, 172).

As these examples attest, the social and economic strains that cause Edward first to despair of his wife and then to search for comfort in the arms of other women can, as far as Dowell is concerned, all be traced back to Leonora’s religion. Yet if Dowell is mistaken in assuming that Catholicism is the cause of the Ashburnhams’ financial and romantic disputes, his tendency to find religion at the root of every problem stems as much from his experience of polite unnecessary and because her priests argued that its construction “would have merely seemed an invidious instance of ostentation,” he also underscores that, from Edward's point of view, Leonora's “refusal to receive that amount of public homage from him” was a sign that she was “wanting in imagination,” that she was “cold and hard” (156). Indeed, not just “truly grieved at his wife's want of sentiment” with regard to the chapel, Edward was also, on Dowell's account, offended by the priests themselves, who “did not make strenuous efforts to convert him”; “There was a period,” Dowell writes, “when [Edward] was quite ready to become an emotional Catholic. I don't know why they did not take him on the hop; but they have queer sorts of wisoms, those people, and queer sorts of tact.”
society as it does from his personal blindness. By this, I mean that Dowell has been exposed to a transcontinental form of propriety in which interlocutors rely on religious language and religious topics to hint at sexual deviance. Although Dowell remains unaware until after his wife’s death that people in polite social circles discuss matters of sex by invoking the more respectable topic of religion, this knowledge, had it come earlier, would no doubt have helped him navigate the situation in Prussia in 1904. For had he known that well-to-do people get around the dirty business of mentioning sex by citing religion, he might have perceived in Leonora’s religious outburst a sign of her dismay at Florence’s increasing sexual power over Edward.

Indeed, if Dowell had been aware of the conversational connection between sex and religion, he might also have learned something useful from Leonora and Florence’s discussion several hours before the former’s outburst at the castle in Marburg. As Dowell explains, just prior to the trip into Prussia, Florence had been employed in her regular project of "clearing up…the dark places of the earth, [of] leaving the world a little brighter than she had found it" (43). More specifically, she had been “engaged in educating” Edward about the Reformation, especially the English Reformation (42). Describing the ongoing battle of the intellects that had, for some time, been going on between Florence and Leonora, Dowell first mentions that “Florence [had] started to tell us how Ludwig the Courageous wanted to have three wives at once—in which he differed from Henry VIII, who wanted them one after the other,” and he then

10 Describing his early courtship of Florence, for instance, he implies that Florence’s family was adept at using religious expressions in their attempts to warn him about his soon-to-be wife’s promiscuity. As he explains, Florence’s aunts had early tried to dissuade him from marrying their niece not by divulging her sexual history but by “even, almost, [saying] that marriage was a sacrament” (90). Dowell also notes that Florence’s uncle attempted a similar maneuver when he “let drop…an odd Biblical phrase” from which the only thing to be “gathered [was] that all that family simply did not intend [Florence] to marry ever in her life” (91).

11 If Leonora had never spoken to Dowell about Florence, it is doubtful that Dowell would ever have understood that the Hurlbirds’ religious comments were designed to point to Florence’s promiscuity. That Dowell does not reflect on the double-register of his conversations with the Hurlbirds until after Florence’s death becomes clear later in the novel. Describing his conversation with Leonora just two hours after Florence has died, he notes that Leonora revealed at that time the fact of Florence and Edward’s affair, a revelation that caused Dowell to reflect that “things [had become] plainer, suddenly, to [his] curiosity”: “It was as if I thought, at that moment, of a windy November evening, that, when I came to think it over afterwards, a dozen unexplained things would fit themselves into place” (117). Among these “unexplained things” are certainly the Hurlbirds’ remarks, since only after his conversation with Leonora does Dowell begin to understand Florence’s earlier conduct, including her lies about her heart trouble, her relationship with Jimmy, her relationship with Edward, and her motivation for suicide.
explains that Leonora, in response to Florence’s speech, had “just nod[ded] her head in a way that quite pleasantly rattled my poor wife” (43). In addition, Dowell records that when subsequently asked by Florence why she had not bothered to share her knowledge of the English Reformation with her husband, Leonora had responded, “‘I have an idea that it might injure his hand—the hand, you know, used in connection with horses’ mouths.’

In making this last remark, Leonora relies on a traditional English proverb to imply that, if she were to share her knowledge of Henry VIII’s marital predilections with her husband, Edward might use that knowledge as license to follow in Henry's footsteps. Yet far from understanding that Leonora foresees verbal, if not physical, violence between them should he look the gift horse of history in the mouth, Edward is so clueless about his wife’s meaning that he soon thereafter inquires of Dowell whether “having too much in one’s head [c]ould really interfere with one’s quickness in polo” (43). Ignorant of the bite that his wife figuratively threatens to his hand, in other words, Edward concentrates on the way increased knowledge of history might affect his ability to control his horse’s bit.

The irony of Edward’s fear of losing control of his polo game at this point in the text lies, of course, in the fact that he has already essentially lost control of everything else, including his marriage, his finances, and the direction of his relationship with Florence. Yet Edward’s simultaneous concern about his polo game and unconcern about Leonora and Florence’s discussion of Henry VIII becomes additionally ironic when we consider the numerous similarities Ford establishes between Edward’s biography and Henry’s. Christening Edward as he does, for instance, Ford resurrects the son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour in the twentieth century and

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12 In reading Leonora’s remark, we might initially suspect she is combining two proverbs: namely, “Don’t look a gift horse in the mouth” and “Don’t bite the hand that feeds you.” This last proverb, however, does not make sense in the relevant scene, since Edward’s hand is the one facing possible injury. In other words, if Leonora is “feeding” Edward historical lessons that he might decide to emulate, her hand, not his, would be the injured one if any biting took place. Leonora is thus relying only on the first proverb mentioned above. More specifically, she is considering how the ungrateful recipient of a free horse might tactlessly examine that horse’s teeth to ensure that it is an acceptable specimen. In this sense, Leonora (the gift horse) might, on having her historical information (her teeth) examined too closely by her husband, be inclined to injure Edward (bite his examining hand) if he decides to act on that information.
makes him heir to a long tradition of social, political, and religious upheaval. Furthermore, naming Leonora Ashburnham as he does, Ford consciously echoes the regnal name of Leo X, the pope during the first third of Henry VIII’s reign and the one who bestowed on him the title “Defender of the Faith” in October 1521. Perhaps most important, however, is Ford’s decision to recreate Henry’s six wives in Edward’s wife and five lovers, a decision that is further underscored toward the end of the novel, when Dowell, claiming to “[follow] the lines of Edward Ashburnham,” echoes his friend’s earlier interest in polygamy and cites four of Edward’s love interests as his own ideal wives: “I suppose I should really like to be a polygamist,” Dowell writes. “[W]ith Nancy, and with Leonora, and with Maisie Maidan, and possibly even with Florence” (257).

Although Ford clearly wishes to underscore the absurdity of Dowell’s wish to marry Edward’s former lovers, he also uses the previous passage to suggest that Edward, despite sharing Henry VIII’s polygamist inclinations, problematically fails to imitate the monarch in nearly every other respect. More specifically, by highlighting the similarities between Edward’s and Henry’s romantic tendencies, Ford encourages his reader to recognize that Edward differs from Henry precisely where he should not: namely, in his inability to respond to social and political change.

For where Henry’s reign involved a remarkable consolidation of power and an attempt to regain a supposedly usurped imperial inheritance, Edward’s life involves the increasing disintegration of landlordly power and the ceding of religious and romantic influence. Indeed, Edward’s inability

13 Aside from having a sexual relationship with Florence, Edward also has sexual affairs with La Dolciqita and Mrs. Basil and has “affairs of the heart” with Maisie Maiden and Nancy Rufford. On page 58, Dowell informs the reader that neither he nor Leonora ever believed Maisie was Edward’s mistress, since her “[h]eart was really so bad that she would have succumbed to anything like an impassioned embrace.” Oddly enough, the Kilsyte affair seems the least improper of Edward’s relationships precisely because it is neither a sexual affair nor an “affair of the heart.” Indeed, on Dowell’s account, Edward’s intentions in the railway carriage had been entirely chaste: “The servant girl in the Kilsyte case had been pretty, but mournful of appearance. I think that, when [Edward] had kissed her, he had desired rather to comfort her” (62).

14 As Dowell explains when describing the conversations that took place between Leonora and Florence, “[Leonora’s] conversations with Florence would be like this. Florence would happen in on her, whilst she was doing her wonderful hair, with a proposition from Edward, who seems about that time to have conceived the naïve idea that he might become a polygamist. I dare say it was Florence who put it into his head” (211).
to control the proliferation of speech that accompanies the sexual and religious squabbles in his household serves as a marked point of contrast to Henry VIII’s eventual disregard for communications with Rome and his decision to concentrate secular and religious power in his own person.

As J.J. Scarisbrick points out in his biography of the monarch, Henry VIII’s Catholicism was “a formal, habitual thing, devoid of much interiority,” and his decision to break with Rome grew not only from his failure to obtain a divorce but also, and perhaps more important, from his conviction “that kingship conferred on him a position in the Christian community…which had been usurped by others” (249, 248). The Royal Supremacy was therefore designed to prove “that the king had a direct God-given cure of souls of his subjects; that he was overlord of the clergy of the national Church; [and] that he owed no obedience to the bishop of Rome” (287-8). According to Scarisbrick, however, Henry’s policies were “not simply a call to England to disown Rome’s jurisdiction but, in [their] largest terms, a promise of radical and necessary renewal of the whole commonwealth,” a renewal that ultimately encouraged “a new sense of nationhood” and posited “England’s autonomy on one foundation only, that of secular national history” (327, 339, 314).

To achieve these ends, Henry spent three years “rely[ing] on a succession of ad hoc missions” to Rome before finally and “openly bullying the Church in England and the Holy See”; simultaneously, he called on theologians and scholars across Europe to provide evidence in support of his divorce (206, 203, 164). More than just directly and indirectly encouraging a proliferation of tracts, books, and opinions both in favor of and against his cause, Henry also sent emissaries to the courts of other leading powers and received emissaries from those courts in an attempt to ensure that existing or potential military allies might speak on his behalf in Rome.

Although Henry’s strategies only delayed his split from the Roman Church, what should be stressed is his ability to increase his domestic power even while he was caught up in a whirlwind of text and speech on the international stage. The same, however, cannot be said to apply to the case of Edward Ashburnham, who not only fails to assert control over the course of
The Good Soldier but also crumbles in the face of social and political change and succumbs to the religious and romantic power-plays of the women in his life. Like the young Henry, who was “nourished on the cult of war and chivalry,” Edward remains enamored with feudalism throughout the novel and seeks through military service a *corps d’esprit* he finds lacking in his role as landowner and husband (Scaribrick 22). Yet unlike Henry, whose reign “was a concentrated display of the power and ubiquity of central authority the like of which had not been seen hitherto,” Edward falls victim to the almost diabolical diplomacy of the women in his life, three of whom use religion to cement their financial, social, or moral control over him (499).

In using the word “diplomacy” to describe the actions of Leonora, Florence, and, somewhat later, Nancy Rufford, I mean to draw attention to the increased talk that dominates the concluding years of Edward’s life. Moreover, I mean to emphasize that these women, as well as Dowell himself, act as emissaries to Edward, but emissaries whose traditional role has been relocated and redirected. Whereas emissaries during and after Henry VIII’s reign communicated the wishes of kings or emperors to persons of equal power or authority, the women in *The Good Soldier* recruit and dispatch emissaries to communicate their domestic wishes to the beleaguered Edward, who supposedly embodies the authority of his estate. The proliferation of such inverted emissarial communication in the novel signals both the breakdown of a social order and a flawed means of addressing that order’s decline. In addition, the contraction of English power on the world stage during the 1910s is mirrored in the novel’s suggestion that problematic communication becomes more frequent among its characters as a result of increasing American intervention. As Dowell remarks early in the novel, his nine years of friendship with the Ashburnhams “were characterized by an extraordinary want of any communicativeness on [their] part” and by the Dowells’ decision to “repl[y]” in kind by “leaving out quite as extraordinarily, nearly as completely, the personal note” (37). Yet as the reader soon discovers, the Dowells’ reticence is less a mutual decision by the couple than a misperception on the husband’s part. For Florence is above all else a talker: “I never could imagine,” Dowell writes, “how she [managed to
graduate from Vassar]—the queer, chattery person that she was. With the far-away look in her eyes...holding up one hand as if she wished to silence any objection—or any comment for the matter of that—she would talk” (15). Indeed, so inclined is Florence to talk that Dowell, hearing her tell Edward the history of Martin Luther in Prussia, records that, “until the astonishment came,” he was “pleased to think that Florence for the moment was indubitably out of mischief” (46, 48, 45).

If Florence’s tendency to “chatter” spurs on the communicative debacle that leads to Edward’s death, Dowell presents Edward himself as a man who both disdains talk and desires it above all else. As he notes toward the beginning of the novel, Edward’s face during their first meeting “had, in the wonderful English fashion, expressed nothing whatever. Nothing” (27-8). More than just silent in face, Edward is also silent of speech, and his general reticence causes Dowell to wonder how he manages to conduct his love affairs. Pondering, for instance, “[w]hat...[Edward] even talk[s] to [his lovers] about,” Dowell initially believes that, since “all good soldiers of [Edward’s] type” are sentimentalists, he must speak to his lovers in the words of his “profession,” must talk to them “of the big words—‘courage,’ ‘loyalty,’ ‘honor,’ ‘constancy’” (29). As Dowell gains new information from Edward about his romantic liaisons, however, he begins to alter his original hypothesis about Edward’s bedroom conversations. Acknowledging early in the novel that Edward did occasionally “discuss what he would have called ‘the graver things,’” Dowell later provides a characterization of desire far removed from his own experience and much more akin to Edward’s (30):

A turn of the eyebrow, a tone of the voice, a queer characteristic gesture—all these things...are like so many objects on the horizon of the landscape that tempt a man to walk beyond the horizon, to explore. He wants to get, as it were, behind those eyebrows with the peculiar turn, as if he desired to see the world with the eyes that they overshadow. He wants to hear that voice applying itself to every possible proposition, to every possible topic...I don’t mean to say that any great passion can exist without a desire for consummation...But the real fierceness of [a man’s] desire...is the craving for identity with the woman that he loves. He desires to see with the same eyes, to touch with the
same sense of touch, to hear with the same ears, to lose his identity, to be enveloped, to be supported…(127-8).

Not comical on first glance, this passage does acquire a humorous dimension when we consider that Dowell—who seems oddly asexual and who may, in fact, never have consummated his relationship with his own wife—is unlikely to have arrived at these thoughts himself. Much more likely is that Dowell, in what seems to be a moment of profound reflection, is simply parroting what Edward told him during one of their final conversations. This consideration becomes even more compelling when we note two other features of the text. First, the passage in question immediately follows Dowell’s first examination of Nancy and Edward’s feelings for each other, feelings that Dowell had to have learned from Edward. Second, in later sections of the novel, Dowell returns to the theme of the passage when, again relying on Edward’s testimony, he contends that Edward’s “desire for consummation” always occurs alongside his desire for communication. Noting that Edward’s “feudal theory…was entirely foreign to Leonora’s nature,” Dowell explains that in the early years of Edward’s infidelities, “he had not the least idea of seducing any one” but rather desired “to pass his days talking to one [lady] or [an]other,” any lady, in fact, “who [was] capable of agreeing with this handsome and fine fellow that the duties of a feudal gentleman were feudal” (160, 172). Even in his affair with La Dolciquita, the woman least likely to agree with his theories, this desire for talk is paramount; for in return for La Dolciquita’s “surrendered…virtue,” Edward “regarded it as…his duty to provide for her, and to cherish her and even to love her…[And] [i]n return, again, for his honourable love [he desired

\footnote{Describing his courtship of Florence, which took place in the summer of 1901, Dowell remarks that he never once kissed Florence, who had “simple wants,” and mentions that the thought of kissing her on a hot summer afternoon was “almost appalling” (87). When he marries Florence less than a month later and they depart for Europe, Florence feigns a heart condition and manages to have her doctors convince Dowell that sex is out of the question; [On board ship.] I got my directions how to behave to my wife. Most of them came from her, though it was the ship doctor who discreetly suggested to me that I had better refrain from manifestations of affection. I was ready enough [to obey]” (95).}
that] she would listen forever to the accounts of his estate” and agree that “salvation can only be found in true love and the feudal system” (175, 176).

While Leonora seems to accept if not condone her husband’s talk-driven adultery and remains silent in the face of it, this situation changes with the arrival of Florence. For his part, Dowell remains unaware not only of Florence’s affair with Edward but also of her willingness to discuss the details of it with Leonora. Yet when Leonora mentions this liaison after her husband’s death, Dowell comes to understand that his wife’s communicativeness behind closed doors has ultimately led to Leonora’s moral decline. Citing Leonora’s own conversations with him, Dowell remarks that she “had been drilled—in her tradition, in her upbringing—to keep her mouth shut” but that she had had trouble doing so during her husband’s infidelities: “[T]here were times, she said, when she was so near yielding to the temptation of speaking that afterwards she shuddered to think of those times. You must postulate that what she desired above all things was to keep a shut mouth to the world…If she spoke she would despise herself” (193). Thus when Florence arrives on the scene and effectively prohibits Leonora from “keep[ing] her mouth shut,” the latter can, according to Dowell, no longer respect herself:

And the longer I think about [these affairs] the more certain I become that Florence was a contaminating influence—she depressed and deteriorated poor Edward; she deteriorated, hopelessly, the miserable Leonora. There is no doubt that she caused Leonora’s character to deteriorate. If there was a fine point about Leonora it was that she was proud and that she was silent. But that pride and that silence broke when she made that extraordinary outburst, in the shadowy room that contained the Protest, and in the little terrace looking over the river. I don’t mean to say that she was doing a wrong thing….But, if she did the right thing, she was doing it in the wrong way. Perhaps she should have reflected longer; she should have spoken, if she wanted to speak, only after reflection. Or it would have been better if she had acted…She should have gone eavesdropping; she

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16 Edward’s next lover, Mrs. Basil, proves much more receptive to Edward’s ideas of romance. Encountering Mrs. Basil in Burma and sharing with her the details of Leonora’s management of the Ashburnham estate, Edward finds her so sympathetic that he begins an affair with her. On Dowell’s account, however, the sexual component of the five-year-long affair was secondary to the conversational component: “I figured it out that, for those five years, Edward wanted long passages of deep affection kept up in long, long talks and that every now and then [he and Mrs. Basil] ‘fell,’ which would give Edward an opportunity for remorse and an excuse to lend [Mrs. Basil’s husband] another fifty” (185).
should have watched outside bedroom doors. It is odious; but that is the way the job is done…No, she acted wrongly…

And yet, poor thing, is it for me to condemn her – and what did it matter in the end? If it had not been Florence, it would have been some other…Still, it might have been a better woman than my wife. For Florence was vulgar; Florence was a common flirt who would not, at the last, lacher prise; and Florence was an unstoppable talker. You could not stop her; nothing would stop her. Edward and Leonora were at least proud and reserved people. Pride and reserve are not the only things in life; perhaps they are not even the best things. But if they happen to be your particular virtues you will go all to pieces if you let them go. And Leonora let them go. She let them go before poor Edward did even… (202-3)

Aside from the humor involved in Dowell’s claim that he knows how “the job” of preventing adultery is successfully “done,” this passage also contains significant irony in that Dowell condemns all talk, even though his narration of “the saddest story” presupposes that he himself has been talked to extensively, and presumably willingly, by both Leonora and Edward. Clearly learning from Edward the details of that man’s affairs with his various lovers, Dowell also learns the details of Leonora’s communications with Nancy Rufford from Leonora herself. Thus, as Dowell remarks, he is both right and wrong to criticize Leonora and Florence; yet his wrongness in judging them has less to do with their behavior than with his inability to assess his own position. Certainly, he is right that Florence’s presence on the scene results in more talk, since Florence’s talks with Leonora lead to Leonora’s talks with Nancy and since Edward’s awareness of Leonora and Nancy’s talks leads to his night-long talk with Dowell toward the end of the novel. Precisely because Edward’s conversation with Dowell spurs the latter’s narrative activity, however, Dowell is as benefited by and as guilty of inappropriate talk as any of the other characters in the novel. Indeed, one could go further and argue that, without the disastrous proliferation of speech among the other characters, Dowell would never have had anything to say in the first place.

Whether or not this is the case, the reasons behind Dowell’s selection as Edward’s confidant are of signal importance to the unfolding of the novel and to Ford’s ultimate satiric aim
of linking social, historical, and political unawareness to the isolation of pre-war English society. Summoned to Branshaw Manor by way of a “laconic cable” requesting “a chat,” Dowell arrives in England on the eve of Nancy’s departure for India and discovers that much has happened during his recent absence in America. Having been madly in love with Nancy since the previous summer, Edward has discussed extensively with her the state of his estate and the nature of “her effect on the moral side of his life,” and at the prospect of her departure, he once again finds himself without an interlocutor (124). Nancy’s impending absence aside, Edward also needs to converse with Dowell as a result of the previous talks that have taken place between Nancy and Leonora. As Dowell reveals, Edward had curbed his conversations with Nancy upon his return to England and had often “uttered nothing but monosyllables when Nancy spoke to him” (226). Yet he also rides with her to hounds, “chaffs” her in his better moments, and offers to give a horse to a needy man in her presence (226). Witnessing such behavior and simultaneously realizing that Edward’s face has become “the face of an old, dead man, when he has no one to talk to,” Nancy cannot help speaking in admiration of Edward to Leonora, and in doing so, she at once encourages and prohibits additional talking (226). For, as Dowell explains, Nancy’s praise of Edward leads Leonora to shout, “‘I wish to God…that he was your husband, and not mine,’” and this in turn leads to a series of hellish conversations between the wrong people and upon the wrong matters (124):

What had happened [during my trip to America] was just hell. Leonora had spoken to Nancy; Nancy had spoken to Edward; Edward had spoken to Leonora—and they had talked and talked. And talked. You have to imagine horrible pictures of gloom and half lights, and emotions running through silent nights—through whole nights. You have to imagine my beautiful Nancy appearing suddenly to Edward, rising up at the foot of his bed, with her long hair falling…You have to imagine her, a silent, a no doubt agonized figure, like a spectre, suddenly offering herself to him—to save his reason! And you have to imagine his frantic refusal—and talk. And talk! My God! (220).
As this passage suggests, Nancy acts as Leonora’s emissary to Edward during Dowell’s absence, but rather than conveying a message of any serious diplomatic import, her mission is a convoluted attempt to save Edward’s mind through a further sinful act. The last of Edward’s would-be lovers, Nancy thus comes to act as the perverse spiritual counterpart of Henry VIII’s last wife, Catherine Parr, who would “come to [the king], but infrequently and only when he sent for her” and would implore him “‘zealously to proceed in the reformation of the Church’” (Foxe as qtd. in Scarisbrick 479). That Nancy approaches the landlord of Branshaw Manor without his permission and that she comes on an errand designed both to sacrifice her Catholic values and to redeem Edward through adultery indicate a departure from religious and social tradition. Indeed, finding the “spectre”-like Nancy “rising up at the foot of his bed” so suddenly and with such an outrageous proposition, Edward might well have realized that the feudal ethic to which he attached such faith was a dead letter.

In *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault famously argues that “what distinguishes these last three centuries is the variety, the wide dispersion of devices that were invented for speaking about [sex], for having it be spoken about, for inducing it to speak of itself, for listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said about it” (34). Although Foucault stresses that public discourse on sex and the means for regulating it became increasingly widespread during and after the eighteenth century, he also notes that the “scheme for transforming sex into discourse had been devised…in an ascetic and monastic setting” and that the Counter-Reformation, especially the Council of Trent from 1545 to 1563, sped up the process (20). In particular, Foucault concentrates on the ways in which “the scope of the confession—the confession of the flesh—continually increased” and how “the new pastoral” established an imperative “for every good Christian”: “Not only will you confess to acts contravening the law, but you will seek to transform your desire, your every desire, into discourse” (19, 21). That Nancy Rufford arrives in Edward’s bedroom and confesses her willingness to have sex in order to save his reason both illustrates and exceeds the argument Foucault advances about the
relationship between confession and sexual discourse. For while Nancy’s desire for Edward is transformed into a confession of sexual readiness and while Edward’s desire for Nancy is transformed into a refusal of her confessional offering, neither the offer nor the refusal are staged in an institutionalized setting for confession. Where Foucault treats the power mechanisms that institutionalized sexual discourse in religion, economy, pedagogy, and justice, in other words, Ford shows the adaptation of these power mechanisms and their corresponding discourses among individuals who have, by way of their endless talks, attempted in key ways to cut themselves off from the social world in which institutional forces operate.

What is so striking about The Good Soldier, then, is less that sexual desire is sometimes frustrated and always channeled into words than that, in the absence of a setting that authorizes guilty speech, Ford’s characters create the conditions that allow them to speak of their guilt. Without a priest on the property, Leonora confesses to Nancy and Nancy to Edward, and without needing a priest at all, the Anglican Edward nonetheless feels compelled to confess to Dowell. While this arrangement might seem to suit the needs of all parties, Ford makes it clear that his characters actually suffer as a result of their informal confessional practices. For if the goal of both legal and religious confession is to bring the confessant back into the communal fold, Ford’s characters confess their secrets in an unsanctioned forum and without a recognized community that awaits their confession and would authorize their readmittance. Moreover, if one of the traditional aims of religious confession is, as Peter Brooks claims, to provide proof of “inwardness” and a “new sense of selfhood,” none of Ford’s characters seem to benefit from the experience (93, 97). This is especially the case because Dowell is often the chosen recipient of the other characters’ confessions. As Brooks explains, “the act of confessing (rather than the facts referred to by the confession) is the primordially important gesture,” one in which “the addressee of the confession is called upon as witness and judge of [the confession’s] efficaciousness” (95). Because Dowell has no experience with confession as a religious practice; because he is, in fact, suspicious of all that smacks of Roman Catholicism; and because his own
history seems oddly devoid of anything meriting confession, his ability to judge a confession’s “efficaciousness” and to appraise other characters’ “inwardness” is, at best, questionable. Indeed, the fact that the same characters continue to confess to him throughout the second half of the novel testifies on some level to Dowell’s limitations as a hearer of testimony.

Dowell’s value as a confessor aside, Brooks also shows that the very nature of confession encourages its repeatability. Arguing that confession lends itself to “a potentially infinite regress,” he suggests that “the confessional rehearsal or repetition of guilt is its own kind of performance, producing at the same time the excuse or justification of guilt (by the fact of confessing it) and the accumulation of more guilt (by the act of confessing it), in a dynamic that is potentially infinite” (52, 22). For Brooks, the logic of confession thus accounts for the possibility of false confessions, since the content of the confession may be “secondary to the need to confess” and since “the production of incriminating acts” may even allow one to desire and “assure punishment or…self-annihilation” (21).

Because Edward Ashburnham does commit suicide soon after hearing Nancy’s bedside confession and after having confessed his own misdeeds to Dowell, one could fairly argue that Edward’s decision to summon Dowell to Branshaw Teleragh is a sign of his own desire for self-annihilation. While Dowell contends that his presence is needed at Branshaw Manor because Edward “regard[s] [him] not so much as a man” but rather “as a woman or a solicitor,” what he fails to understand is that Edward also needs him as a makeshift priest (31, 271). Yet in offering his confession—indeed, in speaking at all—Edward reveals that the conventions by which he has lived, including the conventions of Anglicanism, no longer hold and that he himself may no longer hold the right to live. For if Dowell is correct in suggesting that silence and reserve are the virtues of an English landowner, Edward discards those virtues by disclosing to an American that an English gentleman can no longer conduct affairs of the heart with impunity and by affirming that the feudal spirit can no longer be accommodated in a modern society and a modern economy.
For his part, Dowell most certainly fails to realize that Edward’s story and complaints, as well as his subsequent suicide, point to a deficiency in the social order, a deficiency of recent advent. Arguing that “[s]ociety must go on” and that it “can only exist if the normal, if the virtuous, and the slightly deceitful flourish, and if the passionate, the headstrong, and the too-truthful are condemned to suicide and to madness,” Dowell does not seem to realize that Edward’s “condemnation” results from a conflict between his values and the particular time in which he lives. An anachronism, Edward is not, as Dowell suggests, the victim of “accepted morality”; rather, he is the victim of a newfangled morality, which, if now accepted, certainly would not have been thirty or one hundred years earlier. That this is the case becomes clear when one considers Leonora’s ultimate fate. For in reviewing Leonora’s life after Edward’s death, Dowell, for the first time in the narrative, fails to realize that her Catholicism does have significance—that is, he fails to see that Leonora, as a Catholic, can hardly be said to be the norm in traditional English society, much less “the perfectly normal, virtuous, and slightly deceitful heroine” of a traditional English narrative (273). Since Leonora survives while Edward does not and since she survives in “a modern mansion, replete with every convenience and dominated by a quite respectable and eminently economical master of the house,” her ultimate victory lies not in her alliance with traditionally accepted morality or society but in her alliance with the updated morality and society she helps usher in, both of which allow her second husband, an Anglican landowner, to wear “ready-made” clothes without ridicule and to raise his child “as a Romanist” without protest (273, 274, 276).

If Leonora largely manages to escape unscathed from the confessional debacle that characterizes her last weeks as Edward’s wife, the same cannot be said for Nancy Rufford or Dowell himself. In considering these latter character’s fates, we might recall Peter Brooks’s claim that confession leads to “a potentially infinite regress.” For Brooks, such a regress has a temporal character: in offering a confession, whether pleasurable or painful, an individual may unwittingly increase the demand for confession, a demand that he or she must supply through an
unending series of future confessions. The regress in question thus refers to the continuing need to remember or create past instances of guilt, instances that will then provide the content for present and future confessions. Although confessions in *The Good Soldier* do seem to proliferate in the way Brooks describes, one of Ford’s more brilliant strokes—a stroke that is designed to underscore his satirical critique of troublesome isolation—is to link his characters’ confession to spatial regression. By this, I mean that the more characters confess, the more they seal themselves off from the outer world. At the beginning of the book, when confession does not take place, the characters spend their time traveling across Europe; by the end of the novel, however, when confession has come to dominate their lives, the characters have managed to create an independent society at Branshaw Teleragh. Not just isolated in the English countryside, these characters are isolated within the walls of Branshaw Manor, an estate that, though financially imperiled, offers precisely that degree of seclusion from the outside world necessary for the continuation of confession. Indeed, with the exception of Leonora, Branshaw Manor seems to exercise a sort of magnetic pull on any character who has engaged in confession: when Nancy Rufford travels to the East to meet her father, she loses her reason and must be brought back to the site of her own and others’ confessions; and when Dowell has once heard Edward’s confessions in the gun-room of Branshaw Manor, he only once thereafter leaves the estate—and for the purpose of bringing Nancy back to it.

The disturbing nature of Dowell’s fate, however, is not confined to his apparent inability to leave Branshaw. More troubling still is the transformation he undergoes within the walls of the house, a transformation that becomes evident when, toward the end of the novel, he establishes a similarity of identity between himself and Edward. Summing up his narrative in one of *The Good Soldier*’s most contested passages, Dowell notes without a hint of irony, “I can’t conceal from myself the fact that I loved Edward Ashburnham—and that I love him because he was just myself” (275). While one might find it hard to agree with Dowell, who never seems, like Edward, to “come into the category of the passionate, of the headstrong, and the too-truthful,” one should
nevertheless acknowledge that where Dowell is least truthful about himself—that is, where he concludes that he is Edward’s double—he is also most truthful to Edward (275). Having listened extensively to Edward’s history, Dowell knows much about his friend, even if he fails to understand Edward and his values entirely. Indeed, so familiar is Dowell with Edward’s history, desires, and interests that he assumes them as his own upon Edward’s death. No longer having a heart patient to listen to, in other words, Dowell has no difficulty transforming himself into a counterfeit version of that patient, one who adopts Edward’s character along with his estate and Nancy Rufford.

In suggesting that Dowell takes on Edward’s personality, I mean to underscore how this adoption allows him both to ensure the permanency of his “profession” as nurse and to remain ignorant of English society. Certainly, Dowell continues as a nurse by taking care of the crazed Nancy. Yet, in arguing that his employment is guaranteed for life, I am referring not to Nancy but to Edward’s memory, which he eerily keeps alive by taking over Edward’s personality and possessions. Furthermore, in assuming Edward’s attributes and property in an American way, Dowell also cements his blindness to Edward’s England. Whereas Edward’s chief concerns were keeping his estate afloat and his tenants provided for, Dowell, “an American millionaire,” swoops in after his friend’s death and buys Branshaw Manor outright (275). Dowell’s fortune thus enables him to possess an estate and have power over tenants without the inconveniences that usually attend the inherited possession of an English country establishment.

Although Dowell fails to recognize the extent to which the purchase, not the inheritance, of Branshaw Manor both entitles him to its occupancy and disentitles him from the seigniorial role, he does acknowledge his isolation at the end of the novel:

Yes, society must go on; it must breed, like rabbits. That is what

17 Although Dowell tends to view Edward as a sufferer of metaphorical heart troubles, the novel also indicates that the Ashburnhams are in Nauheim each summer for Edward’s actual heart. As Dowell explains, “Captain Ashburnham also had a heart…The reason for his heart was, approximately, polo, or too much hard sportsmanship in his youth,” a condition that “a yearly month or so at Nauheim” solved by “tun[ing] him up to exactly the right pitch for the rest of the twelvemonth” (6).
we are here for. But then, I don’t like society—much. I am the absurd figure, an American millionaire, who has bought one of the ancient haunts of English peace. I sit here, in Edward’s gun-room, all day and all day in a house that is absolutely quiet. No one visits me, for I visit no one. No one is interested in me, for I have no interests. In twenty minutes or so I shall walk down to the village, beneath my own oaks, alongside my own clumps of gorse, to get the American mail. My tenants, the village boys, and the tradesmen will touch their hats to me. So life peters out. (275)

While the self-pity in this sketch is abundant, the passage nevertheless provides an ironic point of contrast to an equally pity-laden paragraph toward the beginning of the novel. Whereas Dowell pities himself in the later passage for the kind of company he does not keep, he pities himself in the earlier passage as a result of the space in which he will be unable to keep it:

I know nothing—nothing in the world—of the hearts of men. I only know that I am alone—horribly alone. No hearthstone will ever again witness, for me, friendly intercourse. No smoking-room will ever be other than peopled with incalculable simulacra amidst smoke wreaths. Yet, in the name of God, what should I know if I don’t know the life of the hearth and of the smoking-room, since my whole life has been passed in those places? The warm hearthside! (9-10)

The irony of this passage when placed alongside the later one lies in the fact that, writing it some two years before he purchases Branshaw Manor, Dowell does not foresee that he will continue to pass his life not only at a hearthside and in a smoking-room but also at the hearthside and in the smoking-room of Edward Ashburnham. Certainly, Dowell guesses that he will be short on “friendly intercourse” and that he will be surrounded by “incalculable simulacra,” including, though he does not yet know it, the incalculable simulacrum of Nancy Rufford’s maddened self. Yet Dowell’s prediction regarding the kind of company he will (not) keep is less important than the setting in which he will (not) keep it, for that setting is precisely the one in which he heard Edward’s confessions late in 1913 and in which he assumed Edward’s personality after the latter’s death in early 1914.
The novel’s final setting gains what I would call specifically satirical significance when one considers that, months after writing the above passage, Dowell describes himself not as a particular kind of person but rather as a particular kind of space. For he informs his imaginary listener that, given Nancy Rufford’s “odd quality of sainthood” but lack of “vocation,” “it seemed fairly proper that she should make her vows to [him],” since he “was a sort of convent [him]self” (135). Although he does become something like a convent for Nancy once she goes mad, his role as a site, as a place of repose beyond the concerns of the world, is especially striking since he performs that role in the very place he heard Edward’s confession and became a repository for Edward’s memory. Thus, as a figurative container of Edward’s history and as the supposedly literal container of his personality, Dowell effectively establishes the Convent of St. Edward in the smoking-room of Branshaw Manor. And this establishing is perhaps the most historically blind action in the novel. Creating a religious house on the lands of a man named after the heir to Henry VIII, Dowell not only links himself more firmly to the Catholics he dislikes; he also undoes the principal effect of the English Reformation during Henry VIII’s reign: the despoliation of the monasteries. Furthermore, in characterizing himself as a convent, Dowell ensures that confession will continue as a practice in the Ashburnham home, even if the only confessions available for airing are his own.

In his essay on the novel, Michael Levenson argues that “part of the trenchancy of the *The Good Soldier* is that it imagines…a region of character, not only before knowledge but before desire, and it does so…through the figure of Dowell” (383). Contending that “Ford’s boldest stroke [is] to imagine a personality virtually without attributes,” Levenson also suggests that “Dowell’s ‘nullity’ is simply the final consequence of the Impressionist pursuit of immediate experience” and that Dowell stands in contrast to the novel’s other characters, whose attributes and personalities are determined by their experiences of passion. While Dowell would seem to be at a disadvantage in this account, Levenson is interested in showing how passion causes “character…to lose integrity as a concept” (376). As he explains, “passion [in the novel] is not
one mode of experience among others; it is an affront to intelligibility….it challenges the very possibilities of rules that might govern human behavior.” Moreover, the disintegration of character as a concept “uncover[s] not a new freedom but a new constraint”: “Far from an exuberant denial of all restriction, [desire] becomes finally a constraint as severe as the moral conventions that oppose it. Passion comes to indicate…obsessively reenacted experience” (377, 383). For Levenson, then, Dowell actually fares better than the novel’s other characters, since “his deprivation [of personality] coincides with his freedom” (385).

As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, Levenson argues in his Genealogy of Modernism that Ford’s impressionism begins by replacing its commitment to “civic realism” with a “radical egoism” and ends by concentrating on a “subjectivity in which the subject has disappeared” (108, 132, 119, original emphasis). Tellingly, Levenson’s essay on The Good Soldier was published in the same year as his Genealogy and thus seems to serve as a supplemental close-reading for the critic’s larger theorization of Ford’s impressionist aesthetics. In contending that Dowell’s “is a subjectivity before it has assumed the articulations of character,” however, Levenson is required to suppress the point that, whatever his position at the beginning of the novel, Dowell most certainly has adopted a personality or character by the end. For as his nursing of Edward’s memory suggests, Dowell attempts to collapse his identity with Edward’s, and in doing so, he becomes precisely what Levenson declares he is not: a passionate being enslaved to memory. While the Dowell who opens the novel may, as Levenson suggests, have “no determining past, no consistency of opinion, no deep belief, no stable memory”; and while he may initially use “the act of writing…to recover autonomy” as he takes “his first steps toward articulation,” the Dowell who writes the conclusion of the novel has transformed his personality into Edward’s and has transformed Branshaw Manor into the proscenium on which he “obsessively reenact[s]” Edward’s character (383, 385). Simply put, if Dowell at the beginning of the novel is, as he himself once described Florence, “a personality of paper…represent[ing] a real human being with a heart, with feelings, with sympathies, and with emotions only as a bank
note represents a certain quantity of gold,” Dowell by the end of the novel remains a “personality of paper,” but one that he has, in his own hand, scribbled over with his memories of Edward Ashburnham’s talk (133).\(^\text{18}\)

While Dowell’s appropriation of Edward’s personality is troublesome in its own right, it also presents additional complications for the role of confession at the close of the novel. Whereas the proliferation of guilty speech so consumed the Ashburnhams’ attention that it reinforced their isolation from the outside world, Dowell, in his assertion that his personality is essentially the deceased Edward’s, also implicitly acknowledges that his own speech and writing are a travesty of the inwardness and sense of selfhood that Edward’s confessions were designed to produce. If Edward’s confessions suggested an extreme concern for individual actions and the extreme torment of individual guilt, Dowell’s confessions in the closing pages of the novel underscore the absurdity of a non-self posing as a self and confessing borrowed wrongs. In this sense, Dowell effectively becomes an expert manipulator of what Peter Brooks calls “the fictional expedient”—that is, he masters the ability to introduce content into his confession that is neither verifiably true nor “necessarily a lie” but rather that “corresponds to the order of desire and self-conception” (51). At the end of the novel, in other words, Dowell’s is a self “bound up with the fictions it tells about itself—as much a product as a source of those fictions.” Moreover, in selecting this self as his own and adopting it in the Convent of St. Edward, Dowell manages to exploit the supposed virtues of the grilled confessional—the authorized site of confessions—in his own person and for his own purposes. As Brooks explains, the confessional, which originated as a Counter-Reformation measure during the Council of Trent, was designed to “ensur[e] that

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\(^{18}\) Although Ford most likely penned the phrase “personality of paper” before the invasion of “Little Belgium” by the Germans in 1914, the phrase has particular relevance when considered in relation to England’s stated reason for entering World War I. As is well known, those who objected to the war often contended that it was being fought over a “scrap of paper,” one which guaranteed the intervention of the British in the event that Belgium’s neutrality was violated. That Dowell remains removed from the world around him—and even inhabits Branshaw Manor during the first several years of the war without registering its advent—provides an interesting corollary to the historical events of the time. A “personality of paper,” Dowell seems as inconsequential as British citizens and politicians hoped the 1839 Treaty of London might prove.
vision ha[d] no place in the speech act of confession” and therefore to “protec[t] the identity of both confessor and confessant” (101). Yet in Dowell’s case, one in which the confessor and confessant are the same person, the visionless-ness guaranteed by the confessional as a piece of furniture is built into the very act of confession: although he may not realize it, Dowell’s simultaneous roles ensure that neither his eye nor anyone else’s will question the legitimacy of the inwardness his confessions are intended to prove.

If we are struck by Dowell’s adoption of Edward’s personality and by his establishment of a sort of Catholic shrine in Edward’s honor, the irony of Dowell’s position increases when we reflect on the conflicts happening within the Catholic Church just prior to *The Good Soldier*’s publication. As Gabriel Daly explains, major debates about *aggiornamento*—that is, the bringing-up-to-date of the Catholic Church—had arisen from time to time in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: during the 1860s, Catholic intellectuals met in Munich to petition for academic freedom and to encourage the replacement of scholasticism with critical theology, and in the 1940s, theologians associated with the *Nouvelle Théologie* attempted “to persuade the Catholic Church to come to terms with the post-Enlightenment world” (775, 774). Prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-5), however, the “most significant challenge” presented to the Church was the threat posed by “modernism, a movement which occurred between ca. 1890 and 1910” (775). According to Daly, one of the motive forces behind modernism was Catholic intellectuals and theologians’ belief that the Church had, since the 1870s, increasingly tried to “create a medieval cultural enclave [in Rome] with the express purpose of keeping modernity at bay”:

In the period between the two Vatican Councils the Catholic Church resembled a village encompassed by a high wall which separated the villagers from the surrounding jungle. An effective system of taboos and cautionary tales severely discouraged [those at the Vatican] from venturing beyond the wall which both protected and imprisoned them. This artificial village had been specifically designed to preserve the last remnants of a classical and medieval culture which, outside its walls in the surrounding terrain, had long since yielded to the advancing jungle of post-
As a means of deconstructing the “artificial village” represented by the Vatican, modernist Catholics rejected ultramontanism, encouraged the proliferation of Biblical and historical criticism, advocated for a “dynamic conception of the universe,” and argued that “religious truth [was not]...something given from without but discovered through human experience” (McGiffert 29). Although the modernists diverged at some points in their plans for a revitalized Church, most did agree that emphasis should be placed on “the social element in religion” and that “stress [should be laid] upon solidarity over against individualism” (30). As Charles A Briggs, an American Presbyterian and later Protestant Episcopal theologian, explained in a 1909 essay on the modernist controversy, the modernists were, among other things, responding to a phrase of St. Augustine’s, which Cardinal Wiseman had translated in 1839 to read, “Therefore the entire world judges with security that they are not just who separate themselves from the entire world” (Briggs 836). According to Briggs, instead of “submit[ting] to the authority of the majority vote of a Christian Council” or to that “of a Pope, unrecognized by the majority of Christians throughout the world,” the modernist Catholics “advocate[d] a reform of the Church and its institutions in accordance with modern methods of government and discipline, and with scientific, social and economic principles” (886, 880).

Faced with the modernists’ agenda, the Vatican issued a condemnation of modernism in the 1907 encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* and followed up that document in 1910 by requiring all clergy and religious instructors to take an “Oath Against Modernism.” Although the encyclical and the oath were viewed by modernists as victories for medievalism, what should be stressed is that the strength of the modernist movement was great enough to merit a papal response. Because Ford was received into the Catholic Church in 1892; because he decided that his daughters should be raised as Catholics in 1906; and because he was, on Arthur Mizener’s account, “[f]ull of renewed Catholic enthusiasm” in 1909 and 1910, when he was trying to obtain
a German divorce from his first wife, we might expect *The Good Soldier*, a novel that regularly addresses the Catholic religion, to register the modernist controversy raging within the Church during the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century (203).19 Perhaps with the aim of tacitly underscoring Dowell and Edward’s refusal to confront social and political change, however, Ford chooses to exclude any reference to theological modernism in his most modernist of novels. In some ways, the exclusion of contemporary debates in the Catholic Church makes the satirical force of *The Good Soldier* even more powerful, since the absence of those debates reinforces Dowell’s unconcern with contemporary goings-on and his problematic reliance on inaccurate stereotypes. Continuing to set himself in opposition to Catholicism but showing no awareness of the threats the actual Catholic Church perceived as challenging its authority, in other words, Dowell ironically manages to re-create at Branshaw Manor a secularized version of that institution in its anti-modernist incarnation. For as both priest and penitent, both confessor and confessant, Dowell designs an “artificial village” that relies not only on the denial of “the social element in religion” but also on the repudiation of sociality itself. Indeed, by the time Dowell concludes his narration, his isolation is so complete that he seems, if possible, even less aware of “modern methods of government and discipline” and of modern “scientific, social and economic principles” than he was at the beginning of the novel.

The consequences of such isolation emerge forcefully when we set the novel’s opening against the historical subtext of its dénouement. As Dowell explains at the novel’s start, he has retired to Edward’s gun-room and has begun to imagine a listener who will attend to the secrets that have now become his own—those that make up the Ashburnham tragedy:

19 In September of 1910, in fact, Ford was on vacation at Marburg with his lover, Violet Hunt, and went, like the Dowells and Ashburnhams, to see Luther’s Protest. As Mizener notes, Ford has before the trip “already been berating Violet for the way she and the rest of the ‘Prots’ had stolen all the beautiful churches of Germany ‘from us’” (203). At the castle itself, Ford’s vociferousness on this score apparently increased. On Violet’s account, Ford, when confronted with the Protest, declared, “There...There, that is what I brought you to see. The Protest of Zwingli, Luther, and Bucer. That bit of paper is Protestantism. It all began with the signing of that bit of paper...That is what you mean when you say you are a Protestant” (Hunt 160). When Violet followed this outburst by saying that she regularly denied she was a Protestant, she found that her remarks carried no weight: “Useless! A ‘Prot’ I am, and seemingly must remain so in the eyes of this black Papist.”
I don’t know how it is best to put this thing down—whether it would be better to try and tell the story from the beginning, as if it were a story; or whether to tell it from this distance of time, as it reached me from the lips of Leonora or from those of Edward himself.

So I shall just imagine myself for a fortnight or so at one side of the fireplace of a country cottage, with a sympathetic soul opposite me. And I shall go on talking, in a low voice while the sea sounds in the distance and overhead the great black flood of wind polishes the bright stars. (14-15)

In rereading this passage and remembering Dowell’s frequent asides to his “silent listener” throughout the novel, one can only conclude that Dowell’s act of writing does the opposite of what Levenson suggests: it fails to give him autonomy (166). Imagining a mute listener at whom he may talk endlessly—a listener who is forced, in silence, to attend to his variations on the theme of Edward’s demise—Dowell not only shackles himself to Edward’s memory and to Edward’s conventions; he also shackles himself to the literary convention of the dramatic monologue and to the religious practice of confession.20

In choosing to end his novel in this way, Ford certainly meant to drive home the satirical register of the text. For by underscoring Dowell’s troublesome reliance on Catholic stereotypes throughout the novel only to have his narrator isolate himself as much as the contemporary Catholic Church, Ford does just what Frye claims second-phase satirists do: he identifies the kind of conduct that “impede[s] the free movement...of society” and “bring[s] [his reader] to the point

20 In Literary Impressionism and Modernist Aesthetics, Jesse Matz addresses the ideological implications of Ford’s claim that literary impressionism succeeds best when its readers come to the table with “virgin mind[s].” According to Matz, Dowell’s creation of a “silent listener” at the start of the novel occurs despite his having already discovered through experience the limitations of depending on “virgin intelligences” to establish “a vital, meaningful, and anti-modern perceptual complex” (170). Coming after his discovery that Edward’s “virgin mind” is not so much virginal as “purely conventional” and after his realization that Nancy’s “virgin mind,” while “vital,” is “utterly meaningless,” Dowell’s reliance on a silent listener, Matz argues, represents “only the repeat offense of a man who ought to have learned not to put significatory power in the silence of another” (172). Although I, too, find Dowell’s creation of a silent listener problematic, I would argue that the novel ultimately characterizes Dowell’s mind as a virgin intelligence, one that is deflowered, so to speak, by listening to the proliferating confessional speech of other characters. Precisely because such speech tends to develop an unstoppable momentum, Dowell finds himself in a curious predicament at the end of the novel: finally having something to relate but having no one to whom to relate it, he feels compelled to create a listener who, though imagined, will fill the role that he himself formerly occupied. To put the matter differently: having been talked at extensively, Dowell senses the necessity of keeping the talk going, even if doing so results in his increasing isolation.
at which [he or she] can escape from [a similarly] incorrect procedure.” Nevertheless, as a gifted writer and a highly perceptive critic, Ford must equally have sensed that, by ending his narrative as he did, he was establishing a link between impressionist thought and perilous isolation. To say the same thing differently: Ford, in satisfying the aims of his satire, suggests that the techniques of literary impressionism are the most effective vehicle for capturing (and critiquing) individuals’ refusal to engage with objective reality. Although Ford was certainly still championing impressionism at the time of *The Good Soldier*’s publication, then, that novel, by already beginning to conjoin impressionism and isolation, contains the germ of an idea that, in the post-war *Parade’s End*, will grow into full flower. Indeed, the relation of that germ’s growth to the outbreak of World War I begins to become clear when we reflect that, at the end of the novel, which is set in late 1915 or early 1916, Dowell is still telling Edward’s story for the first time. Having in his seclusion with the crazed Nancy never once taken note of the war that began in 1914 and continues to rage across the Channel, Dowell, in the closing pages of the novel, once more confirms his earlier statement that he “know[s] nothing—nothing in the world—of the hearts of men” (9).

**Sound Off: The Troubled Times and Tortured Thoughts of *Parade’s End***

Between the publication of *The Good Soldier* in 1915 and the publication of the final volume of *Parade’s End* in 1928, Ford Madox Ford saw his life change in numerous ways. In those thirteen years, he unsuccessfully asked his first wife, Elsie Martindale, for a divorce; supposedly obtained a German divorce and married Violet Hunt; was sued successfully by Elsie over Violet’s claim to the title of Mrs. Ford Madox Heuffer; left Violet and took up with the Australian Stella Bowen first in Sussex and then in France; had a child with Stella and legally changed his name to Ford Madox Ford; and had affairs with both Jean Rhys and Rene Wright before asking Stella for a separation in 1927. In addition, Ford pioneered *The Transatlantic*
Review and published, among other works, On Heaven and Poems Written in Active Service (1918), Thus to Revisit (1921), Women and Men (1923), The Marsden Case (1923), Joseph Conrad (1924), A Mirror to France (1926), and New York is Not America (1927). The most important event that colored Ford’s life and career during this period of time, however, was his participation in World War I, an experience that continued to haunt him throughout the early 1920s and that provided the basis of the four novels that make up Parade’s End: Some Do Not…(1924), No More Parades (1925), A Man Could Stand Up— (1926), and The Last Post (1928).

In his biography of the author, Arthur Mizener underscores the role Ford’s wartime experiences played in shaping his post-war works. Noting that Ford suffered a breakdown immediately after his participation in the Battle of the Somme in 1916, Mizener explains that Ford thereafter “lived in terror of going mad, though he somehow managed to appear perfectly phlegmatic to those around him” (287). Equally overwhelming for Ford was his fear that his memory, which he had temporarily lost at the Somme, was irreparably damaged. According to Mizener, Ford’s loss of memory was “a peculiarly horrible experience for him,” since “he had always prided himself on his memory which was, if not always precise, extremely vivid and detailed” (286). Indeed, even after the war, Ford was so “afraid that his memory and his creative powers ‘might have deteriorated’” that he threatened never to write again, especially after he reread a piece he had written in 1918: “‘As soon as the war was over…I wrote a novel. But when I came to read it over I found that I had been writing like a madman. The book was not readable. I suppressed it’” (300, Ford as qtd. in Mizener).

Although Mizener goes on to remark that the author was contacting publishers about a new project at the same moment he was promising never to write another book, Ford did not begin to treat his war experiences in fiction until November 1922, when he started to write the

\[21\] In the remainder of this chapter, I generally try to move through the books of the tetralogy in their order of publication. At times, however, this proved impossible. To aid the reader, I have included a list of titles and publication dates in Appendix A. The works of other authors considered in this dissertation are also included in that appendix.
first volume of *Parade’s End*. As Mizener explains, *Parade’s End*, “[l]ike all Ford’s work,…grew immediately out of personal experience”: “[Ford] began with actual people and events, gradually shaping them into representative figures of the country of the mind that was [his] England” (365). Yet *Parade’s End* also differs from Ford’s earlier works inasmuch as its protagonist, Christopher Tietjens, is “representative” not only of England and the English but also of Ford himself, with whom he shares distinct social and political values:

Ford always made much of Christopher’s resemblance to Arthur Marwood. He did take a few details from Marwood—the mathematical talents, the habit of checking up on the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from memory, the actuarial scheme, and the Yorkshire stubbornness…Nevertheless, Christopher Tietjens is Ford’s conception of himself. All the essential characteristics—the commitment of the young Christopher to the ideals of the Edwardian ruling class; his extravagant rectitude in matters of money, of women, of duty; his systematic persecution by the world; his secret longing to be an Anglican saint; his gradual transformation during the war from Tory younger son to Tory radical prepared to go underground to preserve the Tory values…—these are all characteristics of the man Ford imagined himself to be. (369-70)

What should be added to Mizener’s account of the similarities between Ford and Christopher is that Ford’s post-war protagonist also has fundamental similarities to his pre-war hero, *The Good Soldier*’s Edward Ashburnham. Although it would be difficult to argue that Edward possesses “extravagant rectitude” in matters of money and domestic fidelity, he does resemble Christopher Tietjens in his high regard for feudal duties, his prominent sentimental streak, and his marriage to a Catholic woman who interferes in his financial and romantic affairs. Indeed, Christopher’s situation at the beginning of *Some Do Not*… is so much like Edward’s at the end of *The Good Soldier* that, had the Great War not interrupted the course of history, Christopher’s story might very well have become Edward’s.

If Ford’s experience of World War I and his understanding of its dramatic consequences for the English nation made it seem desirable to resurrect Edward Ashburnham in the character of
Christopher Tietjens, Ford also appears to have wanted to reevaluate his pre-war advocacy of impressionist techniques, especially as those were used in *The Good Soldier*. As I mentioned in the previous section, Ford had already begun to link personal and national isolation with impressionism before the start of the war, since the most fitting means through which he could capture the severity of Dowell’s seclusion at the close of *The Good Soldier* was to have that character offer a first-person, chronologically muddled, and impressionist narrative. By the time Ford began writing *Parade’s End*, however, the tacit connection he had established between impressionism and isolation had become a prominent thematic and technical concern. One way of gauging the increasing importance of this connection is to consider the difference between the pre- and post-war novels’ narrative voices and the kinds of isolation they describe. In the case of *The Good Soldier*, Dowell ultimately chooses to remain isolated at Branshaw Manor and to write a narrative that, by virtue of its impressionist style, reinforces his seclusion from the outside word. By contrast, in *Parade’s End*, it is not so much that Christopher Tietjens opts for isolation as that it is forced upon him during and after the war; moreover, he does not write a narrative describing his seclusion but rather, in the concluding volumes of the tetralogy, has the movements of his consciousness charted by Ford. The effect of this change in narrator and narrative focus has significant implications for the satirical message of *Parade’s End*. On the one hand, by characterizing Christopher as he does, Ford suggests that the kind of isolation that had been a choice before the war has, by the conclusion of hostilities, become a predicament faced by the majority of the English population and without their consent. On the other hand, by presenting the workings of Christopher’s consciousness at such length, Ford implies that, with the outbreak of the war, novelists who wished adequately to represent wartime and post-war experience had little choice but to rely on impressionist methods, which allowed them to capture the anxiety-ridden existence of their characters.

That Ford wished to dramatize the necessary turn toward impressionism—or what, in *Parade’s End*, might better be called interior monologue—becomes evident when we consider
The shifts in narrative style across the tetralogy. As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, critics such as James M. Heldman have long observed that Parade’s End, despite beginning with omniscient narration, gradually places “more emphasis on dramatic, focused, and interior narrative” (274). Although Heldman explains this shift in method by citing Ford’s interest in charting both the historical transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century and the literary transition from nineteenth-century Victorianism to twentieth-century modernism, his account suffers from its failure to register Ford’s critical stance regarding those transitions. In other words, Heldman overlooks Ford’s satirization of the way in which England’s entrance into and prosecution of World War I effectively closed off the kind of political and social dialogue that was central to both the Victorian era and the Victorian novel and thus compelled the inward turn that, at least in fiction, results in interior monologue. Far from suggesting, as Heldman claims, that “the only reality is the reality of individual consciousness,” then, Ford implies throughout Parade’s End that his characters retreat into the confines of their minds as a result of an impoverished existence (283). Such is certainly the case with Christopher Tietjens, who, in the first volume of the tetralogy, enters the war protesting the policies and procedures of England’s political and military establishments and who, by the third volume of the work, is so effectively silenced by the experience of combat and the machinations of political and military authorities that he surrenders the possibility of meaningful social or political action. Indeed, by the final volume of the tetralogy, The Last Post, Christopher has become so exhausted with his predicament that Ford does not even bother to include him in the narrative until the last two pages. Instead, he divides The Last Post among the consciousnesses of at least five other characters and thus implies that his protagonist has retreated so thoroughly inward that the content and workings of his conscious mind are too tortured to be represented directly.

Once we begin to understand that Ford’s shift toward interior monologue across Parade’s End is not a celebration of the integrity of individual consciousness but rather a strategy for illustrating the lamentable effects of World War I on notions of political, social, and moral
responsibility, we are also equipped to recognize that the effectiveness of Ford’s satiric attack on England at and after war is as dependent on narrative method as it is on narrative content. Moreover, we can understand that by making interior monologue the default technique for representing a world ravaged by global warfare, Ford suggests his regret for the necessity of that technique as much as he suggests his regret for World War I itself. What should be added to these remarks about technique, however, is that by linking the experience of war to his characters’ inward retreats, Ford aims to demonstrate how the time of total war—its long delays, its moments of extreme danger, its shattering of narratives of progress—affected the English population’s temporal perceptions during and after conflict. More specifically, by illustrating the ways in which the war dismantled traditional understandings of chronological and incrementalized time, Ford suggests that one outcome of the war was the rejection of earlier socially agreed-upon conceptions of temporality and the elevation of the time of the disordered and disordering mind. For just this reason, Parade’s End should not be considered a work that either uncritically expands upon Ford’s pre-war impressionist aesthetic or indiscriminately endorses a Bergsonian notion of durée. Rather, the tetralogy should be regarded as an anti-Bergsonian project, one that, in its criticism of England at and after war and in its disturbing depictions of the workings of the conscious mind, might usefully be classified as a durational satire.

To understand how Ford problematizes modernism’s reliance on narratives of consciousness and links the prominence of those narratives to the cataclysm of World War I, we might best begin by examining his characterization of Christopher Tietjens in Some Do Not..., the first volume of Parade’s End. In that volume, which begins in 1912 with Christopher and his friend, Vincent Macmaster, traveling on a train that “ran as smoothly...as British gilt-edged securities,” Ford is interested in presenting his protagonist as a member of the class that “administered the world” (3). As if to reflect the sureness of his character’s position, Ford chooses to rely on the omniscient narration and patterns of dialogue that guided the Victorian
novel, the form of literature that represented England at the height of its imperial power. In terms of its content, however, Some Do Not... aims to align Christopher not with the Victorian era but rather with the eighteenth century. The effect of this alignment is to make Christopher seem more antiquated than the already antiquated Victorian techniques with which his character is sketched. Indeed, the central conflicts of the first part of Some Do Not... concern Christopher’s liability to be misunderstood by characters whom Ford associates with either the nineteenth-century pre-Raphaelite movement or the modern era. In the second chapter of the novel, for instance, the reader is introduced to Christopher’s estranged wife, the very modern Sylvia Tietjens. Having previously run off with another man, Sylvia joins her mother and her priest in Lobscheid, Germany, and announces that she has managed to get Christopher to agree to “[the] resumption [of the marital] yoke but on rigid conditions” (31). Subsequently pressed about her feelings regarding this upcoming reconciliation, Sylvia declares that her husband is “repulsive: like a swollen animal” and that he is “that sort of precise imbecile...[who’s] so formal he can’t do without all the conventions there are and so truthful he can’t use half of them” (29, 32). Although she initially attempts to explain her loathing of Christopher by citing her boredom with him, her priest pushes her to give the real reason for her hatred, which she describes as follows: “You want to know why I hate my husband. I’ll tell you; it’s because of his simple, sheer immorality. I don’t mean his actions; his views! Every speech he utters about everything makes me—I swear it makes me—in spite of myself, want to stick a knife into him, and I can’t prove he’s wrong, not ever, about the simplest thing.”

Shortly after expressing her frustration at Christopher’s immorality, as well as declaring her intent to “pain him,” even if it means “corrupting [their] child,” Sylvia is driven from the room by her priest’s threat to sprinkle holy water on her against her will. Before she leaves, however, she also clarifies the nature of Christopher’s immoral views.

‘Suppose I’m looking at the Times at breakfast and say, not having spoken to him for a week: “It’s wonderful what the doctors are doing. Have you seen the latest?” And at once he’ll
be on his high-horse—he knows everything!—and he’ll prove, prove that all unhealthy children must be lethal-chambered or the world will go to pieces. And it’s like being hypnotized; you can’t think of what to answer him. Or he’ll reduce you to speechless rage by proving that murderers ought not to be executed...But that’s what I mean by immorality. He’ll profess that murderers ought to be preserved in order to breed from because they’re bold fellows, and innocent little children executed because they’re sick. And he’ll almost make you believe it, though you’re on the point of retching at the ideas.’ (39-40, original emphasis)

As this passage suggests, Sylvia is distressed less by the immorality of Christopher’s positions than by the prospect of being convinced, despite herself, that those positions are correct. Indeed, she seems to agree with the basic premises underlying Christopher’s views but resents the way in which her husband takes them to their logical conclusions. Like her husband, for instance, she believes that the tradition of the English country gentleman is valuable and that the strongest men are those best equipped to lead England; yet “detest[ing]” Christopher’s “display of the English gentleman” in their daily life, she also feels compelled to challenge the stances he takes as an English gentleman (32). Sylvia’s revulsion is thus caused less by her fondness for children or her dislike of murderers than it is by her suspicion that her husband’s opinions are the logical result of the contact between English tradition and modernity.

If Sylvia resents Christopher because he “almost” manages to convince her of the rightness of his views, Vincent Macmaster displays fear at the effects Christopher’s opinions and his willingness to voice them may have on his personal relations and career. At the very beginning of the novel, as the two men are traveling toward Rye, Macmaster tries to avoid mentioning Sylvia’s recent telegram to Christopher and engrosses himself in reading the proofs of a monograph he has written on Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a pre-Raphaelite poet. Although Macmaster is aware of Christopher’s dislike of Rossetti, he finds, having let his mind wander on the history of Christopher’s marriage, that he has inadvertently praised Rosetti aloud. This slip allows Christopher to explain his views on sex in much the same way that he might otherwise have informed Sylvia of the correctness of sending sick children to the lethal-chamber.
Informing Macmaster that he is disgusted at the prospect of Rosetti “standing beside a fiveshilling model with crimped hair,” “gazing into a mirror that reflects their fetid selves…and gurgling about passion,” Christopher announces that he “stand[s] for monogamy and chastity. And for no talking about it” (18). Moreover, he accuses Macmaster of “stand[ing] for lachrymose polygamy” and declares that the lower classes, despite their desire “to see themselves in a bright and variegated literature,” are sound[er] in wind and limb” than the Rosettis of the world, who “lead the contemplative […] the circumspect life” (18, 19). Though shocked at the indelicacy of these conclusions, Macmaster begins to question the morality of his friend’s politics only when Christopher subsequently proclaims that the salvation of England will depend on the lower classes, who have “the courage to know what they want and to say so” (19). Indeed, not just doubting Christopher’s commitment to Toryism, Macmaster ultimately concludes that it is no “wonder that Sylvia calls [her husband] immoral” (20).

That Macmaster manages to arrive at the same position as Sylvia, a woman he loathes, speaks less to the correctness of his and Sylvia’s shared opinion about Christopher’s immorality than to their failure to understand the precise nature of Christopher’s social principles, especially as these involve the lower classes. As Andrzej Gasiorek has argued, Ford’s Toryism, and by extension Christopher’s, “belongs to the Tory Radical tradition,” a tradition “in which all-powerful but benevolent aristocrats take the lead in public life” (57). According to Gasiorek, Ford and his protagonist resemble the Radical Tories by “assault[ing] the commercial spirit produced by the individualist economics of laissez faire, [by] posit[ing] the protection of the worker (via a guaranteed minimum wage)...and [by] refus[ing] to drive a wedge between this version of Toryism and socialism.” Rather than separating himself from the Tories as Macmaster claims, then, Christopher effectively “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

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22 In saying “bright and variegated literature,” Christopher, of course, means that the lower classes appreciate works that, in his opinion, border on the pornographic. For Christopher, such works include the highly eroticized poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
conservatism,” which, in the form of the Conservative Party, had been in “the process of modernizing itself…[since] the last decades of the nineteenth century” (62, 58). In this rejection of the Conservative Party, Gasiorek notes, Christopher aligns himself with twentieth-century politicians such as Lords Hugh and Robert Cecil, who “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…[and] argued for a return to the political life of the disinterested ‘English gentleman’” (58).

To his credit, Christopher does realize that his political position is no longer popular and might prove perplexing to those who do not share it. Later in the tetralogy, for instance, he tells his godfather, General Campion, that he is “not astonish[ed]” that others, including his wife, have confused his political views with socialism: “I’m a Tory of such an extinct type that [Sylvia] might take me for anything. The last megatherium. She’s absolutely to be excused […]” (490). What should be stressed, however, is that despite recognizing that his politics are misunderstood, Christopher in no way tries to explain his social and political values to others, even when doing so would prevent, or at least lessen, conflict. Toward the beginning of Some Do Not..., for example, we learn that Christopher is involved in a conflict at his job at the Imperial Department of Statistics, a conflict that is made all the worse by his rudeness toward his superiors and his failure to explain the grounds of his position. Describing Christopher’s predicament to General Campion, Macmaster explains that the “Government had wanted a set of figures based on a calculation called B 7,” but Christopher, “who had been working on one called H 19—for his own instruction—had persuaded himself that H 19 was the lowest figure that was actuarially sound” (61). With this idea in mind, Christopher had confronted his supervisor, Sir Reginald Ingleby, and had been “extraordinarily rude” in telling him that he would “rather resign than do the beastly job” of faking a set of figures. Witnessing the General’s confusion at this anecdote, Macmaster tries to make the math simpler, but in the process, he underscores his belief that
Christopher is holding too rigidly to beliefs that no one else shares. According to Macmaster, all “Chrissie was asked by the Government—by Sir Reginald Ingleby—[to do had been] to work out what 3x3 comes to: it was that sort of thing in principle”; yet, all Christopher would do was to say “that the only figure that would not ruin the country was nine times nine.”

Beginning to catch on, the General, a man of principle himself, at least inasmuch as principle does not conflict with military discipline, provides an analogy of his own in order to enlighten his godson about the wrongness of his conduct. Imagining that the Army has “offered [him] the job—of course it’s an order really—of suppressing the Ulster Volunteers,” the General explains that, though he would “rather cut [his] throat than [suppress the Volunteers],” he would still follow the orders given him: “‘That’s the view I take,’ the General said, ‘if I don’t take the Ulster job the Government will put on a fellow who’ll burn all the farmhouses and rape all the women in the three counties. They’ve got [that fellow] up their sleeve’” (61, 62). Yet when the General goes on to add for Christopher’s benefit that, whatever the situation, “one should not be rude to one’s superiors,” Christopher responds by making another rude statement: “‘I tell you I wasn’t rude…Damn your nice, paternal old eyes. Get that into your mind!’”

In large measure, Christopher’s refusal to clarify the reasons behind his heated objections stems from his belief that his class position is so secure that he need not explain his conduct. The youngest son of a landed aristocrat, Christopher believes he has a certain degree of immunity in “treat[ing] almost every hierarch like he was a born fool” (48). What’s more, he prides himself on his relationship with his father precisely because that relationship requires no explanation on either side: “Tietjens considered that his relationship with his father was an almost perfect one. They were like two men in the club—the only club; thinking so alike that there was no need to talk” (7, original emphasis). Although Christopher’s brother, Mark, equally appreciates this family dynamic and goes so far as to describe “talkativeness” as an “un-Tietjens-like quality,” Macmaster, whose “ambition is one ingredient of his strong desire for security,” has a keener sense of the changing times and suffers untold “anguish” watching Christopher, “no doubt…the
most brilliant man in England of that day,” fail to “make a brilliant and rapid career towards some illustrious position in the public services” (203, 48, 49). Indeed, reflecting that “[t]imes [are] changing” and that being a Tietjens of Groby might not “be enough to live on for ever,” Macmaster urges Christopher to recognize that “this [is] a democratic age” and tries to stop him from “[going] on, with both hands as it were, throwing away opportunity and committing outrage” (49).

Unfortunately for Macmaster, Christopher does keep “committing outrage,” and his unwillingness to compromise his views ultimately leads to his enlistment in the army when World War I breaks out. Having felt as early as the summer of 1912 that “the approaching bankruptcy of various European powers and the growingly acquisitive skill and rapacity of the inhabitants of Great Britain” would result in a major war by “the time grouse-shooting began, in 1914,” Christopher greets the advent of the war as an opportunity to escape his job at the Imperial Department of Statistics, where his situation has become more precarious over the intervening years (155). Yet in responding to the news of the war without concern, Christopher incorrectly assumes that the British will not become involved in the conflict and will instead wait until an “opportune moment” to “[grab] a French channel port or a few German colonies as the price of neutrality” (187). For that reason, he initially plans to enlist not in the British army but in the French Foreign Legion. As the narrator explains,

The French he admired: for their tremendous efficiency, for their frugality of life, for the logic of their minds, for their admirable achievements in the arts, for their neglect of the industrial system, for their devotion, above all, to the eighteenth century. It would be restful to serve, if only as a slave, people who saw clearly, coldly, straight; not obliquely and with hypocrisy only such things as should deviously conduce to the standard of comfort of hogs and to lecheries winked at....He would rather sit for hours on a bench in a barrack-room polishing a badge in preparation for the cruelest of route marches of immense lengths under the Algerian sun. (187)

Contrary to Christopher’s expectations, of course, England does enter the war on August 4, 1914, and in consequence, the possibility of his joining the French Foreign Legion disappears.
as quickly as it had arisen. Nevertheless, by the beginning of Part II of Some Do Not..., which is set in 1917, the reader learns that Christopher has managed in his capacity as a British liaison officer to come into contact with the French during the opening years of the war. What’s more, the reader discovers that, while engaged with the French, Christopher has suffered shell-shock and, much like Ford himself, lost portions of his much-prized memory. Perhaps the most startling revelation of the opening chapters of the second part of Some Do Not..., however, is that both Christopher’s shell-shock and his work with the French are being held against him for political reasons. As the narrator explains, Christopher’s brother, Mark, a transport official based in England, hears from his father that Christopher “has been a good deal knocked about [in France]” and thus asks his roommate, Ruggles, to find out all he can about Christopher’s state of affairs (206). In completing his task, Ruggles speaks to a “great lady” known as Glorvina, who gains access to Christopher’s confidential service files and discovers that the British have taken issue with Christopher’s “impecuniosity and his predilection for the French; and apparently for the French Royalists”: “There being at that date and with that Government a great deal of friction with our Allies this characteristic which earlier had earned [Christopher] a certain number of soft jobs had latterly done him a good deal of harm. Glorvina carried away the definite information that Tietjens had been seconded to the French artillery as a liaison officer and had remained with them for some time, but, having been shell-shocked, had been sent back. After that a mark had been added against him: ‘Not to be employed as a liaison officer again’” (208).

In having the British military blackball Christopher for cooperating with the Allies, and especially for repeatedly stating his unwelcome belief that a single Allied command might bring the war to a speedier conclusion, Ford clearly wishes to satirize the way in which political considerations in London manage to shape the direction of the war and put more soldiers, both French and British, at risk of death or injury. This is a point that Christopher himself makes as early as 1915, when he explains to Valentine Wannop, his future lover, that he can no longer remain in England, since he cannot “reconcile [it] with his conscience”: 120
...He described the disillusionment it had cost him personally, as soon as this country had come into the war. He even described the sunlit heather landscape of the north, where naively he had made his tranquil resolution to join the French Foreign Legion...and his conviction that that would give him, as he called it, clean bones again.

That, he said, had been straightforward. Now there was nothing straightforward, for him or for any man. One could have fought with a clean heart for a civilisation; if you like for the eighteenth century against the twentieth, since that was what fighting for France against the enemy countries meant. But our coming in had changed the aspect at once. It was one part of the twentieth century using the eighteenth century as a catspaw to bash the other half of the twentieth. It was true there was nothing else for it. And as long as we did it in a decent spirit it was just bearable. One could keep at one’s job—which was faking statistics against the other fellow—until you were sick and tire of faking and your brain reeled. And then some!... ‘But now, with this crowd of boodlers! [...] Supposing one’s asked to manipulate the figures of millions of pairs of boots in order to force someone else to send some miserable general and his troops to, say, Salonika—when they and you and common sense and everything else, know it’s disastrous? [...] And from that to monkeying with our own forces. [...] Starving particular units for political [...]’ He was talking to himself, not to her. (236)

As I noted above, this passage reflects Christopher’s sentiments in 1915, only one year into the war. By the end of Some Do Not..., when he has already seen two years of combat, he has had firsthand experience of the effects of homefront political machinations on the lives of officers and common soldiers. For just this reason, he decides that, regardless of his shell-shock and memory loss, he cannot take an office job in London for the duration of the war but must return to the front, even if this means the possibility of death. Indeed, when he reports to the War Office toward the end of the volume, Christopher reflects that “the best thing for him was to go and get wiped out as soon as possible” (224).

Because Some Do Not... ends with Christopher hitching a ride to Holborn, from where he will be sent back to the front, the reader is unsurprised at the opening of the next volume, No More Parades, to find Christopher in France. What is surprising, however, is the way that No More Parades manages within several pages gradually to abandon the omniscient narration with
which it begins and to shift between passages of free indirect discourse and snippets of interior monologue, the latter of which passages are signaled by Ford’s increasing use of ellipses. Also striking is the comparative absence of dialogue in the volume and its confinement to a limited period of time. For where *Some Do Not...* covered a period of nearly five years—five years characterized by complex conversations and heated debates between Ford’s characters—*No More Parades* resembles an Aristotelian tragedy by relying on the classical unities of action, time, and place and by establishing Christopher as a hubristic tragic hero.

The main action of the second volume is Sylvia Tietjens’s unexpected arrival at the French depot where her husband is organizing a draft of nearly three thousand soldiers. Christopher himself remains unaware of his wife’s presence for the first fifty pages of the novel, and by thus keeping his protagonist in the dark, Ford allows himself the opportunity not only to register Christopher’s thoughts on the dismal state of the British troops but also to satirize his continuing reliance on traditional social and military protocol regardless of time or place. Looking over the soldiers he is expected to process at the depot, for instance, Christopher reflects that “[a]ll these men [have been] given into the hands of the most cynically care-free intriguers in long corridors who made plots that harrowed the hearts of the world”; yet aside from noting that “all these [men’s] agonies [are] mere occasions for picturesque phrases to be put into politicians’ speeches,” he also spends a great deal of time regretting that the soldiers will “be massacred without jauntiness, without confidence, with depressed brows, without parade” (296, 297). That Christopher considers unstylish deaths—that is, deaths without the pomp and circumstance of British military tradition—as significant a problem as death *tout court* already suggests the incommensurability between his experience at the front and the values he continues to hold despite that experience. Indeed, this disconnection is a point that Ford drives home repeatedly, as he has his protagonist reflect that his role with regard to other officers and common soldiers is equivalent to that of a landlord to his tenants. Striving to help his crazed under-officer, McKechnie, for example, Christopher “[feels] vaguely that, at the back of his mind, there was
some reason for trying to cure this young member of the lower middle classes”; moreover, considering it “a military duty to bother himself about [McKechnie’s] mental equilibrium,” he reflects that he must “preserve this fellow” just as he would “prevent deterioration in any other piece of the King’s property” (304, 305). As these examples attest, Christopher is as guilty as the military and political authorities he criticizes for bolstering the now outdated “national belief that the game is more than the player.” For by attempting to feudalize the war in accordance with his Radical Toryism, he engages in a project as artificial as the British military’s attempts to make the Great War resemble past wars in terms of strategy and tactics.

Perhaps the clearest indication that World War I has done away once and for all with British military tradition and with Christopher’s traditional values is Sylvia Tietjens’s arrival at the depot. As Paul Fussell explains, “[W]hat makes experience in the Great War unique and gives it a special freight of irony is the ridiculous proximity of the trenches to home”: “[O]n their two-week leaves from the front, the officers rode the same Channel boats they had known in peacetime, and the presence of the same porters and stewards...provided a ghastly pretence of normality” (64). While it is likely that Christopher would have taken one of those Channel boats home in 1916 after his first tour at the front, No More Parades is remarkable in that it so dramatically underscores that those boats run both ways. More than demonstrating that the war colored the daily lives of non-combatants in England, in other words, Ford emphasizes through Sylvia’s arrival in France that domestic affairs could not only be transported across the Channel but could also have devastating consequences for officers and soldiers at war. Indeed, one of the principal ironies of No More Parades is that Christopher, who spends the first fifty pages of the volume “thank[ing] God” that his wife cannot “get into France,” discovers that Sylvia is not only at the French depot but is there “[to pull] the strings of shower-baths”—that is, to cause scandal and disrupt any semblance of peace her husband might have (317). Even the phrase about “shower-baths,” which is repeated across the volume, highlights the permeation of the homefront
and front-line experiences, since, in metaphorically bringing this modern bathing apparatus with her, Sylvia manages to influence the direction of her husband’s experience of modern warfare.

The first news that Christopher receives of Sylvia’s arrival in France comes from Colonel Levin, an officer attached to General Campion, Christopher’s godfather and oldest friend. Seeing Levin enter his hut and assuming that the man has once again come to consult him on the “little French piece to whom he [is] quite seriously engaged,” Christopher ponders how he can force his superior to get to the point of his visit without violating the rules of military protocol (325). Wanting to tell Levin, for instance, that he’s “a silly ass” and just “a parrot” of General Campion, Christopher spends two pages trying to decide whether military convention will allow him to say what he normally would in society. Once Levin reveals the news of Sylvia’s presence, however, Christopher comes to understand that he has actually spent the better part of the day considering the possibility of violating just those social traditions he had been rigorously trying to uphold with Levin. More specifically, reflecting that the war made one “a changed man [w]ith a mind of a different specific gravity,” Christopher realizes as a result of Sylvia’s unforeseen and inappropriate visit both that “he ha[s] a passion [for Valentine Wannop] deep and boundless like the sea” and that “his parting from his wife [several months before] had set him free for his girl” (344, 345). As he reflects, Sylvia, in having written the General before her arrival and in having come to France “without any sort of passports or papers,” has “giv[en] away her own game” and has “return[ed] him to his allegiance to Miss Wannop…by forcing herself there into his private life, and doing it with such blatant vulgarity” (350). No longer demonstrating a capacity for discretion and decorum, as she had done in Some Do Not..., the Sylvia of No More Parades essentially “make[s] scenes before the servants”—that is, “before the Tommies of [Christopher’s] own unit”—and this Christopher cannot accept, even though he realizes that his wife is “[in]capable of vulgarity except with a purpose” (51, 350).

For her own part, Sylvia also realizes she is acting vulgarly, but she is not entirely sure to what end. Speaking to her former lover, Perowne, she admits that the idea of going to France
“came into [her] head…suddenly. Ten minutes before [she] started,” and as the narrative subsequently moves into her consciousness, she also “suddenly realise[s] the full stupidity of which she ha[s] been guilty” (384). Precisely because she has arrived in France without adequate forethought or a set plan, she sets in motion a series of events that, while farcical, threaten her husband’s life. First trying to seduce Christopher the night after her arrival, Sylvia arranges for her husband to run into Perowne, whom she hopes will cause Christopher embarrassment. This plan backfires when Christopher, mistaking Perowne for a French waiter, assaults him in the hallway outside his wife’s room and, in the process, attracts the attention of a General O’Hara, who already dislikes Christopher for his earlier treatment of the military police. Encountering the General, Christopher smells liquor on his superior’s breath, threatens to have him put under arrest, and is then placed under arrest himself by the General. Thus, by the end of her day-trip to the French front, Sylvia manages to have her husband placed at risk of either a court-martial or a relocation to the front-line trenches. As General Campion later explains to Christopher after receiving news of his altercation with Perowne and General O’Hara, “An officer’s private life and his life on parade are as strategy to tactics,” an analogy by which the General suggests that domestic affairs are actually more important that military conduct. Since, on the General’s account, “[n]o officer could—without being militarily in the wrong—have a private life that is as incomprehensible and embarrassing as [Christopher’s],” his godson’s tactical and organizational abilities, however valuable in the prosecution of the war, have small significance in determining his fate (478). Indeed, because the private lives of officers mean a great deal to the Other Ranks, who “think—and they’ve every right to think it if they wish to—that a man who’s a wrong ‘un over women isn’t the man they can trust their lives in the hands of,” General Campion informs his godson that, even in the event of forestalled court-martial proceedings, Christopher cannot remain at the depot, where every soldier and officer is aware of Sylvia’s shenanigans and his response to them.
If the tragedy of No More Parades lies in Christopher’s being sent to “certain death” because of the farcical events that ensue after his wife’s arrival in France, the satirical force of the novel depends on the British military’s failure to recognize the ridiculous and to treat it as such (476). As the highest-ranking officer in the volume, General Campion embodies the contradictions of the military, especially in his simultaneous recognition of political corruption on the homefront and his unwillingness to accept the extinction of certain social and military traditions in the face of global war. As Colonel Levin explains to Christopher, both he and the General are ashamed that “the only use [they] can make of [Christopher] is to martyrise [him] because two drunken brutes [broke] into [his] wife’s bedroom”; yet, at the same time, their primary concern is the General’s sense of moral rectitude: “[The General’s] dreadfully hard hit...[I]f you and Mrs. Tietjens separate—and still more if there’s anything real against either of you—it’s going to shatter all his illusions” (454, 455).

Immediately following this conversation between Christopher and Levin, the novel enters General Campion’s consciousness for the first time and begins to chart his difficulties in managing the military and political complexities of the Western Front. A former soldier in India, the General considers that the Home Cabinet’s idea of sending the forces currently in France to the East has “at least some relation to the necessities of the British Empire and [its] strategy [of] embracing world politics as well as military movements”; in addition, he agrees that “the prospect of widening the bounds of the British Empire [can] not be contemptuously dismissed at the price of [the] rather sentimental dishonour [of abandoning the French] (465). Nevertheless, on a tactical level, the General fears that the Cabinet’s “plan [is] the conception of a madman,” since it fails to take into account the number of troops, the response of the native population, and the army’s deficient system of communications. Moreover, he recognizes that what is needed and what he should suggest to the Secretary of State for War is a single command: “Modern developments in arms had made no shade at all of difference to strategy and had made differences merely of time and numbers to tactics...What won combats, campaigns, and, in the end, wars,
was the brain which timed the arrival of forces at given points—and that must be one brain which
could command their presence at these points, not a half-dozen authorities requesting each other
to perform operations which might or might not fall in with the ideas or the prejudices of any one
or other of the half-dozen” (468, 469).

Regardless of the General’s certainty that history has borne witness to the rightness of a
single command, his uppermost concern is that by declaring his feelings to the Secretary of State
for War, he will endanger his own political future. In particular, he reflects on the case of his
former classmate, Puffles, who, having “been a great deal too free with his tongue,” has been
“starved of men” at the French front (470, 469). Although the General realizes Puffles’s
treatment “must be damn agonizing for him, and a very improper strain on his men,” he also
considers it “smart practice […] Sharp practice!” that the “fellows at Westminster and in
Downing Street” have decided to keep Puffles ill-equipped in France: “They would not send him
home before he had a disaster because, unless he were in disgrace, he would be a thorn in their
sides; whereas if he were disgraced no one much would listen to him” (470, original emphasis).
For the General personally, however, Puffles’s agonizing situation also suggests political
possibilities. On the one hand, by writing the Secretary of the State for War about the
advisability of a single command, the General could be sent back to England, could “propose to
stand for the half of the Cleveland Parliamentary Division in which Groby [the Tietjens’ family
estate] stood,” and could make it so that “they could all—he, Tietjens, and Sylvia—live together
[at Groby]” (470). On the other hand, the General could wait for Puffles’s disgrace, could
subsequently take control of his friend’s fighting army, and, in the aftermath of the war, could be
“pretty certain of a peerage,” a seat in the House of Lords, or “a good claim on India and that
meant dying a Field-Marshal” (471).

Engaged in these reflections, the General does not initially observe that Christopher has
entered the room and is awaiting an audience about his own situation. When he does take notice
of his godson’s presence, however, he engages him in the thirty-page conversation that brings No
More Parades to its conclusion. What should be emphasized about this conversation is that, unlike the dialogues in Some Do Not..., it is punctuated by increasingly frequent shifts into Christopher’s consciousness. Although these shifts are initially signaled by phrases such as “Tietjens thought,” those textual markers disappear as the conversation proceeds; moreover, they disappear in direct proportion to Christopher’s inability to concentrate on what the General is actually saying. For the reader, then, the last thirty pages of No More Parades provide a disorienting experience, one in which it becomes difficult to tell who is talking, what is being communicated, and how certain unexpressed thoughts are triggered by unrecorded snatches of speech. By having his readers wade through the twists and turns of the conversation in this fashion, Ford thus enables them to feel as unanchored as his protagonist, who, throughout the concluding pages of the volume, reflects that “his mind [seems to be] falling off a hillside” (485). In addition, having Christopher repeatedly return in thought to his earlier experiences at Verdun and Ypres, Ford signals that his protagonist’s retreat into his mind, a retreat more and more frequently broken up by ellipses, is the direct result of war trauma.

If the movement of the dialogue between General Campion and Christopher is difficult to track, one constant does recur and, in doing so, suggests both the collapse of the traditions that Christopher holds dear and that collapse’s relationship to the technological advances of the war. This constant is a discussion of horses, a discussion that is set in motion by Mark Tietjens’s suggestion earlier in No More Parades that his younger brother be attached to the comparatively safe transport division for the remainder of the war. The idea of this relocation first comes back into Christopher’s head after he gathers from the General that, as a result of Sylvia’s visit, he is being sent closer to the front as the second-in-command to Puffles’s beleaguered unit. Devastated at the thought of re-experiencing “[t]he mud, the noise, [the] dread always at the back of the mind,” Christopher wonders whether it is even possible to remind General Campion of Mark’s previous suggestion (477). Moreover, reflecting on the death of O Nine Morgan, an
Other Ranker who died atop him the previous evening, Christopher considers whether he is even sound enough to command the divisional transport:

And then [...] was he up to the job? What about the accursed obsession of O Nine Morgan that intermittently jumped on him? All the while he had been riding Schomburg [his horse] the day before, O Nine Morgan had seemed to be just before the coffin-headed brute’s off-shoulder. The animal must fall! [...] He had had the passionate impulse to pull up the horse. And all the time a dreadful depression! A weight!...It was getting to be a serious matter! It might mean that there was a crack in his, Tietjens’, brain. A lesion! If that was to go on [...] O Nine Morgan, dirty as he always was and with the mystified eyes of the subject races on his face, riding always before his horse’s off-shoulder! But alive, not with half his head cut away [...] If that was to go on he would not be fit to deal with transport, which meant a great deal of riding. (484, original ellipses in brackets)

Despite his concern about O Nine Morgan’s specter appearing beside his horse’s shoulder, Christopher resolves in the subsequent paragraph that he will “chance” the Other Ranker’s apparition, since horses have largely been replaced by motor lorries at the front. Indeed, so wrapped up is he in the thought of “some damn fool of a literary civilian [who has] been writing passionate letters to the paper insisting that all horses and mules must be abolished in the army” that he loses track of what the General is saying and, without knowing it, blurts out that “there are no horses attached to [the] camp” (484, 485). Taken aback by his godson’s interjection, which has no bearing on the question he has just asked, General Campion nevertheless makes it clear that Christopher cannot avoid the front lines, since he has already managed to offend a second-lieutenant and elderly veterinarian named Hotchkiss. Informing Christopher that Hotchkiss has started “a hell of a strafe” in response to objections about his “wrong treatment of horses,” the General declares that his godson has effectively “block[ed] the only other job open to [him]”:

namely, the post in the transport division (485). When Christopher subsequently and incautiously replies that he “would rather die than subject any horse for which [he] is responsible to the damnable torture [of] Hotchkiss,” the General reemphasizes his original point even more brutally: “It looks as if you damn well will die on that account!”
For the reader, these last words carry an irony outside the scope of what the General intends. For in *Some Do Not...*, the General had not only seriously injured Valentine Wannop’s mother’s horse by hitting it with his car but had also been told by Christopher that he might as well “add blasphemy to horse-slaughtering as a profession” (142). That the General—who in 1912 preferred to be taken to court rather than pay the costs for Mrs. Wannop’s injured horse—is willing in 1917 to send his godson to the slaughter for objecting to the mistreatment of horses is therefore not without significance for Ford’s depiction of the changes brought about by World War I. Believing horses to be expendable in the early years of the 1910s, in other words, the General believes by the close of the decade that members of the landed aristocracy are also expendable if they protest the bureaucratic procedures that put men like Hotchkiss in charge of front-line transportation. Also significant is the connection between the way the General injures Mrs. Wannop’s horse in 1912 and the way the horse has been replaced at the front in 1917. Whereas the General manages to maim Mrs. Wannop’s horse with a modernized mode of transportation in the opening years of the 1910s, that same mode of transportation has, by the end of the decade, managed to make the horse militarily obsolescent. Although the General does not make this connection, Christopher does seem to equate the decreasing reliance on the horse with larger social and political changes. Earlier in *No More Parades*, for instance, when O Nine Morgan is bleeding out on top of him, Christopher reflects how “lavish [the human body is] of blood,” realizes that he “[feels] as he did when you patch up a horse that has been badly hurt,” and “remember[s] a horse from a cut on whose chest the blood had streamed down over the off foreleg like a stocking” (307, 308). Indeed, when Christopher proceeds to recall that a girl had once “lent him her petticoat to bandage [a horse],” it becomes clear to the reader that he is not only remembering Valentine Wannop’s actions after the injury of her mother’s horse in 1912 but also establishing a parallel between that injured horse and the dying O Nine Morgan.

By having Christopher engage in such reflections, Ford implicitly establishes a link between the disastrous technologies peculiar to the Western Front and the modern domestic
technologies of the homefront, both of which seal the fate of the feudal, “chevaline” way of life preferred by his protagonist (484). Yet, if Ford supports the connection Christopher makes between the replacement of horses at the front and the rise of the automobile, he also demonstrates that his protagonist’s insights do not extend to his own private life. For while Christopher rightly associates the military elimination of horses with civilians’ distrust of cavalry officers who “wear long moustaches dripping with Macassar oil and breakfast off caviare, chocolate and Pommery Greno,” he does not recognize that his own choice of lovers mirrors the civilian rejection of the feudal spirit (484-5). This becomes clear when we consider that both the narrator and the characters of Parade’s End regularly associate horses with Sylvia Tietjens, whom Christopher ultimately decides to leave in favor of Valentine Wannop. General Campion, for instance, reflects in No More Parades that he “ha[s] always found [Sylvia] the soul of honour, straight as a die, straight as she rode to hounds”; and Sylvia herself tells Christopher in Some Do Not... that since “[he] know[s] what it is to ride a horse for miles with too tight a curb-chain and its tongue cut almost in half,” he might have the decency to reflect that he has “ridden [her] like that for seven years” and to “[t]hink of this mare’s mouth sometimes!” (411, 173, original emphasis). Perhaps the most important connection between Sylvia and horses occurs in the final novel of the tetralogy, when she approaches the bed-ridden and mute Mark Tietjens. First imagining that Mark has declared aloud, “You poor bitch! You poor bitch! The riding has done it!” and then hinting to the now-pregnant Valentine Wannop that her fondness for riding has prohibited her from having another child with Christopher, Sylvia implies that her love of horses, which originally united her to her husband, has, in the aftermath of the very unfeudal Great War, made her an unfit companion for him (808). Indeed, the conclusion Sylvia draws becomes all the more powerful when we recognize that Valentine, Christopher’s new love interest and a former slavey, not only tells him as early as 1912 that she is “afraid of [horses]” but also mocks his feudal values by remarking that all he “want[s] [is] to be an English country gentleman and [to] spin principles out of the newspapers and the gossip of horse-fairs” (133, 135).
Although Christopher does not make his final decision to live with Valentine until months after his conversation with the General, that conversation does suggest that he is becoming accustomed to the idea of living outside the social tradition into which he was born. In particular, his remark that he has made the mistake of “belong[ing] to the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries in the twentieth” and of taking the English “public school’s ethical system seriously” underscores his realization that the world no longer operates on the principles that have guided his conduct (490). Nevertheless, the step between contemplating the violation of social norms and acting on that contemplation is one that Christopher is unprepared to take until *A Man Could Stand Up*—-, the third volume of the tetralogy. Opening on Armistice Day in 1918, *A Man Could Stand Up*— proves even more remarkable than *No More Parades* in the ways that it links the homefront and the front lines and connects the narrative turn toward interior monologue with the progression of the war. In the first place, the volume begins by entering Valentine Wannop’s consciousness, which, outside of short passages in *Some Do Not...*, has received no attention in the tetralogy. In adding Valentine’s consciousness to the others that have already been tracked in *Parade’s End*, Ford already goes some way toward suggesting that World War I, having obliterated stable social and political orders, is driving not only soldiers but also civilians increasingly into the confines of their minds. Yet the twists and turns of Valentine’s anxious thoughts in the first part of the novel do not take on their full force until the volume’s second part, where Ford, returning to a time some months before the Armistice, reveals Christopher’s disordered and disturbing reflections on the possible outcomes of the war. One of Ford’s most brilliant strokes in the tetralogy is not only to re-enter his protagonist’s consciousness for a final time just before the Germans’ 1918 Spring Offensive but also to have Christopher’s final renunciation of feudal principles and his acceptance of Valentine as a possible lover coincide precisely with a tense forty-five-minute period before a German barrage.

Drawing attention to the significance of this forty-five-minute period in *Ford Madox Ford: Prose and Politics*, Robert Green suggests that Ford aims to establish “a close
correspondence between art’s time and life’s” (159). More specifically, he argues that, by “juggling with time’s two forms—one a donnée, the other created by the writer alone—”23 Ford wishes to underscore the “removal of authenticity from the public world” and that authenticity’s “lodgment instead in the private and subjective [realm]” (160). For Green, the temporal compression across the tetralogy is Ford’s strategy for relocating his characters and readers in the time of the mind:

With each succeeding novel [in Parade’s End] a shorter period [of time] has been ‘covered’, and, assuming that our reading speed is roughly constant throughout the four texts, this means that the relation between ‘real’ time and fictive time is changing markedly. In Some Do Not... five years elapse: in No More Parades two days. Now, in between the two kinds of time, the characters’ experiences and our reading of them. In Last Post, indeed, real time is probably longer than fictive time. (159)

Although Green correctly observes that each volume of the tetralogy concentrates on a narrower window of time, his attempt to align the characters’ experience of time with the reader’s time spent reading ignores the complexity of the material within the second part of A Man Could Stand Up—. For what is most startling about the section in which Christopher counts down to the impending barrage is that it forestalls the reader’s attempts to gain traction. Certainly, Christopher’s occasional thoughts about the minutes remaining before the barrage provide the reader a sort of temporal orientation. Yet, in the passages placed between those temporal cues, Ford follows his protagonist’s mind as it considers a dizzying array of topics, including the likelihood of being hit by a shell, the end of the feudal tradition, his commanding officer’s alcoholism, and the prerequisites for Anglican sainthood. If the variety of these topics did not prove sufficiently challenging to digest, Ford also obscures the connections between them by increasing his use of ellipses and by inserting unexpected snatches of dialogue. The overall effect of these combined strategies is not only to slow down the reader’s progress but also to align the time of reading with Christopher’s frequent perception that time has stopped elapsing.

23 The “donnée” about which Green speaks is linear time, in general, and the timeline of the war, in particular.
Furthermore, as a means of signaling the correlation between the duration of the reading process and the duration of the time before the barrage, Ford has his protagonist reflect at several points on the temporal delays that accompany life at the front. Attempting to recall the date of an encounter he had with Sylvia’s former lover, Perowne, for instance, Christopher finds himself reflecting on “the process of eternal waiting that is War”:

That [encounter with Perowne] had been in, presumably, February, and, presumably, it was now April. The way the dawn came up looked like April […] What did it matter? […] That damned truck had stayed under that bridge for two hours and a half […] in the process of the eternal waiting that is War. You hung about and you hung about, and you kicked your heels and you kicked your heels: waiting for Mills bombs to come, or for jam, or for generals, or for tanks, or transport, or the clearance of the road ahead. You waited in offices under the eyes of somnolent orderlies, under fire on the banks of canals, you waited in hotels, dug-outs, tin sheds, ruined houses. There will be no man who survives of His Majesty’s Armed Forces that shall not remember those eternal hours when Time itself stayed still as the true image of bloody War! […] (569, original ellipses in brackets)

If, as this passage suggests, the time of war is largely characterized by stasis, Ford also suggests that this lack of temporal and physical movement coincides with an overwhelming exhaustion. In fact, just moments after the count-down for the barrage has concluded, Christopher observes that even the weapons of war seems to be suffering from fatigue: “A familiar noise said: ‘We....e.....e.....ry!’ Shells always appeared tired of life. As if after a long, long journey they said: ‘Weary!’” (601). That Christopher is anthropomorphizing the German shells to match his own exhaustion becomes clear in his repeated thoughts about his “desire for privacy” and his visions of the purity and freshness of the English countryside (550). Hearing a bugler play a song that reminds him of Herrick and Purcell, for instance, he becomes so wrapped

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24 The encounter with Perowne mentioned here is not the same one that took place in France in No More Parades. As Christopher reveals, he, Perowne, and McKechnie received a movement order to the front at the same time in February 1918. During their trip to the front, Perowne, who laments that he will never see Sylvia Tietjens again, asks Christopher what he thinks death is like. Having assured Perowne that “death was not a very dreadful affair” and that “Death supplied His own anaesthetics,” Christopher discovers that Perowne died the following day: “The Providence of Perowne! For, when he was dug out after, next night having been buring in going up into the trenches, they said, he had a smile like a young baby’s on his face. He didn’t have long to wait and died with a smile on his face [...]” (569).
up in thoughts of English country life, in general, and George Herbert’s seventeenth-century
country life, in particular, that he forgets he has been trying to “[put] heart” into an acting
temporary sergeant-major and begins speaking aloud about the glorious possibility of leaving the
trenches and standing up on a hill in the English countryside (570).

The significance of this last incident rests not so much in what Christopher says as in the
sergeant-major’s response to Christopher’s speech. First remarking that he, too, “want[s] to stand
up” and “to breathe deep after bein’ in a stoopin’ posture for a long time,” the sergeant-major
next declares that Christopher is “a law hunto [him]self” (570). Although Christopher considers
these last words “the most considerable reward [of his military career],” since they give him an
unexpected understanding of how the Other Ranks see him, they also enable him to reflect that, as
a law unto himself, he is no longer accountable to the social laws and traditions that have
heretofore guided his behavior and actions. In particular, he comes to understand that, by putting
aside his “Tory prejudice,” including his belief that “[m]oney comes into gentlemen as air
through petals and foliage,” he can begin planning a life with Valentine Wannop after the war
(605, 589).

In the subsequent pages of the second part of A Man Could Stand Up—, Christopher
ultimately decides to accept command of the battalion from his drunken colonel and to earn two
hundred fifty pounds in the process, which he intends to put “towards living with Valentine
Wannop—when you really could stand up on a hill [...] anywhere!” (613, original emphasis and
ellipses). Yet this decision comes too late. Learning from McKechnie, his under-officer, that
General Campion is expected at the front at any moment, Christopher initially greets this news as
a positive sign that the Home Cabinet has finally approved a single command and has thus put a
stop to the “mug’s game” that is “the war of attrition” (618). Yet, in contemplating that the end
of trench warfare will come at the cost of exposing the Army’s “heel of Achilles”—that is, its
deficient system of communications—Christopher neglects to consider that the General’s arrival
will also expose his own Achilles heel: his personal inability to communicate successfully with
his superiors. More than ignoring this weakness in his character, Christopher fails to remember that it was the General who, some ten months earlier during the Hotchkiss affair, refused to have him under his command and sent him to die at the front. When the General does arrive at the front, then, Christopher is shocked to learn that, instead of taking over command from the drunken colonel, he is being sent back to the lines of communication, where, somewhat paradoxically, the General hopes to hear nothing from him.

Although Christopher later reflects that he will write a letter to Brigade about the General “importing personal enmity into service matters,” we learn in the third part of A Man Could Stand Up—that he has done no such thing (644). What’s more, we discover that the General’s abominable treatment of Christopher, which seems partially attributable to his romantic interest in Sylvia Tietjens, has continued even after the Spring Offensive. As Christopher reflects on Armistice Day,

Campion during his leave had taken up his quarters at Groby [the Tietjens family estate]. [Christopher] did not suppose that Sylvia had become his mistress. It was improbable in the extreme. Unthinkable!...But in that communication trench [ten months earlier] he had not told Tietjens that he had been at Groby. He had said ‘London,’ specifically.

That might be an adulterer’s guilty conscience but it was more likely that he did not want Tietjens to know that he had been under Sylvia’s influence. He had gone for Tietjens bald-headed, beyond all reason for a Commander-in-Chief speaking to a Battalion Commander...

Campion had afterwards taken back his words very handsomely—with a sort of distant and lofty depreciation. He had even said that Tietjens had deserved a decoration, but that there were only a certain number of decorations now to be given and that he imagined that Tietjens would prefer it to be given to a man to whom it would be of more advantage...He said this before members of his staff...And he went on, rather pompously, that he was going to employ Tietjens on a very responsible and delicate duty. He had been asked by H.M. Government to put the charge over all enemy prisoners between Army H.Q. and the sea in charge of an officer of an exceptionally trustworthy nature, of high social position and weight...

So Tietjens had lost all chance of distinction, command pay, cheerfulness, or even equanimity. And all tangible proof that he had saved life under fire—if the clumsy mud-bath of his incompetence could be called saving life under fire. He could go
on being discredited by Sylvia till kingdom come, with nothing
to show on the other side but the uncreditable fact that he had
been a gaoler....(666-7, original emphasis)

Although Christopher is rightly concerned that that General has given him the job of escorting prisoners in order to obscure his actual military contributions, he also finds his final post of the war distasteful for more immediate reasons. Before being sent back to the lines of communication by the General, for instance, he reflects that “prisoners affected him with the sense that they were unclean. As if they were maggots”; moreover, he considers that those in charge of escorting prisoners are, as much as the prisoners themselves, reduced to something less than human: “[His feeling of nausea] was no doubt the product of his passionate Tory sense of freedom. When, then, a man was deprived of freedom he became like a brute. To exist in his society was to live with brutes, like Gulliver amongst the Houyhnhnms!” (619, 620).

In having Christopher make allusion to Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* when pondering the fate of prisoners and their keepers, Ford both answers and alters a previous Swiftian reference within the text. Some forty-five pages earlier, Christopher considers “the agreeable irony of Providence,” which has placed him in the position McKechnie wants and McKechnie in the position he wants, and contemplates that his job is made “all the worse [because McKechnie and his ‘pals’ are] all, with the exception of the Commanding Officer himself, of the little, dark, Cockney type” (574). Musing at that time that he “[feels] himself like a blond Gulliver...rising up amongst a lot of Lilliputian brown creatures,” Christopher returns in thought to *Gulliver’s Travels* some ten minutes later only to have skipped from Gulliver’s

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25 The final line of the second quotation is odd, since we would expect Christopher to equate his time as a gaoler with Gulliver’s time among the Yahooos, not the Houyhnhnms. Three readings of this line are therefore possible. First, Ford could simply have confused the Houyhnhnms and Yahooos when drafting the novel and looking over the proofs. Second, Christopher, who is awaiting the German barrage when he has this thought, could have been sufficiently disoriented to mistake the Houyhnhnms for the Yahooos. The third and most radical reading would be that Christopher actually does consider the Houyhnhnms, not the Yahooos, as the “brutes” in the fourth book of *Gulliver’s Travels*. Among other things, this would mean that Christopher objects to the rigidity, rationalism, and intolerance of the Houyhnhnms. Because Christopher is elsewhere so fond of horses—and is willing to get into significant trouble at the thought of their mistreatment—and because, as a mathematician, he sets great store by reason, it therefore seems unlikely that he would view the Houyhnhnms, not the Yahooos, as the brutes in Swift’s novel.
adventures in Lilliput to his final experiences in Houyhnhnm-Land (574). In thus eliding the middle two parts of Swift’s satire, he not only accelerates Gulliver’s narrative but also foreshadows the speed at which his own degrading narrative fate is becoming assured. Indeed, the particular allusions he makes to Gulliver’s Travels underscore the degree of that degradation: like the Gulliver of Lilliput, Christopher begins the tetralogy by underestimating his size and strength and therefore getting into serious but well-intentioned debacles; by the end of A Man Could Stand Up—, however, when he has had charge of German prisoners, Christopher more closely resembles the Gulliver of Houyhnhnm-Land, who, having been irreversibly assaulted in his pride, thereafter believes himself less than the beasts he has been accustomed to curry and ride: horses.

If Christopher’s allusions to Gulliver’s Travels effectively unite several themes of Ford’s tetralogy, those allusions also point to the similarity between Swift and Ford’s politics and their satiric projects. As Christian Thorne suggests when speaking of Tory satirists such as Swift, “The Tory polemics of the early eighteenth century [were] a virtual combinatory of seventeenth-century discourses, drawing on Thomas Hobbes and James Harrington in equal proportion, weaving together humanist notions of virtue with an absolutist insistence that social authority be unitary and incontestable” (535). Because Tory satirists had perceived the rise of Robert Walpole’s government as the death knell of Toryism, they chose to “transform the republican vision of a more or less egalitarian and open-ended politics into a disaffected myth of English patriotism and class prerogative, in which republicanism takes the guise of a strident, splenetic antimodernity” (535, 536). According to Thorne, writers such as Swift and Pope thus became “the self-proclaimed opponents of print and the public sphere” and evinced a “common loathing of discourse—not a particular discourse but discourse as such, the very procedure of public

26 Here, I am thinking of Gulliver extinguishing the fire in the Lilliputian empress’s apartments by urinating on them, which happens in the fifth chapter of Part I. As for Christopher’s size and strength, he draws attention to these attributes as the only ones that are worth anything after the outbreak of the war. In a conversation with Valentine in 1915, after she asks whether he really must go to the front, Christopher responds, “No! There’s no other course. One is either a body or a brain these affairs. I supposed I’m more brain than body. I suppose so. Perhaps I’m not. But my conscience won’t let me use by brain in this service. So I’ve a great, hulking body!” (237).
argument” (533, 567). Moreover, to the end of “demonstrat[ing] how easily the rhetoric of ratiocination [could be] manipulated,” the Tory satirists sought “to empty public knowledge of its suasiveness and thus to deny the tools of persuasion to those whose business it [was] to persuade” (537). For just these reasons, Thorne argues, eighteenth-century Tory satire “never sets out to persuade anybody of anything”: “Unwilling to participate in the game of persuasion, satire, whether in the form of Swiftian mimicry or Popish mock-heroics, becomes an attempt to evoke, through a series of negative gestures, an ideal that can no longer be positively articulated” (539).

As noted earlier, Ford considered both himself and Christopher Tietjens to be inheritors of the Tory tradition valued by Swift. The connection between Ford and Swift, however, stretches beyond their politics to include their particular satirical agendas. As Thorne explains, the Tory satirists of the eighteenth century were dependent on political patronage as soon as they rejected the emerging print market; in consequence, their critique of politics, not to mention their “critique of critique,” became so paradoxical that they were more often than not inclined to suggest that “[c]riticism…[was] justifiable only when bent on its own destruction” (538, 539). Although Ford, a lover of notoriety and public praise, had fewer qualms about the literary marketplace than his eighteenth-century predecessor, Parade’s End does resemble Swift’s satiric works to the extent that it seems to aim at its own silencing. By this, I mean that Ford, in dramatizing the shift from critical dialogue to interior monologue during and after World War I, begins to suggest not only that his characters’ political and social criticism is unacceptable in the wake of the war but also that his own satirical project, anchored as it is in that same order of criticism, might be as unwelcome or ineffective as his characters’ speech. If a fundamental difference exists between Ford’s satire and Swift’s, then, it lies in their valuation of what “public argument” should be able to achieve. While Swift, at least on Thorne’s account, experienced a “loathing…[for] the very procedure of public argument” even as he continued to make his satirical arguments public, Ford, by way of Christopher Tietjens, implies that public argument, though once useful in shaping the direction of English politics and society, serves no viable purpose
during and after the Great War. Christopher, after all, is effectively silenced every time he tries to argue for a change in English policy or procedure: when he protests the faking of figures at the Imperial Department of Statistics, he manages to avoid his firing only by enlisting in the army; when he argues for the rightness of a single command while serving as a liaison with the French, the military authorities cite his shell-shock as a reason for ending his liaison duties; and when he objects to the behavior of General O’Hara and Lieutenant Hotchkiss, his godfather sends him to the front lines with the hope that, by stopping a bullet, Christopher might also stop speaking.

If Ford is invested in demonstrating that the war coincides with the suppression of public argument and the unlikelihood of meaningful social and political change, he also wishes to underscore that, in the absence of an argumentative forum, individuals are driven into the confines of their minds, where they carry out silent, but no less costly, wars against both friends and enemies. This dimension of the tetralogy emerges most clearly in its final volume, *The Last Post*. Before I turn to that volume, however, a word needs to be said about its literary critical reception, or lack thereof. Set in the southern English countryside some years after the conclusion of the war, *The Last Post* revolves around the consciousnesses of a cluster of characters, including Mark Tietjens, his mistress, Marie-Léonie, Sylvia Tietjens, and Valentine Wannop. Largely because the novel has a pastoral setting, critics have tended to view it as a mistake on Ford’s part, one that shows the author, in his final years, becoming disappointingly sentimental. In an endnote to his article on *Parade’s End*, for instance, Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy remarks that he will not be discussing *The Last Post* in his main text, since “[the volume’s] post-war pastoral merits a separate analysis”; meanwhile, Robert Green, though briefly discussing the novel, contends that “[c]alm seems too easily won in *The Last Post*”: “[T]he moral and experiential vitality [of the earlier volumes]...is noticeably absent from *Last Post*, a novel markedly free of tension, uncertainty and moral conflict” (McCarthy 197; Green 164). In overlooking or underestimating the last volume of *Parade’s End*, critics such as McCarthy and Green seem to have been as much influenced by Ford’s retrospective evaluation of the novel as
by their own readings of it. Approached about a one-volume reprint of Parade’s End in 1930, Ford famously declared that he “strongly wish[ed] to omit the Last Post from the edition,” since he “[did] not like the book and [had] never liked it” (Ford as qtd. in Mizener 509). Yet, as Arthur Mizerner points out, Ford’s sentiments about the volume in 1930 differed drastically from his feelings during the novel’s drafting and immediately after its publication: “[Ford] began Last Post the minute he finished A Man Could Stand Up—, without being urged by anyone; when he finished it he thought very highly of it.”

Regardless of Ford’s later feelings about The Last Post and the critical tendency to disregard the volume, the novel does provide a fitting conclusion to Parade’s End. This fittingness lies precisely in Ford’s suggestion that his characters are doing the opposite of what critics such as Green claim: they are living post-war lives full of, not “free of tension, uncertainty and moral conflict.” That The Last Post is not as rosy as its pastoral setting might suggest becomes clear when one places its opening against the conclusion of A Man Could Stand Up—. In that earlier volume, Christopher and Valentine seek each other out on Armistice Day to begin their life together. More than wishing to consummate their relationship sexually, however, the pair desire to talk to each other at length and without interruption. For her part, Valentine ponders that she will have to live with Christopher in the post-war period, since “you can’t talk unless you live together”; Christopher, meanwhile, tells Valentine’s mother over the phone and in Valentine’s hearing, “One has desperate need. Of talk” (651, 659). In speaking to Mrs. Wannop as he does, Christopher is airing thoughts that he first arrived at in the second part of A Man Could Stand Up—. Just before accepting command of the battalion from the drunken colonel, for instance, he makes much the same connection between cohabitation and conversation that Valentine makes in the novel’s third part:

The beastly Huns! They stood between him and Valentine Wannop. If they would go home he could be sitting talking to her for whole afternoons. That was what a young woman was for. You seduced a young woman in order to be able to finish your talks with her. You could not do that without living with her.
You could not live with her without seducing her; but that was the by-product. The point is that you can’t otherwise talk. You can’t finish talks at street corners; in museums; even in drawing-rooms. You mayn’t be in the mood when she is in the mood—for the intimate conversation that means the final communion of your souls. You have to wait together—for a week, for a year, for a lifetime, before the final intimate conversation may be attained [...] and exhausted. (629, original ellipses in brackets)

Reminiscent of John Dowell’s remark in *The Good Soldier* that Edward Ashburnham “wanted long passages of deep affection kept up in long, long talks,” this passage leads the reader to expect that Christopher and Valentine’s post-war life will be characterized by mutually uplifting conversation. With the opening of *The Last Post*, however, that expectation is immediately challenged, since the final volume commences not by following Christopher or Valentine but by entering the consciousness of Mark Tietjens, who is both bed-ridden and mute. Although the cause of Mark’s condition is, on his doctors’ account, a “fulminant hemiplegia,” he and his mistress, Marie Léonie, reflect at different points in the novel that his silence is a willed protest against both the terms of the Armistice and his younger brother’s refusal to take possession of Groby, the Tietjens family estate (688). As he lies in an convalescent hut outside Christopher’s house in southern England, for instance, Mark applauds himself for not having spoken a word since he received news that the Allies had decided not to take Berlin, a failure of action that he considers both “an intellectual sin” and a sign of “mental cowardice” (775).

Moreover, he recalls with satisfaction that, on the morning of Armistice Day, he told Christopher, who had resolved never to “own a yard of Groby land” or to “touch a penny of Groby money,” that “he would never speak to him again” (737, 735).²⁷

²⁷ The reasons for Christopher’s refusal to take over Groby or to accept money from the estate are complex. As noted earlier, Mark Tietjens asks his roommate Ruggles to investigate Christopher’s financial and personal affairs some time in 1915 or 1916. Ruggles eventually compiles a dossier on Christopher, which suggests that he has gotten into a great deal debt, has “sold” Sylvia to various rich men, and has had an affair with and an illegitimate child by Valentine Wannop (739). Mark eventually presents this news to his father, who, on both Mark’s and Christopher’s accounts, dies of shame and grief. As the youngest of the Tietjens children, Christopher would never have stood to inherit Groby. Mark, however, wants nothing to do with the estate, and during the course of the war, two of his brothers are killed at Gallipoli before having any heirs. Moreover, his sister Mary, who was “a maîtresse femme if ever there was one,” dies during the war as a Red Cross matron (737). These circumstances mean that Christopher, the only Tietjens with an heir, is slated to take over the estate, which he refuses to do because of Ruggles’s report.
Despite priding himself on having remained silent, Mark does maintain a degree of sympathy for his brother. Thinking back to the time before the Armistice, he inwardly praises Christopher for having refused “to deal treacherously with our Allies” (745). As he reflects, he himself had found it “extremely distasteful...to take pay...from a Government” that intended “to dish the French”; indeed, had he “not believed that his services were indispensable to the successful prosecution of the war,” he would “thankfully have resigned from his office.” In addition, considering both England’s post-war state and Christopher’s “fantastic” decision “to make a living out of [selling] old furniture,” Mark discovers that, despite his best efforts, he can arrive at no convincing argument to support his brother’s “re-entry…into the service of the country” (744, 747, 745):

As he saw things, public life had become—and must remain for a long period—so demoralized by the members of the then Government with their devious foreign policies and their intimacies with a class of shady financiers such as had never hitherto had any finger in the English political pie—public life had become so discreditable an affair that the only remedy was for the real governing classes to retire altogether from public pursuits. Things in short must become worse before they could grow better. With the dreadful condition of ruin at home and foreign discredit to which the country must almost immediately emerge under the conduct of the Scotch grocers, Frankfort financiers, Welsh petitfoggers, Midland armament manufacturers and South Country incompetents who during the later years of the war had intrigued themselves into office—with that dreadful condition staring it in the face, the country must return to something like its old standards of North Country common sense and English probity. The old governing class to which he and his belonged might never return to power but, whatever revolutions took place—and he did not care!—the country must return to exacting of whoever might be its governing class some semblance of personal probity and public honouring of pledges. (745-6)

Although this passage ends with Mark’s resignation to his own class’s extinction and with his support for a revival of personal probity and public honor in any quarter, the rest of his thoughts in The Last Post suggest that neither the current nor the deposed governing class will achieve these goals. Reflecting that those who served in the war are being “chivvied to hell by a
civilian population who abhor[s] them,” Mark also considers that Christopher’s success as an antiques dealer is entirely dependent on “the American mopping up of the world’s gold supply and the consequent stripping of European houses of old stuff” (751, 744). As if to confirm Mark’s suspicions that England is deteriorating both under its own steam and at the hands of the Americans, Ford has a variety of troublesome characters visit his bedside. Among these are Christopher’s son, who “passe[s] his, Mark’s comprehension” by being both “a Papist and a Marxian-Communist,” and an American millionairess named Mrs. de Bray Pape, who, having taken up residence at Groby, insists that “the soul of [Madame de] Maintenon [has] returned to earth in her body”\textsuperscript{28} (832, 719).

Seeing these people at the foot of his bed, Mark realizes that “both Mrs. de Bray Pape and [his nephew] were here because [Sylvia Tietjens] had had another outbreak of [...] practically Sadism”: “They were here so that Christopher might be hurt some more and [Sylvia] not forgotten” (732). Although Mark regards Sylvia as “pestilential” and laments the “sex-madness” that drives her antagonism toward Christopher, he makes no effort to respond to the threat that she and her minions represent (730). In the first place, he considers that, having “chuck[ed] the country-gentleman business” at an early age, he has no obligation to interfere with Mrs. de Bray Pape’s management of Groby or Sylvia’s management of Mrs. de Bray Pape (736). More important than his denial of responsibility, however, is his understanding of the “game” that he and Christopher have been “playing” since the Armistice (736, 760). The “rules” of this game involve neither Mark nor Christopher “giving an order [about Groby]” (761). Despite acknowledging that the game prohibits both him and Christopher from “mak[ing] a real score,” Mark refuses to violate the procedures the brothers have tacitly agreed upon (760). Thus, when

\textsuperscript{28} Because of spatial constraints, I have not described at any length the humor involved in Ford’s satire. Some of the funniest passages, however, concern Mark’s reflections on Mrs. de Bray Pape. Hearing the millionairess declare that Madame de Maintenon’s soul has entered her body, Mark glibly considers that Mrs. de Bray Pape “had had to get a soul from somewhere” (719). Several pages later, when the American lady announces that she “very decidedly dislike[s]” Marie Antoinette, who, on her account, “had behaved with great ingratitude to Madame de Maintenon,” Mark also reflects that that “must have been difficult,” since “[s]urely the Maintenon was a hundred years before the other” (723).
Mrs. de Bray Pape asks Mark whether she may have Groby Great Tree, “the symbol of Tietjens,” cut down, he shows signs of neither dissent nor approval; indeed, he chooses not to speak despite his knowledge that Christopher “set[s] great store by the tree” and “would pull the house down if he thought it incommode[d] the tree” (733).

If Mark and Christopher’s “game” effectively stops all communication between them, the consequences of their silent war also extend outward. When *The Last Post* enters Valentine Wannop’s consciousness, for instance, it becomes clear that the rules constraining Mark and Christopher’s conduct equally constrain her ability to speak freely to her lover. Reflecting on her pregnancy and thinking that, above all else, she wants her child to “lie gazing at what his mother had seen whilst she was awaiting him,” Valentine considers the possibility of asking Christopher whether she can keep the curtains in her bedroom (810). Almost immediately after considering this possibility, however, she reasons that she will “go...on to the end with her longings unvoiced,” since her house is a “show-place” for furniture-hunting Americans who have some right to “peek into the nursery” before purchasing items from her husband. Moreover, overhearing Mrs. de Bray Pape talk about the removal of Groby Great Tree, Valentine ponders threatening legal action against the millionairess but instead locks herself into her room: “And she was aware that why, really, she had sprung to [lock] the door rather than to [yell out] the window, had been that she had not desired to make an unfair move in that long chess game; on behalf of Christopher... [Threatening Mrs. de Bray Pape] would not have been jonnock. That would have been to interfere in the silent Northern struggle between the brothers. That she would never do, even to save Christopher’s reason” (818).

That the couple so desirous of “TALK!” in the previous volume of the tetralogy has suffered a breakdown in communication testifies to the lasting consequences of the war in the post-war period (651). More specifically, Ford indicates in *The Last Post* that the anxiety caused by the war has become the normal state of affairs for both former soldiers and civilians, all of whom have been silenced by military, social, and political upheaval. Aside from pointing to the
spread of anxiety caused by the war, however, Ford also suggests that, in the post-war period, interior monologue is the only technique that allows authors to capture individuals’ retreats into the confines of their anxious minds. This connection between the war and troubled interiority is perhaps most pronounced in Ford’s characterization of Christopher in *The Last Post*. As the reader learns early in the novel, Christopher, having two days earlier traveled to Groby in Yorkshire, is not at the house in southern England but is expected to return at any minute. The anxiety that the main characters feel about his return is, of course, heightened first by the presence of his son and Mrs. de Bray Pape and later by the arrival of Sylvia Tietjens. Even before these visitors make contact with members of the Tietjens household, however, both Valentine and Mark give signs of their unease about Christopher’s return. This they do by registering the sounds of approaching airplanes. For his part, Mark first laments that Christopher, in an attempt to attract American tourists, has purchased a house “so near a confounded air-station”; he then considers that his “poor old” brother is “probably at that very minute in one of those beastly machines overhead, coming back from Groby” (760). Valentine similarly connects the sounds of the planes with Christopher’s imminent arrival, especially since “the day before yesterday when [Christopher] had been almost out of his mind about the letting of Groby he had suddenly looked up at an aeroplane and had remained looking at it for long, silent [...]” (812).

In having Valentine and Mark align Christopher with unseen but clearly heard airplanes, Ford skillfully underscores the domestication of wartime experience in the aftermath of the Great War. On the one hand, in choosing not to have Christopher himself appear until the final two pages of the novel, Ford has the sounds of the airplanes take the place of his protagonist’s speech and thoughts, both of which had previously received direct representation in the dialogue and interior monologue of the earlier volumes of the tetralogy. On the other hand, in having his characters’ anxiety about Christopher’s return coincide with the sounds of the planes, Ford reinflects Christopher’s own thoughts about the menace of aerial warfare in *A Man Could Stand Up*—. In that earlier volume, as Christopher ponders why the Germans are taking so long to
storm the British trenches, he considers that the delay might be the result of “our people...sending over the planes, whose immense droning was then making your very bones vibrate” (605).

Reflecting that the planes serve the ironic purpose of “tell[ing] the Huns that [the British] are ready to be surprised,” Christopher goes on the conclude that the planes provide the most harrowing experiences of the war: “So we sent out those deathly, dreadful things to run along just over the tops of hedgerows, in spite of all the guns! For there was nothing more terrifying in the whole war than that span of lightness, swaying, approaching, a few feet above the heads of your column of men: instinct with wrath, dispensing the dreadful rain!”

For the reader of both *A Man Could Stand Up*— and *The Last Post*, a deep irony thus accompanies Valentine and Mark’s association of the airplane with Christopher. Just as Christopher had viewed airplanes during the war as engines of death and wrath, Valentine and Mark, some years after the war’s conclusion, view the approaching planes as a sign of Christopher’s wrathful and anxiety-producing return. Most chilling, however, is that the airplane, though converted into a means of mass transportation in the post-war period, is still perceived as an overhead menace, despite the fact that the end of the war was supposed to enable soldiers to emerge from the trenches and “to stand up on a bleedin’ ‘ill” (570). If that promise’s unfulfilled status is not sufficiently clear in Valentine and Mark’s tortured thoughts, it most certainly becomes evident when Christopher finally arrives on the scene carrying a chunk of Groby Great Tree under his arm. In addition to the chunk of the tree, Christopher also presents his brother with a case of stuffed sea-birds, a case that elicits Christopher’s only remarks in the entirety of *The Last Post*: “‘Half Groby wall is down,’” Christopher tells Mark, “‘Your bedroom’s wrecked. I found your case of sea-birds thrown on a rubble heap.’”

Aside from being the only speech Christopher offers in *The Last Post*, his comments about the case of sea-birds also return us to Mark’s earlier reflection that that case is “[p]robably…the only memorial to him, Mark Tietjens, at Groby” (829). That this case now lies atop the “rubble heap,” no doubt accompanied by the other chunks sawn off Groby Great Tree,
signals not only that Mark’s sole contribution to the family estate has been disposed of but also
that the entire tradition of that estate has been unceremoniously committed to the trash. For his
part, Mark receives the news of the bird-case with typical sarcasm, reflecting to himself that “[i]t
was as well that one’s services were unforgettable!” (835). Yet he is so startled by Christopher’s
haggard appearance and by Valentine’s decision to rebuke her lover for neglecting the antiques
business during his trip to Groby that he resolves to speak to Valentine in order to spare his
brother additional pain. Repeating the lyrics of a song that his nurse had sung to him as a child,
Mark urges Valentine “[n]ever…[to] let [her] barnie weep for [her] sharp tongue to [her]
Goodman,” and, having spoken these words, immediately dies.

On one level, Mark’s concluding gesture seems to signal a positive change in the
characters’ state of affairs. Returning to the lyrics of the Yorkshire song, Mark dies having
aligned himself with the tradition he has rejected throughout the volume. Moreover, his decision
to speak at all demonstrates a compassion for his brother that is foreign to the “rules of the game”
established between them. On another level, however, this final scene of the novel underscores
the irreversibility of the positions in which the characters find themselves. Having previously
reflected that Sylvia, by incautiously allowing Groby Great Tree to be cut down, will “drop into
the sea in the wake of [the Tietjens] family vessel,” Mark decides to speak only after Sylvia has
cast the final die for Christopher’s sanity and obliterated the “vessel” of tradition that was
supposed to leave her behind (830). More problematic still is Mark’s decision to speak to
Valentine, not his brother, and to offer her advice that the novel has already diagnosed as
dangerous. Certainly, Valentine receives Mark’s final words about wifely silence by admitting
that she needed to hear them more than Marie Léonie, who is absent from the scene of Mark’s
death. Yet, by encouraging Valentine to hold her tongue when she feels critical of her lover’s
conduct, Mark essentially returns her to the position she was in before her outburst to
Christopher—that is, he metaphorically locks her back up in her bedroom and advises her to
continue staring in silent discontent at the objects that are soon to be sold to the likes of Mrs. de
Bray Pape. Despite seeming to break with the tetralogy’s tendency to replace dialogue with interior monologue, then, Mark’s final speech actually reinforces the movement toward tortured reflection charted across Parade’s End.

In ending the tetralogy in this fashion, Ford reaffirms the connection he has already established between the content of his fiction and its structure. Allowing his work to increase in length while its narration decreases in dialogue, he makes his novel’s form replicate his characters’ experience of a war that both seemed without end and seemed to put an end to a particular social order and way of being. At the same time, by replacing his characters’ pre-war polemical speech with their post-war impotence and silence, Ford demonstrates that the inward turn his characters make during and because of the Great War carries over into the post-war period with nefarious consequences. Far from celebrating his characters’ interiority, then, Ford suggests that the anxiety-producing experience of the war—a war that toppled socially agreed-upon norms and challenged social and political traditions—causes individuals to retreat into their minds, where, despite their best efforts, they find not solace but more anxiety.

That the war has successfully infiltrated the characters’ minds and influenced the directions of their thoughts becomes clearest in one of Valentine’s final reflections. Having spent the majority of the novel assuring herself that Christopher is “always right” in his predictions about the direction of the country, even if his rightness remains unverifiable for years, Valentine considers the fate of her unborn child (815). Recalling that Christopher intends his son to become a parson like George Herbert, Valentine reasons that her lover must believe in Providence, since he would otherwise “not dream for his little Chrissie a country parsonage.” Yet, as she subsequently tries to arrive at the name of Herbert’s parish, her reflections about a divine, just, and benevolent deity suffer under the weight of an unintended allusion she makes to World War I:

[Christopher] proposed, if they ever made any money, to buy a living for [Chrissie] – if possible near Salisbury. […] What was the name of the place […] a pretty name? […] Buy a living where George Herbert had been parson….Bremersyde […] No that was the home of the Haigs […] Tide what will and tide what
tide, there shall be Haigs at Bremersyde. [...] Perhaps it was Bemersyde! [...] Bemerton, then. George Herbert, rector of Bemerton, near Wilton, Salisbury. [...] That was what Chrissie was to be like….If the country would stand it! [...] (814, original ellipses in brackets)

As the proliferation of ellipses in this passage suggests, the considered and peaceful reflection that Valentine and Christopher associate with George Herbert and the seventeenth century has, in the wake of World War I, been replaced by a breathless and anxiety-ridden rumination. More worrisome than the interruptions in and reversals of Valentine’s thoughts, however, is her unintended replacement of Bemerton with Bremersyde, home of the Haigs, a slip that implies the anachronistic nature of Christopher’s plans for his son. For while the country might “stand” another General Haig—who, despite being known as “Butcher Haig,” was revered for his successes late in World War I and excused for his early debacles—it no longer has the intact tradition, much less the opportunity, to “stand” another George Herbert. Instead, with the Haigs safely installed once again in Scotland, all England seems fit for after the war are furniture-hunting and estate-leasing Americans, who, like Mrs. de Bray Pape, aim to “giv[e] lessons in history to the dissolute aristocracy…for their own good, resent it how they might” (726).

29 Ford’s use of ellipses goes a good way toward showing the anxiety of this passage, but in context, Valentine’s anxiousness becomes even clearer. Several paragraphs before this one, she contemplates the airplane overhead and, from there, immediately shifts to thoughts about Groby Great Tree. As she reflects, over the preceding two days, Christopher had been “almost out of his mind about Groby and Groby Great Tree,” and his anxiety had caused him to have night terrors about the war: “Bringt dem Hauptmann eine Kerze [...] Bring the Major a candle,” he would shout dreadfully beside her in the blackness. And she would know that he was remembering the sound of picks in the earth beneath the trenches. And he would groan and sweat dreadfully and she would not dare to wake him [...] (813). Immediately following her reflections on Christopher’s night terrors, Valentine recalls meeting a “little, imploring, eyeless soldier boy” who had been under Christopher’s command during the war, and that memory, in its turn, leads her to reflect on Providence: “You would almost say there was a Provvy who delighted to torment you.” The idea of Providence, of course, triggers her thoughts about George Herbert’s parsonage. All these reflections take place in seven paragraphs that spread over two pages.

30 Douglas Haig commanded the BEF from 1915 until the end of the war. Under his command, the BEF suffered nearly two million casualties, which earned Haig his nickname. The leader of forces at the Battle of the Somme, Haig has been both applauded and denounced by critics since the end of the war. Ford, however, may have had Haig in mind while crafting General Campion, since the General tells Christopher the following in No More Parades before sending him to Puffles’s unit: “I was called Butcher Campion in South Africa, just as Gatacre was called Backacher…It’s the proudest tribute any commander of men can have [...] To be called Butcher and have your men follow you in spite of it. It show confidence, and it gives you, as commander, confidence! [...] One has to be prepared to lose men in hundreds at the right minute in order to avoid losing them in tens of thousands at the wrong!” (474).
Late in his life and reflecting on his life’s work, Ford claimed that *The Good Soldier* was his “best book technically, unless you read the Tietjens books as one novel, in which case the whole design appears” (Ford as qtd. in Schorer viii). Just after making this remark, however, Ford qualified it by noting that “the Tietjens books will probably ‘date’ a good deal, whereas the other may—and indeed need—not.” Although Ford never explained why he believed *Parade’s End* would not have the lasting popularity of his pre-war novel, the accuracy of his prediction seems to depend on two interrelated factors. First, the heightened historical specificity of his satiric tetralogy, not to mention its extreme length, makes *Parade’s End* difficult to penetrate for readers who are unfamiliar with the details of England’s experience of the Great War and its aftermath. Second, the narrative techniques that Ford uses in *Parade’s End*, though seeming to pick up where the author’s earlier literary impressionism left off, are used to the satirical end of illustrating the troublesome origins and consequences of individuals’ inward turns in the wake of the war. For critics who have already determined that Ford’s aesthetics privilege “the reality of the individual consciousness,” endorse “an increasingly radical egoism,” and demonstrate the “lodgment [of the authentic] in the private and subjective [realm],” *Parade’s End* thus presents a serious obstacle, since, far from privileging subjectivity, it suggests that interior monologue is the only way to represent impoverished existence (Heldman 283; Levenson 132; Green 160). In contrast, *The Good Soldier*, while certainly underscoring the connection between impressionism and isolation, can nevertheless be read as a novel that accords with established critical views of Ford’s subjectivist aesthetics, even if such readings require critics to ignore the social, political, and historical particulars that Ford embeds in that novel.

To appreciate the development of Ford’s fiction, then, especially as that development was influenced by the Great War, we need to reevaluate our assumptions about what Fordian impressionism does. In the case of *The Good Soldier*, we need to consider that Ford’s use of impressionist techniques in capturing Dowell’s thought process is designed to achieve the goals that Frye has aligned with second-phase satire: namely, “[the] breaking up [of] the lumber of
stereotypes, fossilized beliefs, superstitious terrors, crank theories, pedantic dogmatisms, oppressive fashions, and all other things that impede the free movement…of society” (233). In the case of Parade’s End, we need to recognize that Ford is not just providing a fictional chronicle of the war but also offering a satirical account of its dynamics and consequences. Through his dramatization of the collapse of public dialogue in the wake of the war and his emphasis on his characters’ inward retreats, Ford manages to write a durational satire that, over its many pages, problematizes traditional accounts of modernism’s dependence on Bergsonesque representations of consciousness. Indeed, by linking social stasis and the ascendancy of techniques for representing the fluidity of consciousness, Ford suggests both that his characters are driven against their wills into silence and confused thought and that those authors who wish faithfully to represent mid- and post-war existence are equally driven, whatever their original inclinations, to adopt the literary techniques that capture that silence and confusion.
CHAPTER TWO

Making the World Safe for Some Mockery: The Post-War Memoirs and Fiction of Geoffrey Keynes, Robert Graves, and Wyndham Lewis

Though generally considered an autobiography, Geoffrey Keynes’s *The Gates of Memory* (1981) is nonetheless difficult to classify generically. As Anthony Storr suggested upon the book’s publication, Keynes’s memoir is “less an autobiography than a valuable piece of social history…a portrait of an age.”¹ At least in part, Storr’s point about *The Gates of Memory* is confirmed by the structure of the book, which, rather than following Keynes’s life in chronological fashion, is divided into a series of chapters covering, among other things, great men, the fine arts, medicine, world war, and bibliography. Indeed, so concerned is Keynes with discussing the particular subjects he has studied and the many influential people he has met that he himself often seems eclipsed in a work that is supposed to be about his life. Yet if Storr is right that the center of *The Gates of Memory* is only in the loosest of ways Geoffrey Keynes, his comment also posits a distinction between autobiography and social history that nevertheless requires probing. For what autobiography is not, in some sense, a social history? And if the boundaries between autobiography and social history can be so easily dissolved, how can we understand *The Gates of Memory*’s characterization of a period that begins in the 1890s and ends in the 1960s?

The pressing nature of these questions becomes apparent when we consider the sheer number of memoirs that emerged during the decades Keynes describes, especially in the aftermath of the two world wars. Writing a memoir of his own in 1937, Wyndham Lewis attested to the flood of such works that had “poured out simultaneously upon the market” in the 1920s and expressed concern that his own belated offering would have to put up a fight if it were to be read at all (*BB* 8). Indeed, in a rejected preface to his memoir, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, he

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¹ This quote, which originally appeared in the *Sunday Times*, is featured on the back cover of the paperback version of *The Gates of Memory*. I have searched many databases to find a copy of the review in which the quote was contained but have been unable to locate one.
lamented not only that his book would have significant competition but also that the kind of language that had been available to earlier memoirists was no longer available to him: “[T]ake Mr. Robert Graves—I have to be prepared to lie on the station bookstall between Mr. Priestley[’s The Good Companions] and [Graves’s] Goodbye to all that! Now a classic bestseller. But obviously where Mr. Graves says “Goodbye to all that”, I have to say “Cheerio to the bloody shoot”, or just “I’m through with all that, buddy!” (186).

Lewis’s concern that Graves’s autobiography, though published nearly a decade before his own, might continue to outsell Blasting and Bombardiering underscores both the success of Good-bye to All That (1929) and the saturation of the literary marketplace with works generically like his own. Aside from the challenge posed by the much-used form of the memoir, however, Lewis also faced the task of differentiating his work from Graves’s on the level of content. Contracted to provide “a memoir of his relations with other writers and authors,” Lewis, who moved in much the same social circle as Graves, had to offer anecdotes about many of the same individuals who had already been described in Good-bye to All That (Smith 182). Although Lewis to some degree avoided the problem of repeating Graves’s content by focusing his “gossip” chapters on James Joyce and Ezra Pound, neither of whom Graves had mentioned, Blasting and Bombardiering ultimately contained similar—and, in some cases, identical—stories about the Bloomsbury Group, the Sitwells, and T.E. Lawrence. What’s more, Lewis dangerously approached territory that Graves had already trod in his decision to dedicate much of his memoir to his experiences of combat during World War I. As Thomas R. Smith notes, Lewis’s eventual decision to write more about the war than about fellow authors and artists necessitated the removal of the early preface in which he had mentioned Graves by name (182). Nevertheless, for the reader of Good-bye to All That, Graves’s presence continues to be felt in Blasting and Bombardiering, since his earlier memoir not only focused on war experience but also did so in much the same jocular manner.
Although Keynes published *The Gates of Memory* over forty years after Lewis published *Blasting and Bombardiering*, his work, no less than Lewis’s, fails to escape the undertow created by *Good-bye to All That*. Indeed, having been mentioned by name in Graves’s memoir, Keynes feels it necessary to correct his predecessor’s account of the pre-war rock-climbing expedition in which he figures:

My grandsons have been amused to find my name appearing in Graves’s entertaining but unreliable work, which they read when it was a set book in their classrooms. Graves said that ‘George [Mallory] was one of the three or four best climbers in climbing history.’ This may have been true, but I have no memory of his being ‘drunk with excitement’ after any of his climbs. Edmund Blunden in a review of Graves’s book…gently exposed the author of this ‘slipshod prose’ as boastful and inaccurate…I have seldom met Graves, the great poet, since that encounter, though we were both at Pen-y-Pass in the spring of 1914 with a party gathered round Geoffrey Young, the most famous climber of an earlier generation. (96)

Questions of boastfulness and inaccuracy aside, Keynes’s decision to devote a chapter to George Mallory in 1981 tellingly repeats Graves’s decision to include a chapter about the mountaineer in 1929. On the one hand, these similar chapters underscore that Keynes, like Lewis, belonged to the same social set as Graves. Indeed, as the remainder of *The Gates of Memory* makes clear, Keynes and Graves not only shared the acquaintance of George Mallory and Geoffrey Young but also the acquaintance of, among others, Siegfried Sassoon, the Sitwells, T.E. Lawrence, Vaughn Williams, Walter de La Mare, and Sir Edmund Gosse. On the other hand, each autobiography’s dedication of a chapter to George Mallory and climbing expeditions suggests that, for a particular class of English men, the pre-war period was defined by certain kinds of social activities and social relationships, most of which were disrupted when World War I broke out. That the war did effectively sever some relationships, even as it allowed other to come into being, is already hinted at in Keynes’s remark that he rarely saw Graves after the spring of 1914. In similar fashion, Lewis, who describes himself, Joyce, Pound, and T.S. Eliot as
“The Men of 1914,” implies that, by the following year, when he alone had seen combat, a fundamental change had taken place in his interactions with these other authors.

If Lewis, Keynes, and Graves each suggest that World War I altered old friendships and did away with a certain way of life, their memoirs also attest to their belief that the war and its aftermath could not be depicted using traditional autobiographical strategies. For his part, Keynes responds to the changed complexion of post-war English society by choosing to pursue the Arnoldian goal of concentrating on the best that has been thought and said in the wake of the war. In an altogether less benevolent spirit, Lewis and Graves opt to reconceive the form of the memoir along satirical lines. More specifically, they import the satiric genre’s critical impulse and tendency toward wit into their autobiographies and thus offer a scathing, if humorous, indictment of both England’s prosecution of the war and its post-war policies and procedures. In writing memoirs with such a clear satirical bent, however, Graves and Lewis choose to forego the corrective prerogative usually associated with satire. By the conclusion of Good-bye to All That, for instance, Graves makes it clear that he is neither willing nor able to change the conduct of England’s political leaders, and, in consequence, he vows “never to make England [his] home again” (343). Meanwhile, Lewis, despite arguing that 1937 seems a better time than 1918 or 1926, ends Blasting and Bombardiering by associating the contemporary moment with a troublesome stasis: “What I like about the new Zeitgeist is that he’s stopped paying any attention to all that—to Anthony Eden and Jack Doyle, Broadribb and Hore Belisha. He’s settling down to wait, like the rest of us. Since he can do nothing in spite of the fact that he’s the Zeitgeist, to alter things, he is making himself at home in this long long ‘pause’ (to use [Léon] Blum’s word)” (340, emphasis added).

In choosing to conclude their memoirs as they do, Lewis and Graves help inaugurate the tradition of durational satire in post-war England. Indeed, Lewis’s autobiography reflects his second step in the direction of durational satire, since his satiric magnum opus, The Apes of God, had been published seven years earlier. In the remainder of this chapter, then, I wish to consider
not only how World War I disrupted existing English social and political norms but also how Graves’s and Lewis’s experiences of the war pushed them in the direction of durational satire. Keynes’s *The Gates of Memory* will serve as a point of contrast in this endeavor, since the author of that memoir, though presenting “a portrait of [his] age,” offers a much different picture of mid- and post-war England than do Graves and Lewis. Finally, toward the conclusion of this chapter, I will turn toward *The Apes of God* in order to consider how Lewis creates a durational satire by fictionalizing his philosophical and critical positions from the mid-1920s. Arguing that Lewis incorporates his earlier polemics from *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926) and *Time and Western Man* (1927) into *The Apes of God* but does so only to call his previous political and aesthetic stances into question, I will conclude this chapter by examining his final critical pronouncements in *Rude Assignment* (1950), his second autobiographical project, which shows him re-evaluating his political positions after not one but two world wars.

**Three Lives: *The Gates of Memory, Good-bye to All That, and Blasting and Bombardiering***

Opening *The Gates of Memory* with a modesty that colors his entire autobiography, Keynes explains that he is hesitant to speak of the “interesting people” he has met, since doing so “sounds too much like performing an exercise in name-dropping, the most unattractive of all occupations, which no one enjoys” (1). Despite this brief hesitation, he immediately proceeds to note that his brother, the economist John Maynard Keynes, is one of the most “important” people he has known and, for that reason, suggests that “a short account of [their] common ancestry may not be out of place.” In the remainder of his first chapter, Keynes does trace his genealogy, though his decision to begin his family history with the first Keynes, or Cahagnes, who came to England with William the Conqueror makes that history anything but “short.” Equally detailed are the author’s subsequent two chapters, which concentrate on his childhood and schooling. In particular, he describes his early relationship with Maynard, whom he considered less as a brother
than as “a superior and somewhat distant being,” and his friendship at Rugby School with Rupert Brooke, who was later known for his war poetry (20). Throughout these chapters, Keynes speaks of his subjects seriously and deviates from his respectful tone only when offering self-deprecating remarks about his intelligence or drawing attention to his acquaintances’ more charming idiosyncrasies.

Like Keynes, Robert Graves also begins his autobiography with a genealogy. Yet, when he begins to describe his earliest memories as “proof of [his] readiness to accept autobiographical convention,” his jesting tone makes it immediately clear that his memoir is of a different species than Keynes’s (1). Whereas Keynes reveals that his first memories are of events that occurred when he was nine or ten years of age, Graves makes the incredible claim that his earliest memory occurred when he was just twenty-three months old: “The first [memory I have] is being loyally held up at the window to watch a procession of decorated carriages and waggons [sic] for Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in [June of] 1897 (this was at Wimbledon, where I had been born on July 24th, 1895)” (1). Because it is highly unlikely that the two-year-old Graves could remember anything at all, let alone the details of Queen Victoria’s procession, the reader is led to suspect that the author has concocted the “memory” of the Diamond Jubilee to ironize his family’s unquestioning dedication to the British Empire. Indeed, the reader’s suspicion about Graves’s ironic motivations is reinforced when the author supplies his next two memories. As he recalls, his second memory was of “gazing upwards with a sort of despondent terror at a cupboard in the nursery…filled to the ceiling with octavo volumes of Shakespeare.” Noting that he “already had a strong instinct against drawing-room activities,” including his father’s Shakespeare reading circle, Graves explains that he was equally unimpressed by more modern authors: “Nor had I any illusions about Algernon Charles Swinburne, who often used to stop my perambulator when he met it on Nurses’ Walk…and pat me on the head and kiss me: he was an inveterate pram-stopper and patter and kisser…I did not know that Swinburne was a poet, but I knew that he was a public menace” (1, 2).
Taken as a trio, Graves’s earliest memories contrast with Keynes’s by caricaturizing, rather than honoring, the English upper-middle-class and by placing the author, as a toddler, in a superior position to that class. When Graves subsequently begins to provide his genealogy, then, the reader is already primed to expect more fun than fact, an expectation that proves correct in the author’s mockery of both autobiographical convention and the convention of English gentlemanliness: “Here I might parody Marcus Aurelius, who begins his *Golden Book* with the various ancestors and relatives to whom he owes the virtues of a worthy Roman Emperor: explaining why I am not a Roman Emperor or even, except on occasions, an English gentleman” (3). Over the next several pages, as Graves maps out his family tree on both its English and German sides, his parodization of the two cultures depends for its effectiveness on his tongue-in-cheek reliance on Victorian and early twentieth-century stereotypes, stereotypes that, once combined, provide an accurate portrait of Graves’s personality:

The [English] Graves’s have good minds for such purposes as examinations, writing graceful Latin verse, filling in forms, and solving puzzles…They have a good eye for ball games, and a graceful style. I inherited the eye but not the style; my mother’s [German] family are entirely without style. I have an ugly but secure seat on a horse. There is a coldness in the Graves’s which is anti-sentimental to the point of insolence, a necessary check to the goodness of heart from which my mother’s family suffers. The Graves’s, it is fair to generalize, though loyal to the British governing class to which they belong, and so to the Constitution, are individualists; the von Ranke’s regard their membership of the corresponding class in Germany as a sacred trust enabling them to do the more responsible work for the service of humanity…The most useful and, at the same time, most dangerous gift that I owe to my father’s side of the family…is that I am always able, when dealing with officials, or getting privileges from public institutions which grudge them, to masquerade as a gentleman. (10)

As Bertrand Rouby notes in response to this passage, Graves’s “genealogical presentation is eminently paradoxical, the author defining his ascendants less by way of ancestral virtues than by a collection of small, singular eccentricities. Thus, the only distinctive trait of a Graves is
finally negative, namely distrust concerning the norm” (165-6).² While Rouby is correct in recognizing that Graves’s “first index as regards the geography of the self is a centrifugal itinerary that leads the individual irresistibly toward the margin,” he mistakenly attributes to all Graves this wariness of convention.³ As Graves himself makes clear, however, it is not just any Graves who has “an ugly but secure seat on a horse”; he alone has such a seat precisely because he is an amalgamation of conflicting national stereotypes.

In relying on such stereotypes in his description of himself, Graves paves the way for his later characterization of the First World War. Recalling his time at public school just before the war’s outbreak, he emphasizes that his balancing act between the English and German sides of his heritage became increasingly difficult to achieve. Although he explains that his preparatory school had taught the English virtues of “keep[ing] a straight bat at cricket” and maintaining a “high moral sense,” he records that his “German connexion” proved a “social offense” at his next school, Charterhouse: “My history from the age of fourteen, when I went to Charterhouse, until just before the end of the War, when I began to think for myself, is a forced rejection of the German in me” (11, 27). The reason for Graves’s rejection of his German heritage emerges most clearly in his sixth chapter, where he describes the atmosphere of Charterhouse a week before the war began. Beginning the chapter by revealing his early suspicion that the “public school spirit” was a “fundamental evil,” he proceeds to discuss the class structure of his House, which, “except for five scholars,” consisted of “the sons of businessmen: a class of whose interests and prejudices [he] knew nothing” (36, 38). As he quickly learns, however, that class’s principal occupations are debating “hotly the threat, and even the necessity, of a trade war with the Reich” and implying that “‘German’ meant ‘dirty German’. It meant: ‘cheap, shoddy goods competing

² Rouby’s essay is written in French. For ease of reading, I have translated the quoted passages but will include the original version in footnotes. For this sentence, the original reads as follows : « Du côté des Graves, la présentation généalogique est éminemment paradoxe, l’auteur définissant moins ses ascendants par le biais de vertus ancestrales que par une collection de petites excentricités singulières. Ainsi, l’unique trait distinctif d’un Graves serait finalement négatif, à savoir la méfiance à l’égard de la norme » (165-6).

³ Original text : « Premier indice quant à la géographie du soi : un itinéraire centrifuge qui conduit irrésistiblement l’être vers la marge » (166).
with our sterling industries’. It also meant military menace, Prussianism, useless philosophy, tedious scholarship, music-loving and sabre-rattling” (39).

With the middle name of “von Ranke,” a name “glaring” in its Germanic origin, Graves recalls how he “came near a nervous break-down” at Charterhouse, especially when “someone started the legend that [he] was not only a German, but a German Jew” (39). Although he notes that he avoided mental collapse, if only because of his friendship with George Mallory, his conflicted feelings about his time at Charterhouse emerge in his rapid tonal shifts, shifts that occur not only between chapters or between paragraphs but also within single paragraphs.

Mocking his religious naïveté while at Charterhouse, for example, he describes in humorous fashion his early friendship with and then separation from a boy named Raymond Rodakowski, who tended to argue that the soul, far from being superior to the mind, “seem[ed] a mere pawn in the game” (48). Immediately after glibly noting that Raymond refused to agree to “any broad-Church compromise,” however, Graves flashes forward in time to the last years of World War I and reveals with a disarming seriousness that he did manage to speak to Raymond once more: “[I]n 1917, when he was with the Irish Guards, I rode over to his billets one afternoon, having then become a complete agnostic, and felt as close to him as ever. He got killed at Cambrai not long after.” In a similar fashion, Graves lightheartedly provides stories about boxing, rock-climbing, his first crush on a classmate, and his school’s magazine only to follow those stories with a disturbing memory about a pre-war debate at Charterhouse. Explaining that the debate concerned whether his House was in favor of compulsory military service, he reveals that only six out of one hundred nineteen students opposed such service and that, of those six, only he and one other student survived the war. Subsequently taking account of the fates of the other one hundred nineteen students, he somberly notes that, aside from “[m]any dull boys [who] had brief, brilliant military careers, particularly as air-fighters, becoming squadron and flight commanders,” most of his “calculations” about his classmates’ futures were “upset” by the war (58):
At least one in three of my generation at school died; because they all took commissions as soon as they could. The average life expectancy of an infantry subaltern on the Western Front was, at some stages of the War, only about three months; by which time he had been either wounded or killed. The proportions worked out at about four wounded to every one killed. Of these four, one got wounded seriously, and the remaining three more or less lightly. The three lightly wounded returned to the front after a few weeks or months of absence, and again faced the same odds. Flying casualties were even higher. Since the War lasted for four and a half years, it is easy to see why most of the survivors, if not permanently disabled, collected several wound stripes. (59)

In its tonal matter-of-fact-ness, this passage of statistics proves startling for the reader, who has so far enjoyed tales about Graves’s youthful mischievousness and insolence. Graves himself seems to anticipate the passage’s jarringness, since, in typical fashion, he switches immediately back to a lighter subject in the concluding paragraph of the chapter. Yet, even as he ends the chapter by mimicking the style of an alumni magazine, the tragic note of the preceding paragraphs reemerges in his final sentence, where he establishes an implicit connection between the madhouse atmosphere of Charterhouse just before the war and a former graduate’s actual madhouse escape after the war:

Two well-known sportsmen were contemporaries of mine: A.G. Bower, later captain of England at soccer, but only an average player at Charterhouse; and Woolf Barnato, the Surrey cricketer (and millionaire racing motorist), also only an average player. Five scholars have made a name for themselves: Richard Hughes as a playwright; Richard Goolden as an actor of old-man parts; Vincent Seligman as author of a propagandist life of Venizelos; Cyril Hartmann as an authority on historical French scandals; and my brother Charles as society columnist on the middle page of The Daily Mail. Occasionally I see another name or two in the papers. The other day, M—was in the news for escaping from a private lunatic asylum; he had once offered a boy ten shillings to hold his hand in a thunderstorm, and frequently threatened to run away from Charterhouse. (59-60)

Between this paragraph, which highlights both the irony and the sympathy that shift with such rapidity throughout Good-Bye to All That, and the first paragraph of the tenth chapter, which begins the war narrative proper, Graves includes his chapter on George Mallory and Geoffrey
Keynes at Snowden. In so placing that chapter, Graves, like Keynes, marks the end of an era with a chapter idealizing certain men and activities before turning to the carnage of the First World War. At the same time, however, he uses the break between the eighth and tenth chapters to introduce a more self-reflective note into his autobiography. The full effect of this new dynamic in the text does not become clear until the twelfth chapter, where he describes the process he underwent to transform his autobiography into its current state. Recalling that he first began writing about his war experiences while on leave at Harlech in 1916, he notes that, having “stupidly written [the first draft of the tenth chapter] as a novel,” he must now “retranslate” his account of his early months in France as “a history” (91). Although he does not explain why the fictionalization of his experiences was especially “stupid,” his decision to rewrite the chapter as an autobiographical account—that is, to present his experiences as fact, not fiction—seems to depend on two apparently contradictory concerns. On the one hand, by claiming that the participants and events recorded in the chapter are real, Graves allows himself more control over the reader’s response. For while readers certainly do feel emotion in response to the actions and feelings of fictional characters, they are more likely to regard seriously the moral lapses and unethical behavior of real people. On the other hand, Graves’s insistence on his autobiography’s realism enables him to drive home the appalling absurdity of World War I and its participants’ conduct. To say the same thing differently: By emphasizing that he is describing real people and events, Graves manages to suggest that, whatever its merits, novelistic form can in no way do justice to the lunacy of World War I, which proved far stranger than fiction.

Although Graves plays up the realism of his work both to provoke moral outrage and to underscore the absurdity of the war, his decision to do so has posed difficulties for critics who have attempted to assess the genre of *Good-Bye to All That*. In particular, Graves’s remarks about his autobiography’s realism have led critics to downplay the text’s status as a satire, since satire has traditionally been understood to occur only in a fictional setting. According to Edward W. Rosenheim, Jr., for example, “all satire involves, to some extent, a departure from literal truth
and, in the place of literal truth, a reliance on what may be called a *satiric fiction*” (312, original emphasis). Similarly, Edward and Lillian Bloom argue that “[t]wo qualities may be insisted upon as the essence of satire”: “One is ethical, the confirmation of human ‘norms, systematic values, and meanings.’ The other is aesthetic, ‘an appreciable degree of fictionality’” (108). For literary critics who agree with Rosenheim and the Blooms, *Good-Bye to All That* thus poses a challenge, since Graves not only includes the generic marker “Autobiography” in the work’s subtitle but also insists at certain moments in the text that he is presenting fact, not fiction. Attempting to address this generic challenge, Paul Fussell has chosen to classify *Good-Bye to All That* as a “fiction-memoir”—that is, a work that “disguis[es]” its fictional status under its claims to factual authenticity (220). In coining this term, however, Fussell actually obscures matters more than he clarifies them, since, when he begins identifying the components of Graves’s fiction-memoir, he relies on a welter of additional generic categories, including theatre, farce, comedy, and parody, none of which he defines. If this collection of terms was not sufficiently troublesome, Fussell complicates matters further by speaking of the need to “unravel” the text’s “satiric effect” (217). Because his only other mention of satire occurs in his first chapter, where he concludes that World War I itself was a “great tragic satire” that “consist[ed] of its own smaller constituent satires, or ironic actions,”[4] Fussell causes his reader not only to wonder what he means by the “satiric effect” of *Good-Bye to All That* but also to question if he sees any fundamental distinction between satire and irony (6).

As I argue at greater length in the final chapter of this dissertation, the critical tendency to develop new terms, including “fiction-memoir,” for works that deviate from traditional understandings of satire creates more problems than it attempts to solve, since the definitions of those terms often prove more nebulous than the ones they are trying to replace. Moreover, by

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[4] Although Fussell is perhaps striving to lend a poetic note to his text, his characterization of World War I as a “great tragic satire” makes little sense, since satire, unlike non-literary irony, requires an active intelligence that aims to create a satiric effect. For this same reason, the title of the chapter (“A Satire of Circumstance”) in which this quotation appears also seems bizarre. Because Fussell never describes an agent, even a divine one, behind the “satire of circumstance,” we might rightly question how he defines satire and whether he distinguishes it from situational irony.
implying that satire is no longer a useful category when one or more of its traditional criteria are not met, critics problematically overlook the etymological origin of the word “satire,” which derives from the Latin *satura*, a term denoting miscellany (Garnett 2). As theorists of the genre have long argued, satire proves its commitment to miscellany not only by “parastatically appropriating” other literary forms but also by “borrowing and de-forming” a variety of rhetorical and generic structures (Connery and Combe 5; Guilhamet 11). Because de-formation is thus a hallmark of satire, critics such as Fussell need not scrap the genre as a classificatory tool when a particular work challenges presumptions about what satire is or does. Indeed, in the case of *Good-Bye to All That*, maintaining satire as a classificatory category allows us to gauge how Graves not only incorporates autobiographical realism into the satiric genre but also underscores the post-war uselessness of one of the genre’s more traditional features: namely, its commitment to “ridicul[ing] the modifiable manners, mentalities, and morals of mankind” and its concern with “mendable man in a changeable society” (Gurewitch 41, emphasis added).

The clearest instance of the collision between Graves’s satiric realism and his rejection of satire’s reformative prerogative occurs in his account of his friendship with Siegfried Sassoon, a fellow poet who, though becoming a hardened political activist during his service in World War I, thereafter abandons his political concerns in deference to the English literati.\(^5\) Introducing Sassoon into the text just after having described his participation in the battles of La Bassée and Loos in September 1915, Graves explains that, in November of that same year, he discovered a personalized copy of *The Essays of Lionel Johnson* lying on a table in the Company Mess; “looked around to see who could possibly be called Siegfried Sassoon and bring *Lionel Johnson* with him to the First Battalion”; and, spotting Sassoon, decided that “[t]he answer was obvious” (174). As Graves goes on to note, Sassoon “had, at the time, published only a few privately-printed pastoral pieces of eighteen-ninetyish flavour, and a satire on Masefield which, half-way

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\(^5\) This, at least, is how Graves describes Sassoon’s behavior. Geoffrey Keynes offers a different explanation of the split between Graves and Sassoon in the aftermath of the war. Subsequent pages in this chapter discuss Keynes’s account.
through, had forgotten to be a satire and turned into rather good Masefield.” Moreover, he recalls that when he subsequently showed Sassoon some of his own poems, which he was to publish in *Over the Brazier* in 1916, Sassoon “frowned and said that war should not be written about in such a realistic way” (175). For Graves, who had already been in France five months, Sassoon’s contention that war poetry should veer away from realism underscored the fact that his new friend “had not yet been in the trenches.” Remarking that he “told [Sassoon]...that he would soon change his style,” Graves thereafter returns to Sassoon at key points in *Good-Bye to All That* in order to demonstrate that his prophecy was verified to the letter. Some thirty-five pages after introducing Sassoon into his autobiography, for instance, Graves reveals the change that had taken place in his friend between November 1915 and the Battle of the Somme in 1916:

[In late July of 1916], [t]he Battalion’s next objective was ‘The Quadrangle’, a small copse this side of Mametz Wood, where Siegfried distinguished himself by taking, single-handed, a battalion frontage which the Royal Irish Regiment had failed to take the day before. He went over with bombs in daylight, under covering fire from a couple of rifles, and scared away the occupants. A pointless feat, since instead of signaling reinforcements, he sat down in the German trench and began reading a book of poems which he had brought with him. When he finally went back he did not even report….The attack on Mametz Wood had been delayed for two hours because British patrols were still reported to be out. ‘British patrols’ were Siegfried and his book of poems…Siegfried had been doing heroic things ever since I’d left the Battalion. His nickname in the Seventh Division was ‘Mad Jack’. He won a Military Cross for bringing in a wounded lance-corporal from a mine-crater close to the German lines, under heavy fire. I missed him this time…But I sent him…a rhymed letter about the times that we were going to have together when the War ended; how, after a rest at Harlech, we were going for a visit to the Caucasus and Persia and China; and what good poetry we would write. (210)

Although Graves certainly takes relish in Sassoon’s bizarre behavior during the Battle of the Somme, this passage and subsequent ones serve to indicate his respect and admiration for Sassoon’s development as a man, a soldier, and a poet. In illustrating Sassoon’s growth as a poet and soldier, however, Graves also wishes to provide a point of contrast by which to chart his own
trajectory as an author. Thus, when he does describe his meeting with Sassoon at Harlech in September 1916, he not only draws attention to the war’s ability to cast a pall over their leave but also refers back to the opening pages of his twelfth chapter: “When Siegfried had gone [from Harlech], I began the novel on which the earlier chapters of this book are based, but soon abandoned it.” As this remark suggests, Graves’s experience of the war not only caused his poetry to become more realistic by November 1915; it also resulted in the heightened realism of his autobiographical prose, a realism that nevertheless relies on satirical characterizations of individuals and events to establish a connection between the absurd and the factual during the war.

As Rouby notes regarding Graves’s insistence on realism throughout *Good-bye to All That*, the author’s “distrust of explanatory theories goes hand in hand with his repeated refusal of plot and novel…Henceforth, one finds working in the text a tension between, on the one hand, the hatred of fiction…and, on the other hand, an apparent will to deformation and caricature. But this will is only apparent: the author evolves in a world too caricatural to be changed into fiction…The entirety of Graves’s text responds to this demand for absolute authenticity” (167).

If authenticity became a primary concern for Graves as early as his leave at Harlech, he also suggests that the same concern came to dominate Sassoon’s mind when the pair returned to the Battalion at Litherland in November 1916. There, Graves explains, Sassoon first began to speak of the poets’ role “as men of courage” and to argue that their “proper place would be back in France, away from the shameless madness of home-service” (233). Over the course of the next year, Sassoon continues to insist that he and Graves are needed in France, and by June of 1917, while ill and on leave in Kent, he is driven so “dotty” by “[t]he thought of France” and the sounds of “the guns thudding ceaselessly across the Channel” that he writes Graves to ask whether he should “rush back and die with the First Battalion or stay in England and do what he

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6 Original text: « Cette méfiance à l’égard des théories explicatives…va de pair avec le refus réaffirmé de toute mise en intrigue et de tout roman…Dès lors, on repère à l’œuvre dans ce texte une tension entre, d’une part, la haine de la fiction…et, d’autre part, une apparente volonté de déformation et de caricature. Mais cette volonté n’est bien qu’apparente : l’auteur évolue dans un monde trop caricatural pour être changé en fiction…Tout le texte de Graves répond à cette exigence d’authenticité absolue » (167).
[can] to prevent the War going on” (258). Although Graves recognizes that both these “courses are] hopeless,” especially “go[ing] back and get[ting] killed,” which “would be only playing to the gallery—the wrong gallery”—his protestations do nothing to prevent Sassoon from later submitting a treasonous declaration to the Bradford Pioneer (260). Within that declaration, Sassoon objects to “the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed” and voices his commitment “to destroy the callous complacence with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realize.”

Until he receives a copy of this declaration in the mail, Graves remains supportive of Sassoon’s stance on the war, though less idealistic about what he or his friend might be able to achieve through protest. Once the clipping arrives, however, Graves decides that action must be taken, if not for all the fighting men in the trenches then at least for Sassoon himself:

This [letter] filled me with anxiety and unhappiness. I entirely agreed with Siegfried about the ‘political errors and insincerities’ and thought his action magnificently courageous. But more things had to be considered than the strength of our case against the politicians. In the first place, he was in no proper physical condition to suffer the penalty which the letter invited: namely to be court-martialed, cashiered and imprisoned. I found myself most bitter against the pacifists who had encouraged him to make this gesture. I felt that, not being soldiers, they could not understand what it cost Siegfried emotionally. It was wicked that he should have to face the consequences of his letter on top of those of the Quadrangle and Fontaine-les-Croiselles experiences. I realized the inadequacy of such a gesture. Nobody would follow his example, either in England or in Germany. The War would inevitably go on and on until one side or the other cracked. (261)

One of the more striking features of this passage is Graves’s description of the pacifists, not the military officials, as “wicked.” This is not to say that Graves believed military officials were beyond blame but rather to emphasize his observation that civilians, in pursuit of their political ends, also managed to put soldiers in harm’s way. Within the larger context of Good-bye to All That, Graves’s condemnation of both politicians and pacifists also points to his rejection of
the corrective function of satire. For if satire has traditionally been concerned with “mendable man,” Graves makes it clear in this passage not only that he has no power to alter the course of the war or the minds of civilians, politicians, and military leaders but also that the only man he has any hope of mending is Siegfried Sassoon. Moreover, the mending he proposes to effect has nothing to do with Sassoon’s morality or with society’s but rather with Sassoon’s health and reputation, both of which Graves hopes to protect from the immorality of a world at war. Indeed, in stressing that “more things had to be considered than the strength of our case against the politicians,” Graves already hints that his only recourse in addressing the moral wrong done Sassoon will be to intervene immorally, or at least deceitfully, in the workings of the military system.

By the end of the twenty-fourth chapter, the reader learns that Graves successfully manages to convince a medical board that Sassoon is unfit for service, though he regrets “the irony of having to argue to…mad old men that Siegfried was not sane!” (263). This act of friendship, however, proves distasteful to Sassoon himself, who writes Graves in verse- and letter-form from the front just before the Armistice and describes his ultimate decision to return to combat. “[R]eprehendi[ng] the attitude [Graves] had taken in July,” when he had suggested “that the Regiment would either think [Sassoon] a coward or regard his protest [in the Bradford Pioneer] as a lapse from good form,” Sassoon informs Graves that it is “suicidal stupidity and credulity…to identify oneself in any way with good form; a man of real courage would not acquiesce as [Graves] did” (275). For Sassoon, Graves’s reproof of the “callous bastards” who “sacrifice[e] the troops” should in itself cause him to disregard bienséance; yet, for Graves, who understands that the system, military or otherwise, cannot be overcome by the rightness of any one moral position, Sassoon’s claim is itself “suicidal stupidity.” Noting that he “forget[s]” the content of his response to Sassoon’s letter, Graves first speculates that it was “perhaps that, while in France, I had never been such a fire-eater as he” and then proceeds to describe Sassoon’s attitude toward the War as nothing short of bipolar: “In fact, Siegfried’s unconquerable idealism
changed direction with his environment: he varied between happy warrior and bitter pacifist… I was both more consistent and less heroic than Siegfried.”

In his account of his epistolary exchanges with Sassoon, Graves marks a rupture between the poets and their understandings of how best to exist in a world devastated by war. Nevertheless, if the pair’s first major argument concerned Graves’s concern with “good form” and Sassoon’s rejection of that concern, their final split, which occurs ten years later, happens because they switch sides in the debate. Speaking of the end of his friendship with Sassoon, Graves explains that the cause of the “breach…was [Graves’s] failure to observe the proper literary punctilios in a correspondence with the late Sir Edmund Gosse, C.B.” (256). As this remark suggests, Sassoon, despite having objected in 1917 to Graves’s continuing adherence to a system of propriety, argues in 1926 that his friend’s treatment of Gosse, a major figure among the English literati, is insufficiently “proper.” Sassoon’s about-face in the aftermath of the war become all the more troublesome when Graves reveals that, in 1916 or 1917, Gosse “had severely criticized some lines of an allegorical poem in [Sassoon’s the Old Huntsman]” by suggesting that they “might be read as a libel on the British House of Lords…[which] was proving itself splendidly heroic in the War” (256).

Although Graves once agreed with Sassoon that the “continuance [of the War] seemed merely a sacrifice of the idealistic younger generation to the stupidity and self-protective alarm of the elder,” Sassoon’s ultimate decision to return to the fold of English good form proves that nothing lasting has been gained from the war (245). For like the English public, which cares little that the Treaty of Versailles is “destined to cause another war some day,” Sassoon eventually adjusts himself to a changed but forgetful England (288). Meanwhile, the “more consistent but less heroic” Graves spends years trying “to rid [him]self of the poison of war memories” before deciding in 1929 to leave England for good (321, 343). At once a sign of the permanence of the War’s legacy for him and a protest against the short-sightedness and forgetfulness of his countrymen, Graves’s relocation to Spain indicates that the “All That” of his title is an ironic
gesture directed not only toward his work to date, his marriage, and his schooling but also toward
the English nation, which has dismissed the War as easily as Graves subsequently dismisses the
country. Simply put, if the Great War can be reduced to something as simplistic and crude as an
“All That,” Graves believes that England herself deserves the same fate.

In renouncing England because England has, in a sense, renounced the war, Graves
nevertheless leaves his mother country an ironic parting gift in Good-Bye to All That. What
should be stressed about that gift is that, by way of both its content and genre, it aims not only to
underscore the absurdity of England’s prosecution of World War I but also to suggest that certain
literary forms and styles are incapable of representing the Great War accurately. This is a point
that Geoffrey Keynes also makes in The Gates of Memory, a point he approaches, oddly enough,
by taking issue with Graves’s account of his rupture with Sassoon. According to Keynes, who
presumably heard the details of the split from Sassoon himself, the cause of that rift lay not in
Graves’s disrespect toward Edmund Gosse but rather in his treatment of Sassoon in the first
edition of Good-bye to All That. Noting that Graves had “deeply wounded” Sassoon in that
edition “by publishing without permission, and so violating his privacy, part of Sassoon’s verse
letter written from hospital shortly after he had been wounded in the head in July 1918,” Keynes
implies that the offense was made all the worse when copies of the first edition, all of which were
“withdrawn soon after publication,” soon began to turn into “‘collectors’ pieces’” (96).

In providing Sassoon’s side of the story, however, Keynes also mentions the difficulties
he himself had with the poet regarding the publication of The Letters of Rupert Brooke and
thereby causes the reader to question the veracity of Sassoon’s account of his break with Graves.
Writing that he had begun “to fall under the spell of Rupert Brooke” at Rugby School in 1902 and
that he had soon become so taken with Brooke’s “sign[s] of [literary] genius” that he “began
keeping everything he produced,” Keynes explains that, in the years following Brooke’s death
during the war,\(^7\) he came to resent the “Brooke ‘legend,’” which cast his friend as “an ineffectual young aesthete, who sought to attract notoriety by publishing poems” (36, 40, 165, 164). Thus when Brooke’s mother died in 1931 and left him as literary trustee for Brooke’s estate, Keynes decided to “[discredit] the legend” by publishing Brooke’s private letters, a decision he stood by even after Sassoon informed him that it was “unjustifiable...to expose to the public gaze all Rupert’s most intimate affairs and emotional contortions” (167, 239). Remarking that his stance regarding Brooke’s letters caused a “cloud” to emerge over his friendship with Sassoon, Keynes nevertheless insists that he acted rightly, since the publication of those letters allowed readers of war poetry to distinguish between Brooke and “true war poets,” including Sassoon himself (239, 164):

I have mentioned the difficulty some young men, such as Rupert Brooke, had had in 1914 in deciding how best they should serve their country. Brooke’s War Sonnets, written in that year, expressed patriotic sentiments which were undoubtedly genuine and reflected the feelings of most young people at the time, but these poems did not glorify war (as some hostile postwar critics have insisted) or place their author among the later ‘war poets’; he had seen no active service and had no opportunity of knowing what war really meant to those who took a direct part in it. True war poets, such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, wrote only in horror at war’s obscenities and with pity for its victims. (164)

As the last sentence of this passage indicates, Keynes sees a sharp difference between the work of his boyhood friend and that of his later friend, Sassoon. What is striking for the reader of autobiographies as different as Good-bye to All That and The Gates of Memory, however, is that Keynes reiterates in 1981 the same point that Graves made in 1929. Describing his recitation of war poems at a War Memorial service in the late 1920s, for instance, Graves explains that “instead of Rupert Brooke on the glorious dead, [he] read some of the more painful poems by Sassoon and Wilfred Owen about men dying from gas-poisoning, and about buttocks of corpses bulging from the mud” (318).

\(^7\) Although Brooke died during the war, he did not die in battle. As Keynes explains, Brooke died of septicaemia in April 1915, when he was traveling with his battalion to participate in the Gallipoli campaign (163).
Though not a soldier like Graves, Keynes’s similar differentiation between poets such as Brooke and Sassoon points to his understanding of the legacy of World War I and his wish that that legacy not be forgotten. Indeed, in an attempt to drive home the difference between those who did and did not see combat, Keynes dedicates nearly twenty-five pages of his autobiography to his experiences during the war as a medical officer in the Royal Army Medical Corps (R.A.M.C.). Beginning his account of his war service by noting that, in August 1914, he “received the news of the declaration of war...with astonishment almost amounting to incredulity,” he explains that he immediately decided to quit his position in London as a senior house surgeon and to enroll in the R.A.M.C. (124). Yet despite his early belief that the war would allow him to pursue “useful employment in his profession while doing his duty for his country,” he discovers that medics, no less than soldiers, are exposed to the “unnamed horrors” of combat. Shortly after learning of Brooke’s death, for instance, Keynes is transferred to the Ypres salient, where he comes to “realiz[e] how gently [over the preceding year he] had been let down into the cauldron of war” (131). Moreover, by September 1915, when he is nearly killed by an 8-inch shell, Keynes is able to declare forthrightly that he “was no longer a civilian in uniform but was suddenly almost a soldier, though very much afraid” (134).

In his description of his initial misunderstanding of the war and his eventual awakening, Keynes relates an experience that is a hallmark of memoirs written about World War I. Graves describes a similar experience in Good-bye to All That, and even a cynic like Wyndham Lewis records that he had “not the remotest idea” in 1914 what the war would mean (57). Explaining that he initially regarded “war” as nothing but “a history-book word,” Lewis writes in Blasting and Bombardiering that he “came to know [war] gradually” but “intimately” (85). Although he elsewhere notes that his “attitude to the war was unsatisfactory,” since he “experienced none of the conscience-prickings and soul-searchings, none of the subtle anguish, of so many gentlemen whose books poured out simultaneously upon the market” in the 1920s, Lewis also admits that, in the early days of the war, he “half thought” that the conflict would “be a war to make the world
safe for Democracy” (7-8). In acknowledging his early naïveté about World War I, however, Lewis’s aim is to reveal how quickly his experiences resulted in his growing skepticism and political awareness. Some twenty pages after citing the illusions with which he entered the military, for instance, he describes the moment at which he began to reconsider the war’s significance:

I was present—I dimly recognized—at the passage of an entire people out of one system into another….And I of course was one of them, in this most awkward of fixes, shoulder to shoulder; I too was being translated from a relaxed system to a far more stringent one: I was experiencing my full share of perplexity at finding myself assisting at the assassination of Democracy: I put just as much value on my skin as [other soldiers] did on theirs, I was as exigent on the score of my privileges as an individual; I too was born to Habeus Corpus. I differed from my brothers-in-arms only in a skepticism regarding the reality of this Democracy which had bestowed upon me such a high opinion of my skin, and experienced an inability to accept the theory that I was making the world any more ‘safe’ by my present activities. Everything that I was doing seemed to be making it very much the reverse. (27-8)

Despite his earlier contention that his attitude toward the war was “unsatisfactory,” Lewis demonstrates in this passage that, as much as any other memoirist, he also suffered “conscience-prickings,” “soul-seachings,” and “subtle anguish.” Indeed, regardless of Lewis’s insistence throughout Blasting and Bombardiering that he is “talking no politics,” passages like this one suggest that his disillusionment during the war pushed him to write an autobiography of a decidedly political nature. That he does have political aims becomes clear in his decision to intersperse polemical statements amid his “gossip” about Pound, Joyce, and Eliot and his descriptions of his literary projects, including Blast (1914-5) and Tarr (1918). For how else but as political provocation can the reader understand Lewis’s musings on whether “the Sovereign State [should] be taken seriously” or whether “any merely national institutions [are] so valuable, so morally or intellectually valid, that we should lay down our lives for them, as a matter of course” (188)? And how else but as a testimony to the unavoidable connection between politics and art can the reader understand a chapter like “Towards an Art-less Society,” where Lewis first
contends that “[t]he Arts with their great capital A’s are… parasitically dependent upon the good health of the social body” and where he then argues that “the day was lost, for art, at Sarajevo” (257, 258)?

In underscoring the link between politics and art, Lewis advances an argument that colors many of his post-war works, including The Art and Being Ruled, Time and Western Man, and The Apes of God. Within Blasting and Bombardiering itself, however, he concentrates on the ways in which particular artistic cliques, as a result of their social class and political positions, manage to escape military service during the war and to gain prominent positions in the art-world during the post-war period. Describing his particular bugbear, the Bloomsbury Group, in a chapter appropriately entitled “Political Education Under Fire,” Lewis regrets the death of Gaudier Breszka, a young sculptor killed during the war, and wonders aloud to Ford Madox Ford “[w]hy…Gaudier [should] die, and a ‘Bloomsbury’ live” (184). Remarking sarcastically that the “‘Bloomsburies’ were all doing war-work of ‘National importance,’ down in some downy English county, under the wings of powerful pacifist friends; pruning trees, planting gooseberry bushes, and haymaking, doubtless in large sunbonnets,” Lewis explains that “[a]ll were of military age” and that “[a]ll would have looked well in uniform.” Moreover, insisting that the Bloomsbury Group “had money and we hadn’t,” Lewis contends that “ultimately it was to keep [the Bloomsburies] fat and prosperous—or thin and prosperous, which is even worse—that other people were to risk their skins” (185).

In his repeated attacks against the Bloomsbury Group, Lewis is not alone. Discussing his developing relationship with his brother, Maynard, for instance, Keynes explains with an unprecedented degree of disdain that his interactions with Maynard generally took place in the presence of members of the Bloomsbury Group:

In October 1913 I...occupied a room at the top of a house in Brunswick Square, Bloomsbury...Living in the Brunswick Square house at the time were Adrian Stephen, Virginia Stephen, and Duncan Grant; probably for this reason it has often been supposed that I belonged to the famous Bloomsbury group. In
fact I make no claim to this. I did, of course, know all of them slightly and very much liked Duncan Grant, but I was not recognized as ‘belonging’ and did not wish to be. I respected Vanessa Bell, disliked her husband Clive, who was always ‘shewing off’ in a noisy way, and did not know Adrian at all. Saxon Sydney-Turner I had no way of knowing as he never opened his mouth, and I sometimes wondered why he was there at all. Harry Norton...annoyed me by his presumably clever nonsense and more particularly by his saying to me that my father was ‘an old fly-by-night’; what that meant I did not know, but anyway it was offensive.

Virginia Stephen I hardly knew, though it was with her that I had closer relations, while she was more or less unconscious. I came back one evening from the hospital to find the whole house in a state of consternation because Virginia had been found insensible in her room, having just made her first attempt at suicide by means of a large dose of narcotic drug. (115-6)

Despite concluding his anecdote about Virginia Woolf, née Stephen, by remarking that “[w]e can now know what literature would never have existed” had she died, Keynes continues to disparage the Bloomsbury Group later in his autobiography (116). In his chapter “Balletomania,” he explains that his brother “had taken very little notice of [him]” until 1925 and reveals that, upon Maynard’s death in 1946, he discovered a letter from his brother to Duncan Grant dated 1907, a letter in which Maynard issued the “harsh judgement” that “‘Geoffrey is quite hopeless’” (197). However hurtful this discovery, Keynes must certainly have been glad that the letter was not addressed to Clive Bell or Harry Norton but rather to Grant, whom he “much loved when apart from the other Bloomsburyites.”

If the unassuming Keynes felt strong enough about Clive Bell to record his “dislike” in print, it is little wonder that the much more sharp-tongued Graves took issue with Bell in Good-bye to All That. Snidely remarking that Bell, “England’s leading art critic and a conscientious objector,” had done “‘work of national importance’” during the war, Graves reveals that this “work” consisted of “look[ing] after the cows on the manor farm [of Philip and Lady Ottoline Morrell]” (248). Graves also has fun at the expense of Lytton Strachey, who, though unfit for the Army, “prefer[s] to appear before a military tribunal as a conscientious objector” and there causes
an “extraordinary impression…[with] an air-cushion which he inflated in Court as a protest against the hardness of the benches” (249). According to Graves, this incident of the cushion was only outdone by Strachey’s response to a routine question about what action he would take “if [he] saw a German soldier trying to violate [his] sister,” a question to which Strachey allegedly “replied with an air of noble virtue: ‘I would try to get between them.’”

As their memoirs suggest, Lewis, Keynes, and Graves’s objections to the Bloomsbury Group make sense only in a larger narrative of war, a narrative in which a man like T.E. Lawrence comes to represent an opposite set of values. Indeed, as the autobiographies taken together suggest, Graves introduces Sassoon to Lawrence at Sassoon’s request, while Keynes later meets Lawrence, “who had long been one of [his] top heroes,” by way of Sassoon (Keynes 234; Graves 298). For his part, Lewis describes how he one day opened his door to a “small and unobtrusive figure in a raincoat” only to discover that Lawrence was on his front step (238). Although Lewis records mixed feelings about Lawrence’s magnetism, sexuality, and prose, he nevertheless concludes that “[t]he spectacle of [such a] stupid waste of so much ability always depressed him,” especially since Lawrence was “a very interesting man, of great ambitions paradoxically associated with great idealism” (239, 242). Set in contrast to Lawrence, then, the conscientious objectors of the Bloomsbury Group prove unappealing not only for temperamental but also for political reasons. This is not to say that Graves, Keynes, or Lewis blindly supports the war or the English government’s policy regarding it but rather to underscore that each of the three autobiographers respects individuals for their service and heroism, even if these are the result of political causes and agendas that are morally unjustifiable and unjustified.

In placing certain individuals such as T.E. Lawrence outside their broader criticism of the War, Graves and Lewis reinforce the collage-like structures of their satiric autobiographies,

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8 On the same page that he provides this anecdote, Graves also discusses his relationship with Aldous Huxley, who, in Antic Hay, has his main character, Gummer, devise just such a cushion to cope with uncomfortable seating.

9 In Blasting and Bombardiering, Lewis tells this same story about the air-cushion, though he makes Strachey’s response to the question about his violated sister more ridiculous by way of his punctuation: “Strachey without hesitation replied: ‘I—would—place—myself—between—them!’” (184, 185, original italics).
which alternate between brief moments of faith in “mendable man” and longer moments of skepticism. As for *The Gates of Memory*, its collage-like structure owes its origins not to the satirical genre but rather to Keynes’s vast breadth of knowledge on subjects ranging from bibliography and entomology to ballet and medicine. Dedicating one or more chapters to each of these areas of interest and often concentrating on individuals other than himself during the process, Keynes selects the brightest and worthiest items from the shipwreck of two world wars and offers those items as evidence of progress despite the global cataclysms of the twentieth century. Indeed, Keynes’s medical experience seems to have had a direct influence on the structure of his memoir, since he approaches the twentieth century much as a surgeon would approach an ailing patient. Just as a surgeon excises or resects malignant tumors, Keynes chooses to resect certain historical events and personal experiences before stitching together those pieces of his memoir that most effectively present the English nation as a healthy organism. What is perhaps most striking about Keynes’s textual operations, however, is that, regardless of his positive aims, *The Gates of Memory* manages to enter into unforeseen dialogue with Graves’s and Lewis’s post-war works, despite those works’ satiric agendas. This it does not only by echoing in miniature Graves’s and Lewis’s accounts of World War I but also by explaining the aberrant functioning of two endocrine glands, the thyroid and the thymus, which Graves and Lewis took particular interest in during and after the war. Although I will return to Lewis’s theories about the thymus in the next section of this chapter, the medical connection between Graves’s and Keynes’s autobiographies is worth considering here, since it sheds light on the soldier’s experience of the duration of war.

Shortly after describing his intervention on Sassoon’s behalf with the military medical board, Graves explains that his friend entered Craiglockhart Hospital, a military institution that primarily treated shell-shocked officers. While there, Sassoon came under the care of W.H.R. Rivers, a neurologist, psychologist, and anthropologist who was also the physician in charge of Wilfred Owen’s treatment. Although Graves reveals that Sassoon “soon became close friends”
with Rivers, he himself remained skeptical of the doctor, who seemed to “[make] a point of
taking up a new department of research every few years, and incorporating it in his
comprehensive anthropological scheme” (264). Despite his skepticism about Rivers, however,
Graves does cite a conversation he had with the doctor when he describes the correlation between
an officer’s effectiveness and the length of time spent at the front:

Having now been in the trenches for five months, I had passed my
prime. For the first three weeks, an officer was of little use in the
front line; he did not know his way around, had not learned the
rules of health and safety, or grown accustomed to recognizing
the degrees of danger. Between three weeks and four weeks he
was at his best, unless he happened to have any particular bad
shock or sequence of shocks. Then his usefulness gradually
db\declined as neurasthenia developed. At six months he was still
more or less all right; but by nine or ten months, unless he had
been given a few weeks’ rest on a technical course, or in hospital,
he usually became a drag on the other company officers. After a
year or fifteen months he was often worse than useless. Dr W.H.R.
Rivers told me later that the action of one of the ductless glands—I
think the thyroid—caused this slow general decline in military
usefulness, by failing at a certain point to pump its stimulating
chemical into the blood. Without its continued assistance the man
g\went about his business in an apathetic and doped condition, cheated
into endurance. It has taken some ten years for my blood to recover. (171-2)

Whether Graves actually believed Dr. Rivers’s account of the thyroid gland’s
deteriorating functionality over the course of a soldier’s service, he nevertheless incorporates it
into his satirical autobiography, since it enables him to illustrate the inhumane behavior of
politicians and military leaders. More specifically, by noting that physicians such as Rivers have
long understood the effects of a malfunctioning thyroid on soldiers’ health and performance,
Graves implies that politicians and military leaders have purposely ignored scientific fact in an
attempt to keep experienced soldiers at the front for longer periods of time, even if doing so
means a decrease in soldiers’ effectiveness and an increase in the likelihood of their deaths. If the
link Graves here establishes between thyroid deficiency and the duration of the combat
experience is not sufficiently startling, it certainly becomes so when the reader recalls that, earlier
in Good-bye to All That, Graves remarks that one of his relatives, another Robert Graves,
discovered the thyroid condition known as Graves Disease in the 1830s (8). As is now well known, Graves Disease causes hypothyroidism, often results in hyperactivity followed by extreme fatigue, or asthenia, and causes severe mental symptoms, including anxiety, psychosis, depression, and hallucinations. Because Graves draws attention to his own war-induced neurasthenia throughout his autobiography and because he equally frequently mentions Sassoon’s depression and hallucinations, there is little doubt that he failed to make the connection between his relative’s discovery and Dr. Rivers’s remarks.

No less intriguing is the fact that Geoffrey Keynes, with whom Graves had gone rock-climbing just before the outbreak of World War I, became one of England’s leading thyroid surgeons in the war’s aftermath. As Keynes explains in The Gates of Memory, he had, by the 1930s, performed “several thousands” of thyroid surgeries, including an operation on a southern Iraqi sheikh, who, after the surgery’s successful conclusion, presented him with “a heavy gold ring set with a half-sovereign dated 1913—no doubt from one of the bags of coins distributed to the Arabs by Lawrence of Arabia during the First World War” (273, 275). The “most interesting medical development” in which Keynes participated, however, related not to the thyroid but rather to the thymus. Noting that the thymus, like the thyroid, can be prone to tumors, Keynes explains that the presence of a tumor on the thymus, a gland that regulates the autoimmune system, can cause the condition known as myasthenia gravis. Although myasthenia gravis resembles Graves Disease by producing extreme fatigue in the sufferer, it can also cause a paralytic state in which “the proper functioning of the neuro-muscular mechanism is prevented by the failure of the nervous impulse to pass from the nerve to the muscle” (275). Indications of such a failure, Keynes remarks, may first appear “in one small group of muscles such as those controlling the upper eyelids, and then become gradually more widespread until the victim dies from failure of the muscles responsible for breathing.” Nevertheless, in those cases where “there may be no recognizable signs of disease except an apparently inexplicable weakness,” the removal of the thymus or a thymetic tumor can “sometimes produce a striking temporary
improvement” in the patient’s quality of life. Admitting that he was not the first surgeon to perform a thymectomy, Keynes does acknowledge that he was the first doctor in England to perform that surgery, despite having “never in [his] life even seen the thymus gland” before the operation (276).

Although there is no direct connection between the thyroid and thymus or between Graves Disease and myasthenia gravis,\(^\text{10}\) Graves’s and Keynes’s discussions of these glands and conditions creates a metaphorical parallel between the ailing human body, especially those exhausted by war, and the body of the war-torn nation. In his remark that the news of the declaration of war caused him and others to experience “astonishment amounting to incredulity,” for instance, Keynes implies that the English population was drowsily unaware of impinging global disaster in the summer of 1914. Meanwhile, Graves, in describing his military training after the outbreak of the war, makes it clear that the English nation was equally ignorant of the kind of warfare World War I would inaugurate: “[W]e second-lieutenants learned Regimental history, drill, musketry, Boer War field-tactics, military law and organization, how to recognize bugle calls, how to work a machine-gun, and how to conduct ourselves on formal occasions. We dug no trenches, handled no bombs, and thought of the company, not of the platoon, still less of the section, as the smallest independent tactical unit” (80). As these remarks suggest, England, like a patient with myasthenia gravis, was paralyzed before the war as a result of its geographical and political insularity; yet, like a patient with Graves Disease, the nation rushes into action at the news of the war’s outbreak only to expend itself quickly where men and resources are concerned. The predicament of the individual soldiers who make up the English army, however, proves even more worrisome than the general fate of the nation, since those soldiers’ prolonged exposure to combat results not only in the decreased functioning of their immune systems but also in

\(^{10}\) In their 1993 article in *British Ophthalmology*, Marino E. Vargas, Floyd A. Warren, and Mark J. Kupersmith note that Graves Disease and myasthenia gravis do occasionally occur in the same patient: “The association between thyroid disorders and myasthenia gravis (MG) has long been recognised. The occurrence of Graves’ Disease is reported in 3-10% of myasthenic patients” (822).
psychological traumas that continue to exist even after the conclusion of hostilities. Thus, while the duration of the combat experience directly affects the individual bodies that make up the national body, it can also produce psychological symptoms that extend beyond the time of war.

Aside from the resemblance between, on the one hand, the symptoms of England and her soldiers before and during World War I and, on the other hand, the symptoms of sufferers from Graves Disease and myasthenia gravis, a similarity also exists between the treatment for these medical conditions and the treatment of autobiography and war in Good-bye to All That and The Gates of Memory. As noted above, Keynes constructs his autobiography not only by excising problematic historical and political matters, but also, in large part, by excising himself. Rather than providing a sustained criticism of his time, his work concentrates on those men and women who have contributed something meaningful to England and the world, while also drawing attention to the pursuit of knowledge, which, regardless of subject, has the ability to cross borders and transcend issues of nationality. Like Keynes, Graves also performs an excising activity; yet where Keynes excises national blemishes, Graves criticizes England’s flaws at length before permanently removing himself from the country. In choosing to immigrate to Majorca after having launched a blistering attack against England at and after war, Graves thus reinforces his autobiography’s departure from satiric tradition. More specifically, his relocation suggests that he has no solutions for the problems his satiric memoir has diagnosed at such length and no hope for a country that continues to deny the lessons of world war.

Precisely because Graves reconceives the satiric genre by eschewing its traditional corrective function, one should reject those accounts of Good-bye to All That that downplay the work’s “refusal of ethical postures” (Rouby 175).11 In particular, one should take issue with claims that Graves’s memoir, like others that emerged from the war, demonstrates an affinity with the high modernist novels and poems of the 1920s and 1930s that stressed the value of new or

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11 Original text : «Avec son apparente sécheresse et son ironie dévastatrice, le texte est bien cette machine de guerre animée par une exigence d’efficacité, et puisque la morale et la stratégie n’ont rien à faire ensemble, Goodbye to All That se caractérisera par son refus des postures éthiques » (175).
revitalized myths. In *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Fussell makes just such an argument when discussing the “fiction-memoirs” of the war. Noting that *Good-bye to All That* and other post-war memoirs make use of the “ironic mode” described by Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism*, Fussell describes the authors of such works as “literary characters” and compares them to the novelistic creations of a variety of non-combatant American and European modernists:

The passage of these literary characters [i.e., the memorists] from prewar freedom to wartime bondage, frustration, and absurdity signals just as surely as does the experience of Joyce’s Bloom, Hemingway’s Frederick Henry, and Kafka’s Joseph K. the passage of modern writing from one mode to another, from the low mimetic of the plausible and the social to the ironic of the outrageous, the ridiculous, and the murderous. It is their residence on the knife-edge between these two modes that give the memoirs of the Great War their special quality, a quality often overlooked because too few readers have attended to their fictional character, preferring to confound them with ‘documentary’ or ‘history.’ These memoirs are especially worthy of the closest examination because, for all the blunt violence they depict, they seem so delicately transitional, pointing at once in two opposite directions—back to the low mimetic, forward to the ironic and—most interestingly—to that richest kind of irony proposing, or at least recognizing, a renewed body of rituals and myths. (312)

Although Fussell is right in this passage to note the modal shifts between the low mimetic and the ironic in World War I memoirs, his description of Graves’s autobiography, among others, as “delicately transitional” fails to take into account the almost schizophrenic nature of *Good-bye to All That*, which undermines the notion of transition, delicate or otherwise, and substitutes for it the notion of rupture. Indeed, this substitution accounts not only for Graves’s nearly unidirectional focus on the War but also for his text’s rapid tonal shifts. More problematic than the characterization of *Good-bye to All That* as transitional, however, is Fussell’s final sentence about ritual and myth, which introduces an ill-timed note of optimism into his otherwise bleak account of post-war fiction-memoirs. Within the context of *The Great War and Modern Memory*, this optimism appears even odder that it does in excerpt, since Fussell immediately follows the paragraph above first by associating the trenches with Frye’s description of “demonic imagery”
and then by cordonning off memoirists like Graves from high modernists like Eliot and Pound, the former of whom he labels “lesser talents—always more traditional and technically prudent” (313-4). As a result of this last description, in particular, Fussell’s earlier argument about delicate transitions, not to mention his subsequent qualification of the verb “proposing,” takes on a whole new meaning, since by the conclusion of this section, he seems to suggest that these “lesser talents” have neither the energy nor the skill to do anything aside from “pointing in two opposite directions” and “recognizing” the end phase of irony, which they will never achieve.

Perhaps the most troublesome feature of Fussell’s argument is that the author, in attempting to elevate memoirists like Graves to a position near but not equal to Eliot or Pound’s, actually manages to work against his previous characterization of fiction-memoirs. For if any author proposed “a renewed body of rituals and myths,” it was not Graves but Eliot, who neither participated in the war nor wrote directly about it. Furthermore, it was Eliot, who, under Pound’s aegis, became “always more traditional and technically prudent.” Indeed, in Blasting and Bombardiering, a work Fussell does not consider, Lewis makes much this same point in one of his final chapters, where he begins to describe his first meeting with Eliot:

It is with a heavy pen, if not with a heavy heart, that I take up my narrative of my earliest ‘contacts’ with Number Three of my trio of eminent acquaintances, Mr. T.S. Eliot…Certainly Mr. Eliot is not the devil—I am not proposing to claim that honour for him, nor would he himself do so…No. But Mr. Eliot may be regarded perhaps as not unlike the plenipotentiary of the Evil Principle in the Thomistic Heaven of the post-war—despatched there by his satanic majesty (he of the Naughty Nineties) rather as Ribbentrop is appointed to be his peace-envoy abroad by the wicked Hitler. And one’s pen grows languid, it refuses to dance—it moves at a funeral pace across paper—at the prospect of unraveling the technics of this complicated mission. It shrinks from the obligation to fix for posterity the features of this eccentric missionary. For it is nothing less than this that I have here set out to do. (282)
Putting aside Eliot’s supposed alliance with “his satanic majesty,” the most important word in this quotation is “post-war,” a word that appears numerous times in Blasting and Bombardiering and that Lewis uses to refer to the span of time between the Armistice and the General Strike of 1926. Aligning this much-despised period with the equally loathsome 1890s, Lewis explains that, once “[t]he War bled the world white,” “a sort of weed-world sprang up and flourished. All that was real was in eclipse, so all that was unreal came into its own and ran riot for a season” (17). Proceeding to describe this “weed-world” as “cardboard make-believe,” Lewis sets it apart from the post-post-war, which, in his concluding remarks, he depicts as a world “encrusted” with politics (339). Although he repeatedly claims that he does not enjoy politics running riot in place of the weeds, Lewis does acknowledge that the post-post-war signifies a positive turn of events: namely, that “the real is recovering its strength” (17). Indeed, it is in light of this recrudescence of the “real” that Lewis’s characterization of Eliot needs to be understood. For in others of his works, especially Men Without Art, Lewis calls into question Eliot’s critical declamations and poetic practice, but he does so outside of any political context. Writing what he does about Eliot in Blasting and Bombardiering, then, Lewis signals that he is responding as much to the poet as he is to the period of the post-war, which, with its preference for the “unreal” and the apolitical, reared its ugly head not only in English society but also in Eliot’s insistence on “a renewed body of ritual and myth.”

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12 Lewis does not indicate who “his satanic majesty” is, but given his repeated attacks on Oscar Wilde, Wilde seems like a possible candidate. Speaking of the English novelist Ronald Firbank in Blasting and Bombardiering, Lewis describes him as “the very genius loci of the ‘post-war,’ and the reincarnation of all the Nineties—Oscar Wilde, Pater, Beardsley, Dawson all rolled into one, and served up with sauce créole” (224). Meanwhile, in The Art of Being Ruled, Lewis blamed “the Naughty Nineties” in general and Wilde in particular for encouraging the rise of homosexuality in the post-war period: “On what tone are we to address ourselves to the consideration of this inverted fashion, abstracting ourselves, of necessity, from any prejudices we may feel for the purpose?...Until quite recently European [sic] society took a very severe view of [sexual inversion]...Even so late as the famous ‘nineties the English [sic] courts made a martyr of that description of Oscar Wilde. He became almost a political martyr, other countries using his well-advertised agony to point to the philistinism of England. A very amiable and charming person, he awakened the chivalrous instincts everywhere, like a very attractive maiden in distress. And as he possessed to the full the proselytizing zeal that usually goes with sexual inversion...he prepared the ground with his martyrdom, ecstatic recantations, eloquent and tearful confessions, and the great prestige of his wit, for the complete reversal of the erotic machinery that has ensued or is ensuing” (209).
If Lewis censures Eliot’s post-war works, as well as those of Pound and Joyce, he does not allow himself to pass unscathed. Although he admits no personal wrongdoing in the wake of the war, he does take issue with his participation in pre-war artistic circles, which, in retrospect, he finds naively optimistic in their claims to revolutionary influence. Perhaps most striking, however, is the mythical language he uses to speculate about future generations’ possible evaluations of the pre-war modernists’ misplaced hope: “Even people may ask themselves if such creatures ever in fact existed, or did not rather belong to the family of the phoenix, or if dragon-blood did not flow in their veins. How otherwise could they find it worthwhile to make these efforts, or believe so bravely in the future of the world, which by then every school boy will know is a bughouse and leave it at that” (255). In constructing this scenario, Lewis wishes not only to call into question his and other modernists’ pre-war idealism but also to suggest that contemporary artists and authors who continue to advance idealist programs fail to recognize that World War I made attempts at artistic perfection and utopian futures pointless:

I will fix for an alien posterity some of the main features of this [pre-war] movement. No one is better fitted than I am to do so, in all humility I may asseverate….However, I may seem to sweep on too fast and far, and to speak as if Mr. Eliot were not there, alive although no longer kicking, to write a morality next year, to be played in the Chapter of some venerable Close; or his melancholy ex-lieutenant Mr. [Herbert] Read, to write yet another dashing but dull rearguard book, about the ‘abstract’ arts…And I do not mean to say that all the masterpieces of this school have yet been penned, painted, or planned. But what I do say is that whatever happens in the world during the next century or so, there will be no society present upon the globe to think, live, and speculate in the manner conducive to the production of such works as Bouvard and Pecucet, Ulysses, The Hollow Men, The Ambassadors, The Portrait of Carlyle, to name a few of the sort of productions that I mean, and to mix my times and arts a little too. The last society likely to do anything of that sort vanished with the War. It is a case of goodbye to all that, and for good. And one has to be no great prophet to foresee that whichever of the forces confronted upon the political stage to-day may get the upper hand… any detached artistic effort, on the grand scale, will be quasi-impossible. There will not be present the will, the psychological incentive, the time, or the peace that are requisite for that. (255-6)
As I noted in my introduction, Lewis initially began *Blasting and Bombardiering* with a preface that placed his autobiography alongside Robert Graves’s on a station bookstall. In this passage, however, he places himself alongside Graves in the realization that World War I and the Peace have obliterated any hope of lasting social or political transformation. Indeed, insisting as he does that the ‘Men of 1914’ were “*the first men of a Future that has not materialized*” and that never will, Lewis, like Graves, rejects the possibility mentioned by Fussell: namely, that renewed myth or revitalized ritual will have any power to affect post-war England (256, original emphasis). More than just countering Fussell’s claim in advance, however, Lewis also goes a step beyond Graves by suggesting that satire, and more particularly durational satire, is the logical post-war step in the literary development of irony. For where Graves begins the process of introducing such a satirical trend in his 1929 autobiography, Lewis repeats in *Blasting and Bombardiering* not only Graves’s earlier satirical strategy but his own. To be more precise, he imports into his 1937 memoir the satirical techniques he had already refined in 1930 in *The Apes of God*, a novel that followed Graves’s autobiography and immigration to Spain by less than a year. That *Good-bye to All That* and *The Apes of God* did appear in print around the same time suggests that Graves and Lewis simultaneously, if separately, renounced the project of mendable man. Yet to understand what caused Lewis to make that renunciation, we need consult not only the text of *The Apes of God* itself but also Lewis’s earlier non-fictional works, including *The Art of Being Ruled* and *Time and Western Man*. It is to those works that I now turn.

**Condemned and (Self-)Condemning: The Post-War Durational Satire of Wyndham Lewis**

Originally planned as parts of a single longer work, *The Art of Being Ruled* (1925) and *Time and Western Man* (1927) offer a diagnosis of a variety of contemporary social ills, especially as these affect the professional artist and author. Despite their publication dates, the works have their origin not in the post-post-war period but rather in the earlier post-war period
that Lewis despised. Speaking of that earlier period toward the end of *Blasting and Bombardiering*, Lewis explains that, aside from its troublesome avoidance of “the real,” the eight years immediately following World War I proved particularly irksome for his career: “The War, of course, had robbed me of four years, at the moment when, almost overnight, I had achieved the necessary notoriety to establish myself in London as a painter…[and in 1918] I had to some extent to begin all over again” (213). Although he acknowledges that being “thrown back on [him]self” was not an entirely unfortunate turn of events, since it prevented him from “wast[ing] [his] time in a hundred ways,” he does remark that his distaste for the immediate post-war period caused him to “go Underground” until 1926 (5). Indeed, Lewis found the period between 1918 and 1926 so loathsome that he refuses to say anything about it in his post-war memoir: “1918-26 is a period marked ‘strictly private’. In the last few chapters of this book I flash over it on silver wings, coming down in the middle of 1926 and bowing myself off the stage. But I give you nothing but an air-picture of it, like a diagram.”

Despite Lewis’s unwillingness to provide details about his life during the post-war period, his claim that he eventually “disinterred [him]self” to become “a philosopher and critic,” rather than a painter, does suggest that his experiences of the era lie behind his subsequent philosophical and critical works. In particular, *The Art of Being Ruled*, the first book he published after his “disinterment,” provides a useful guide in understanding the bedrock of the political and artistic positions that he developed between 1918 and 1926. Within that book, Lewis provides an exhaustive critical account of both the obsolescence of nationality and individuality in the post- and post-post-war periods and the rise of a series of “rackets,” which manage to hide the refusal of responsibility under the cloak of freedom and equality (436). In a lengthy chapter on the shortcomings of Bertrand Russell, for instance, he argues that the “differences between individual and individual in our community, or between the various western nations…are potentially matters of the past”; moreover, he contends that “[o]nce you have destroyed, or allowed to be destroyed, the ancient customs and arts of a country, you cannot reimpose them” (50, 366). For this last
reason, in particular, he stresses that the post-war tendency to replace nationality with regionalism solves nothing,\(^\text{13}\) since “Regionalism, Merrie England, etc., is in reality a movement to substitute one uniformity for another: a small one for a big one” (50). As he explains, “The Maypole or Jack o’ the Green in the Council-School festivity is too evident a lie: it is like a sphinx in St. Paul’s, or a Carthaginian galley on the Spree” (50, 366-7).

Regardless of his disdain for regionalism’s fraudulent claims to uniqueness, Lewis directs his sharpest barbs at socialism. Observing that in the wake of the War and the Bolshevik Revolution “all serious politics today are revolutionary” and that the “‘nation’ as a unit is not universal enough” for the purposes of contemporary political movements, Lewis argues that “only the ‘class’ is general enough, and the subject or slave class bulky enough—both helpless and immense—pathetic enough, and primitive enough, to answer to [those movements’] requirements” (17, 76). More pernicious, however, than the socialists who seek power by replacing the vertical strata of capitalism with the “horizontal diversity” of syndicalism are the members of the bourgeoisie who have somehow managed to endorse socialism while retaining the benefits of their pre-war social status: “[Revolution] is today everywhere obligatory,” Lewis writes. “Every one who has money enough is today a ‘revolutionary’; that and the dress suit are the first requisites of a gentleman” (30, 33).

Implicit in this last quotation is Lewis’s belief that England’s version of socialism is little more than its class system disguised with a fashionable new name. To make matters worse, it is

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\(^{13}\) Disdaining regionalism in his nonfiction throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Lewis provides an interesting point of comparison to the non-veteran late modernists Jed Esty writes about in *A Shrinking Island*. Although Esty is careful not to align England’s “anthropological turn” with regionalism, his characterization of “national culture,” at least as it is found in the works of Forster, Woolf, and Eliot, is nearly identical to Lewis’s presentation of regionalism. Whereas this last group of writers found an escape “from the Manichean logic of empire” in the “language of cultural particularity,” Lewis was quick to argue that such a “cultural revival” was nothing but the wolf of nationalism dressed in sheep’s clothing (36). In this respect, Lewis has a closer kinship with the Auden generation than he does with the late modernists described by Esty, since he, too, “move[d] further away from, not closer to, the ambiguous embrace of national identity or group politics” (9). Indeed, over twenty years after the publication of *The Art of Being Ruled*, Lewis still saw regionalism as a trend to be combated: “For the variety the regionalist recommends is an archaic variety, which has no relevance any longer in the general life of the world. There is a little Scotman in my neighbourhood (in London) who does his shopping in a kilt, a dagger thrust into the top of his stocking, and a feather stuck in his bonnet. It amuses him to imagine that he lives in the days of the Bruce or the ’45. –That dagger had a meaning once: but today it is like the lance of Don Quixote” (*RA* 99).
the financier who “speaks the language of philosophy” and “takes over the watchwords and fiercely reformist temper of revolution”; and it is the financier, as well, who, in his attempts to “enslave and change,” creates the post-war mentality of “What the Public Wants” (79). This mentality, Lewis argues, relies on two contradictory premises: on the one hand, the financier preaches the virtues of “Mankind,” a notion that is “part of the machinery of the democratic flattery of democracy”; on the other hand, he advances his affairs by operating under the assumption that it is “impossible to exaggerate…the idiocy of the Public” (82, 86). According to Lewis, this discrepancy between the financier’s public and private practice has resulted in the simultaneous infantilization of the public and that public’s insistence on a bogus form of freedom. More specifically, in a world where “Emancipation and irresponsibility are commutative terms,” Lewis claims that “the luxurious, hand-to-mouth, capitalo-revolutionary society of the interregnum has installed itself in the nursery,” as well as in the artist’s studio (134, 136, original emphasis):

To state in its awful simplicity the true inner nature of what is happening, every one wants to be a child, and every one wants to be an artist; which is of course impossible. All the privileges of lisping innocent and petted childhood, and all the privileges of art, are coveted by the masses of the mature and the rich. The mature have developed this particular covetousness because their privileges, the privileges and ambitions of mature life, have been ravished from them. The rich have developed it because, as it is impossible to enjoy openly the privileges of riches in the present period of transition, to exercise power openly, and openly surround themselves with its emblems and satisfactions; as it is necessary to pretend to be merely private citizens when in reality they are the rulers of the world – so they covet the privileges of the artist, to which, and the privileges similarly of the child, they with some reason consider that their irresponsibility affects them. Both the grown-up and the rich man find the natural outlet for their ambition and vitality blocked. Neither can expand upwards or forwards, so they are forced back into these roads that terminate respectively in the Nursery and in the Studio and Study of the artist. (136-7)

14 Lewis uses italics frequently throughout The Art of Being Ruled, Time and Western Man, The Apes of God, and Rude Assignment. In the remainder of this chapter and unless otherwise signaled, all citations from those works will contain the author’s original italics.
Although Lewis describes this problematic situation with much vehemence, one should note that his proposed solutions are themselves problematic. In his chapter, “Disappearance of the Spectator,” for instance, he condemns “the cult of the amateur” and suggests that, for the majority of pseudo-artists and pseudo-actors, “[q]uietness, obedience, and receptivity” should be the order of the day: “So to be receptive rather than active (to just lie down and couver rather than execute) is by no means a humiliating rôle. And the spectator’s godlike rôle is not a contemptible one at all” (160). At the same time, however, he argues that “the processes of stultification which are occurring,” including the production of sub-par works of art and the spread of disingenuous politics, should actually be “hasten[ed],” since “a new duality of human life (introducing perhaps a new species, and issuing in biological transformation) would result” from the separation of the masses and the “free intelligences” (364). As this juxtaposition of quotations suggests, Lewis simultaneously urges amateurs to take pride in their inferiority as performers and producers and alerts them that, by accepting their inferiority, they will ultimately belong to a lesser species of enslaved intelligences. If this contradictory advice was not troublesome in its own right, it certainly becomes so as a result of Lewis’s frequent musings on the success of flattery in the post-war period. Claiming that flattery has seized the day, Lewis must have recognized that his unflattering biological hypothesis would be met with nothing like “quiescence, obedience, and receptivity” from the masses or from amateurs.

More problematic than this couching of insult in the language of dignity is Lewis’s optimism regarding the position of the “real” artists and intelligences he is attempting to preserve. Although his contention about the possibility of a new species may be tongue-in-cheek, he does repeatedly make unrealistic claims about the benefits that will accrue to artists under more, not less, centralized regimes. Indeed, in perhaps the most frequently cited quotation from The Art of Being Ruled, he argues that “for anglo-saxon countries as they are constituted today some modified form of fascism would probably be best” (320-1). Taken alone and viewed in hindsight,
this support of fascism may appear damning; yet, as Lewis goes on to explain, “Complete political standardization, with the suppression of the last vestiges of the party system, will rescue masses of energy otherwise wasted in politics for more productive ends.” More to the point, the end of the “party system” will spell the end of Western democracy, which Lewis loathes not only for its ineffectualness but also for its hypocrisy:

It is a paradox [of ‘the duel between communism and capitalism, fascism and democracy’] that all the frankness is on one side and that is not on the side of the West, of democracy. All the traditional obliquity and subterranean methods of the Orient, are, in this duel, exhibited by the westerner and the democratic régime. It is we who are the Machiavels, compared to the sovietist or the fascist, who makes no disguise of his forcible intentions, whose power is not wrapped up in parliamentary humbug, who is not eternally engaged in pretences of benefaction; who does not say at every move in the game that he is making it for somebody else’s good, that he is a vicar and a servant when he is a master. It is true that he promises happiness to the masses as a result of his iron rule. But the iron is not hidden, or camouflaged as christian charity. He says that one politics in a country, one indisputed government, will be for the good of the average man. And when these one-party states are centrally organized, as Italy is becoming, who can gainsay him? (74-5)

The matter of gainsaying aside, the importance of this passage lies in its emphasis on directness. For here and elsewhere in The Art of Being Ruled, Lewis is not endorsing fascism as a good in itself but rather suggesting that it is the least of three evils. Indeed, he makes it clear that he prefers the “sovietic system” to the fascist “in the abstract” but that, for the English temperament, fascism would best allow the nation’s “free intelligences” to get on with their business without the time-wasting habit of democratic double-speak. Thus, to label Lewis a fascist, as many critics do, is to miss his point, which is not about the desirability of fascism but about the need for artistic and intellectual efficiency. This is not to say that Lewis does not deserve criticism; rather, it is to relocate that criticism away from his superficial flirtation with fascism and in the direction of his more general, and also more problematic, faith in centralization.
In this last regard, Lewis’s concluding remarks about internationalism prove particularly troublesome. Explaining in his penultimate chapter that “internationalism is becoming a fact,” as is “political world-control,” he makes a startling leap in logic when he argues that, “[w]ith a world-state and a recognized central world-control, argument about the ethics of war would become absurd” and “‘revolution’ would not be encouraged” (367). Given his previous discussions about humanity’s limitless capacity for absurdity and its uncontrollable desire for power, these conclusions seem, at best, ill-considered and, at worst, ridiculous. Indeed, it is quite possible that Lewis is simply being ironic—that he is overstating his case to the satirical end of exposing the misplaced optimism of those who advocate centralized political authority.

Nevertheless, if Lewis’s tongue is in his cheek, it is a little too firmly lodged there, since it becomes increasingly difficult to tell if he is or is not in earnest. Soon after mentioning the world peace that he envisions coming on the heels of “world-control,” for instance, he suggests in what seems a serious tone that a centralized, international government will benefit intellectuals: “It is easy to see how the passing of democracy and its accompanying vulgarities…must facilitate this putting of the intelligence on a new basis. The annihilation of industrial competition and the sweeping the board of the Small Man, commercially and socially, should have as its brilliant and beneficent corollary the freeing of its great and difficult tasks of intelligence of the first order” (375).

Although perhaps “easy” for Lewis to see, the conclusion that internationalism and intellectualism are destined to have a symbiotic relationship remains difficult for the reader to accept. For if Lewis is correct that the intellect is much maligned in the comparatively small nation, why would it be better off when all nations have been consolidated? And if the leaders of the future enlightened world-government will most likely be the same men who formerly led nations,¹⁵ what would cause the reversal of their present unconcern for the intellect, especially

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¹⁵ One might argue that the leaders of the new world government could themselves be intellectuals, but this is not a possibility that Lewis considers. Instead, he repeatedly separates practitioners of the sciences and arts from politicians
since, in the absence of industrial competition or commercialism, they would no longer be able to make a profit off of intellectual advances? Even more unfounded is Lewis’s remark that future world leaders would not only encourage the intellect but would also allow the “intellectual workman…isolation and freedom from interference” and would “accomodat[e] [him] with conditions suitable to his maximum development” (374, 375).

In looking at passages such as these, we might be forgiven for suspecting that Lewis’s support of a centralized world system has less to do with his concern for all peoples than it does with his apprehension about his own fate as an artist. For despite Lewis’s contention that the intellectual’s removal from the crowd in an international system would “not [be] a snobbish withdrawal,” his characterization of intellectuals as a class corresponds a little too neatly with his implicit characterization of himself as a superior being (373). To be more precise, the intellectual Lewis describes is not only superior to every other class of men but is also a practitioner of a very specific kind of intellectual activity: Lewis’s own. That Lewis disingenuously suggests the universal value of his personal craft by labeling it “the intellect” tout court becomes clear in the following passage, where he provides a very precise, and thus highly debatable, description of “the life of the intellect”:

The life of the intelligence is the very incarnation of freedom: where it is dogmatic and harsh it is impure; where it is too political it is impure: its disciplines are less arbitrary and less political than those of religion: and it is the most inveterate enemy of unjust despotic power. In its operation it is less violent and more beneficent than religion, with its customary intolerance of emotional extremes. It does not exercise power by terror or by romantic pictures of the vast machinery of Judgment and Destruction. It is more humane than are the programmes of the theological justiciary. And its servants are not a sect nor an organized cast, like the priest or the hereditary aristocrat, but individuals possessing no concerted and lawless power, coming indifferently from all classes, and living simply among other people. And their pride, if they have it, is because of something and argues that politics should have nothing to do with either set of disciplines. In consequence, he implies that the leaders of the world government will be chosen from the same portion of the population as they are in national governments. The next block quote in the body of this essay provides one example of Lewis’s differentiation between politicians and scientists or artists.
inside themselves which has been won at no one else’s expense,
and that no one can give them or remove from them. (374)

Upon a first reading, this last quotation may seem suitably general for the book’s concluding remarks. However, the specificity of the “life of the intelligence” being described—and its identicalness to Lewis’s conception of his own intellectual life—peeps through at certain moments, as when he insists that the intellect “is the most inveterate enemy of unjust despotic power.” Shelving the question of what just despotism might look like, we should note that, within this passage, Lewis implicitly suggests that many of his acquaintances, though widely considered intellectuals, have no right to that title. On the one hand, the Italian futurist Filippo Marinetti, whom Lewis knew in the 1910s, would be denied intellectual status, since he provided “romantic pictures of the vast machinery of Judgment and Destruction” in the days leading up to the Great War; on the other hand, the Sitwell family and the Bloomsbury Group, whom Lewis satirizes at length in both Blasting and Bombardiering and The Apes of God, would fail to qualify as intellectuals, since, at least on his account, they were members of “sects” that had gained pride and won notoriety at the expense, both literal and figurative, of their forebears and the soldiers who fought the war.

That Lewis’s favored type of intellectual is the one graven in his image becomes even clearer in his next nonfiction work, Time and Western Man, which picks up where The Art of Being Ruled leaves off.16 Charting the decline of art and philosophy that has resulted from the nightmare of the post-war period, Time and Western Man takes particular issue with the post-war ascendancy of “time-philosophers” such as Henri Bergson, Oswald Spengler, Samuel Alexander, and Alfred North Whitehead, all of whom, according to Lewis, have encouraged the thriving of various “cults” and “rackets” through their irresponsible characterizations of time. Moreover, the

16 The similarities between these two works are not confined to subject matter. In the chapter “The Subject as King” in Time and Western Man, Lewis’s thirteenth argumentative bullet-point, which begins with a criticism of the Behaviorism endorsed by Professor John Watson, concludes with six paragraphs that are lifted word for word from The Art of Being Ruled. Aside from altered breaks within these paragraphs, the only difference between pages 328-331 of Time and Western Man and pages 339-342 of The Art of Being Ruled is the excision of two block-quotes from the earlier work.
book advances lengthy arguments against the literary works of modernist authors such as Joyce, Gertrude Stein, and Marcel Proust, authors who, on Lewis’s account, embraced Bergsonian durée and thereafter strived to capture Bergsonian flux in their fiction.

Discussing *Time and Western Man* in *Fables of Aggression*, Fredric Jameson argues that that book, along with Lewis’s other nonfictional works of the mid-1920s, shows a “sudden release of impressive quantities of what must be called cultural criticism” (122). For Jameson, however, the trouble with *Time and Western Man* is “[n]ot the content of [Lewis’s] elaborate onslaught…but rather its form,” since “[t]he theme of time is here an instrument of analysis and descriptive explanation which is then called upon to function as a causal hypothesis” (124).

Arguing that “[t]he anomalous situation of the painter finds itself slowly absolutized against its will and [then] imperceptibly turns back into an affirmation of intellectual life in general (‘intelligence’) and artistic creation in particular,” Jameson underscores how Lewis’s “idiosyncratic and individualistic posture at length becomes indistinguishable from the most banal defense of (Western) culture” (126). More than just identifying a slip between the particular and the universal, Jameson also contends that *Time and Western Man* serves as a “protofascist” prequel to Lewis’s later endorsement of Hitler:

The intellectual authority of the culture critique depends on the repression of this concrete social situation, and on the projection of its anxieties into some more timeless realm of moral judgement: the sense of placelessness, the illusion of absolute values thereby produced, discloses the constitutive idealism of this genre, which formally tends to express a classical conservatism even where its content seems to contradict the form. Lewis was often, in this sense, merely a conservative. Where his polemics become formally and ideologically revealing are those moments in which the idealistic framework of the culture critique is briefly and with fitful, energetic impatience unmasked. At such moments, indeed, the rhetoric of conservative thought, which has ended up believing in its own official solicitude for Culture, gives way to the unpleasant and embarrassing cynicism of protofascism itself, which knows its intellectual practice as something other than the disinterested guardianship of universal values. In these moments, an embattled and Darwinian defense of the subject’s own threatened position and individual vested interests breaks through the universalizing pretence of philosophical discourse; and the rights of
privilege are openly affirmed against the threat to the self of some genuinely universal vision of human society. (129)

As I noted in connection with *The Art of Being Ruled*, there is little doubt that Lewis’s political and philosophical writings of the 1920s and 1930s are prompted by the threats he saw to his own artistic and authorial position. What Jameson fails to consider, however, are the precise reasons behind Lewis’s conservatism or protofascism. Certainly, Jameson argues in his prologue that protofascism arose from the petty bourgeoisie’s suspicion that, with the demise of middle-class ideologies and the rise of Marxism during and after World War I, their own class position had become insecure and could be reinforced by a cooptation of the critique of capitalism. Yet in criticizing Lewis for transforming his “instruments of analysis” and “descriptive explanations” into a “causal hypothesis,” Jameson himself relies so heavily on his own ill-defined instruments of analysis and exceedingly broad descriptive explanations that the only cause he seems able to identify behind Lewis’s writing, and indeed most modernist fiction, is reification. Even the concept of reification proves troublesome, though, since despite Jameson’s claim that “we” will be required “radically to historicize the gap between style and narrative,” he characterizes reification as a sort of juggernaut that, regardless of the historical moment, has both an irreversible course and predetermined consequences (7).

To be fair, Jameson does anticipate this kind of criticism, when he writes that the “methodological eclecticism with which such a project [as his] can be reproached is unavoidable, since the discontinuities projected by these various disciplines…correspond to objective discontinuities in their object (and beyond that, to the very fragmentation and compartmentalization of social reality in modern times)” (6). Nonetheless, such hedging of bets does not account for the fact that his only semi-substantial description of protofascism occurs in his prologue; nor does it explain why he simultaneously downplays the relevance of biography and endorses the use of psychoanalysis in examining Lewis’s *oeuvre*. In this last respect, his application of Lyotard’s concept of the “libidinal apparatus” to Lewis’s fiction proves particularly
Arguing that the “theory of the libidinal apparatus marks an advance over psychologizing approaches,” since it “endows a private fantasy-structure with a quasi-material inertness” and serves as “an independent structure of which one can write a history,” Jameson initially contends that “the diplomatic system of the pre-War nation-states” provided Lewis with “an objectified fantasy-structure,” which the author “thereafter reinvested and over-determined by the libidinal and the instinctual” (10-11, emphasis added). In a subsequent chapter, however, Jameson reverses tack when he claims that, by considering the “objective preconditions of a given form” and by “exploring those semantic and structural givens which are logically prior to [a] text,” we are saved from “affirm[ing] the meaningless proposition that the verbal artifact…[is] somehow ‘caused’ by forces on the quite different levels of political history or socioeconomic organization” (93-4, emphasis added).

Characteristically dense, Jameson’s writing here obscures the fact that he wants to have his cake and eat it too. For in his attempt to prove that the libidinal apparatus is both “independent” in the present and historicizable in the future, he refrains from identifying historical causes for particular “verbal artifacts” while also insisting that historical events, especially the politics and organization of the nation-state, have determined a certain set of available forms, which an author then adapts to his private and supposedly ahistorical fantasy-structure. To rephrase: Jameson avoids the “meaningless” task of finding causes for individual texts by inserting the libidinal apparatus between those texts and a collection of forms that have historical causes. How these forms can be caused by the historical moment while the

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17 The word “instinctual” appears repeatedly in *Fables of Aggression*, particularly in the closing chapters, but Jameson never elucidates what he means by the term. In fact, the term seems to acquire two different meanings over the course of the text, neither of which is altogether clear. On the one hand, Jameson suggests that Lewis’s late fiction, especially *The Human Age*, predicates “angelic strength…on the very absence of instincts” and denies the instinct any of the saving grace that might have accompanied it in the figure of Tarr’s Otto Kreisler (119). Yet at the same time, he argues that Lewis’s “later works can be seen to form a kind of instinctual combinatorie or permutation system, projecting all the logically possible variations on the basic structure of the aggressive assault implicit in satire” (142). According to Jameson, then, Lewis’s late fiction is the result of an inversely proportional relationship between the author’s instincts and his characters’: or, to rephrase, the more Lewis attempts in his fiction to separate the instinct from his conception of strength, the more thoroughly “the instinctual” determines the forms of his texts. Why Lewis’s growing concern with the role of the instinct in his fiction would be accompanied by the running amok of his own instincts is a matter Jameson does not consider. In this case, as in many others, he seems to feel that “Lewis’ narratives know [their contradictions], whether he does or not” (120).
permutations of the libidinal apparatus remain unaffected by the history of those forms remains unexplained in Jameson’s book. Instead, ignoring commutative logic and insisting that it is “more sensible” to examine “semantic and structural givens,” Jameson ultimately and confusingly historicizes forms rather than consider the biographical history of any single author. And this he does at the risk of making the texts themselves appear both historically necessary and strangely authorless:

This account of the preconditions of Lewis’ [fiction] is a very different proposition from interpretive statements which might take it as the ‘reflexion’ of the European diplomatic system or see its violent content as betraying some ‘homology’ with World War I. An analysis of the semantic and structural preconditions of a form is not a correspondence theory of art; nor do we mean to see national allegory as an afterimage given off by the international diplomatic system itself. Rather, like any form, it must be read as an instable and provisory solution to an aesthetic dilemma which is itself the manifestation of a social and historical contradiction. (94)

In looking at this last passage, we might wonder, despite Jameson’s assurances, what the difference actually is between traditional causal explanations (i.e., “reflexions,” “homologies”) of literary productions and the claim that “social and historical contradictions” produce certain forms that then address these contradictions. At the same time, once the issue of how a text should “be read” is temporarily bracketed, we might feel inclined to ask by whom that text came to be written, not to mention who it was that arrived at such “an instable and provisory solution to an aesthetic dilemma.” In this last respect, the remainder of Jameson’s chapter only muddies the waters further, since the specific work of Lewis’s he examines, not Lewis himself, becomes the actor in his semi-historical account of form. According to Jameson, in other words, it is not Lewis but his 1918 novel Tarr that “presuppose[s] the nation-state itself as the basic functional unit of world politics,” and it is Tarr, not its author, that “calls into question” and “seeks to deliver itself” from “the increasing gap between the existential data of everyday life within a
given nation-state and the structural tendency of monopoly capital to develop on a worldwide, essentially transnational scale” (94, 95).

Perhaps more chic or à la mode than the causal methodology he labels as “meaningless,” Jameson’s approach to Lewis’s fiction ultimately creates more holes than it fills. In addition, by focusing nearly exclusively on Tarr, Self Condemned (1954), and The Human Age (1955-6), he avoids Lewis’s fictional works of the interwar years, works that rely strongly on the author’s understanding of his historical moment and reflect his concerns about that moment on both formal and generic level. Certainly, Jameson mentions Lewis’s interwar novels, including The Apes of God and Revenge for Love (1937); yet, in considering those two major satires of the 1930s, he restricts his remarks to the level of their sentence production. Despite its 625 pages, for instance, The Apes of God receives only two pages of sustained analysis in Fables of Aggression, an oversight that seems based on Jameson’s belief that, with its “illimitable sentence-producing capacity,” the novel is “virtually unreadable for any sustained period of time” (32, 5). In Jameson’s defense, he is not alone in finding The Apes of God a difficult novel. As Paul Edwards explains in his afterward to the work, even Ezra Pound “found some of the earlier chapters [of The Apes of God] hard going” (629). Nevertheless, as Lewis’s lengthiest and most concentrated satire, The Apes of God is central to his oeuvre, especially since the author later constructed a theory of modern satire around the novel in Men Without Art (1934). The importance of The Apes of God also becomes clear when we recognize that it offers a fictionalized account of the artistic, philosophical, and political positions that Lewis first advanced in The Art of Being Ruled and Time and Western Man. Any serious account of Lewis’s body of work, then, cannot claim to be complete without an analysis of The Apes of God, which so thoroughly encapsulates the author’s aesthetic and political concerns during the post- and post-post-war periods.

The Apes of God opens with a portrait of former gossip-star Lady Fredigonde Follett as she completes her morning toilette. As Lewis later explained, “Fredigonde has a special rôle allotted her,” since she not only “appears before the formal raising of the curtain upon the Apes
proper” but also provides an example of the “interior method” of writing, which Lewis believes should be restricted to the “extremely aged,” “young children,” “half-wits,” and “animals” (MWA 98). Once this “slow-movement prelude” of Lady Fredigonde’s levée is complete, Lewis switches to the “exterior method” of narration as he begins following Horace Zagreus, a rich albino who exposes the hypocrisies of the art-world to Daniel Boleyn, a handsome, though himself half-witted, Irish émigré. As becomes clear in a subsequent section of the novel entitled “The Encyclical,” Zagreus indoctrinates his pupil according to the teachings of Pierpoint, a man who never appears in person across the novel’s 600-plus pages. Pierpoint’s physical absence, however, does not prohibit his overwhelming presence in the novel, since his beliefs emerge clearly both in the Encyclical itself and in Zagreus’s frequent “broadcasts” of his mentor. Indeed, for the reader of The Art of Being Ruled and Time and Western Man, Pierpoint, despite never making an appearance, leaps to the fore of nearly every page, since his views, especially those captured in the Encyclical, coincide almost entirely with Lewis’s own positions in the mid-1920s.

If Lewis chooses to put his earlier pronouncements in the mouth of Pierpoint, who, in turn, puts those pronouncements in the mouth of Zagreus, he does so not simply to repeat his familiar stances but to explore the historical and political causes of them. In particular, he is invested in considering the rise of the amateur on the post-war artistic scene, and for this reason, he has the major events of his novel occur in two settings: the studio and the salon. Within the studio scenes, Dan, dispatched by Zagreus, conducts field-research on a variety of pre-selected amateurs, or apes, and then records his ethnographical findings in a journal. And within the salon scenes, Zagreus provides his young apprentice with guided tours of the apes’ homes, where he attracts attention to himself by “broadcasting” Pierpoint’s beliefs to both his pupil and the assembled company. While the contents of these Pierpointian broadcasts are as wide-ranging as Lewis’s arguments in his polemical works of the mid-1920s, their two major themes are the effects of the Bolshevik Revolution on and the consequences of the Great War for English society and art.
In the chapter “Chez Lionel Kein Esq.,” for example, Zagreus provides two broadcasts, the first of which includes a criticism of Proust and a condemnation of the war and the second of which considers the communist reduction of people to abstractions in the post-war world.

Toward the beginning of the chapter, Zagreus informs his host, a devoted Proustian, that Proust is “an indecent institution” and that to like him is to combine “your power-complex and your appetite for gossip” (254). Arguing that “[e]very individual without exception is…objectively unbearable” and that “no one ever sees himself in the public mirror—in official Fiction,” he goes on to suggest that the ‘great novels’ of this time are dramatised social news-sheets” in which “the villains of the piece, of course, are the people who displease the accredited editor of Social-Gossip and of public opinion—or, in other words, the author (the ‘novelist’ and his friends)” (257, 255, 262). Moreover, declaring that the salon “is the stronghold of democracy, as democracy is understood with us” and claiming that, in consequence, “[t]here is a great pretence of egalitarian principles….an absence of ostentatious distinctions” in contemporary fiction, Zagreus concludes that modern literature is ensuring the extinction of real genius, a process that World War I first set in motion:

Always in these [society] books what could be called the ‘Lion’-theme—or the anti-‘Lion’-theme—will be noticed recurring. It is a constant feature. For this is a jungle from which all Lions are banished—lest democratic susceptibilities be offended. And anyone who is noticed being kind to a ‘Lion’—much more any ‘Lion-hunter’—has pretty quickly snob spat at him—that is, superlatively, a sport that is not allowed! For in the High Bohemia of the Ritzes and Rivieras are we not all ‘artists’—all ‘geniuses’—all ‘Lions’? Was not the War fought to that end—to make the World safe for Democracy, and free of disturbing ‘Lions’, for ever more? It is the Paradise of the Apes of God, we are to understand! (264)

Although this recital is met with derogatory remarks from his host and hostess, who have heard Pierpoint speak at length and identically on the same subject, Zagreus remains unfazed and continues his broadcasting over luncheon. This time, hearing another guest, Kalman, a self-professed “bolshevik in [his] cradle,” discuss the hilarity of “a man become a thing,” Zagreus
takes issue with the leveling impulse of communism, which, like the democracy of the salon, values what “can be measured and abstracted” instead of what is “concrete” and real (261).

More specifically, learning that Kalman has a journalist friend who makes his living by asserting that all women are young and all youth noble, Zagreus argues that “in our democratic society flattery...take[s] the form of saying to people that they are like other people—rather than unlike or possessing something peculiar of their own” (283). For Zagreus, and therefore for Pierpoint, such “‘eminence’...[is] crowd-eminence”; it is the “old snobbery of pride-of-race...broken up and...evenly distributed among the crowd...each getting his little bit in rotation.” Furthermore, the eminent status given to abstractions like youth or health is a sign of “a progressive collapse towards primitive conditions,” since it ultimately leads to the slave’s boast of just “being alive” (284). Although Kalman expresses dissatisfaction with Zagreus’s characterization of his views and ultimately reveals he heard the same arguments from Pierpoint three years earlier, Zagreus continues to insist that “[t]o be a human being, any human being at all, is to be ‘eminent’ under communism” (285). In addition, informing Dan that Kalman’s “abstractions...would please [him] better than quantities of people,” if by people one means those assembled at the Keins’, Zagreus ends his broadcast by stating that the entire company are “characters of Fiction,” but “Fiction as dependent upon reality—such a poor reality and so unreal—that they are neither flesh nor fowl—they are fictional mongrel facts” (293).

By the conclusion of “Chez Lionel Kein Esq.,” the reader is unsurprised to learn that Dan and Zagreus have been ordered from chez Kein and told not to return. What should be emphasized about the chapter, however, is that both the attack directed at Proust and the attack directed at Kalman have their origins in Lewis’s opposition to Bergsonian philosophy, which he criticizes at length in *Time and Western Man*. Writing in that earlier work that “the little seed planted by Bergson...[is] now spreading more vigorously than ever,” Lewis argues that Proust’s À *La Recherche du Temps Perdu* and James Joyce’s *Ulysses* would never have existed without Bergson’s philosophical concept of *durée* (87). Aside from noting that he disapproves of this
concept, since, in its literary manifestations, it leads to a troublesome romanticism and an “instinctive indulgence,” Lewis also underscores that, despite Bergson’s claims to the contrary, *durée* actually depends on “a theory of ‘timelessness’” (xix, 108):

So we arrive at the concrete illustrations of that strange fact already noted—that an intense preoccupation with *time* or ‘duration’ (the psychological aspect of time, that is) is wedded to the theory of ‘timelessness.’ It is, as it were, in its innate confusion in the heart of the reality, the substance and original of that peculiar paradox—that so long as *time* is the capital truth of your world it matters very little if you deny time’s existence, like the einsteinian, or say there is nothing else at all, like Bergson...For all practical purposes you are committed to the same world-view. Practically it will impose on you the same psychology; but further than that, if you wished to pursue it, you would find that the purely physical theory of Einstein is of such an order that, though it sets out to banish the mental factor altogether and to arrive at a purely physical truth, it nevertheless cannot prevent itself turning into a psychological or spiritual account of things, like Bergson’s. For the mind of Einstein, like that of Bergson, or like that of Proust, is not a physical mind, as it could be called. It is psychologic; it is mental. (108-9)

A firm believer in the superiority of concreteness and exteriority, Lewis clearly takes issue with any temporal philosophy or theory that ultimately does away with socially agreed-upon notions of time and substitutes for them a timeless, psychological hodgepodge of thoughts and feelings. More than just finding troublesome the prioritization of the mind over objective reality, however, Lewis also believes that philosophical arguments like Bergson’s, though appearing to give individuals freedom, actually reduce them, at best, to lifeless creatures and, at worst, to machines. Speaking of Proust’s attempt to capture Bergson’s philosophy of time in fictional form, for instance, Lewis claims that Proust had to “[die] as a sensational creature in order that he should live as an historian of his dead sensational self”; more problematic still, Lewis argues, is that Proust, in his concentration on past experiences and sensations, “distract[s] people from a living Present (which becomes dead as the mind withdraws) into a Past into which [those people] have gone to live” (249).
Although Lewis does not directly link Proust and Bergson in *The Apes of God*, the connection between the novelist and philosopher he established in *Time and Western Man* does serve as an implicit segue between Zagreus’s attack on Proust and his attack on Kalman. More specifically, when he introduces the latter character into the text, Lewis not only has Zagreus reflect that Kalman had “entered [the Keins’] circle as a result of his shared “Proust-interests” but also has Kalman repeat one of Bergson’s arguments from *Le Rire* (1900). In that turn-of-the-century work, which appeared in print eleven years after his first extended discussion of *durée* in *Time and Free Will* (1889), Bergson famously contended that laughter originates when we perceive “something mechanical encrusted upon the living”; “We laugh every time a person gives us the impression of being a thing” (30, 34). What’s more, Bergson argued that our perception of the comic depends on our recognition that “the body [has taken] precedence of the soul” (32). Lewis had found this characterization of the origins of laughter problematic at least since 1927, when he published *The Wild Body*. As Vincent Sherry remarks in his essay on that work, Lewis took issue with the “profoundly humanist norm” that underlay Bergson’s characterization of the comic and therefore sought to make Bergson’s “humanist vantage...the butt of laughter” (123). When he set about to describe “[t]he root of the comic,” then, Lewis claimed that it was not to be found in perceptions of a person acting like a thing but rather in “observations of a thing behaving like a person” (*WB* 247). Within *The Wild Body*, Sherry explains, Lewis’s commitment to this idea emerges in his repeated suggestions that his “comic characters are not some subnormal exception”; instead, those characters “comprise a usual humankind, whose strenuous but vacuous attempt to supersede their animal-mechanical nature affords the constant opportunity for comedy” (123).

On first considering all this, we might perceive a contradiction between Lewis’s rejection of Bergsonian *durée*—which, on his account, coincides with “mechanical repetition”—and his suggestion that comedy depends on viewing “all men...[as] things, or physical bodies, behaving as persons” (*TWM* 249; *WB* 247). This contradiction is only apparent, however, since Lewis’s
aesthetic position, including his views on the comic, develops from his belief that individuals deny reality and truth by wrongly assuming the superiority of the mind and soul over matter, including the materiality of the body. For Lewis, this denial of the body at the expense of the mind and soul encourages a misplaced vanity, which, especially during the post-war period, results in the success of certain troublesome “cults” and the advent of artistic forms, literary and otherwise, that reinforce those cults. Indeed, when he began outlining his satiric practice in *Men Without Art*, which he published four years after *The Apes of God*, Lewis insisted that satire’s value lay in its ability not only to combine the “objective, non-emotional truth of the scientific intelligence” with “the exuberant sensuous quality of creative art” but also to combat “the ‘dark’ gushings of the tides of *The Great Within*”: “There is a stiffening of Satire in everything good, of ‘the grotesque,’ which is the same thing—the non-human outlook must be there (beneath the fluff and pulp which is all that is seen by the majority) to correct our soft conceit” (99, 101).

Within *The Apes of God*, upon which he bases his theory of satire in *Men Without Art*, Lewis most clearly points to the kinds of “soft conceit” that need to be corrected through Dan and Zagreus’s visit to the home of the Finnian Shaws, a “family-group” loosely based on the Sitwells. Invited by Osmund, Phoebus, and Harriet Finnian Shaw to provide a “vanish” and other amusements for a party at their run-down country estate, Zagreus assembles a group of apes and apprentices as performers and dresses them in costumes designed by Pierpoint. Once at the estate, however, the performers spend less time performing and more time listening to Zagreus’s broadcasts. As at the Keins’, these broadcasts center on the war and the social and artistic “leveling” that was its result (403). Indeed, seemingly picking up where he left off in his denunciation of contemporary fiction, Zagreus delivers his first broadcast on the subject of the popularity of crime novels, which he finds responsible for the post-war infantilization of the public. Arguing, for instance, that prior to and during the war only the “War-Makers read Oppenheim,” since “the young men [were fighting] the Boche,” Zagreus proceeds to explain that, in the post-war world, the Oppenheim- or “Wallace-fashion [has become] symptomatic of high-
brow capitulation, in face of universal pressure”: “What was the schoolboy mind has now become that of the anglo-saxon adult. The post-war anglo-saxon adult has become a boy with a tin pistol. To that the Great War—the ‘Great Adventure’—has brought him” (401, 402).

Over the course of the remainder of this broadcast, Zagreus discusses both the difficulty of returning to morality after “you massacre ten million people in war and another ten million in civil war” and the ease of returning “to the mentality of childhood and of savagery—Nursery after Army, and dugout-canoe after dugouts in trenches” (411). In breezily parroting his mentor, however, Zagreus does not foresee that another of Pierpoint’s underlings, his “political secretary” Starr-Smith, will soon continue the broadcasts while also implicating Zagreus himself in them (413). Arriving on the scene toward the end of the novel, when he rescues the abandoned Dan from a lecherous “Ape-of-god of Ninety-one,” Starr-Smith, outfitted as a Blackshirt, first shatters Dan’s illusions about Zagreus’s fondness for him and then resumes Zagreus’s broadcast about the post-war Youth-cult (462). As he explains to Dan while the two are confined in an alcove of the Finnian Shaws’ inner sanctum, the family has a repertoire of “acts” designed to illustrate their perpetual status as children: the first of these is a parading and deriding of elderly military officers, while the second is the imitation of the Finnian Shaw patriarch, Cockeye. As regards the officers, or “Old Colonels,” Starr-Smith contends that, despite being the butts of the Finnian Shaws’ repeated jokes, they are also “[t]he sheep that kill,” since their “respectability…is [their] abominable passe-partout” which allows them to commit mass murder under the banner of war (525). Subsequently moving from the Colonels to those who are responsible for them, including generations of nobility like the Finnian Shaws, he argues that “the nation is after all the wrong notion” for modern England, since the country currently lacks any leaders committed to national ideals: “The real masters of England have died out. Old Germanic serfs, figureheads, is [sic] all that is left—such do more harm than good—they are excellent decoys on the grand scale—there is no longer an English nation!” (529).
Although Dan characteristically fails to understand what this broadcast means, Lewis provides the equivalent of stage cues for the reader when he has his narrator remark that, with each succeeding phase of the broadcast, Starr-Smith becomes “a little more definitely fascist” (528). In fact, when Starr-Smith finally turns to the younger Finnian Shaws themselves, Lewis records that his blackshirted character becomes “very fascist” indeed, especially in his description of the family’s coinciding “politics of personal vanity” and “politics of Revolt” (529, 530). In thus escalating Starr-Smith’s degree of fascism over the course of his broadcast about the state of England, Lewis not only plays with the notion that the clothes make the man but also repeats his own dalliance with fascism in *The Art of Being Ruled*. Echoes of that earlier work can also be heard when Starr-Smith, at “the climax of [his] great ‘broadcast,’” switches from his discussion of the “politics of revolt” to a description of the social wars that resulted from the Great War:

The public good is here the glitter only of the social desires of an ageing group of wealthy romantic amateurs called Finnian Shaw—expressed in the terms of oppression of youth. ‘Youth’ is in this case bluff of course…It is the personal vanity you must cut out and pin down…Harriet and Osmund—you see them, Osmund and Harriet—they are compelled to perpetuate the politics of the child-parent-war. The child-parent-war is put across by means of the emotions aroused by the age-complex and the youth-complex dominating the first Post-war decade. The child-parent-war is the war next in succession to the sex-war. You have heard of the sex-war? Yes. (For the break-up of the aryan Family-idea, two ‘wars’ have been arranged. The sex-war covers the man-woman relationship: the child-parent-war, or the age-war, covers the child-parent relationship. This is a parallel ‘revolt.’ When these ‘wars’ have been brought to bear in social life with full effect, the Family will have entirely disintegrated.) (530-1)

Less composed than Lewis’s arguments in *The Art of Being Ruled*, this passage nevertheless presents an adequate summary of the major issues addressed in that earlier book. In addition, Lewis’s concatenation of wars and complexes returns us to an issue I first raised in connection with the war memoirs of Graves and Keynes. As I noted previously, Lewis shared with these two memoirists an interest in the psychological and physiological conditions that emerged during the war and the post-war. Although not necessarily believing in the existence of
these conditions and more often than not deriding the work of both psychoanalysts and
endocrinologists, Lewis, like Graves before him, used popular theories of the mind and the glands
to satirize the behavior of post-war society. In the case of the *Apes of God*, he not only considers
each of his character’s supposed complexes but also accounts for the Finnian Shaws’ and Horace
Zagreus’s behavior by citing their glandular anomalies. In particular, he diagnoses the Finnians
Shaws as suffering from irregularities of the thymus, a gland he had first considered in *Time and
Western Man*. In that earlier work, Lewis had argued that the “thymus is supposed to be the
childish gland—that preserving the juvenile qualities of ‘heart’ and body”—and had suggested
that “the numerous instances of prolonged childishness or Peterpanism in people of mature years”
resulted from “the unusual power of their thymus apparatus” (355). Three years later, having
created arch-Peterpanists in the family of the Finnian Shaws, he places his earlier theory in the
mouth of Starr-Smith, who attempts to describe the Finnian Shaws’ conduct to Dan:

> The whole family is a clear case of the domination of the
> Endocrine proper to Infancy! That is called the *Thymus Gland
> of Internal Secretion*. This gland is supposed to disappear or
> become inactive in the adult-life. It is the gland provided for
> the tender-years. In the Finnian-Shaw family this particular
> Endocrine persists. Into the ripest years, it is ridiculously active.
> It pumps the humours of childhood into that great body of
> Osmund. As a family they suffer from an over-dose of Thymus—
> the childlike Endocrine. (560)

As Keynes, the first English thymectomist, makes clear in his autobiography, the thymus
serves no such purpose as Lewis here imagines. Nevertheless, Lewis’s familiarity in 1930 with a
gland that a reputable thyroid surgeon had never seen until 1942 remains fascinating, especially
since he gives the thymus such explanatory weight in his fiction and nonfiction. At the same time,
Lewis’s attention to another gland, the thyroid, further demonstrates his knowledge of the
(pseudo-)science of his era, and it is this gland he uses to explain Zagreus, the major detractor of
the Finnian Shaws. Instead of speaking through Starr-Smith, however, Lewis proceeds to offer
Zagreus’s diagnosis of thyroid surplus in the voice of another character, Julius Ratner, the novel’s prime example of the Jewish ape of God.

Dressed as the “Split-Man”\footnote{Zagreus, at Pierpoint’s suggestion, provides Ratner with his costume for the Finnian Shaws’ party. According to Zagreus, a “Split-man,” of “African Half-man,” is “one of the most formidable demons in the world at his weight” (331). “[S]plit down longitudinally” and therefore possessing “one eye, one arm—leg, hand and foot,” the Split-Man prefers his right side to his left, since the left side of the body contains the heart. As Zagreus tells Ratner prior to the party, “You are a right-sided split-man, with the liver in the place of the heart...The heart is a superfluity. The whole left side is useless—embarrassing and really far beyond our means. Our purse is not long enough” (332).} during his performance at the Finnian Shaws, Julius Ratner is first introduced into the novel during one of the earlier studio episodes, when Dan receives a letter directing him to Ratner’s home and providing him with Ratner’s biography. As Zagreus explains in the letter, Ratner, a “[p]edagogue of his own complexes,” first “emerged from the East End, with Freud for his Talmud,” before the war. During the war, however, Ratner “went away,” only to discover upon his return that “[t]he world had, as far as [he] was concerned, been purified in vain (with blood and debts) and made safe for democracy to no object” (137). More specifically, in the aftermath of the war, the thirty-something Ratner “took too-late-for-success or even to stand a dog’s chance to homosexual intrigue” and soon found himself confined to a mental hospital, where he became an aficionado of psychic disorders. Thereafter, Zagreus explains, Ratner “inclined to discuss [these events] with all comers, with his own glosses. He paraded a hundred simultaneous complexes and was happy after a fashion, weaving an ingenious web of cheap glamour— with a spider that was Eros, and himself the little gilded fly.”

As such a biographical account would suggest, Ratner becomes the novel’s complex-expert, and in the remainder of the book, the reader finds him striving in his life, his writing, and his publishing business to bring his peers “back to the (g)Land” (542). Confronted with this specimen of ape early in the novel, Dan is bewildered by the meaning of Ratner’s technical jargon. Hearing his interlocutor declare, for instance, that the “explanation of Horace” lies in a “thyroid-surplus,” which “gives people who have [it] that feeling of the great importance of everything,” Dan remains both confused and bored until Ratner links Zagreus’s sense of “importance” to his serial attachments to young men (168). More than just informing Dan that
his mentor’s abnormal thyroid accounts for his fondness for young “geniuses,” Ratner also prepares the way for Starr-Smith, who capitalizes on Dan’s growing doubts about Zagreus during the party at the Finnian Shaws’. Although Starr-Smith confines his discussion of glands to the Finnian Shaws’ defective thymuses, he does tell Dan that “Zagreus is like the Finnian Shaws—he is Peter Pan!” and reveals that only “period-prestige”—the prestige of that “sacrosanct period-of-periods…the ‘Naughty Nineties,’ [which] Made the World Safe for Homosexuality”—has brought Zagreus to the party (506). Troubled by Starr-Smith’s confirmation that Zagreus is a repressed homosexual, Dan becomes even more disturbed when his new acquaintance discloses the inner workings of the Pierpointian machine. As Starr-Smith explains, his own presence at the party is designed to prevent Zagreus from adopting any more geniuses. In particular, he has been dispatched by Pierpoint to stop Zagreus from replacing Dan with Archie Margolin, a dwarf-sized Jew, who, unlike Dan, “would cost money” (475). While Dan, who dislikes Archie, receives this last piece of news with glee, Starr-Smith’s endless discussions of finance soon set him back on edge. Wondering, for instance, “how anybody could be so mercenary…unless it was being a *secretary,*” Dan is shocked to learn that Ratner is not only Zagreus’s “money-lender” but also Pierpoint’s (510). According to Starr-Smith, Pierpoint’s indebtedness is particularly unbearable for both him and his boss, since it prohibits Pierpoint from replacing Ratner with someone else and results in the accumulation of additional financial and social obligations. Ratner’s continuing presence also proves troublesome since, at least on Starr-Smith’s account, he is “responsible for Zagreus treating [his young men] so badly” (508). As Starr-Smith notes, “It was Pierpoint [who] recommended Ratner” to Zagreus as “a joke”; yet, Zagreus, “hafting] no sense of humour at all,” responded by gladly adopting Ratner as both his personal “split-man” and his preferred comedic straight man.

Shortly after his conversation with Starr-Smith, Dan once more runs into Ratner, who confirms that “Pierpoint is hopelessly unbusinesslike” and that “between [him and Starr-Smith] they make a mess of everything” (515). From Dan’s perspective, however, the most damning
indictment against Pierpoint arises not from anything Ratner says but from what he enables Zagreus to say. Oddly perceptive in his judgment about Zagreus and Ratner’s relationship, Dan muses earlier in the novel that Ratner, playing the role of Zagreus’s straight man, ultimately makes of Zagreus a ventriloquist’s dummy. For by having such a central role in Zagreus’s presentation of Pierpoint’s views, Ratner, just by being near Zagreus, encourages him to keep on with his Pierpointean broadcasts. As Dan reflects during the Finnian Shaws’ party,

Oh Horace, why must you broadcast? Since they had been together no evening had passed but they had it, and sometimes at lunch or tea—twice Horace had ‘broadcast’ by telephone. Certainly there were voices and voices: but the accents of Pierpoint—well it passed his understanding that Horace with his beautiful speaking-voice should adopt the harsh bellows of that pronounced charlatan. Again. Saying all that now, to other people—that was not sensible, it put Horace in a strange position as it would anybody...to have that disgusting charlatan’s great voice (with all the wild things it said) coming out of your mouth! If Horace would only realize the position it put him in—it was of course that that rat-named individual was always hinting at the toad, and he could bring it home to him. Horace did not seem aware...Tonight it had been especially worse than ever...How [Horace and Ratner] had kept it up tonight too, one after the other, with insults and laughter, with the other man being so rude all the time he could see...Quarrelling, and smiling at each other, a most painful impression it had made on him...he could not bear these strange arguments where they were smiling and laughing all the time like so many hyenas! (415)

Unfortunately for Dan, who proves startling shrewd in his realization that Pierpoint lies behind the Zagreus-Ratner act, the remainder of the Finnian Shaws’ party continues to be dominated by the broadcasts of Pierpoint’s disciples. For the reader of Lewis’s oeuvre, however, the content of these broadcasts is nothing short of remarkable, since it shows Lewis anticipating his future nonfictional works. As if envisioning the shape of Men Without Art, for instance, Lewis has Zagreus announce during one of his broadcasts that “[s]atire to be good must be unfair and single-minded” and that the “true satirist…must remain upon the surface of existence;” moreover, in having Zagreus argue that satiric laughter has a “metallic bark that kills,” Lewis
foreshadows his later contention that laughter, especially that of “a barking man,” is a “healthy clatter” that allows us to “drown the alarming noise made by our neighbors” (AG 452, 451; MWA 93).

If Lewis anticipates *Men Without Art* in several of Zagreus’s broadcasts, he uses others to call into question the effectiveness of his arguments in *The Art of Being Ruled* and *Time and Western Man*. Indeed, during Zagreus’s broadcast on crime fiction, Lewis places himself in the text by name and suggests that his previous works have done little to reverse disturbing trends in contemporary literature. Asked by Ratner to make sense of “the Paris high-brows” and “our solitary high-brow pur-sang Lewis,” Zagreus responds that the works of the former are “nothing but an entlastungsoffensive” in the face of the post-war wave of crime fiction, while the works of the latter are “teiloperationen” against the same trend (401, 402). When pressed further about the meaning of these characterizations, Zagreus explains that he has used the “war-jargon of german peace-politics” to describe the post-war war between high-brow and low-brow artists (402).

Although such German phrasing may initially seem harmless enough, the characterization of the Parisians’ art as “relief-offensives” and Lewis’s work as “partial-operations” undoubtedly carries significance when one considers Lewis’s own feelings about the disastrousness of the war and the peace for both the German state and the German people. Aligning himself by way of his character with the defeated and downtrodden Germans, in other words, Lewis hints at his own side’s future defeat in the literary conflict described. This state of affairs becomes all the more worrying after the conclusion of Zagreus’s discourse on satire, since Zagreus then reveals that he has paid Pierpoint “a tenner” for each of the broadcasts (453). Not only serving to make Zagreus

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19 In nearly all his nonfictional works, Lewis is exceedingly vocal about the flaws of the Versailles Treaty. In *Blasting and Bombardiering*, for instance, he writes, “And as to the Peace—unless the Peace was all plotted and planned beforehand, too, as we are assured the War was, that surely no one could have prefigured. No one—here I feel I must be on certain ground—could have foreseen the vindictive dismemberment of Hungary for instance—the deliberate political annihilation of a strong state to provide an artificial volume for a weak state—everywhere a starving of the healthy organism, and a gorging of the sick, so as to put a premium on the second-rate” (57). Over a decade later, in *Rude Assignment*, Lewis repeats much the same argument when he explains the reason behind his first book on Hitler: “My general aim, for instance, in 'Hitler' (written 1930, published 1931) was to break the European ostracism of Germany, call in question the wisdom of the Versailles Treaty and get it revised, end the bad behaviour of French chauvinists, [and] attempt to establish healthy relations in Western Europe. This was undertaken in the interest of Western civilisation…” (224).
a more absurd character, this last revelation effectively implicates Lewis in the world he is satirizing. For by creating Pierpoint in his own image and then exposing him as a fraud, Lewis implies that his own works are not only for sale but available to all comers, including the Apes of God.

Citing Robert C. Elliott’s *The Power of Satire* at the beginning of his examination of Lewis’s satires, Fredric Jameson explains that “the archaic impulse of satire was rigourously nonmoral” and that the “reemergence” of this impulse in modernity “generates a new formal dilemma which returns upon satiric practice to problematize it in an unexpected way” (137, 138). More specifically, the modern satirist begins to question his right “to speak for the collectivity—to castigate, for the sake of some imaginary community, follies and vices which are themselves profoundly social in nature.” As Jameson goes on to argue in connection with *Self Condemned*,

In this situation, the content of satire slowly becomes transformed: continuing all the while to denounce his traditional objects, the satirist becomes self-conscious about his own activity. With the problematization of his own place as a judging and observing subject, he begins to reckon himself into the universal condemnation which only awaited his own presence to be complete. At length…bile and misanthropy come to be numbered among the vices to be castigated, and satire squares its own circle with a portrait of what Elliott has called ‘the satirist satirized.’ With this, however, a dialectically new form is generated, driven by an internal contradiction that has left such works among the permanent enigmas of literary history. (138)

In considering Lewis’s characterization of Pierpoint in *The Apes of God*, we might wish to apply Jameson’s remarks about the satirizing of the satirist in *Self Condemned* to that earlier novel. Yet, as was the case with his presentation of methodology, Jameson’s larger claim about Lewis’s self-satirization ultimately suffers from his failure to consider the precise reasons for Lewis’s decision to satirize himself. Continuing to view generic innovation, including Lewis’s satiric innovations, through the lens of psychoanalysis rather than biography or history, for instance, Jameson makes the unconvincing claim that, in the post-war period, Lewis’s “new libidinal apparatus” allowed his “psychic forces [to] know analogous figuration” and “freed [them]
to capture and to expropriate narrative systems” (141). This labored characterization of Lewis’s development proves all the more troublesome when Jameson foregoes a description of “the rich biographical symptoms in Lewis’ work” and instead concludes that, like most modern satirists, Lewis displays a “misanthropy…accompanied with an ineradicable sense of guilt no less intense for all the purely symbolic or imaginary nature of his [satiric] gesture.” Although we might initially expect Jameson to follow this last comment with a more extended account of Lewis’s misanthropy and guilt, that expectation is soon upset. For despite noting that Lewis’s misanthropy and misogyny “may quite appropriately be read as the pathological symptom of some deeper character disorder in the man himself,” Jameson prefers to “read [Lewis’s misanthropy and misogyny] as a figural pretext for the immanent play of aggressivity within the text itself.” As he goes on to explain, “On this view, even aggressivity would not be read as a secondary phenomenon that needed some further, primary explanation (as in hypotheses about sadomasochism, the aggressive instinct, the authoritarian personality and the like), but is grasped as the expression in instinctual terms of the purely formal movement and consequences of satire as a symbolic act” (141-2).

In looking at this last claim, we might question what virtue lies in replacing an examination of an author’s “aggressive instinct” with an explanation of aggression as a form’s “expression in instinctual terms.” Indeed, shelving the valid question of what “instinctual terms” actually are, we might wonder how “aggressivity” can even be a possibility once separated from a living being and attached to something as inanimate as a literary form. Whatever the answers to these queries, the most pressing problem in Jameson’s argument is not who or what gets to be misanthropic, pathological, or aggressive; rather, it is whether satire as an historical form causes Lewis to implicate himself in his fictional work or whether Lewis’s recognition of his historical moment causes him to complicate in satire the positions he first advanced in *The Art of Being Ruled* and *Time and Western Man*. 
That Lewis offered his theory of satire in *Men Without Art* some four years after *The Apes of God* and nearly a decade after his two earlier nonfictional works suggests that the latter of these two propositions is the correct one. Describing modern satire only after writing his prime example of it, Lewis uses *Men Without Art* to provide a commentary on his positions in *The Apes of God* just as he uses *The Apes of God* to provide a commentary on his positions in *The Art of Being Ruled* and *Time and Western Man*. Bracketing *Men Without Art* and Lewis’s tendency to complicate his arguments retrospectively, however, we should recognize that *The Apes of God* already contains an answer to the question about the relationship between history and the “satirized satirist” in its final section, “The General Strike.” As I noted in connection with *Blasting and Bombardiering*, Lewis claimed that 1926 was a pivotal year in his artistic and political development, since he then “disinterred” himself after having concluded that the hated post-war period had come to an end with the General Strike. Written some seven years before *Blasting and Bombardiering*, *The Apes of God* gives the General Strike much the same importance that Lewis attributed to it in his autobiography. Indeed, the only dateable event in the novel, the Strike puts a period to the period of the book’s setting by suggesting that the fraudulent activities of the apes of God have their logical counterpart in that nationwide protest, which was widely considered a failure.20

Aside from signifying the end result of the post-war period, the novel’s final section also serves as a return to its beginning and thus underscores the ineffectiveness of the critical intervention that Zagreus—and behind him, Pierpoint and Lewis—has been trying to effect in the studios and salons of the 1920s. Having started at the home of the aptly named Folletts, whose

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20 The General Strike began on May 3, 1926. Responding to the predicament of coalminers who, for two days previous, had been locked out of the mines, workers from a variety of industries struck with the aim of prohibiting mine owners from decreasing the miners’ wages and increasing their hours. Although English industry and transportation ground to a halt for several days, volunteers soon began to offer their assistance in manning essential services. By May 12, 1926, the Trades Union Congress (TCU), which had organized the strike in the first place, signed an agreement with the mine owners to call off the strike; the TCU did not succeed in getting the mine owners to agree to any of the miners’ terms. Although the miners continued to strike until November, most returned to their work at lower wages and longer hours soon thereafter. The following year, the government led by Stanley Baldwin passed the Trades Disputes and Trades Union Act, which made “sympathy strikes” and mass picketings illegal (BBC).
folie manages to increase over the course of the novel, the book concludes with Zagreus, himself a Follett on his mother’s side, visiting his Aunt Fredigonde. Arriving with Archie Margolin, not Dan, in tow, Zagreus discovers that Fredigonde has just allowed her husband to die without seeking medical assistance and now wishes to marry Zagreus himself. The absurdity of the aged Fredigonde’s declaration of love for her much younger nephew drives home not only the insanity of the Follett family but also the pointlessness of the Strike taking place outside their doors. Indeed, not a single major character in the novel takes notice of the Strike, which, on the narrator’s account, has left “[t]he whole townland of London” both “up in arms” and “silent as the grave” (618). Zagreus, for instance, is so unconcerned with the Strike that he appears on the Follett doorstep not to deliver the latest news about the Strike’s development but to solicit money to fund Archie’s “genius.” This project becomes all the more pressing when Zagreus realizes that his uncle, heretofore his prime source of funding, is now dead; recognizing that he can secure further Follett money only by responding positively to his aunt’s romantic advances, Zagreus accepts Fredigonde’s proposal of marriage and thereby secures his continuing association with Pierpoint. Meanwhile, below stairs, Archie provides an absurd complement to his mentor’s ridiculous engagement by dancing “with elf-like nigger-bottom-wagging” to the music of the same street performer whom Fredigonde has long considered the harbinger of death (625).

In most critical accounts of Zagreus and Fredigonde’s engagement, the return of “Death the Drummer” at the moment of the couple’s first kiss is taken to represent Fredigonde’s immediate demise. Such a contention, however, overlooks the necessity of Fredigonde’s survival for the ultimate success of Lewis’s satire. For if the overall theme of the satire is that a vicious social and political circle is created by vicious circles of apes of God, the death of Fredigonde would close that circle once and for all. More specifically, by killing off Fredigonde before her marriage to Zagreus and by thereby denying Zagreus the inheritance he would receive as her surviving husband, Lewis would effectively prohibit Zagreus from continuing as Pierpoint’s disciple. That Lewis had no intention of ending Zagreus’s affiliation with Pierpoint becomes
clear in his decision to begin “The General Strike” with an account of the reorganization of the
Pierpointian machine, including Zagreus’s Pierpoint-approved decision to oust Dan in favor of
Archie.21 Had Lewis chosen to follow that account with the death of Fredigonde, which would
deprive Zagreus of the money needed to fund his geniuses and to pay Pierpoint for his broadcasts,
he would essentially have undercut the satirical force of the novel, which largely depends on
Zagreus’s paradoxical and unstoppable urge to create new apes at the same time that he lambastes
existing ones. What’s more, the decision to kill Fredigonde would have undermined the effect of
the novel’s most startling characterization of Zagreus, which appears in “Chez Lionel Kein Esq.”

As I noted earlier, Zagreus and Dan are eventually ejected from the home of the Keins
because of Zagreus’s rudeness to his hosts. Yet the underlying cause of this rudeness lies not in
anything the Keins say but rather in a moment of personal insight Zagreus has during lunch.
Having earlier in the afternoon stood on the Keins’ doorstep and considered his and Dan’s
shadows first as members of a “theatre queue” and then as participants in a half-Proustian, half-
Pompeian mortuary procession, Zagreus hears Isabel Kein tell another guest that he once suffered
sunstroke in South America and immediately begins to experience déjà vu. In particular, Zagreus
returns to the idea of “The theatre queue!” and reflects that the sun outside the Keins’ house is
“the same sun, or another, that had struck him…in the plantations where the De Castro factory
now stood” (295). The consequence of this confusion of time and place is that Zagreus becomes
unable to separate his identity from those of the other guests, all of whom he considers apes of
God:

The Pompeian funerary chariot—the shadow so much older than
the original—and the little peering jewish face [of Proust], now
defunct—from a wall in Pompeii to Kein’s door. The theatre-

21 Writing Dan a final letter informing him that he has been replaced by Archie Margolin, Zagreus also explains that
Ratner has been replaced by a relative of Archie’s, who is “a perfect minor Satan of the first water” (611). In addition,
informing Dan that he, not Starr-Smith, was guilty of assaulting Ratner at the conclusion of the Finnian Shaws’ party
and that Starr-Smith has told Pierpoint that Dan is “one of the most dangerous and treacherous young men it would be
possible to find,” Zagreus confirms that he is still a committed member of the Pierpointian establishment: “As Pierpoint
put the matter to me (when we talked it over)—‘to have such a great athletic brute as that around Zagreus,’ said he”—
violent at the best of times, by all accounts, but into the bargain an alcoholic…That is neither desirable nor, with due
regard to safety, wise!” (608).
queue had come to life, now: here, all about him, in solid ranks, it chattered and ate. He had imagined a queue. But here it must be—less and less resembling the original—shadows upon the walls of Pompeii, of Paris, the hot Andean plains—a horrible family of shadows. An ape-herd, all projections of himself, or he of them, or another—gathered from everywhere, swarming in after him, or collected to await him. Their plangent personalities, stuck up in opposite rows, behaved as though they were meeting for the first time (as indeed they might be) and had little connection...Or the queue had started acting—for want of an author, as he had just said—after a fashion. When their eyes met his it was himself, in some form, at some time. The intensity of this truth, like a piercing light, often compelled him to turn his head away from people, as he might from the image in a mirror. He lifted up his head—he would look these apparitions in the mirror-like depths of their eyes! A lifetime of these machines—he knew them by their factory marks: it was not a task beyond his powers to take their ‘movements’ out of their cases—it was a human task—that great mechanic Pierpoint had been his master. But he who was ‘fey’ disdained it—he dismissed those phantasies now and fixed his frowning eye upon Isabel [Kein]. (295-6)

In citing this passage at length, I mean to draw attention to three of its more startling features. First, and perhaps most obvious, is Zagreus’s realization that he, no less than the Keins, is a member of the “ape-heard” he spends so much of his time excoriating. Second, unlike nearly every other passage in The Apes of God, this passage is presented using the “internal method” that Lewis not only thoroughly condemns in Men Without Art but also (and equally thoroughly) denounces as a literary offshoot of Bergsonian philosophy in Time and Western Man. That Lewis chose this method to present Zagreus’s only moment of self-understanding might seem to suggest that he found the method less loathsome than he claimed elsewhere. Yet, aside from keeping in mind Lewis’s remark that the internal method should be reserved for “the extremely aged,” “young children,” “half-wits,” and “animals,” we should also recognize that the author does not choose to have Zagreus change his conduct after his moment of self-reflection. Indeed, far from wishing to escape the “great mechanic Pierpoint,” Zagreus, who seems to have gone slightly mad from another bout of sunstroke, resolves immediately to “irritate himself into assuming his place more fully in a relaxing reality” and, to that end, decides to attack his hostess as thoroughly as she has attacked him and Pierpoint (296). Rather than benefiting from self-reflection, then, Zagreus
strengthens his attachment to Pierpoint at the exact moment that we would expect him to abandon “his master.”

The final feature of this passage that deserves attention is its placement at the very center of Lewis’s massive novel. Coming as it does after nearly three hundred pages of knotty, if humorous, prose delivered in the author’s preferred exterior method, Zagreus’s moment of self-understanding initially seems to break up the monotony of the reading experience and to offer the reader a breath of air. That breath, however, proves neither refreshing nor lengthy both because the complex syntax of the passage seems intended to mimic the workings of Zagreus’s sun-maddened mind and because Lewis immediately follows the passage with a return to the now-familiar, if no less laborious, exterior method. While one effect of this brief scene is thus to suggest and then immediately deny other narrative possibilities, it also manages to underscore the extended duration of the reading experience, which is nowhere near being finished. Perhaps most remarkable is that Lewis draws attention to the duration of that experience not by offering a passage that, in terms of technique, depends on quantifiable notions of time but rather by providing a passage whose method of presentation depends, as he elsewhere argues, on the Bergsonian notion of durée. An authorial trick placed at the heart of a highly satirical novel, Zagreus’s self-reflection ultimately points to Lewis’s belief in the fraudulence of the interior method and his commitment to offering an exhaustive and exhausting critique of pseudo-artists and their Bergsonian literary practices. Indeed, Lewis drives both these points home by following “Chez Lionel Kein Esq.” with the novel’s longest chapter, “Lord Osmund’s Lenten Party,” which contains Zagreus’s broadcasts on crime fiction and satire. As noted previously, it is also in “Lord Osmund’s Lenten Party” that we learn that Zagreus suffers from “thyroid-surplus,” or hyperthyroidism, a condition that is the opposite of the hypothyroidism that Robert Graves in Good-bye to All That links to extended exposure to combat. By drawing attention to the duration of the reading experience through Zagreus’s self-reflection, then, Lewis, though perhaps
unwittingly, links his hyperthyroidic character to the hypothyroidic soldiers whose bodies were unable to adapt to the duration of combat experience.

Because the content and centrality of Zagreus’s moment of self-understanding suggest that Lewis did not intend that his main character should abandon his place in the “ape-herd,” we can speculate that Fredigonde, Zagreus’s new source of financial backing, does not die at the end of the novel. Yet in implying that Zagreus will continue his affiliation with Pierpoint, Lewis also underscores the limitations of the kind of criticism he provides within *The Apes of God* and in earlier works, including *The Art of Being Ruled* and *Time and Western Man*. Here again, the scene at the Keins’ proves instructive, since Lewis, the ventriloquist behind both Pierpoint and Zagreus, manages through Zagreus’s reflections to implicate himself in the ape-world that he and his characters deride. Indeed, taken as a whole, *The Apes of God* seems to dramatize Lewis’s re-evaluation of the validity and strength of the political and artistic arguments he first began advancing publicly in the wake of the General Strike. That he was disheartened by the results of this evaluation becomes clear in his decision to end the work not only during the Strike but also with the absurd union of Fredigonde and Zagreus. For just as Zagreus considered the theatre queue of his and Dan’s shadows on the Keins’ doorstep, Lewis seems in the novel’s final scenes to gaze at his own past pronouncements and to find them lacking. Rather than misanthropy or guilt, then, self-doubt appears to cause the satirization of the satirist in *The Apes of God*, a verdict that we can confirm by recalling Lewis’s rigid distinction between his post- and post-post-war selves. Drafting books such as *The Art of Being Ruled* and *Time and Western Man* during the post-war period, Lewis returns in the post-post-war *Apes of God* to many of the same themes, including the problems of the nation-state, the infantilization of the public, and the troubles of the intellectual; nevertheless, the bravado adopted in the earlier nonfictional works is, if not absent in *The Apes of God*, problematically displayed by characters whom Lewis depicts as frauds. Precisely because Lewis attributes his earlier arguments to Zagreus and Pierpoint, we can gather
that, from the vantage of the post-post-war period, he questions the value of *The Art of Being Ruled* and *Time and Western Man*, both of which are products of his post-war reflections.

Although there are many possible ways of accounting for Lewis’s loss of confidence in his earlier arguments, his second autobiographical work, *Rude Assignment*, which was published after the Second World War, offers some clarification. Describing this work against the backdrop of Lewis’s two previous decades of writing, Andrzej Gasiorek sums up the major shifts in Lewis’s political positions as follows:

The two most obvious shifts [in *Rude Assignment*] concern Lewis’s attitude to Western culture and to the political fate of Europe. The key books of the 1920s had been written in defence of a cultural tradition perceived to be under threat from a variety of disintegrative philosophical movements and artistic currents; the key books of the 1930s sought to stave off war by explicating the causes of international conflict and arguing that peace could be preserved only if the principle of national sovereignty was upheld against political centralization. By the late 1940s Lewis had moved away from both positions. The culture he continued to value had, he argued, been destroyed by the two world wars and was being superseded by a more universal world culture. Lewis suggested that the Western tradition had served its purpose and was being incorporated into a ‘more comprehensive synthesis’ (*RA* 208). This view dovetailed with his rejection of arguments in favour of national sovereignty as the basis upon which peace in Europe could be best maintained: arguing that the new world culture would be ill-served by the preservation of state boundaries, he emerged from the Second World War a federalist and decentralizer. (100-1)

In this characterization of the developments across Lewis’s *oeuvre*, Gasiorek adequately describes the works of the 1920s and the 1940s. As regards the 1930s, however, his contention that Lewis advocated “national sovereignty” as a means of ensuring a continuing peace proves only partially true. For as early as *The Art of Being Ruled*, Lewis had already begun to favor...

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22 Gasiorek no doubt draws his conclusion about Lewis’s endorsement of national sovereignty by taking Lewis at his word in *Rude Assignment*. In that work, Lewis writes that he has never been a nationalist but that he did believe, “say twelve years ago, that the doctrine of national sovereignty was an indispensable guarantee of freedom” (98). The problem with accepting Lewis’s characterization of himself in this instance lies in the fact that an earlier passage in *Rude Assignment* provides contradictory evidence about his political position in 1935. In chapter twelve of Part One, for example, Lewis provides an excerpt from *Left Wings Over Europe* (1936) and then concludes that, at the time of the passage’s evolution, he was...
international centralization, and within *The Apes of God*, he had, via Starr-Smith, vehemently denounced the concept of the nation-state. Indeed, what makes Lewis’s “emergence from the Second World War [as] a federalist and decentralizer” so shocking is that he emerged from the First World War as a federalist and centralizer. Although there is little doubt that his earlier arguments in favor of centralization were based more on his concern for the working artist than on his fondness for centralized political systems such as fascism, his ultimate refusal of centralization, not to mention his post-World-War-II criticism of *The Art of Being Ruled*, has its root in an even darker pessimism about the contemporary role of the artist. As he explains in *Rude Assignment*, “all that was ‘merely’ cultural was at an end [after 1925],” and, in consequence, the “artist has not ‘escaped,’ or ‘fled from,’ the outer world of men in general of reality: he has been *driven* from it” (219, 29). Furthermore, precisely because the artist has been “isolate[ed] in an age where he no longer has any function to perform,” Lewis contends that “today [he]

using “‘Great Power’ thinking” and was writing from “the purely English standpoint” (72). In examining the contents of the excerpt itself, however, what becomes clear is that Lewis was less concerned about national sovereignty in 1935 and more concerned about the possibility of the spread of communism. Having long disparaged communism, despite acknowledging in *The Art of Being Ruled* that the “sovietic system” appeared best to him “in the abstract,” Lewis does not write from “the purely English standpoint” in *Left Wings Over Europe* as a means of endorsing national sovereignty itself; rather, he uses national sovereignty as a vehicle to persuade the uncritical masses that they will benefit more by not going to war with Germany, since Germany’s defeat would most likely mean the rapid ascendency of communism throughout Europe. Simply put, Lewis encourages national sovereignty in 1935 for much the same reason he encouraged an English form of fascism in 1925: in both instances, the cause he upholds is simply the lesser of two (or three) evils.

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23 Gasiorek’s claim about Lewis’s post-World-War-II decentralizing tendencies here needs to be placed in a larger context, for Lewis is less of a decentralizer in the late 1940s than he first appears. On the one hand, Lewis is interested in decentralization if one is considering the matter in connection with the traditional concept of the nation-state. As he argues repeatedly in *Rude Assignment*, the nation is no longer a meaningful concept, and he is resolved to “[l]et nations, like men, die in peace” (237). On the other hand, Lewis remains attracted to the idea of internationalism that he first aired in *The Art of Being Ruled*, and his vision of this international system is a very centralized one. Remarking in a footnote, for instance, that he is now “a doctrinaire internationalist” and that “if a Party appeared whose plank was *one world*, [he] should belong to it,” Lewis advances both the idea of a federal World State based on the model of the US and the possibility of a global government that would have the power to cull the best intelligences from the masses in order to create a “summit…of the most complex, conscious, and highly individualised” beings (77, 100, 202). While the former idea might seem to suggest only a loose centralization of the world, the latter idea, which is repeated throughout the book, not to mention in *The Art of Being Ruled*, suggests a highly-centralized federal government. Thus, what Lewis seems to desire is decentralization on all matters not related to science and the arts; to these last two disciplines, one might also add economics, which Lewis, in his conclusion to *Rude Assignment*, argues should be standardized across nations (237).
certainly should not write *The Art of Being Ruled*, or think of treating [its] particular subjects,” since the “infernal Utopia” described in the book “is one of quiescence, obedience, receptivity,” all of which the nation expects, and at a high price, from its intellectuals in 1947\(^{24}\) (182, 183).

Repeating verbatim the series of nouns he first advanced with confidence in *The Art of Being Ruled* but now rejecting them as a strategy for existing in a world torn apart by not one but two world wars, Lewis underscores in *Rude Assignment* the distance he has traveled from his political philosophy of the 1920s. What’s more, he explains that he had begun to see the errors of “quiescence, obedience, and receptivity” long before commencing *Rude Assignment*. Noting in this last work that the “moronic inferno of insipidity and decay” he presented in *The Art of Being Ruled* “is likewise the inferno of ‘The Apes of God,’” Lewis contends that the world of his gargantuan satire “was, as it were, Utopia-gone-wrong. For the *abdication* [of the power to change society] left nothing to be desired” (183). Ever desirous of change in the situation he finds deteriorating around him—indeed, describing himself as “stand[ing] for fundamental change”—Lewis could not continue to endorse such an “abdication” after the 1920s; indeed, it is this realization, accompanied by his embarrassed understanding that “‘Western civilisation’ had still an exclusive meaning” for him in 1925, that causes him to undermine his earlier pronouncements first in *The Apes of God* and later in *Rude Assignment* (184, 189).

Within the latter work, Lewis does attempt to cover his tracks and prove his consistency, as when he remarks that, whatever the changes in detail over the decades, “the incentive [behind his arguments] is the same”: namely, his “tremendous aversion to war” (106). In addition, he twice re-advances his unpracticable proposition from *The Art of Being Ruled* concerning a meritocracy of intellectuals despite acknowledging that the world is now more political than ever and that he himself “[p]olitically…stand[s] nowhere any more than a fish does” (83). Regardless of the confidence of these pronouncements, Lewis elsewhere manages to convey that he is less

\(^{24}\) Although *Rude Assignment* was published in 1950, Lewis seems to have written the bulk of the work during 1947. On page 112, for instance, he writes, “In my career up-to-date (1947) as a writer, or artist, I have enjoyed great freedom.”
sure of his usefulness as a philosopher and critic in the aftermath of World War II than he was after The Great War. Answering Rebecca West’s question about why he has “not mould[ed] the intellectual life of his time more powerfully than he [has],” Lewis contends that “there was no one—[him]self or anybody else—who could possibly have ‘influenced’ in the way she meant, or ‘moulded the minds of’ the intellectuals in question,” since, after 1925, most soi-disant intellectuals were caught up in “the political backwash of Hegel,” “violent and destructive sensationalism,” and “marxist criticism...of the kind produced by Edmund Wilson” (217, 219).

More than this, Lewis argues that, although World War I “produced socially more shock symptoms...than has world war ii,” the fate of the intellectual is worse in 1947, since there is a general “disinclination to think things out to the bitter end; to ask all the tragic questions that a great human blunder provokes”: “This time there is no admission of tragedy...There is nothing but a dreary silence. A much-censored people become self-censored: the English have become a colony of clams” (191, 186).

Perhaps the most startling feature of Rude Assignment is Lewis’s cynical optimism about atomic power. Whereas he had previously written book after book trying to eliminate war by finding alternative institutions and attitudes to those of his historical moment, he suggests in his second autobiographical project that only a global war along the lines of Hiroshima or Nagasaki would be a war to end all war. Declaring that he does “not see how the nations can fail to make use of their [atomic] trump cards, once the game heats up,” and then imagining the aftermath of “atomic world war,” he explains that civilization and culture would eventually resume but in the absence of competing nation-states:

Quiet people, like myself, cannot be expected to look forward to such an event. But an atomic world war—if it is necessary—will do no great harm.—All the corpses whose arms and legs had shed their skins like discarded gloves...would be disposed of, the insane be put under restraint, the hospitals jammed with the cancerous wrecks, the ruined towns tidied up. Things would start up again, the human scene just as civilized as it was before....

But the deciding factor [of this resumed civilization] will
be that men have entered upon the era of super-states: then, under 
the eliminatory impact of this new device for wiping out life—this 
monstrous blast, like the breath of an outraged god—the time must 
rapidly come when only one battered entity, calling itself a ‘nation,’ 
will be there, and that will be that.

My restrained optimism is, then, a by-product of atomic 
energy. One or two more wars it seems necessary to allow for—alas. 
Then the great climacteric in life on earth should come: the day on 
which man will resign himself to Peace. Time will then be available 
to attend to the fundamental problems of social justice, sidetracked 
continually by war. (103-4)

Although this passage is unmistakably tongue-in-cheek, especially since Lewis follows it 
by arguing that such acts of war “are plainly those of brutal madmen,” its basic contention is not 
belied by the remainder of Rude Assignment. In fact, at the end of the chapter in which this 
passage is found, Lewis, having adopted a more serious tone, advances the same proposition 
before adding a less than convincing rider: “If I knew that war could drive out war, I would be all 
for war—though I do think we are approaching the time when war may become terrible enough to 
teach the unteachable” (106). More disturbing that these half-hearted endorsements of atomic 
warfare is the conflict between pessimism and hope in Lewis’s descriptions of society and the art-
world, a battle that pessimism clearly wins. Suggesting, on the one hand, that it is “the business 
of the State to catch [promising individuals]” and to “[confer] on them the privileges they 
require,” Lewis argues, on the other hand, that “all government reeks of force…of badness no 
State has a monopoly” (200, 70). Similarly, explaining that he has a “potential party—that of 
Cosmic man,” Lewis first contends that “a genuine Utopia of work” is possible once life is 
organized “according to fundamental aptitude,” but he then proceeds to argue that the allure of 
politics lies precisely in its power to destroy and divide: “Politics is the game everyone plays now: 
it is a life-and-death game, with plenty of corpses. That is what makes it such fun” (83, 202, 73).

That Lewis ultimately had more faith in his cynical diagnoses than in his optimistic 
hypotheses emerges most clearly in his characterization of his own nonfictional work. In the 
concluding pages of Rude Assignment, for instance, he readdresses The Art of Being Ruled, Time
and Western Man, and The Doom of Youth (1932) before “hazard[ing] the opinion…that the…books written by [him] in the trough between the two world wars, might be the last independent utterance of that sort before the deluge” (238). In its finality, this statement not only speaks to the impending chaos Lewis foresees in world politics and society; it also testifies to his own sense of futility as a “disinterred” philosopher and critic. For if the only “independent utterances” of the interwar years have been ineffective in stopping World War II and the decline of society as he knows it, Lewis need not, and indeed does not, write any more books of this kind. What’s more, he writes no additional satires, since he recognizes the unfitness of the moment for any such works. Noting, for instance, that in 1930 “it was incumbent upon all good citizens to turn satirists on the spot, at the sight of such as those exhibited in ‗The Apes of God,’ Lewis proceeds to argue that in a society where “all ‘realism’ is apt to be classed as ‘satire’, or as ‘caricature,’” “true Satire,” which is possible only when there is “objective truth,” “cannot exist” (57, 52, 55). Precisely because he believed the 1930s and 1940s saw a decline in “the appetite for the real” and the replacement of objective truth with “an inflated, conventional, ‘improved’ substitute,” Lewis explains that he never could have and never did regard his satirical “occupation as more than a gigantic episode” (56).

As I argued in an earlier part of this chapter, the motivation for Lewis’s satirization of himself in The Apes of God has little, if anything, to do with his pathology or formal necessity. Rather, aware of his historical moment and realizing the vast political and social distances crossed in less than half a decade, he could not or chose not to endorse fully the arguments he had earlier advanced in The Art of Being Ruled and Time and Western Man. In addition, aware when writing The Apes of God and during the remainder of the 1930s that the time was no longer ripe for satire of the kind he preferred, Lewis restricted his satiric career to one work of “pure” satire before providing the death knell for the genre in his subsequent theorization of it (RA 56). Less a working doctrine than a personal defense of an historically specific work of art, in other words, the discussion of satire in Men Without Art, not to mention the follow-up discussion of the same
matter in *Rude Assignment*, serves the purpose of accounting for a particular political and artistic stance at a particular point in time. A gargantuan monument to that soon outdated stance, *The Apes of God* underscores the ineffectiveness of satire even as it helps to inaugurate the tradition of durational satire, a tradition that, in fact, depends on the elevation of the genre’s critical function over its corrective one.
CHAPTER THREE

_Heures de Combat: the Durational Satire of Evelyn Waugh_

In nearly every critical account of Evelyn Waugh’s novels, implicit or explicit stress is placed on the year of the author’s birth. Born in 1903, the standard argument runs, Waugh suffered from a sense of his historical and literary belatedness. Too young to have participated in World War I and to have belonged to the generation of post-war modernists whose novels and poetry changed the face of English literature in the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s, Waugh, critics argue, defined himself in terms of his missed opportunities. Indeed, the term “late modernist” seems designed to fit Waugh’s particular case, since, throughout his early essays, he draws attention to his generation’s belated relation to the soldiers of the Great War and the high modernists of the post-war period.

If Waugh regretted that he had not been born earlier, he nevertheless felt that the difficulty of his position was increased by his elders’ behavior during and after World War I. In “The War and the Younger Generation,” an essay he wrote in 1929, he divides the English population into three classes and argues that the first two—“the wistful generation who grew up and found their opinions before the war” and “the stunted and mutilated generation who fought”—have encouraged the youngest generation to become “the undiscriminating and ineffectual people we lament today” (EAR 61-2). Having grown up perceiving the “food rations,” “the hysterical outbursts of hate and sentiment,” and the “rumours and scares” of the war years not as a departure from normality but “simply [as] the atmosphere of their adolescence,” Waugh’s generation sustained the “real and lasting injury” of a “pervading sense of inadequacy” and an absent “sense of qualitative value.” As he goes on to explain, “[I]t is absurd to blame [the youngest generation] if, after being nurtured on margarine and ‘honey sugar’, they turn instinctively to the second-rate in art and life.” Moreover, because the elder generations did not manage in the post-war years to reassert the “rigid discipline…of the standards of civilization,”
Waugh finds it “hardly surprising” that the youngest generation “were Bolshevik at 18 and bored at 20.”

Although Waugh concludes “The War and the Younger Generation” by mentioning how, with the “vaguest hope,” he sees “a small group of young men and women…striving to regain the sense of values that should have been instinctive to them,” the essay does not provide the identities of those individuals or the values that they are beginning to embrace. Two additional essays, however, offer a clearer picture of Waugh’s understanding of his generation’s merits. In “The Youngest Generation,” which he wrote in 1921, he mentions that he and his peers will be known for being “clear-sighted,” “very hard and analytical and unsympathetic,” and he explains that the generation’s “justification” will be their “very full sense of humour” (EAR 11).

Meanwhile, “In Too Young at Forty” (1929), Waugh describes the “Spirit of the Age” as it is found in the works of his friends and acquaintances, including Harold Acton, Robert Byron, Christopher Hollis, Peter Quennell, and Adrian Stokes (EAR 46). As he explains, the “Spirit” in question consists of “a tendency to be bored with the problems of Sex and Socialism,” a “horror of the ‘ye old’ picturesque, folk-dancing, art-and-crafty relaxations of our seniors,” “a disposition to regard very seriously…the more disciplined forms of religion,” and “a complete freedom from any kind of prudery” (47).

Such provocative pronouncements have understandably formed the basis of many attempts to characterize Waugh’s understanding of his historical moment and the nature of his literary work. Yet one of Waugh’s early essays that tends to be overlooked provides a useful corrective to the notion that the author perceived himself and his work only in relation to the world war he had missed. Entitled “Oxford and the Next War,” this essay is a tongue-in-cheek letter that was printed in Isis, an undergraduate periodical, in 1924. The value of the essay lies in Waugh’s early realization that his generation will be defined as much by wars of the future as by their inability to have participated in England’s most recent conflict. Addressed to a fictional undergraduate traveling abroad, the letter begins by describing run-ins with Oxford Proctors, the
closing down of clubs near the university, and the decline of the London theatre. The main contention, however, is that “Bill,” Waugh’s imaginary correspondent, could help the young men of Oxford by referring them to any bellicose individuals he might meet during his travels. Noting that his generation “had the fortune to be brought up in easy familiarity with bombs and casualty lists and bad bread and all the things young men used to be warned about,” Waugh argues that he “become[s] more and more convinced…every day” that “what [the young men at Oxford] want is another war” (21). In particular, he informs “Bill” that “the fighting people” in a war experience two benefits: “moments of really intense enjoyment and really intense misery—both things which one wants at our age.” “Bill” is therefore urged to make the most of any new acquaintances who seem especially warlike:

If on your travels you meet any traitors who want to levy war against the king, or kings who want to overthrow representative institutions, or fanatics who want to convert people by the sword to some ghastly religion, or jolly adventurers who want to kill all the Mormons or check the Yellow Peril, or restore the Hapsburgs or the Stuarts, or invade America in the cause of alcohol or China in the cause of opium, or France in the cause of Sabbatianism, or the Vatican in the cause of compulsory vaccination, please tell them, him or her that we can raise a very jolly platoon of gentlemen-adventurers for them in Oxford if they, he or she will pay us handsomely and give us a good chance of a speedy death. (21)

Certainly meant as a joke, or at least a partial one, Waugh’s overlooked letter does lend support to the critical insistence on his belatedness in relation to World War I. Yet if the letter re-establishes a theme familiar from other of Waugh’s essays, it also shows the author’s suspicion that his generation might simultaneously be anticipatory or premature. Not only too young to have fought in World War I but also potentially too old to serve if Bill’s travels do not unearth a war-in-the-making, Waugh seems to regret both that the Great War did not break out later and that another war does not break out sooner. Indeed, the underlying seriousness of the argument made in “Oxford and the Next War” becomes all the clearer when we reflect that Waugh, upon the outbreak of World War II, did everything he could to enlist despite his comparatively advanced age. As Selina Hastings notes in her biography of the author, Waugh applied for and
failed to receive positions at the Ministry of Information, the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Colonial Office, and despite a promising letter from Naval Intelligence, he found no post with that body, with the Irish Guards, or with the Welsh Guards (385). Only in late November 1939, when Brendan Bracken had encouraged Winston Churchill to support Waugh’s application personally, did the author receive a post with the Royal Marines (391).

Given the ample proof that Waugh was desperate to participate in World War II and that he wrote four novels directly addressing the war, the critical tendency to focus only on his early novels and his belated relation to World War I is troublesome. Indeed, even those critics who do take account of the novels Waugh wrote after the 1930s often concentrate on *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) alone and neglect to discuss the centrality of World War II in novels such as *Put Out More Flags* (1942) and the *Sword of Honour* (1952-1961) trilogy. The latter work, in fact, often receives nothing but the most fleeting of praise before critics interested in the intersection of literature and war turn to the novels Waugh wrote before the conclusion of hostilities. In *Modernism and World War II*, for instance, Marina MacKay acknowledges that Waugh “later produce[d] an admired novel trilogy about the Second World War,” but she makes only one other reference to *Sword of Honour* and does so when talking about Waugh’s satirization of the “military mythmaking” of the Great War (120, 130). Because MacKay’s first chapter describes Waugh’s war novels as a “late modernist resistance to what was perceived as a post-war cult of philistine materialism,” it is bizarre that she subsequently concentrates on works of his that were written and published before such a cult had had time to materialize.¹ Moreover, because MacKay argues in her introduction that Waugh’s “wartime books [serve] as contemporary accounts of modernism’s end,” it is difficult to determine how she understands the novels

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¹ According to Douglas Lane Patey, Waugh did protest as early as 1943 about the “growing ‘socialist ascendancy’” in England and agreed with many others that the war was being used to advance a socialist agenda of domestic reform (202). As Patey explains, “Britons of many political outlooks agreed that it was not only ‘war socialism’ itself but the popularization over several years of the ideology of the ‘people's war’…that made possible the victory of the Labour Party over Churchill’s coalition in 1945, giving socialists for the first time a majority in the House of Commons” (204). Even if Waugh was one of these Britons, however, MacKay's concentration on two novels written *during* the war troubles her claim that those novels were written in “resistance to…a post-war cult of philistine materialism.”
published after *Brideshead Revisited*, including *The Loved One* (1948), *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957), and the *Sword of Honour* trilogy itself. If MacKay is correct to suggest that modernism was ending in 1945, the year of *Brideshead*’s publication, what kind of works does she believe Waugh produced after 1945? Did he simply stop being a “late modernist” in 1945, or are we asked to agree with this conclusion because it is customary to date the end of modernism with the end of World War II?²

Although MacKay may too quickly overlook the trilogy that would seem best to reflect her book’s title, her account does at least acknowledge that Waugh saw his art as a constantly changing response to the historical events through which he lived. The same, however, cannot be said for other critics, who concentrate on the author’s earlier novels yet do not find it problematic to read those works through the lens of the author’s post-war essays, editorials, and reviews. The essay “Fan-fare,” for example, which was published in *Life* in 1946, is often used to show what Waugh set out to achieve in *Brideshead Revisited*, a novel published a year earlier than the essay and written between October 1943 and June 1944.³ In similar fashion, some critics do not hesitate to apply to Waugh’s entire oeuvre his provocative claim in “Fan-fare” that he had never

² In the introductory chapter of *Modernism and World War II*, MacKay describes her project as "an alternative history of a long modernism, where modernism is read backwards in an effort to bypass conventional historiographies of origins and emergence that promise an imaginative return to a time before modernism in order to reconstruct it from its beginnings" (17). Although Mackay may be correct that "[w]e can only read modernism from where we are" and that "[t]he teleological account of modernism [problematically] demands a peak of achievement from which everything that follows disappoints," her own anti-origins account is "teleological" in its own right, since it implicitly relies on the claim that late modernism came to an end in 1945. As she explains at one point, "[T]his book focuses on revisionist acts through which British modernists outlived their canonical moment to reshape modernism itself. Late modernism puts to new political uses the imaginative structures of modernist writing—but it was too late to count." Modernism by then had ossified into a self-contained literary period and into an aesthetic achievement that could only be construed as political in the most problematic, even embarrassing, of ways" (18, emphasis added). If modernism "had ossified" by the start of World War II and if the "modernism of the Second World War is a point of transition, a missing link between imperial Britain and the devolved archipelago it turned into," one wonders what kind of fiction authors such as Waugh and Graham Greene produced after the war, and presumably after late modernism, had concluded (20).

³ The relevant dates for the composition of *Brideshead* are provided in Patey, 208-212. That the sentiments in "Fan-Fare" post-date the composition of *Brideshead* can, however, be proven by the essay itself, since Waugh declares therein that he will not write "another *Brideshead Revisited*" (*EAR* 302). Despite this statement, both Christine Berberich and Michael Gorra use "Fan-Fare" to explain Waugh's aims in writing *Brideshead*. See Berberich p. 96 and Gorra p. 182.
written satire. The mistake in both these instances is to suggest that Waugh’s political position and artistic practice were static over the course of his career. Even Waugh’s biographer, Douglas Lane Patey, offers a version of this conclusion in his otherwise careful biography. Noting that “many consider [the Sword of Honour trilogy Waugh’s] finest achievement” and arguing that the trilogy is “a correction” of Brideshead Revisited, Patey nevertheless concludes that “in many important ways Waugh’s emotional and intellectual development—like that of many who outlived the great drama [of World War II]—ended in 1945” (349, 355, 184). As Waugh declared only in 1946 that his future works would be “unpopular” by showing “a preoccupation with style” and by making an “attempt to represent man more fully...in his relation to God,” Patey’s claim about the author’s post-war intellectual and emotional stagnation is difficult to accept (EAR 302).

In the remainder of this chapter, then, I intend to show that Waugh’s emotional and intellectual development did not miraculously stop in 1945 and that his engagement with modernism, late or otherwise, did not, equally miraculously, cease in that same year. Instead, I will begin by placing Waugh in the anti-Bergsonian camp of earlier modernists such as Wyndham Lewis, and I will underscore how his experience of combat during World War II influenced his fictional representation of time and interiority in his mid-war and post-war works. Concentrating initially on Put Out More Flags’s satirical treatment of authors and styles aligned with the Decadent era, high modernism, and contemporary Leftist art, I will eventually shift my attention to Waugh’s claims about periodization, satire, and individuality in “Fanfare,” claims that provide the basis for Guy Crouchback’s characterization in the Sword of Honour trilogy. With regard to the trilogy itself, my aim will be to demonstrate how Waugh foregrounds his characters’

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4 As I note later in this chapter, Michael Gorra contends that Waugh's The Loved One (1948) was "the only one of his books sufficiently directed against a specific target...to fit the generic requirements of satire" (189).

5 Although his claim about Waugh's development, or lack thereof, after 1945 is troublesome, Patey is kinder than most critics, who implicitly suggest that Waugh stopped developing emotionally and intellectually in 1934, the year A Handful of Dust was published. With the exception of the many books and articles on Brideshead Revisited, very little criticism addresses the novels Waugh wrote after A Handful of Dust. Indeed, even those critics who discuss Brideshead feel compelled to spend several pages listing that novel's failures.
experience of the war’s duration and ultimately links the temporal attentiveness acquired during war to his protagonist’s spiritual transformation. More specifically, as I argue that the Sword of Honour trilogy participates in the tradition of durational satire, I will be underscoring Waugh’s belief that individual salvation can be achieved only through a sustained but often exhausting awareness of the objective world and historical time.

“Il Faut en Finir”: Literary Phoniness in Put Out More Flags

As critics have often noted, Evelyn Waugh’s early novels Decline and Fall (1928) and Vile Bodies (1930) achieve their satirical effect not only by casting ridicule upon the superficiality of 1920s society but also by relying on ironic characterizations of Henri Bergson’s notions of Being and Becoming. Although Waugh never recorded his immediate impressions of Bergson’s philosophy, his diary does indicate that he was reading Bergson’s work as early as 1925. Moreover, several of his articles and reviews of the 1920s suggest that his response to Bergson was similar to and influenced by that of Wyndham Lewis. In “Too Young at Forty” (1929), for instance, Waugh encourages his elders to “grow up a little” and calls out for special ridicule “the Peter Pans of Bloomsbury,” a phrase that most certainly owes a debt to Lewis’s The Art of Being Ruled (1926) (EAR 46). As I noted in the previous chapter, Lewis uses The Art of Being Ruled to criticize, among other things, the infantilization of the public in the wake of World War I. More than lambasting “The Children of Peter Pan” who “refus[e] to grow up,” he also discusses the allure of perpetual childhood in terms of Bergson’s philosophy: “The child is an equivocal figure. It is the symbol of the eleatic Becoming, of a malleable and impersonal thing” (ABR 166, original emphasis). Despite the fact that Lewis does not directly align Peter-Pan-ism and Bloomsbury, the connection that Waugh made several years later would have been clear enough to anyone familiar with Lewis’s work. As Reed Way Dasenbrock notes in his Afterword to The

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Wyndham Lewis, meanwhile, owed a debt to Waugh’s brother, Alec. In 1932, he published Doom of Youth, a work that clearly riffs on Alec’s controversial 1917 novel, The Loom of Youth.
Art of Being Ruled, “If Lewis’s principle [in the book] wasn’t exactly ‘Evil, be thou my good,’ it was something like, ‘Whatever Bloomsbury considers evil, be thou my good’” (444). Lewis himself provides his clearest explanation of who the Peter Pans and their bedfellows are in the chapter addressing the contemporary “War on the Intellect” (344). Dividing the anti-intellectual “campaign” into four camps, several of which might conceivably contain the Bloomsbury Group, Lewis mentions “The Child,” among whom he includes “juvenile geniuses of all sorts” and “adults who adopt the child-mind”; “The Amateur,” or “the many wealthy people who…have adopted art either as a disguise or as a desultorily followed highbrow game”; “The Demented,” of whom Gertrude Stein is the “stammering, squinting, punning” example; and “The Pragmatic,” among whom are “the american [sic] pragmatists, [and] all those people in France…influenced by Bergson.” According to Lewis, however, Bergson’s doctrines are not just responsible for “The Pragmatic” but have also influenced each of the four categories listed: “Within the dominions, generally speaking, of the Great God Flux, are to be found (distributed amongst all or any of these four groupings) the psycho-analysts, futurists, dadas, proustites, etc.”

Although no direct evidence shows that Waugh had The Art of Being Ruled in mind when writing “Too Young at Forty,” his 1930 review of Satire and Fiction does suggest that he was familiar with additional works of Lewis’s. In that review, Waugh praises Lewis’s “observations about the ‘Outside and Inside’ method of fiction” and remarks that “[n]o novelist and very few intelligent novel readers can afford to neglect [Lewis’s book]” (EAR 102). Moreover, he describes Lewis’s gargantuan anti-Bloomsbury satire The Apes of God as “opulently conceived” and contends that Lewis not only has “the finest controversial style of any living writer” but also serves a “valuable” public role “as a critic of contemporary scientific-philosophical systems.” Because Lewis had published only Tarr (1918), The Art of Being Ruled (1926), and Time and Western Man (1927) before Satire and Fiction, it seems safe to speculate that Bergsonism was among those “scientific-philosophical systems” that Waugh believed him to be criticizing productively. As George McCartney argues, Waugh not only found “Lewis…the perfect
counterweight to Bergson” but also shared the former’s “highly developed visual sense” and consequent “dedication to an objective narrative style” (39, 40). In particular, Waugh rejected Bergson’s conception of the world as a place of “ceaseless change in which there are no before or after, but only a blurred now,” and far from wishing to replace the clarity and distinctness of the intellect with “the shapeless smear of sensation,” he suspected that Bergson’s notion of Becoming had disastrous consequences for both society and art (46). With regard to literature, McCartney contends, Waugh not only rejected “the expressive fallacy implicit in stream-of-consciousness narration” and “the studied turmoil of literary surrealism” but also viewed authors who accepted Bergsonian principles and embraced “extreme subjectivity” as suffering from “a deranged willfulness” (49, 66).

Like Lewis, Waugh was convinced that the epistemological assumptions of twentieth-century art had deflected it from its proper course. Instead of the classic struggle to fit the mutable subject matter of this world to the perception of the timeless and essential, modern art either escaped into abstraction or occupied itself with the temporary and accidental. Rather than serving the human need for an abiding sense of continuity and permanence amidst daily uncertainty, it either turned its back on immediate experience or seized upon those aspects of it that exemplified its transient, perishable nature. (56)

Although Waugh shared Lewis’s sense that modern art had gone astray in the decades following World War I, his tendency to regard literary explorations of interiority as a “deranged willfulness” owes as much to his growing interest in Catholicism as it does to his anti-Bergonsian stance. Familiar with the theological debates about religious modernism—debates that, as noted in an earlier chapter, seem to hover around the edges of Ford Madox Ford’s The Good Soldier—Waugh was not only aware that Pope Pius X had issued two anti-modernist decrees in the 1910s but was also cognizant that those decrees took issue with theological modernism’s emphasis on subjective, rather than rational, confirmations of God’s existence. As Patey explains, modernist theology posited “that the divine [was] available…only in the concrete flow of personal experience” and thereby suggested that “no rational theology [could] be wholly true or true for all
time, but part only of a continuous becoming” (53). For Catholic leaders, the undesirability of this position, which was believed to have had its origins in the Reformation, was self-evident.

Among others, Father D’Arcy, Waugh’s catechist, rejected the “Modernist contention” that “subjective experience is the foundation of religious belief” and insisted that “‘reasoned assent,’” rather than “‘intuition’” or “‘sentiment,’” was the “criterion of religious truth” (D’Arcy as qtd. in Patey 39, 54). Indeed, it was partly because Waugh showed an anti-modern strain as a catechumen that Father D’Arcy thought him a suitable candidate for conversion. Beginning his period of religious instruction in 1930, Waugh made it clear that he had “come to learn and understand what he believed to be God’s revelation” rather than “to test ‘how far it corresponded with his experience,’ with his own ‘likings and impressions’” (Patey and D’Arcy as qtd. in Patey 372 n. 5).

Even without his increasing interest in Catholicism, Waugh would probably still have been opposed to “extreme subjectivity” in literature, since his generation came of age in the 1920s, when major modernist authors such as Joyce and Woolf were beginning to receive acclaim.

In The English Novel at Mid-Century, Michael Gorra borrows Woolf’s 1940 image of “the leaning tower” to suggest that artists of Waugh’s generation suffered from “the sense of [their] own impotence before history” and “the belief that everything important had happened already, not just in the arts, but in British history itself” (12, 14). With regard to the arts, Gorra contends, Waugh and his peers believed that the high modernists had engineered the death of the novel “by denying the ‘antagonistic duality of soul and world’ upon which [Georg Lukács argued] the form depend[ed]” (7). More specifically, the high modernists had allowed the novel to fulfill “the promise of ‘the adventure of interiority’ by transforming that interiority into the world itself” (10). On Gorra’s account, the only reason Waugh and his fellow artists were able to write novels after modernism’s inward-turn lay in history’s refusal to “let the novel die”: through “the sheer fact of change,” “[h]istory… reassert[ed] its power over individual lives, not merely in terms of social
convention, but in a brutal, bloody, and obvious way” and thus “restored the novel’s traditional subject, the relation of the soul to the world” (10, 11).

If the intervention of history may have allowed the authors of Waugh’s generation to get on with the business of writing, Gorra also makes it clear that their novels involved a dramatic departure from their predecessors’. “Almost entirely without the modernist’s sense of innovation as both an adventure and a necessity,” the authors of the second generation wrote novels that not only “lacked the expansiveness of traditional realism” but also refused to “offer the modernist prospect of unifying the world’s fragments” (8). Furthermore, these second generation novelists did “not emphasize the soul, the interior life, at the expense of the world”; rather, “[t]heir theme [was]…the failure to achieve a satisfactory relationship between individual consciousness and objective reality in a society, and with an art, suspicious of the value, the relevance, and even the existence of the interior life itself” (10).

Whether we choose to accept Gorra’s theory about the timely reemergence of history, Waugh’s decision to avoid the subjectivism of his literary forebears became evident as early as his first novel, Decline and Fall. In that work and in the later Vile Bodies, Waugh denies his characters any interiority and allows those who approach something like critical thinking to suffer the same fates as those who accept the thoughtlessness of the modern world. By creating characters who do not share his values, Waugh ran the risk that his readers would overlook his support of reason and intellect. Yet, according to McCartney, Waugh avoided this predicament by using cinematic techniques, including montage, that enabled him to satirize the deficiencies of the modern world while reserving for himself the “director’s role,” a role that permitted him to show “the novelist…deal[ing] with extremity and absurdity without being affected by them” (104). In particular, McCartney draws attention to the ways in which Waugh’s use of filmic techniques allowed him simultaneously to diagnose the consequences and to disavow the premises of Bergson’s philosophy. In Creative Evolution, Bergson had aligned the cinematographer’s camera with the intellect and had criticized the intellectual faculty both for
“put[ting] itself outside its natural place in the universal becoming” and for “reduc[ing] experience to a sequence of static representations or frames” (106). Dividing his early novels into short and often unconnected episodes, Waugh thus managed to put “Bergson’s cinematographical intellect to his own very unbergsonian purposes”: he recreated his characters’ experience of living amid the flux while also stationing himself in the only secure position outside it (107).

Although Waugh’s use of filmic techniques has been noted by critics other than McCartney, the virtue of McCartney’s account is that it does not limit its claims to Waugh’s early fiction. Whereas most critics acknowledge Waugh’s antipathy to Bergsonism in his first two novels and draw attention to those novels’ use of montage, McCartney argues that Waugh continued to employ these techniques as late as The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold. If McCartney is right, and it seems hard to conclude otherwise, his work enables us to see a continuity across and to measure developments within Waugh’s oeuvre. Instead of artificially ending Waugh’s career with the much-respected Handful of Dust (1934) and instead of implying, as MacKay and Patey do, that Waugh’s fiction conveniently stopped developing in 1945, the year late modernism is customarily said to end, McCartney demonstrates that Waugh’s Lewisian aversion to Bergson and his corresponding desire to order and control chaos within his fiction were lifelong concerns.

But a lifetime is a long time, and history will, as Gorra says, tend to reassert its presence. The advent of World War II was certainly such a reassertion of history from Waugh’s perspective, and it thus caused him to reevaluate what he had achieved in his early novels, as well as to consider in what direction his subsequent fiction would go. Determining the exact point in time at which Waugh took stock of his work and began to transition to a new style and new interests has divided those critics who examine his wartime novels. Patey, for instance, contends that the transitional piece in Waugh’s fiction is Work Suspended, a fragment of a novel that he had conceived around 1938 and was working on at the time when he was called up to the Royal Marines. According to Patey, Work Suspended was “different from any [novel Waugh] had written: not another objective, fast-moving satire crowded with characters and events but a slow,
ruminative first-person narrative, introspective and emotional, composed in prose of new luxuriance and complexity” (171). In contrast to Patey, both Gorra and Claire Hopley locate the moment of transition in Put Out More Flags (1942). Hopley, for instance, contends that Put Out More Flags is not “simply the last of [Waugh’s] farces” but also “the transitional piece in which the decline later elaborated in Brideshead and Helena and the death wish that emerges at the end of Sword of Honour are first explored” (94). Gorra, on the other hand, views the 1942 novel as “a self-consciously wistful farewell” to the earlier novels and argues that, with the start of World War II, Waugh and others of his generation began to “search for an adequate style” that would let them “restor[e] value to the subjective life” and underscore “the importance, the credibility and the sensibility of individual experience in an increasingly depersonalized world” (179, 17).

That Work Suspended does make use of the first-person narration that becomes central to Brideshead Revisited is incontrovertible. Yet Patey’s insistence on the centrality of the fragment in Waugh’s career runs up against the fact that Waugh not only abandoned the novel but also changed its timeline before including it in two collections of short stories published in the late 1940s and 1950s. Although Patey notes that the original fragment “had been set in the early thirties” and that “later versions end just as World War II is declared,” he does not explain why we should understand Waugh’s willingness to alter small details in an otherwise uncompleted novel as a major development in his fiction. Hopley and Gorra thus appear closer to the truth than Patey when they emphasize the transitional nature of Put Out More Flags, but even they overlook the fact that that novel is as much a mission statement about what Waugh’s future fiction will not look like as it is a good-bye to a particular satirical or farcical technique. In drawing attention to Waugh’s search for a style that would permit him “to restore…the novel’s traditional function as a mediator between subjective experience and the objective world,” for instance, Gorra does not acknowledge that Put Out More Flags elucidates both the kind of “subjective experience” that is no longer worthy of being represented in fiction and the manner in
which such experiences should not be represented. It is to both these matters, as well as the satirical way in which they are addressed in *Put Out More Flags*, that I now turn.

As the dedication to the novel makes clear, the characters in *Put Out More Flags* represent “a race of ghosts” who, “no longer contemporary in sympathy,” are situated “in that odd, dead period…which people called at the time ‘the Great Bore War’” (unnumbered). The “Great Bore War” is, of course, the Phoney War of October 1939 to April 1940, and Waugh begins the novel by suggesting that the period not only disappointed expectations about British military involvement in Europe but also encouraged the dominance of bores and phonies on the homefront. Among the phonies who open the novel are the mother, sister, and mistress of Basil Seal, a gentleman in-name-only whose personal “system of push, appeasement, agitation and blackmail” is said to “[run] parallel to Nazi diplomacy” (56). Basil’s sister, Barbara, while “pretend[ing] to no illusions” about her depraved brother, does harbor the suspicion that the war is Hitler’s attempt to disrupt the workings of her husband’s estate: “[A]cross the sea, Barbara felt, a small and envious mind, a meanly ascetic mind, a creature of the conifers, was plotting the destruction of her home” (11, 4). Meanwhile, Basil’s mother, Lady Seal, reflects that World War I “had cost her little…except a considerable holding of foreign investments and her brother Edward’s reputation as a strategist” and thus perceives the outbreak of World War II as an opportunity “to offer her country” her dissolute son (18). As she explains to Sir Joseph Mainwaring, a family friend whom she hopes will secure Basil a job in the armed forces, “[T]his war seems to take the responsibility [for Basil] off our hands. There’s room for everyone in war-time, every man…In war-time individuality doesn’t matter any more” (22).

Perhaps the most intriguing member of the female trio presented at the beginning of the novel is Basil’s mistress, Angela Lyne. Receiving more descriptive space than the other two female characters, Angela resembles the type of woman whom Waugh would later describe in the *Sword of Honour* trilogy as “the exquisite, the doomed, and the damning” (*EoFB* 263). What is provocative about Angela, however, is less her resemblance to other characters in Waugh’s
novels than the manner in which she is introduced. Seeming to rely on the Victorian trope of observing a character from afar before getting down to the business of plot, Waugh introduces Angela seated on a French train and imagines her being watched by a fellow passenger:

A stranger passing the open door of her compartment might well have speculated on her nationality and place in the world and supposed her to be American, the buyer perhaps for some important New York dress shop—whose present abstraction was due to the worries of war-time transport for her ‘collection.’ She wore the livery of the highest fashion, but as one who dressed to inform rather than to attract….Her smartness was individual… [H]er person was a record and criticism of succeeding fashions, written, as it were, year after year, in one clear and characteristic fist. Had the curious fellow passenger stared longer…he would have been checked in his hunt when he came to study his subject’s face. All her properties—the luggage heaped above and around her, the set of her hair, her shoes, her finger-nails, the barely perceptible aura of scent that surrounded her, the Vichy water and the paper-bound volume of Balzac on the table before her—all these things spoke of what (had she been, as she seemed, American) she would have called her ‘personality.’ But the face was mute. It might have been carved in jade, it was so smooth and cool and conventionally removed from the human. A stranger might have watched her for mile after mile, as a spy or a lover or a newspaper reporter will loiter in the street before a closed house, and see no chink of light, hear no whisper of movement behind the shuttered façade, and in direct proportion to his discernment, he would have gone on his way down the corridor baffled and disturbed. (23-5)

Putting aside our knowledge that the “war-time transport” mentioned in the first sentence of this paragraph is that of World War II, we might suspect that this passage comes from a nineteenth-century realist novel. Indeed, from the carefully chosen word “livery” to the Balzacian description of Angela’s personal belongings (including a book by Balzac) to the final Jamesian sentence, this passage seems to compress the nineteenth-century novel into a handful of sentences written in a “clear and characteristic fist” that is not recognizably Waugh’s own. Yet coupling this passage with what follows, Waugh reveals that his aim is not only to mimic the literary works of the previous century but also to imitate both the fiction and nonfiction of his own century, including the works of Virginia Woolf. As much an echo of “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” as of Thackeray, Balzac, or James, in other words, the passage above plays upon the
main anecdote of Woolf’s 1924 essay, as well as upon her notion that “to impart character [is] an obsession [for the novelist]” (Woolf 321). Indeed, lest this correlation with Woolf’s essay be overlooked, Waugh soon reinforces it by entering Angela’s consciousness in much the same way that Woolf enters Mrs. Dalloway’s. I am quoting the following passage at length for the good reason that presenting it in excerpts would obscure the way in which Waugh skilfully mimics Woolf’s style, a style that depends on playing up the latent connective threads between seemingly unrelated thoughts:

She turned to the window as the train slacked to walking pace, passing truck after truck of soldiers. Il faut en finir, Nous gagnerons parce que nous sommes les plus forts. A hard-boiled people, the French. Two nights ago at Cannes, an American had been talking about the mutinous regiments decimated in the last war. “It’s a pity they haven’t got anyone like old Pétain to command them this time,” he had said.

The villa at Cannes was shut now and the key was with the gardener. Perhaps she would never go back. This year she remembered it only as the place where she had waited in vain for Basil. He had telegraphed “International situation forbids joy-riding.” She had sent him the money for his journey but there had been no answer. The gardener would make a good thing out of the vegetables. A hard-boiled people, the French; Angela wondered why that was thought to be a good thing; she had always had a revulsion from hard-boiled eggs, even at picnics in the nursery—hard-boiled; over-cooked; over-praised for their cooking. When people professed a love of France, they meant a love of eating; the ancients located the deeper emotions in bowels. She had heard a commercial traveller in the Channel packet welcome Dover and English food: “I can’t stomach that French messed-up stuff.” A commonplace criticism, thought Angela, that applied to French culture for the last two generations—“messed-up stuff,” stale ingredients from Spain and America and Russia and Germany, disguised in a sauce of white wine from Algeria. France died with her monarchy. You could not even eat well, now, except in the provinces. It all came back to eating. “What’s eating you?” […] Basil claimed to have eaten a girl once in Africa; he had been eating Angela now for seven years. Like the Spartan boy and the fox […] Spartans at Thermopylae, combing their hair before the battle; Angela had never understood that, because Alcibiades had cut off his hair in order to make himself acceptable. What did the Spartans think about hair really? Basil would have to cut his hair when he went into the Army. Basil the Athenian would have to sit at the public tables of Sparta, clipped blue at the neck where before his dark hair had hung untidily to his collar. Basil in the pass at Thermopylae […]
Angela’s maid returned from gossiping with the conductor… (27-9)

Right down to the text of French war posters (“Il faut en finir. Nous gagnerons parce que nous sommes les plus forts.”) finding their way into Angela’s consciousness, this passage echoes the spirit of Mrs. Dalloway, a novel wherein a variety of characters internally register, among other things, the advertising work of a skywriter. In fact, critics have consistently noted that, with the exception of Work Suspended, Put Out More Flags is the first of Waugh’s novels to make use of a Woolfian stream-of-consciousness. The end to which Waugh puts this technique, however, remains up for critical debate. Addressing both this passage and the previous one, for instance, Hopley concludes that, “an individualist and an aesthete,” Angela Lyne “is able to assess herself and her situation” more “objectively” than the other characters in the novel and is, in fact, a “prototype for Guy [Crouchback]” in the Sword of Honour trilogy (89). In contrast, Phyllis Lassner suggests that, “despite her ‘shuttered façade’ and…‘morbid’ and ‘squalid’ relationship” with Basil Seal, Angela’s “dispassion and dependency on Basil” both “ensures her [problematic] redemption” at the end of the novel and contributes to the work’s “reification” of female stereotypes (209, 213). Finally, in opposition to both Hopley and Lassner, Patey claims that, while Put Out More Flags is Waugh’s first attempt to create “individuals” rather than “types,” the novel fails to clarify what it means to be either an individual or a type and instead includes characters who “are projections of [Waugh’s] moods” and “mouthpieces for his opinions” (180, 178-9). On this reading, though not mentioned by name, Angela Lyne would seem to be caught in some sort of limbo between the heaven of individuality and the hell of typology.

Without venturing down the often-trod (and not always productive) road of accusing Waugh of misogyny, the best of these readings is Lassner’s, since it neither grants Angela Lyne a privileged position of interiority nor laments that such interiority, though desired by Waugh, fails to come off. For if Angela Lyne serves any purpose in Put Out More Flags, it is to indicate that

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7 See Myers p. 60 and Patey p. 193.
whatever interiority she might have is not worth the paper it is written on. How do we know this is so? In the first place, if we pretend to agree that Angela’s interior monologue marks a drastic but welcome departure from the one-dimensional characterization of Waugh’s early satires, the end of the novel nevertheless shows that Angela’s possession of interiority gains her nothing but alcoholism and a promise of marriage from the reprobate Basil. Although one might initially suspect that Waugh encourages the reader’s sympathy for the alcoholic Angela, who, as Basil says, drinks because “[s]he doesn’t like the war,” the text does not indicate either that Waugh supports Angela or that he agrees with Basil’s conclusions (206). With his personal policy of “Nazi diplomacy,” his general unconcern with Angela’s feelings, and his constitutional inability to recognize his own or others’ immoral behavior, Basil seems the least likely of the novel’s characters to have discovered the true reason for Angela’s drinking. Moreover, despite the novel’s frequent attention to Angela’s habit of listening, cocktail in hand, to war news on the radio, a closer reading of the relevant scenes reveals that it is not news of the war in general that bothers her but rather her pathological suspicion that the French are disreputable or untrustworthy.

In the longest scene surrounding drinking and the radio, a scene that serves to link interior monologue, addiction, and mental illness, Angela hears news that someone—presumably a German spy, but really a deranged Englishman—has attempted to assassinate the Chaplain General at the Ministry of Information. Unfazed by this update from the BBC, Angela immediately switches to a German news service and hears Lord Haw-Haw alleging that Churchill, not the Nazis, attempted to assassinate that same Chaplain. Still unfazed, she finally “switch[es] on to France where a man of letters [gives] his impressions of a visit to the Maginot Line” and declares that the Line is not the most likely route the Germans will take to invade the country (192). As the narrator goes on to record, just after noting that another drink has been poured,

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8 One might also note that the only problem Basil has with Angela's drinking is that he was not invited to join in. After Peter Pastmaster tells him that Angela was falling-down drunk at a movie house, Basil goes to her apartment and remarks, “I think it’s pretty mean of you to drink without me as you’ve been doing…Now listen, next time you want to go on a bat, let me know. Just ring me up and I’ll come round. Then we can drink together” (206). When Angela replies that she frequently wants “to go on a bat,” Basil responds that “[he]’ll come round often.”
“[Angela’s] distrust of France was becoming an obsession with her now. It kept her awake at night and haunted her dreams by day—long, tedious dreams born of barbituric; dreams which had no element of fantasy or surprise; utterly real, drab dreams which, like waking life, held no promise or delight” (192-3).9

In examining Angela’s response to the French broadcast, including her subsequent laughter and tears when reflecting that both she and the Maginot Line are “lines of least resistance,” we might initially agree with Basil that the state of affairs in Europe is too much for her to bear. The only satisfactory way to account for Angela’s disregard for the English Chaplain General and her obsession with the French, however, is to return to the stream-of-consciousness passage in which she is introduced. For it is in that passage that she reflects on the “hard-boiled” nature of the French, recalls that she does not like hard-boiled eggs or the French culture of the past two decades, and remembers that Basil, who was supposed to meet her in France, is accustomed, among other things, to cannibalism. Moreover, in a coda to that passage, Angela is led along “the haphazard trail of phrase and association” to conclude that Basil, once enlisted in the Army, will most likely (and, from her perspective, most luckily) come into contact with “Death”: “‘Death the Friend’ of the sixteenth-century woodcuts, who released the captive and bathed the wounds of the fallen...Death the macabre paramour in whose embrace all earthly loves were forgotten; Death for Basil, that Angela might live again [...]” (30-1).

By the time we actually see Angela drinking and listening to the wireless, then, the stream of consciousness that had earlier led her to follow her reflections on the hard-boiled French with reflections on the welcome death of Basil has been short-circuited. And it is short-circuited precisely because Basil does not have the courtesy to die. Without Basil’s death or her new life anywhere in sight, Angela’s “haphazard trail of...association” becomes truncated: the

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9 In the scene where Basil confronts Angela about her drinking, the connection between Angela's alcoholism and her "distrust of France" once more becomes clear. Informed by Basil that he is employed at the War Office, Angela "[begins] talking intensely and rather wildly about the French" and then retreats momentarily to her bedroom (204). As the narrator goes on to explain, "[Angela] came back half a minute later with an abstracted little smile; the inwardly happy smile of a tired old nun—almost. There was a difference.”
feeling that she is being eaten alive remains, but France, the country with which she associates eating, takes Basil’s place as the aggressor. France thus comes to stand as a metonym for the threat Basil represents, and the way in which this relation between nation and person has been achieved is precisely through Angela’s (and the narrator’s) examination of her thoughts at the beginning of the novel. Read this way, the novel seems to suggest that a streaming consciousness is as much at fault for neurosis and alcoholism as the war itself.

Contra Hopley, then, Waugh’s achievement in his introductory description of Angela is not that he creates an introspective character who can assess her situation objectively; and contra Patey, Waugh’s failure is not that he tries to grant Angela the status of an individual but manages to create only a type. Instead, Waugh succeeds in using the narrative strategies of high modernism both to suggest that his historical moment has no room for introspective individuals and to show that those who too closely follow the movements of their consciousnesses will eventually succumb to despair. Furthermore, Waugh implies that those authors who represent the workings of their characters’ minds understand neither the time in which they live nor the consequences of their own valorization of interiority. Situating Angela Lyne in a train at the opening of the novel and imagining another passenger who examines her, Waugh repeats the scenario described by Woolf in “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” but he does so only to suggest that the Mrs. Browns and Mrs. Lynes of the world might be better left alone “in [the] corner” where Arnold Bennett, H.G. Wells, and John Galsworthy “never once looked” (Woolf 330). In addition, he echoes the cadences of Mrs. Dalloway only to conclude the relevant passage by arriving at Death, a decision that proves remarkable when we recall that Lewis, some fifteen years earlier, had already linked “deadness” with modern fiction’s Bergsonesque techniques,

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10 Angela’s substitution of France-as-aggressor for Basil-as-aggressor also involves the irony that the problem with France is precisely its lack of aggression with regard to Germany. If the fighting escalated in France, in other words, the British would be obliged to send over more troops, which would mean that able-bodied men like Basil would be needed to fight. For Angela, this would be an ideal situation, since it might result in Basil’s death and, consequently, in her "release" from him (27).
including stream-of-consciousness. In *Time and Western Man*, for instance, Lewis discusses Joyce’s and Proust’s novels in much the way one imagines him speaking of Woolf’s:

> Without the uniform pervasive growth of the time-philosophy starting from the little seed planted by Bergson, discredited, and now spreading more vigorously than ever, there would be no *Ulysses*, or there would be no *A La Recherche du Temps perdu*....

> The method that underlies *Ulysses* is known as the ‘telling from the inside.’ As that description denotes, it is psychological. Carried out in the particular manner used in *Ulysses*, it lands the reader inside an Aladdin’s cave of incredible bric-à-brac in which a dense mass of stuff is collected, from 1901 toothpaste, a bar or two of Sweet Rosie O’Grady, to pre-nordic architecture. An immense *nature-morte is the result*. This ensues from the method of confining the reader in a circumscribed psychological space into which several encyclopaedias have been emptied...

> The inner-meaning of the *time-philosophy* [that drives Joyce’s and Proust’s novels], from whatever standpoint you approach it, and however much you paste it over with confusing advertisements of ‘life,’ of ‘organism,’ is the doctrine of a mechanistic universe; periodic; timeless, or nothing but ‘time,’ whichever you prefer; and, above all, essentially *dead*. A certain *deadness*, a lack of nervous power, an aversion to anything suggesting animal vigour, characterizes all the art...issuing from this philosophy. (*TWM* 89-91)

An “aversion to animal vigour”: This is a phrase designed for Angela Lyne, a character whom Waugh elsewhere describes as a “seemingly cosmopolitan, passionless, barren, civilized woman” (25). For an author who conceived of himself and his first wife as the “nucleus of an alternative Bloomsbury” as early at the late 1920s and who praised Lewis’s exterior method as early as 1930, the decision to imitate Woolf’s literary techniques in *Put Out More Flags* was decidedly not an homage (Stannard as qtd. in Patey 25). As Gorra notes, far from having “sympathy with Woolf’s demand that novels present life as a ‘luminous halo’ of consciousness,” Waugh had “no interest in consciousness as such, except insofar as his characters’ lack of it, and their consequent flatness, [could] be made to tell” (167).

While Gorra advances the previous claim only with regard to Waugh’s earliest novels, we can apply his basic premise to *Put Out More Flags* if we add two riders. First, Waugh has “no
interest in consciousness as such,” except insofar as revealing the contents of that consciousness allows him to show up the impoverishment of the interior life of modern individuals. It is for this reason that he has Angela Lyne ignore Basil’s cannibalism so long as it does not affect her directly, and it is for this reason, as well, that he has such fun displaying the ludicrous connections among her thoughts. Second, Gorra’s claim can be made to apply to Waugh’s later fiction if we realize that the author is willing to enter a character’s consciousness so long as it enables him to expose the unfitness of interior monologue as a method for dealing with the individual at particular moments in time. Although such a method might have seemed harmless enough during the interwar years and although it might have continued to seem innocuous during the opening stages of a war that merited the modifier “Phoney,” Waugh suggests that the method is nevertheless a phony strategy for granting interiority to the phony individuals who had their heyday before the Blitz. Simply stated, the content of Angela’s thoughts, as well as the use to which she puts them, indicates that she is as problematic a character as Basil: she lacks the reason, will, and moral sense that, according to Waugh, define any individual worth his salt.11

Angela, however, is not the only character who becomes the target of Waugh’s satire in *Put Out More Flags*. Ambrose Silk, who more accurately resembles the “aesthete and individualist” that Hopley sees in Angela, also comes under fire, and in his case, too, Waugh’s attack seems directed as much at the character as at his association with a particular literary style. One way of approaching Ambrose on both these fronts is to consider an essay Waugh wrote for *Harper’s Bazaar* in 1930. Entitled “Let Us Return to the Nineties But Not to Oscar Wilde,” the essay rejects the contemporary enthusiasm for the Age of Decadence and contends that support for that epoch among “amateurs and dilettanti” has two causes. First, since “it is a very arduous business to keep up with one’s own period” and “takes as much serious effort to be sincerely and completely modern as to swim the Channel,” those people who want to seem modern but who do

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11 Discussing Waugh’s aversion to Marxism, Patey notes that the author “consistently denounced [that political creed] as a ‘denial of individuality to individuals,’ a failure to observe ‘the basic assumption of all traditional Christian art and philosophy that every human being is possessed of free will, reason and personal desires’” (179).
not want to expend the energy to be so have designated the more familiar art of the 1890s as “modern” (EAR 123). Second, the allure of the 1890s is that it requires no “acquaintance with Art and History” and “no sort of endowment of intellect or culture” to be appreciated or imitated (124). According to Waugh, such an avoidance of the cultivation of intellect and culture explains the public’s particular fondness for Oscar Wilde, whose “grim social circles” considered “anything that was not Politics or Sport [to be] Art”: “If [Wilde] wore scent, or jewellery [sic], or eccentric waistcoats, or collected knick-knacks of porcelain, or chinoiserie—it was all unusual and therefore was Art. If he lay a long time on a sofa in a silk dressing-gown—that was Art, too.” Precisely to counteract this diminished and debased understanding of Art, Waugh, much like Lewis before him, feels it his duty to emphasize that “the poor decadents were, less than anyone, in touch with their own age” and to recommend that if a return to the 1890s must take place, one should instead “look with approval” on “the cult of the safety bicycle,” “the finishing touches [that] were being put to the motor-car and [the] plans [that] were being made for heavier-than-air flying machines” (125).

As Waugh’s facetious remark about the bicycling craze of the 1890s makes clear, he would prefer not to return to the 1890s at all, with or without Oscar Wilde. Thus, in creating Ambrose Silk, a character whose name alone justifies the suspicion that he is “a survival from the Yellow Book,” Waugh moves a generation behind Woolf’s to indicate another kind of individual and another kind of art that is unfit for a world engaged in its second total war (38). To his credit, Ambrose himself understands that he is belated and out of place. In an interior monologue of his own, he reflects that, as a homosexual, he has been “[b]orn after his time, in an age which made a type of him, a figure of farce; like mothers-in-law and kippers, the century’s contribution to the national store of comic objects” (46-7). Indeed, even before the novel begins, he has apparently realized that the “primrose path [of] the days of Diaghilev,” of Eton, of Oxford, and of Paris in the 1920s and 1930s has come to a dead end, and he has therefore chosen an alternate route, an “austere and heroic” one, which has led him to “[begin] a book—a grim, abstruse, interminable
book, a penance for past frivolity” (48, 49). Sadly for Ambrose, this book, having been conceived and started in Germany before the war, is now lost to the ages. Yet the beliefs that provided the foundation for that book reemerge in his repeated contention that European culture must be made “coenobitic” instead of “conventual,” a remark by which he means to encourage the cultivation of solitude and “taste and wisdom” instead of militarism, bureaucracy, and, somewhat counterintuitively, monasticism12 (225).

In the very small amount of criticism that has been devoted to Put Out More Flags, the overwhelming consensus seems to be that Ambrose is the novel’s privileged character.13 Contending that Ambrose “is as close as the novel [comes to having] a moral center,” for instance, MacKay argues that the character serves two key purposes (124). On the one hand, because he is “the only character in Waugh’s novel not locked into his own stupidity, snobbery or self-interest,” his ultimate fate demonstrates how “creative dissidence is victimised by political expediency masquerading as patriotic duty” (124, 121). On the other hand, Ambrose “[r]epresent[s] modernism itself” and “offers a challenge to the reactionary Tory insularity that Waugh would come in the end to epitomise” (121). Although MacKay devotes more attention than previous critics to the complexity of Put Out More Flags, she too easily aligns Ambrose with modernism and then uses this alignment to argue that Waugh supported “the liberal defence of solitary dissidence” (126). Certainly, it is true that Ambrose has connections with modernism: not only has he “frequented Jean Cocteau and Gertrude Stein”; he has also “written and published…a study of Montparnasse Negroes that ha[s] been banned in England by Sir William Joynson-Hicks” (48). And equally certainly, Ambrose adopts a view of the war that would seem to reflect Waugh’s own worries about the loss of individuality and the rise of a crowd mentality. Yet

12 According to Patey, Waugh realized after Put Out More Flags was published that he “had misunderstood the meaning of ‘coenobitic’” (195). He later changed the word, and in the 1966 edition of the novel, which was published in the year of his death, “coenobitic” was replaced with “hermetic.”

13 See Hopley, pages 87-88, and Myers, pages 64-65. Patey, to my knowledge, is the only critic who argues that Waugh's treatment of Ambrose is satirical: “[W]here earlier [Waugh] had celebrated the literature of 'escape,' Put Out More Flags definitively rejects notions of art for art's sake, and satirizes Ambrose Silk for supposing that art can avoid being propaganda” (180).
Ambrose’s former social circles and support of individualism do not make him the novel’s representative figure of modernism or of Waugh’s politics, especially when we take into account the narrator’s remark that, in his most frequent moods, Ambrose “caused time to slip back to an earlier age than his own youth….when amid a more splendid décor of red plush and gilt caryatides fin-de-siècle young worshippers crowded to the tables of Oscar and Aubrey” (223). If this were an occasional idiosyncrasy of Ambrose’s and if it decreased in prominence as the war came to bear on him, MacKay’s argument might carry more weight. The truth of the matter, however, is that Ambrose’s “fin-de-siècle” tendencies become more pronounced as the novel progresses and that his particular strain of individualism become so indistinguishable from “stupidity, snobbery [and] self-interest” that it results in precisely what McKay identifies: his victimization. For by the end of the novel, Ambrose, who mistakenly assumes that everyone’s interests are identical to his own, finds himself a victim of Basil’s machinations and a fugitive wanted by the Ministry of Information.

Part of the reason that Ambrose’s art and politics might seem to be endorsed by the novel lies in the fact that he is introduced in a setting clearly intended for mockery. Situated in a room among a group of half-hearted Communist artists and intellectuals, he does appear more respectable and responsible than, say, the painter Poppet Green, “[e]vidence of [whose] silliness abounded in the canvases, finished and unfinished, which crowded the studio” (31). Moreover, he seems superior to the remainder of the Communist clique, whose idols are the poets Parsnip and Pimpernell, a pair for whom Waugh reserves his most biting irony (31). For not only are Parsnip and Pimpernell an “inseparable” pair whose “complementary qualities…[make] them equal to one poet”; with the start of the war, they are also clearly planning to leave England and are using their art as an excuse for their emigration (42). Throughout the discussion of the “Parsnip-Pimpernell controversy,” Ambrose reflects on the absurdity of his companions and thus seems to merit Waugh’s endorsement. Yet, even had Ambrose’s reflections not been included, readers familiar with Waugh’s essays of the 1930s might be inclined to regard his silence as a
pleasing attribute, since the author was elsewhere vocal enough for two in his denunciations of Parsnip and Pimpernell’s models, W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood. As Patey observes, “Waugh liked to say that what other critics called the ‘Auden gang’…had ‘ganged up and captured the decade,’” and he consequently “insisted that…artists and intellectuals [were] ‘people with individual work to do’” (172, 173). Rejecting the “documentary stance” and lack of style that he thought characterized Leftist art and refusing to embrace the notion “‘that the class struggle [was] the only topic worth a writer’s attention,’” Waugh resented the fact that “no workable identity” existed during and after the 1930s for “the non-Leftist, non-highbrow who also wished to be a serious writer” (173, 174, 178).

Although Waugh blamed artists such as Auden and Isherwood for encouraging the prevalence of Left-leaning literature during the interwar years, he also believed that the critical establishment and the general public had their share of culpability. In a review of Journey to a War (1939), for instance, he sardonically praises the publishers of the book for trying to increase the sales of Auden’s poetry by placing it in the same volume as Isherwood’s 200-page travel diary; furthermore, with a barely disguised animosity, he relays his “hope” that the pair’s otherwise “happy relationship” will not be disturbed by their book’s “pantomime appearance as hind and front legs of a monster” (EAR 251). His biggest criticism, however, is reserved not for Auden or Isherwood but for those who celebrate the former:

The English public has no particular use for a poet, but they believe they should have one or two about the place. There is an official laureate; there is also, always, an official young rebel. I do not know how he is chosen. At certain seasons the critics seem to set out piously together to find a reincarnation of Shelley, just as the lamas of Tibet search for their Dalai Lama. A year or two ago they proclaimed their success and exhibited Mr Auden. It is unfair to transfer to him the reproach that properly belongs to them. His work is awkward and dull, but it is no fault of his that he has become a public bore. (252)

With evidence like this to hand, it is not surprising that today’s critics concentrate on the satirical treatment of “bores” like Parsnip and Pimpernell in a novel set during the “Great Bore
War.” To move from the scathing treatment of Auden and Isherwood in Put Out More Flags to the conclusion that Ambrose Silk is Waugh’s approved mouthpiece, however, is to make a serious error. For if Parsnip and Pimpernell are guilty of literally “run[ning] away from contemporary history,” Ambrose is figuratively guilty of the same crime (POMF 43). Just pages before Poppet and her friends discuss Parsnip and Pimpernell, we learn in a clearly satirical passage that Ambrose believes himself “a martyr of Art” and that he is prone to reflect aloud that he “belong[s], hopelessly, to the age of the ivory tower” (37, 38). Although he subsequently laments his “irredeemably bourgeois” nature and regrets that his voice “is the brazen voice of Apuleius’ ass, turning its own words to ridicule,” Ambrose fraternizes with Poppet’s Communist circle less because he wishes to descend from his ivory tower than because he wishes to avoid marginalization and mockery (71, 72). “Marginalization” is here a key word, since the prospect of such a state tends to cause critics to line up in support behind whatever character appears to suffer from it. And this is precisely what happens in Ambrose’s case, especially when the following passage comes up for critical discussion:

This is all the anyone talks about, thought Ambrose; jobs and the kind of war it is going to be. War in the air, war of attrition, tank war, war of nerves, war of propaganda, war of defence in depth, war of movement, peoples’ war, total war, indivisible war, war infinite, war incomprehensible, war of essence without accidents or attributes, metaphysical war, war in time-space, war eternal […] all war is nonsense, thought Ambrose. I don’t care about their war. It’s got nothing to do with me. But if, thought Ambrose, I were one of these people, if I were not a cosmopolitan, Jewish pansy, if I were not all that the Nazis mean when they talk about ‘degenerates,’ if I were not a single, sane individual, if I were part of a herd, one of these people, normal and responsible for the welfare of my herd, Gawd strike me pink, thought Ambrose, I wouldn’t sit around discussing what kind of war it was going to be. I’d make it my kind of war. I’d set about killing and stampeding the other herd as fast and as hard as I could. Lord love a duck, thought Ambrose, there wouldn’t be any animals nosing about for suitable jobs in my herd…Cor chase my Aunt Fanny round a mulberry bush, thought Ambrose; what a herd.” (87, original emphasis)

In reading this passage, critics regularly focus on Ambrose’s (though not always Waugh’s) celebration of difference, and because “difference” has critical cachet, Ambrose
equally regularly becomes “the moral center” or the “moral heart” of the novel. In reaching such a conclusion, however, critics overlook the fact that, despite his reflections on the limitations of the “herd,” Ambrose proceeds to repeat the behavior of those “poor decadents” whom Waugh had criticized over a decade earlier for being “less than anyone, in touch with their own age.” Indeed, the next time we encounter Ambrose, he is approaching his publisher not to propose a novel set in the twentieth century but to inquire about funding for the *Ivory Tower*, a periodical that encourages “Art for Art’s sake” and advocates going “[b]ack to the lily and the lotus, away from these dusty young *immortelles*, these dandelions sprouting on the vacant lot” (138).

While the *Ivory Tower* is clearly meant to resemble Cyril Connolly’s mid-war magazine, *Horizon*, that resemblance is less important than the fact that, in discussing his plans for his own magazine, Ambrose utters the same French phrases Angela Lyne had earlier considered during her train ride. Asked by his publisher whether his proposed magazine will be a “kind of new *Yellow Book*” and whether this will not raise the ire of contemporary Leftist artists, Ambrose first rejects the notion that his magazine will be a repetition of its 1890s forebear (“*Geoffrey. How can you be so unkind??*”) and then responds that artists have “allowed [themselves] to be dominated by economists” for too long (139, original emphasis). As he goes on to exclaim, “‘I’ve had enough [of ‘concrete mixers and tractors’]. *If faut en finir*’—and added: ‘*Nous gagnerons parce que nous sommes les plus forts.*’” The brilliance of Waugh’s reintegration of these lines is twofold. First, he aligns the satirical aim of Angela’s portrait with that of Ambrose’s: in both cases, the characters’ interior lives are treated to a degree unprecedented in Waugh’s novels, and in both cases, that treatment is designed to show the limitations of the individuals who receive it. Second, Waugh’s use of the em-dash and the phrase “and added”

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14 Any adequate reading of this passage would take into account that Ambrose is less interested in celebrating difference than he is in reflecting on what kind of power he would be able to wield if he were similar to others. Tonally, in fact, the passage suggests that Ambrose would rather have such power than be the world’s “single, sane individual.”

15 Connolly himself was aware that Waugh was having sport with him. As if to drive the point home for his readers, however, Waugh follows Ambrose’s reflections on the publication of *The Ivory Tower* with a section describing Basil’s interactions with the Connolly children, a hideous (but hilarious) family of refugees.
before the second of the French sayings suggests not only that the propaganda of the war is
determining the direction of Ambrose’s thoughts and speech but also that stream-of-
consciousness is a sort of epidemic that spreads without the awareness of characters or the control
of authors. To follow “Il faut en finir” with “Nous gagnerons parce que nous sommes les plus
forts” makes sense if we imagine Angela reading war posters and registering their content as her
train speeds through the French countryside, but it does not make sense in the context of
Ambrose’s discussion with his publisher, since those same posters are presumably not displayed
in the publisher’s office or even in the city of London. Putting aside the unlikelihood that
Ambrose has ever seen the French posters containing these words, we should also note that his
quotation of the posters’ language proves particularly ill-timed. After all, the point of his
publisher’s objections to the Ivory Tower is to show Ambrose both that he is not part of a “nous”
socially or artistically and that “la force” of his position is precisely what is in question in 1940.
From the reader’s perspective, moreover, Ambrose’s repetition of these lines has an additional
degree of irony, since the slogans are now being uttered by an Englishman in England in the
winter of 1940-41. With the benefit of hindsight, we know that France is not only about to fall to
the Germans in the coming months but also that the English will soon shoulder the burden of the
Allied cause after the evacuation of Dunkirk in April 1941. The reappearance of the phrases thus
foreshadows the westward shift of war responsibilities, while simultaneously satirizing France
and England’s claims to strength and their presumption that the war will end quickly because they
say it will.

Without the willingness to understand his publisher’s point and without the reader’s
knowledge of how the war will develop, Ambrose continues to misunderstand the nature of his
position within the art world and within the world at war. Immediately before discussing his idea
that European culture should be “coenobitic” instead of “conventual,” for instance, he announces
that “[w]e must return to the Present” instead of “looking back or forward” as the traditionalists
and the Marxists do, respectively (225). Yet some ten pages after making these declarations, he
once more tries to secure funding for the *Ivory Tower* by conveying its relation to a literary tradition. Indeed, he not only invokes tradition but also mentions the very line of descent that he previously resented. Asked by the head of the publishing firm, Mr. Rampole, whether the magazine will include advertisements, Ambrose responds in the negative and remarks that he was thinking “of making it something like the old *Yellow Book*” (237). Although one might argue that Ambrose offers this comparison in order to secure capital from his interlocutor, who, as we learn, has the habit of protesting “on the widest grounds that publication of any kind [is] undesirable,” this generous reading ignores the fact that, once published, the *Ivory Tower* consists of “ferocious unprovoked blows at those who held that literature was of value to the community” and, somewhat paradoxically, includes advice to that same community about “the proper degrees of contempt and abhorrence due to the military, and…all statesmen of an energetic and warlike disposition” (237, 238). Indeed, when the first edition of the magazine is in drafts and the under-publisher expresses dismay that its contents are “all very controversial,” Ambrose replies intolerantly that the objections of the reading public are of no concern to him: “Not controversial, Geoffrey. We invite acceptance, not argument” (239, 241).

The one exception to the general drift of the *Ivory Tower* is Ambrose’s “Monument to a Spartan,” an essay that follows the history of his former Brown Shirt lover, Hans (239). In examining the narrator’s description of this essay, we might suspect that Ambrose’s categorization of the piece as “Pure Art” is apt. At any event, the essay certainly seems entertaining reading, as it follows “Hans immature…floundering and groping in the gloom of Teutonic adolescence”; “Hans growing a little older, joining the Brown Shirts….bemused in a twilight where the demagogues and party hacks loomed and glittered like Wagnerian heroes”; “Hans’s Storm Troop comrades…fall[ing] on [his] friendship [with Ambrose]…and sav[ing] him from facing the implications…[of Ambrose’s Jewishness]” (239-41). Before we begin praising Ambrose’s accomplishment and reasserting Waugh’s support of his art, however, we should make several observations. First, whatever seems attractive in the summary of Ambrose’s essay
is not a product of Ambrose’s mind but of Waugh’s. By this, I do not mean to emphasize that “Monument to a Spartan” does not actually exist; instead, I mean to underscore that the narrator of the novel does not cite directly from the piece that Ambrose is said to have composed. If Waugh were really invested in proving that Ambrose is a great artist, in other words, it would have been quite easy for him to offer a passage from the essay within quotation marks. In that event, the passage would still have been Waugh’s own, but the decision to have treated the imaginary work as a primary source would have prohibited our suspicion that the narrator is having as much fun summarizing Ambrose’s purple prose as Waugh himself elsewhere had in summarizing J.B. Priestley’s Blackout in Gretley. Indeed, the very lushness of the summary underscores that Waugh is satirizing the kind of ornate and melodramatic writing that continues to appear even when authors such as Ambrose are attempting to address serious moral and political issues. As if to drive home the fact that his characterization of Ambrose’s essay is satiric, Waugh has his narrator note that Ambrose had “austerely denied himself any hint of satire” in “Monument to a Spartan” (240). In thus taking account of Ambrose’s avoidance of the satirical, Waugh’s narrator implicitly acknowledges that such a denial is not his personal strong suit.

The second consideration to keep in mind is that Ambrose decides to alter the ending of the work he views as “Pure Art” at the behest of the novel’s biggest phony and con, Basil. Interested in rising rapidly at the War Office if only so he can woo Susie, a voluptuous

16 Waugh was not opposed to offering excerpts of his characters’ prose in other novels, which suggests that he intentionally decided to summarize Ambrose’s prose for satiric effect in Put Out More Flags. In Sword of Honour, for instance, Waugh provides passages from Corporal-Major Ludovic’s journal and from his Pensées, as well as a poem Ludovic writes for the occasion of the displaying of the Sword of Stalingrad.

17 In a 1957 essay entitled “Anything Wrong with Priestley?,” Waugh responds to Priestley’s attack on The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold. Remarking that “what gets Mr Priestley’s goat...is [his] attempt to behave like a gentleman,” Waugh goes on to note that “[i]t is instructive to reread [Priestley’s] powerful novel Blackout in Gretley, which was written at a very dark time in the war when national unity was of vital importance” (527, 529). Waugh’s summary of that novel is as follows: “[The book’s] simple theme is that the English upper classes were in conspiracy to keep the workers in subjection even at the cost of national defeat. The villain, Tarlington, is everything deplorable, a man of good family and of smart appearance, a Conservative, the director of an engineering works, a courageous officer in 1914—and, of course, a German spy. Blackout in Gretley is like The Hill in reverse; all morals derive from social origin. The police are a fine body of men but the chief constables are Fascist beasts. Two attractive women in the same fast set are equally suspect; but one turns out to have been a disorderly waitress before her respectable marriage; she has a heart of gold. The other is the niece of Vice-Admiral Sir Johnson Fund-Tapley and, of course, a traitor. Only two workers show moral delinquency; of these one turns out to be a German officer in disguise; the other, and more wicked, is—a Roman Catholic. Even the bad food at the hotel is ascribed to the fact that it is managed by a retired officer” (529).
receptionist, Basil desires to supply information about Fascist activity to his superiors and thus plans to make Ambrose out to be a fifth columnist. To this end, he convinces Ambrose to conclude “Monument to a Spartan” with “Hans still full of his illusions marching into Poland” and then suggests that Himmler appear in the final pages as “a kind of apotheosis of Nazism” (246). The depravity of this plan goes without saying, especially since we know that Basil “had from long association an appreciable softness of disposition towards Ambrose” and “wished him well rather than ill” (249). More shocking than the immorality of Basil’s behavior, however, is that Ambrose follows the advice of a man whom he elsewhere reflects is a “Philistine,” a “crook,” a “monumental bore,” and a “grave embarrassment” (70). Not only less of an individualist than he claims to be and that critics believe he is, then, Ambrose is also an artist so unconfident in the quality of his work that he accepts the advice of a man he disdains.

If Ambrose’s acceptance of Basil’s suggestions causes us to doubt his integrity as an artist and the integrity of his art, this development in the novel’s plot nevertheless allows Waugh to yoke together the targets of his satire. An opponent of the phoniness of Parsnip and Pimpernell’s political poetry, Ambrose manages to be duped by Basil, the representative figure of the Phoney War, and thus produces an essay that is unfaithful to his intentions but a faithful testament to the bullying and propagandizing spirit of the time in which he lives. In fact, in titling his essay as he does, Ambrose actually foretells, though he does not know it, the end to which the essay will be put. As we have seen, Waugh links Ambrose to Angela Lyne not only by granting both characters interior monologues but by having the content of the latter’s monologue reappear without provocation on Ambrose’s lips during his dialogue with his publisher. Yet Ambrose is further tied to Angela by his use of the word “Spartan,” which appears at only one other point in the novel: namely, in the same stream-of-consciousness passage in which Angela observes the French war posters. In that passage, having considered Basil’s act of cannibalism, Angela proceeds to reflect that, “[l]ike the Spartan boy and the fox,” she has been eaten alive for seven years by her lover; yet she also considers that Basil’s enlistment in the military will cause him to
become an “Athenian…[forced to] sit at the public table of Sparta.” The problem with this latter analogy, of course, is that the English military establishment in 1939 in no way resembles the Spartan military of old, and for this reason, Basil will not be compelled to follow its rules or die in its battles but will be able to exploit the modern military system to his own ends. Any monument to a Spartan in 1939 or 1940 is thus also a monument to the fox who destroys the Spartan. And in consequence, Ambrose’s “monument” to Hans is really a monument to Basil and his “Nazi diplomacy,” especially since the version of the essay that appears in print has been rewritten in Basil’s “clear and characteristic fist.”

In his concluding comments on *Put Out More Flags*, Patey remarks that, “[i]n its ambivalences, its incompletely and inconsistently developed themes, [the book] is [Waugh’s] only finished novel that can be said to fail architecturally” (198). What Patey neglects to notice, however, is Waugh’s very complete and consistent development of at least one theme: the inappropriateness of various styles of art for dealing with the modern individual and the modern world at war. Clearly satirizing Auden and Isherwood and the contemporary Leftist art that “[denies] individuality to individuals,” Waugh also uses the strategies of high modernism to undermine that movement’s alignment of individuality with a Bergsonesque interiority (Waugh as qtd. in Patey 179). Moreover, he suggests that the premises underlying the fiction of the Decadent era lead to a disastrous self-indulgence and a disregard of the historical moment. For all these reasons, *Put Out More Flags* should be viewed not only as a record of the Phoney War but also as an indictment of the phony artistic methods used to address the problems of the individual and the nation. Indeed, it is precisely to make this point that Waugh allows Basil to dominate his relationships with representative figures of all three artistic movements satirized in the novel. A former lover of Poppet Green, whom he unsuccessfully offers up to the authorities as a Communist agent, Basil contributes to the short-circuiting of Angela Lyne’s high modernist stream-of-consciousness and turns Ambrose’s “Pure Art” into Nazi propaganda. The novel’s premier phony and bore, Basil thus demonstrates the ease with which Decadent, high modernist,
and Leftist art, already problematic in their own right, can be perverted and co-opted for self-interested purposes.

**Onward, Christian Soldier: Attending to Time in Sword of Honour**

As noted above, those critics who discuss the novels Waugh wrote after *A Handful of Dust* tend to view *Put Out More Flags* as his transitional work. Yet if Waugh uses *Put Out More Flags* to suggest the direction his subsequent fiction will take, the program he outlines therein is a negative one—that is, he satirizes certain literary strategies associated with the Left, high modernism, and Decadence to show that they are no longer viable after the outbreak of World War II. To find a positive statement of Waugh’s post-war artistic goals, then, one must look not to *Put Out More Flags* but rather to “Fan-Fare,” which was published in *Life* in 1946. In that piece, Waugh notes that his future novels will show “a preoccupation with style” and will center on the “attempt to represent man more fully, which…means only one thing, man in his relation to God,” and he hazards that both these qualities will alienate his readership, whom he spends considerable time mocking for their impertinence and ignorance (*EAR* 302). Moreover, he claims that he will “never” produce “another *Brideshead Revisited*” and will no longer use his novels to “com[e] to terms with the world.” Finally, offering the incredible claim that none of his books has been a satire, since satire “flourishes [only] in a stable society and presupposes homogeneous moral standards,” he argues that the “artist’s only service to the disintegrated society of today is to create little independent systems of order of his own” (304).

Perhaps the most detailed self-assessment of his writing ever provided, “Fan-Fare” has led critics both to concentrate on the spiritual dimension of Waugh’s later novels and to accuse the author of social snobbery. Within the essay itself, Waugh meets the charge of snobbery by saying that he is not worried about it. As both the passage addressing snobbery and the remainder of the essay suggest, however, the provocativeness and, at times, snideness of Waugh’s remarks
stem less from misanthropy or class-prejudice than from a very real concern about position of the individual at a precise moment in time. Suggesting and, to some degree, celebrating that his future novels will be “unpopular,” Waugh does not attack specific individuals or classes of individuals but rather calls into question certain contemporary political and economic characterizations of the populace as a whole. In particular, he takes issue with the notion that his century is “the Century of the Common Man,” explaining that the problem with this notion is twofold: on the one hand, “[t]he statesman who damned the age with the name ‘the Century of the Common Man’ neglected to notice the simple, historical fact that it is the artists, not the statesmen, who decide the character of a period”; on the other hand, “[t]he Common Man does not exist. He is an abstraction invented by bores for bores” (302). To treat such an abstraction as if it were real is, according to Waugh, to reduce the individual to a type and to make that type “the property of economists and politicians and advertisers and the other professional bores of our period.” Indeed, it is in light of this distinction between individuals and types that Waugh’s seeming condescension to his American readers should be understood. Urging a certain “Mrs Schultz” to recognize that “[e]ven [she]….is an individual,” Waugh is not attacking the “dear lady[’s]” merits as an individual; quite the contrary, he is pointing toward her willingness to ignore her individuality, to accept her typification, and to overlook her status as the “property” of those same economists, politicians, and advertisers.

The larger economic and political scope of Waugh’s argument in “Fan-Fare” becomes evident in the first paragraph of the essay. Acknowledging the success of Brideshead Revisited in America, he remarks that “[i]n a civilized age this unexpected moment of popularity would have endowed [him] with a competency for life” (300). In the decidedly uncivilized age in which he finds himself, however, “the politicians confiscate [his] earnings and [he is] left with the correspondence.” Going on to explain that, after paying the taxes on his royalties, he cannot afford “the price of a stamp” to answer his readers’ letters, Waugh might initially seem guilty of hyperbole (301). Yet, as Patey explains, Waugh’s concerns were legitimate. After the war, the
“wartime levels of taxation remained in effect: a basic rate on income of nearly fifty per cent, which with the addition of supertax meant a top marginal rate that between 1941 and 1953 never fell below 97.5 per cent” (250). Realizing that it was “simply not worth while earning more than a gross £5000 a year nowadays,” Waugh chose to publish as few novels as possible during the late 1940s and early 1950s and instead to live off the proceeds from Brideshead (Waugh as qtd. in Patey, Patey 258). But the state was not the only guilty party Waugh identified. Instead, he believed that the Mrs. Schultzes of the world, by too easily acquiescing in the state’s economic valuation of themselves, were also inclined to apply that valuation to others. More specifically, the individual who consciously or unconsciously accepted his demotion to a type was inclined to see everyone else, including the artist, as a type that could be bought and sold. Noting the prevalence of this behavior in America, where the values of “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity” supposedly trumped the European virtues of “Liberty, Diversity, and Privacy,” Waugh chastised those of his American readers who “believe[d] [his] friendship and confidence [were] included in the price of [his] book[s]” (EAR 300-1).

If “Fan-Fare” reveals that Waugh was troubled by the economic and political arrangement of the post-war world, his description of his future fiction suggests that these concerns will not make their way onto the printed page. Declaring his wish to concentrate on “style” and “man in his relation to God,” Waugh seems to remove himself from contemporary history and thus from the realm of satire, which he rightly understands as historically dependent. The problem with taking Waugh at his word, however, is that his claims about the nonviability of satire are directly linked to his complaints about “the Century of the Common Man.” Believing that the “Common Man does not exist,” Waugh must also believe that “the Century of the Common Man” does not exist. Thus, when he subsequently argues that satire “has no place in the Century of the Common Man where vice no longer pays lip service to virtue,” he is not suggesting that satire is impossible in 1946; instead, he is implying that those who support the notion of “the Century of the Common Man” are beyond the reach of a satire that “seeks to
produce shame” by “aim[ing] at inconsistency and hypocrisy” (304). Only those who, like Waugh, believe in the integrity of the individual and in the artist’s power to shape his age will be able to recognize satire and to realize that the contemporary moment is more than capable of accommodating it.

Although critics have regularly noted Waugh’s dislike of “the Century of the Common Man” and used “Fan-Fare” to make this point, the subtle connection between the author’s negative evaluation of his era and his claims about satire go unexplored. Willing to identify satire in Waugh’s early novels, these critics too easily believe that Waugh honestly renounces satire in 1946. In consequence, the novels Waugh wrote after Put Out More Flags are usually treated through the lens of his remark that “the determining character” of the “whole human mind and soul” is “that of being God’s creature with a defined purpose” (302). On some level, this critical decision makes sense, since, beginning with Brideshead Revisited but with the exception of The Loved One, Waugh’s later novels do foreground religion in a way that is foreign to his earlier work. Applying the content of “Fan-Fare” retroactively to Brideshead Revisited, for instance, Gorra discusses Waugh’s mid- and post-war fiction as an attempt to give characters “souls.” On Gorra’s account, Waugh, like others in his generation, began “around the start of the Second World War…[to] search for an adequate style” that would allow him “some means of restoring…the credibility and the sensibility of individual experience in an increasingly depersonalized world” (Gorra 17). To achieve this aim, Gorra explains, Waugh used religion “to create a sense of human possibility”: “[The use of religion] makes [Waugh’s] characters aware of the soul’s existence and so redeems their vile bodies, and in doing so gives his fiction a sense of the purpose and value of individual experience that the social conditions of his period, as well as his own style, had destroyed” (183).

The virtue of Gorra’s account is that it differentiates between Waugh’s approach to “individual experience” and the approach of his literary predecessors. As he notes in connection with Brideshead, a work whose first-person narration he emphasizes, “[Selecting Charles Ryder
as his narrator] allows the novelist to present the interior life without requiring him to depend upon either the Victorians’ sense of an accommodation between the soul and the world, or the modernists’ attempt to transcend it” (184). Yet in concentrating on the way in which Waugh’s narrative decisions and attention to style are designed to make the soul most visible, Gorra overlooks the continuing presence of satire in Waugh’s post-war fiction. Indeed, the word “satire” appears only once in Gorra’s account of Waugh’s novels, and in that instance, he remarks, as noted earlier, that The Loved One was the “only one of [the author’s] books sufficiently directed against a specific target…to fit the generic requirements of satire” (189). What these “generic requirements” are is unclear. More important, however, is Gorra’s failure to understand that, for Waugh, to write about the “world” at all was to write about it satirically. Even Brideshead Revisited, the least satirical of Waugh’s novels, manages to veer into that genre when politics, not religion, is under discussion. Rex Mottram, for instance, who becomes the most frequent butt for the other characters’ jokes, receives regular satirical attention, especially in those scenes where his politics are discussed.

If a novel so clearly devoted to the Catholic religion cannot escape without a trace of satire, it is therefore far from surprising that Waugh would have recourse to satire when he began to write the novels that make up the Sword of Honour trilogy, a trilogy that directly addresses the political and military environment of World War II. Indeed, Waugh’s journals and letters from the period of the trilogy’s composition suggest that he understood himself to be creating satire. Writing to Diana Cooper in the spring of 1951, Waugh informed her that he had begun “‘scribbling away hard at [his] maximum opus,’” which he found “‘frightfully funny’” (Waugh as qtd. in Patey 303). Similarly, in a letter to Ann Fleming, he remarked that the first volume in the trilogy was “‘the first comic turn of a long music-hall show…put on to keep the audience quiet as they are taking their seats.’” Humor, however, was not Waugh’s only goal. Reading and drawing inspiration from Ford Madox Ford’s durational satire, Parade’s End, which he deemed “‘very good.’” Waugh also explained in his correspondence that his own project would probably include
“four or five” novels and that it “[wouldn’t] show any shape until the end” (original emphasis). As these remarks suggest, Waugh felt that Sword of Honour had a larger significance than any of his previous works and believed that a great deal of space was required to accommodate his intentions. This last point is especially important to recognize, since in 1944 and 1945, when he was composing Brideshead, he suggested turning that novel into a multi-volume work but was dissuaded from doing so by his literary agent, who informed him “that novels in more than one volume did not sell” (Patey 259). Because it seems unlikely that the public’s fondness for multi-volume works increased between 1944 and 1951, Waugh must have insisted that the integrity of his project took precedence over public demand and the average reader’s attention span.

The cost of ignoring the desires of the public and of refusing to make the “shape” of his work evident before the trilogy’s final volume was, of course, that readers and reviewers were confused or disappointed when each of the individual novels appeared. As Patey points out, Waugh had always had the misfortune of seeing his novels misinterpreted by the literary establishment. As early as the publication of Decline and Fall and Vile Bodies, no two critics seemed able to agree whether the works were comedy, farce, or satire, and with the publication of Black Mischief (1932), Waugh’s satirical purpose was so far misunderstood that he became embroiled in a three-year controversy with Ernest Oldmeadow, the editor of The Tablet, who found the novel “‘a disgrace to anybody professing the Catholic name’” (Patey 58, Oldmeadow as qtd. in Patey 108). When Men at Arms (1952), the first volume in the trilogy, appeared, it fared little better than Waugh’s earlier novels. John Raymond’s remarks in the New Statesmen and Delmore Schwartz’s comments in Parisian Review were perhaps the most brutal. According to Raymond, “Men at Arms [was] good-tempered Waugh and therefore Waugh at his second best,” while Schwartz suggested that this novel and Brideshead, though seemingly championing

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18 In South America when Oldmeadow published his article on Black Mischief in The Tablet, Waugh received support from twelve men, including Wyndham Lewis. Organized by Tom Burns, a friend of Waugh’s, these men sent a letter to The Tablet in which they wrote, “We think [Oldmeadow’s] sentences exceed the bounds of legitimate criticism and are in fact an imputation of bad faith. In writing, we wish only to express our great regret at their being published and our regard for Mr. Waugh” (Letter as qtd. in Patey 108).
Catholicism, could actually be “read…as the fiction of an *agent provocateur* in the pay of a society for the propagation of atheism” (Raymond as qtd. in Patey 308, Schwartz as qtd. in Patey 309). As Schwartz went on to add, “[T]he daring and the gaiety of the books which made Waugh justly famous, have been succeeded by what can only be described as a bored titter.”

Even before these reviews were published, Waugh had begun to have reservations about *Men at Arms*, which he told Graham Greene had “some excellent farce, but only for a few pages. The rest is very dull” (Waugh as qtd. in Patey 305). While it is true that *Men at Arms*, which is also set during the Phoney War, is less uproariously funny than *Put Out More Flags*, the later novel is, in some ways, more successful than the earlier one, since its more muted style reflects Waugh’s extended experience of the war. To put the matter differently: Waugh, despite worrying that the first volume of his trilogy was “dull,” “inelegant,” and “slogging,” actually managed to capture the soldier’s experience of the war’s duration. Indeed, in the same letter to Graham Greene, Waugh followed his remark about the dullness of *Men at Arms* by adding, “Well, the war was like that” (305). Not just “dull,” the war was also without apparent aim to many who fought in it or watched its development from the homefront. As Paul Fussell explains in *Wartime*, the atmosphere surrounding the Second World War was markedly different from that surrounding the Great War. Citing Robert E. Sherwood’s remark “that the Second World War was “the first war in American history [and of course even more so in British history]” in which the general disillusionment preceded the firing of the first shot,” Fussell draws repeated attention to the “ideological vacuum” of the later conflict and contends that “the only wise course for the Second-War conscript [was] to fight without any hope that his labor and suffering [would] result in good” (130, 131). Moreover, because the war “seemed so devoid of ideological content that little could be said about its positive purposes,” authors who saw combat or served the war effort in some other capacity were, on Fussell’s account, compelled to adopt an “Aesthetics of Silence” (136).

Among those fighting there was an unromantic and demoralizing

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19 The brackets in the quotation from Sherwood are Fussell’s.
sense that [the war] had all been gone through before. For all its danger, the Second War often came close to being boring, with a sigh, not a scream, its typical sound. If loquacity was one of the signs of the Great War—think of all those trench poets and memoirists—something close to silence was the byproduct of experience in the Second War. So demoralizing was this repetition of the Great War within a generation that no one felt it appropriate to say much, either to understand the war or explain it. (132-3)

Although Waugh’s composition of a multi-volume work suggests that he was not committed to an “Aesthetics of Silence,” Fussell’s remark about the boredom of the war certainly lines up with Waugh’s earlier comment that the war was dull. As the narrator of Men at Arms notes at both the beginning and the end of the book, Guy Crouchback finds the nature of the war between 1939 and 1940 best encapsulated in the military directive that he and others are “under orders to await orders”: “Chaos prevailed. The order was always to stand by for orders” (25, 262).

Even if Waugh felt “loquacious” enough to write more than 200 pages describing, among other things, the boredom of the war, both he and his protagonist also struggle against the “ideological vacuum” in which they find themselves. Or perhaps “blender,” not “vacuum,” is the right word. Agreeing with Fussell that “[n]o writer of any political sensitivity could mistake how ideologically incoherent the war was from beginning to end,” MacKay nevertheless emphasizes the “consensus politics of the Second World War” and stresses that “all major British writers of the mid-century made the guilty compromise, knowing it to be exactly that, of supporting the Second World War” (12, 10). Mark Rawlinson makes a similar point in British Writing of the Second World War. Contending that the “idea of war’s political instrumentality requires that somehow the destruction of persons…be articulated with conceptions of the future internal and external relations of states,” Rawlinson suggests that “[w]artime literature is both critical of the content and vehicles [used to legitimate violence], and fully implicated in the reproduction and invention of alternative justifications of [that] violence” (2, 3). This was especially the case, he argues, with regard to the debate about individualism and collectivity that dominated wartime discourse. In 1940, for instance, the poet Stephen Spender “[took] up arms, imaginatively, not in
response to Nazi ideology, brutality, or territorial ambition, but in recalling that...‘there was
something which you fought for blindly—the possibility of being alone’” (33). Drawing attention
to the way in which this comment “publicize[d] [writers’] fear that the survival of private life
demanded its surrender,” Rawlinson goes on to explain how Spender, among others, was able to
reconcile his wish for his own privacy with his longstanding support of Communism: “The
collective and individual, categories frequently invoked and contested in wartime culture, were
not exclusively the rallying cries of the left and the right respectively. Their opposition is never
solely an index of national social organization: these categories are fundamental to the translation
of values in discourse about the war” (32-3, 35-6). Indeed, it is precisely because these
“categories” became unmoored from their traditional political positions during the war years that
the British government was able to declare that the nation’s citizens were “‘individualists’
intolerant of totalitarian controls” even as the state increased its control over individuals to an
unprecedented degree (35).

As noted above, Waugh’s concern about the fate of the individual directly influenced his
decisions about the future direction of his work. The difficulty he faced was navigating a path
between the “extreme subjectivity” he had parodied in Put Out More Flags and the flatness of
color that had driven novels like Vile Bodies and Black Mischief. Although Brideshead
Revisited might seem to have provided an acceptable precedent for his future exploration of the
individual, Waugh’s remark in “Fan-Fare” that he would not produce “another Brideshead
Revisited” suggests that as early as 1946 he found that precedent problematic. In fact, by 1950,
two years before the publication of Men at Arms, he was writing to Graham Greene that he had
“reread Brideshead and was appalled” (Waugh as qtd. in Patey 243). If Brideshead thus offered
an example of what not to do, how could Waugh adequately represent the complexity and
integrity of the individual? And how, in Gorra’s words, could he correct the earlier novel’s
“flawed vision of the Church” while still “persuad[ing] a reader that his characters have souls”
(190, 183)?
One answer to these questions is that Waugh himself did not know the answers until the trilogy was completed or near completion. That this was the case becomes evident when we consider the revisions he made to the work when it was published in one-volume form. In the preface that accompanied that edition, Waugh noted that he had intended to eliminate “[r]epetitions and discrepancies” and to “remov[e] passages which, on rereading, appeared tedious” (*SofH* 9). What he mostly removed, however, were large sections from *Men at Arms*, which, in retrospect, he seems to have believed made his protagonist look like “an ineffectual day-dreamer” who was “ridiculously out-of-touch” (*Cliffe*). For instance, the charming passages in which Guy imagines his war experience through the lens of his boyhood fictional hero, Truslove, are cut, as is the hilarious scene in which Guy and his fellow officers are forced to play “Housey-Housey,” a Bingo-like game, by the otherwise bloodthirsty Brigadier Ben Ritchie-Hook. Given the spiritual understanding Guy gains by the end of the trilogy, about which I will say more later, Waugh apparently sensed that these scenes made Guy’s transformation less plausible and trivialized him as an individual.

Although it is certainly a matter of opinion whether the original edition of *Men at Arms* or the version that makes its way into *Sword of Honour* is superior, the merit of the scenes deleted from the former work is that they reflect Guy’s attempt to understand the place of the individual in the opening stages of the war in much the same way that Waugh was attempting, at the time of the novel’s drafting, to come to terms with the role of the individual in the post-war world. Before the war starts, Guy, who is living in Italy, clearly feels himself a sort of husk of a man: “[N]ot loved…either by his household or in the town” and sensing that “there [is] no sympathy between him and his fellow men,” he has for the past eight years been “suffer[ing] [the consequences of] a tiny stroke of paralysis; all his spiritual faculties were just perceptibly impaired” (11, 14, 10). Upon hearing news of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, however, he begins to feel that his “[e]ight years of shame and loneliness [have] ended” and that “now, splendidly, everything ha[s] become clear”: “The enemy at last was plain in view, huge and hateful, all
disguise cast off. It was the Modern Age in arms. Whatever the outcome there was a place for him in the battle” (7-8).

Already ironized in the introduction to Men at Arms, Guy’s response to the outbreak of the war, which depends on his many illusions about honor and justice, becomes all the more troublesome in the remainder of the novel, as he repeatedly discovers that no one else perceives the enemy as clearly or plainly as he does. Following the early stages of his gradual disillusionment with military life, Men at Arms thus depends for its success on underscoring the extent of Guy’s illusions in 1939 and 1940. And this, in fact, is what the scenes Waugh later deleted do. Envisioning himself as the modern incarnation of Captain Truslove, who bravely fought the Pathans, and imagining that the eventual formation of his brigade will resemble a Hollywood film about Bonnie Prince Charlie and “the Rising of ’45,” Guy is regularly let down by his fantasies and expectations (227, 218). Indeed, his confidence that the enemy has cast off all its disguises is set in contrast to his own failed attempt to disguise himself. When, for instance, he grows an imposing mustache and acquires a monocle after having remembered “countless German Uhlans in countless American films,” he is found so “comic” by his ex-wife that he removes both the mustache and the monocle only to rediscover in the mirror “an old acquaintance he could never cut, to whom he could never hope to give the slip for long, the un congenial fellow traveller who would accompany him through life” (140, 167).

In his essay on Sword of Honour, Lewis MacCleod attempts to show how “Waugh imagines marginality in ways that are, perhaps per versely, consistent with the notions of marginality espoused by some early postcolonial speakers and writers” (64). Arguing that the trilogy “seems to be a fight over the cultural control of England more than a military fight to defend or control Europe” and suggesting that Guy, like Chinua Achebe’s Okonkwo, “feel[s] the collapse of any sense of belonging in a very sincere and painful way,” MacCleod demonstrates that “[t]he question [of Sword of Honour] is not usually whether Britain will surrender to Germany, but whether Guy will ultimately surrender to the vision of Britain the official view
posits, whether he will be culturally re-constructed to fit emerging social norms” (67, 68, 69).

Whether we agree with MacCleod’s conclusion that Guy ultimately manages to achieve a “modest kind of cultural reclamation,” his remark that the protagonist “is a kind of endangered species, a biological as well as a cultural cul-de-sac,” certainly illustrates a primary theme of the work (73, 74). What should be added to MacCleod’s account, however, is that Waugh in many ways suggests that Guy deserves to be endangered. By this, I mean that the satire of the trilogy is as much dependent on emphasizing Guy’s spiritual and emotional limitations as it is on depicting the ongoing battle over the “cultural control” of England. Indeed, before Guy can become a desirable victor in that battle—and it is debatable that he ever does—he must first be shriven literally and metaphorically, must recognize and repent both his sins and illusions.

Such a process of course takes time, and if the long duration of World War II did not itself necessitate treatment in a multi-volume work, the plausibility of Guy’s transformation certainly demanded a considerable number of pages. By having the events of his trilogy occur during a twelve-year period (1939-1951), Waugh thus wished to underscore that changes like Guy’s can happen only over an extended period of time. More than this, he was intent on emphasizing that Guy’s transformation happens in relation to and depends on a time that is itself continually changing. With such a double goal in mind, satire was once more the logical generic choice for Waugh, since, in its historical specificity, it allowed him to trace Guy’s spiritual development against the backdrop of and in response to precise events in the long history of World War II. That is: By integrating significant dates in the war’s unfolding throughout the trilogy, Waugh manages simultaneously to criticize the English prosecution of the war and to satirize Guy’s outlook on and role in that conflict at particular moments in time. Indeed, as if taking a cue from Robert Graves, Waugh regularly describes his protagonist’s experience only to reinforce the ridiculousness of it by shifting the lens of his narration to catastrophic events happening simultaneously in other parts of the world. Just as Graves follows certain humorous anecdotes about childhood friends by revealing that those friends were killed during World War I,
Waugh repeatedly follows amusing scenes of military hijinks by noting disastrous developments in the course of the World War II. For instance, after several pages in which Guy’s “very rum” friend and sometime hero, Apthorpe, has unsuccessfully been trying to force all junior officers to salute him, Guy is summoned to the office of Colonel Tickeridge, who begs him to tell the other officers to stop teasing Apthorpe about his behavior, even if that behavior is inappropriate and even if Apthorpe is not “quite right in the head” (232, 246). Yet just after the conclusion of this conversation, Waugh underscores the ludicrousness of it with the following sentence, which concludes the chapter: “This [conversation] happened, though the news did not reach Penkirk for some time, on the day when the Germans crossed the Meuse” (247).

The brilliance of this last line is twofold: on the one hand, the passage highlights the slowness of British military intelligence in arriving to the troops; on the other hand, it shows up the unpreparedness of those troops and their officers, who are devoted to protecting one under-officer’s feelings at the exact moment the Germans are invading Belgium. A similar effect happens earlier in the novel, as well, but in that case, Guy becomes as much a target of the narrator’s bleak humor as his superior officers. In that scene, which occurs “[s]hortly before Christmas” in 1939, Guy invites his nephew, who has just returned from France, to a “guest night” at his regiment’s headquarters, where all is run in accordance with the motto, “Any damn fool can make himself uncomfortable” (52). Although we learn that Tony, the nephew, relays stories “of field-craft, night patrols, and booby traps, of the extreme youth and enthusiasm of the handful of enemy prisoners whom he had seen [in France], of the admirable style and precision of their raiding tactics,” Guy is less concerned with what his nephew’s stories suggest about the Germans than he is with the odd appearance of Apthorpe’s chosen guest and with the rituals of the Halberdiers’ guest night celebrations. To make this point clear, the narrator juxtaposes the goings-on of the banquet with a harrowing account of what is happening simultaneously in Poland:

At length when the cloth was drawn for dessert, the brass departed
and the strings came down from the minstrels’ gallery and stationed themselves in the window embrasure. Now there was silence over all the diners while the musicians softly bowed and plucked. It all seemed a long way from Tony’s excursions in no-man’s-land; farther still, immeasurably far, from the frontier of Christendom where the great battle had been fought and lost; from those secret forests where the trains were, even then, while the Halberdiers and their guests sat bemused by wine and harmony, rolling east and west with their doomed loads. (98)

The use of “no-man’s-land” and “Christendom” in this passage might at first suggest Waugh is using free indirect discourse, since throughout the trilogy, Guy reflects on his own experience in the language of World War I and the Crusades. This reading is troubled, however, by the portion of the sentence that follows the final semi-colon. For, as we soon learn, Guy himself is so “bemused by wine and harmony” that he considers the “whole evening…one of simple sublime delight” and thereafter participates in a drunken “game of football with a waste-paper basket” (99, 100). Moreover, the line about “the trains…rolling east and west with their doomed loads” acts as a motif throughout the volume, a motif that is always used to show up multiple characters’ lack of concern for events happening in other parts of the world. On Valentine’s Day 1940, for instance, the narrator reveals that while Guy is obsessing about an upcoming meeting with his ex-wife, whom he wishes to seduce, and while the British public is reflecting on “the indignities and discomforts of the prisoners” on the Altmark, “trains of locked vans [were] still rolling East and West from Poland and the Baltic, [and] were to roll on year after year bearing their innocent loads to ghastly unknown destinations” (169). To this state of affairs, and despite his early celebration of an enemy “at last…plain in view, huge and hateful,” Guy is said to be “oblivious."

If Waugh uses his narrator’s remarks to undercut the moral position of his protagonist, who, as we know, entered the war for supposedly moral reasons, he does so not by way of secular

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20 Because the deportation of the Jews did not begin until years after 1939, the “doomed loads” Waugh mentions here are most likely Poles, Ukrainians, and Belarusians who were relocated after the Germans and Soviets divided Poland between themselves in 1939. By the time he wrote Men at Arms, Waugh would, of course, have known about the concentration camps for Jews, so there is a possibility, especially later in the novel, that he is speeding up his history by a year or two.
dates alone. As Coleman O’Hare notes, Waugh “systematically counterpoint[s] the attitudes and actions of his characters with images taken from Catholic custom, ritual, and liturgy” (302). In particular, O’Hare argues that Waugh employs liturgical references to “illustrate the growth of the hero’s awareness”: “Beginning with an allusion to Ash Wednesday, the day of penance at the beginning of Lent, [Men at Arms] moves to Holy Week and to Good Friday. In all three instances the words and actions of the liturgy contract [sic] Guy’s false ideals and the reality of war, its triviality and deceit” (308). What should perhaps be added to O’Hare’s account of the novel’s liturgical allusions is that they increase in frequency as the trilogy progresses. Not only do the “liturgical references…move from darkness to light” and thereby mimic Guy’s spiritual awakening; they also appear more often as Guy recognizes his illusions as illusions and acknowledges the ideological blurriness of England’s war effort. Thus, in Men at Arms, where Guy is still under the “spell” of Apthorpe and Ben Ritchie-Hook, the allusions to the liturgical calendar are sparing, but when he returns to England at the beginning of Officers and Gentlemen after having surrendered many of his illusions, the novel immediately offers a liturgical parallel (MA 183).

By invoking the liturgical calendar in addition to the secular one, Waugh draws attention to the importance of historical and religious dates in marking Guy’s progress toward spiritual redemption. The dates he supplies, however, provide a means not only of sign-posting Guy’s growth but also of measuring the time it takes for such growth to occur. The duration of Guy’s military and spiritual pilgrimage is thus as important as that pilgrimage’s origins and end, an observation that finds support when we remember that Guy himself initially conceived of his war experience in terms of its length. Asked by a Fascist cab driver in the Prologue to Men at Arms how long he plans to be out of Italy, Guy responds, “For the duration of the war,” and once he speaks these words, the unknowable length of the war becomes a refrain throughout the

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21 On the second page of Officers and Gentlemen, for instance, Guy sees the aftermath of an air raid in London and is “momentarily reminded” first of Holy Saturday and then of Pentecost (4).
remainder of the trilogy (13). Indeed, in the world of the novels, where no two characters seem to share an opinion about the origins, direction, or aftermath of the war, everyone does manage to agree that the war will be long. More than just emphasizing the war’s length by way of his characters, Waugh also takes pains as early as the first volume of the trilogy to show how the experience of war causes those who serve in it to have a distorted perception of temporal duration. In one of the final scenes of *Men at Arms*, for instance, as the dying Apthorpe talks for the last time with Guy, he offers a confession which begins with the following question: “Do you remember years ago, when we first joined, I mentioned my aunt?” (330, emphasis added).

Making this inquiry in the second week of October 1940, just about a year after he and Guy have joined the Halberdiers, Apthorpe perceives his time of military service to be considerably longer than it has been. Although Apthorpe’s near-death state and his consumption of a sip or two of whisky before asking this question might lead us to believe the experience of war is not responsible for his temporal confusion, his disorientation with regard to time’s passage is eventually shared by other characters, including Guy, as the trilogy progresses.

That Waugh himself saw duration as a crucial component of wartime experience is supported by his plans for a literary magazine during the war years. Failing to have obtained a commission in the months immediately following the outbreak of the war, he devoted his attention to *Work Suspended*. When he was called up some months later, however, he informed his literary agent that he would “not resume [his] novel for the duration” and asked whether “there [was] a chance of selling the two [existing] chapters…to a high-brow paper” (Waugh as qtd. in Hastings 387). As Selina Hastings explains, Waugh would ideally have liked *Work*...

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22 In *Men at Arms*, Colonel Tickeridge, Tommy Blackhouse, and Gervase Crouchback discuss the length of the war on pages 44, 105, 281, respectively.

23 The date of Apthorpe and Guy's enlistment in the Halberdiers can be ascertained on pages 51 and 52 of *Men at Arms*. On those pages, the narrator first remarks that it is "early November [of 1939]" and then explains that, "[i]n their month in the regiment," Guy and Apthorpe have not "once been out to a meal." Subsequently, when Guy is off the coast of Senegal, we learn that the *Barham* has been "holed," an event which took place on September 24, 1940 (306). Thus, when the narrator remarks that Guy and his regiment are in West Africa "[t]hree weeks later," we can conclude that it is the second week of October 1940 (323). Shortly thereafter, we also learn that mail arrives in that third week and that Apthorpe returns from the bush "a day or two before the mail arrived" (324, 326). Taken together, these temporal cues suggest that Apthorpe dies in the second week of October 1940.
Suspended to have been published in a “high-brow paper” of his own: “Evelyn himself had had an idea of starting a monthly literary magazine, to be called Duration, with Osbert Sitwell and David Cecil as co-editors, but his plans had been pre-empted by Horizon, launched by Peter Watson and Cyril Connolly in December 1939” (Hastings 387). By 1941, the first chapter of Work Suspended had been published in Horizon, but Waugh’s sense that he had been beaten to the “high-brow” punch seems to have contributed to his decision to satirize Connolly and Horizon first in Put Out More Flags and later in the Sword of Honour trilogy. In the later work, Waugh not only mocks Survival, a Horizon-like publication that, according to one fictional member of the House of Commons, is “pessimistic in tone, and unconnected in subject with the war effort”; he also splits his satirical treatment of Connolly between two characters: the editor of Survival, Everard Spruce, “a man who cherished no ambitions for the future, believing, despite the title of his monthly review, that the human race was destined to dissolve into chaos,” and the would-be novelist, Ludovic, who, aside from being the villain of the trilogy, is also the author of a book of Pensées very reminiscent of Connolly’s The Unquiet Grave (1944) (EofB 40).

Long accustomed to being satirized in Waugh’s novels, Connolly seems to have taken in stride his characterization in Sword of Honour. More important than Waugh’s attack and Connolly’s response, however, is the way in which Waugh used his trilogy to combine his penchant for satire and the thought behind his proposed magazine’s title. Foregrounding the duration of his characters’ war experience in a multi-volume work that covers the duration of the war, Waugh becomes a durational satirist in the vein of Ford, whose works he was reading during the composition of Sword of Honour, and of Lewis, whose satirical aesthetic he had praised as early as 1930. Although he would certainly not have applied the label “durational satire” to his trilogy, the fact that he referred to the project as “Operation Lifetime” suggests that he saw the work as a culmination and synthesis of his personal experience as a satirist, a Catholic, and a soldier (Waugh as qtd. in Patey 318).
Even before Waugh began writing *Sword of Honour*, he had underscored his sense of the importance of duration through his literary style. In the concluding chapter of *Confused Roaring*, McCartney juxtaposes two passages describing rooms, one of which comes from Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves* and the other of which comes from *Brideshead Revisited*. Drawing attention to the fact that “the language [in the passage from *The Waves*] enforces the sense of a world without duration at all” and shows Woolf trying to capture “what Bergson meant by *durée*”—that is, “the unreflective experience in which one feels oneself indisputably engaged with the very life of things and overcomes the alienation that exists intellectually between perceiver and perceived”—McCartney turns to the passage from *Brideshead* to argue that Waugh approves of an “art which endures beyond the individual even as it shapes his life with the historical perspective it uniquely affords” (170, 171, 173-4):

In contrast to Woolf’s timeless room, Waugh’s is thoroughly historical. He places each part, each object according to its style and period: the Soanesque library, the Chinese drawing room, the Chippendale fret-work, the Pompeian parlor. We are meant to see this suite of rooms through the categories of the historical imagination. However charming its immediate dazzle, it is, as Charles Ryder says of architecture elsewhere in the novel, more important in its duration beyond the moment of his perception. Its significance is in its continuity…This is no occasion for metaphysical transcendence of the interval that separates the perceiver from the perceived. Instead the beholder is led to meditate on the tradition the building represents….On these terms, architecture is an ‘aesthetic education’ in the original sense of the word: it leads one out of the darkness of self-absorption and subjectivity into the awareness of the external world one shares with others, a world which requires a clear understanding of the division between subject and object. (171, original emphasis)

Though limiting his remarks to *Brideshead*, McCartney here makes a distinction that equally applies to the second volume in Waugh’s post-war trilogy, *Officers and Gentlemen*

24 The relevant passage from *The Waves* is as follows: “The sun fell in sharp wedges inside the room. Whatever the light touched it became dowered with a fanatical existence. A plate was like a white lake. A knife looked like a dagger of ice. Suddenly tumblers revealed themselves upheld by streaks of light. Tables and chairs rose to the surface as if they had been sunk under water and rose, filmed with red, orange, purple like the bloom on the skin of ripe fruit. The veins of the glaze of the china, the grain of the wood, the fibres of the matting became more and more finely engraved. Everything was without shadow. A jar was so green that the eye seemed sucked up through a funnel by its intensity and stuck to it like a limpet” (Woolf as qtd. in McCartney 170).
a book that foregrounds the author’s concern with showing the nature and consequences of the war’s duration in real time. In that volume, the issue of the war’s duration first arises when Tommy Blackhouse, the former paramour of Guy’s ex-wife and his future commander, declares, “It’s going to be a long war…One may need all the friends one can get before it’s over” (9). Tommy makes this remark at the beginning of the third week of October 1940, but his speculation is not confined to that date, since in his first appearance in Men at Arms, which occurs on December 31, 1939, he makes a similar statement: “Well, it’ll be a long war. There’ll be fun for us all in the end” (105). What is remarkable about both comments is that Tommy manages accurately to prophesy the war’s length but fails to foresee the effects of that duration upon the average soldier. While Guy does manage to have some “fun” in Men at Arms and joins Tommy’s Commando with high hopes at the beginning of Officers and Gentlemen, the remainder of the trilogy shows him experiencing nothing amusing and losing friends rather than gaining them. Indeed, Officers and Gentlemen shows Guy losing friends and making enemies precisely because of the seemingly endless duration of one military debacle: the 1941 British evacuation of Crete.

As critics have often noted, the fictionalized version of the Crete evacuation in Officers and Gentlemen very closely resembles Waugh’s personal experiences on the island. Attached to one of several Commandos under the command of Robert Laycock, Waugh arrived on Crete just before midnight on May 26, 1941, only to discover, in Selina Hastings’s words, “nothing less than a vision of hell” (424). The only remaining British-held territory between the Germans and Egypt, Crete was under the control of General Bernard Freyberg, who, prior to the arrival of

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25 At the beginning of Officers and Gentlemen, we learn that Guy has just arrived back in England from West Africa. Since we know that he leaves Africa by plane the day after Aphthorpe's death and since he seems to talk to Tommy almost as soon as he returns to England, Tommy must make this remark about the war's length toward the beginning of the third week in October 1940. Later, we learn that Guy places an ad in the Times on November 2, 1940, a date that occurs seventeen days after his conversation with Tommy ("It was the sixteenth day since he had left barracks…") (46). As for the date of Tommy's first appearance, the narrator remarks just before Tommy and Guy's conversation that it is "the last day of the old year" (103).

26 To be clear, Tommy does not use the word “fun” in a sarcastic sense; an experienced soldier, he quite honestly believes that the war will provide opportunities for amusement.
Laycock’s troops, which were known as Layforce, had misread Ultra signals and therefore believed that the Germans would invade primarily by sea, not, as they did, by air. Before embarking for the island, Laycock had been informed that his Commandos’ role would be to “[put] out of action enemy-held ports and aerodromes” and to “suppor[t] the garrison at the crucial Maleme aerodrome,” but by the time Layforce arrived in Crete, “there was no question of providing either support or resistance: the Allied forces were in turmoil, the Commandos finding themselves in the midst of what their brigade major, F.C.C. Graham, accurately described as ‘a nightmare of unreality and unexpectedness’” (Hastings 424).

Over the next five days, the situation on Crete only worsened. Informed by the island’s second-in-command, General Weston, that, with the Allied forces hopefully moving toward a safe evacuation point, they were “to form a rearguard covering the withdrawal to Sphakia on the south coast,” Laycock and Graham moved northward to set up headquarters at Babali Hani, while Waugh and several other men were left behind with a Colonel Colvin (425). Colvin, who had deserted his battalion and was desperate to move south despite orders, soon annoyed Waugh to such an extent that Waugh sought out Laycock and returned with him to see Colvin removed from his command. Shortly thereafter, Waugh also accompanied Laycock to General Weston’s headquarters, where they were informed that Layforce was to be the last unit to embark during the evacuation, since it had been the last to land on Crete. As the war diary for Layforce indicates, Laycock subsequently ordered his men to carry out the rearguard action and, once it had been completed, to move toward Sphakia. Yet when the men did begin to arrive in Sphakia, they discovered another scene of turmoil, as soldiers struggled to board the too few boats at anchor. Faced with the chaos near the shore and realizing that they might soon be taken as prisoners of war, “Laycock, Graham and Waugh tried to find the embarkation officer to ask for authorisation to withdraw, but he, it appeared, had already gone” (428). In consequence, Laycock himself took charge. As Waugh later recorded in his personal diary, “Bob then took the responsibility of ordering Layforce to fight their way through the rabble and embark…which we did in a small
motor boat. We reached the destroyer Nizam about midnight and sailed as soon as we came aboard...We did not see any of the ship’s officers and arrived at Alexandria at 5 in the afternoon, June 1st, after an uneventful voyage” (Waugh as qtd. in Hastings 428). Less “uneventful” were the fates of the more than 5000 soldiers who were left on Crete to be apprehended by the Germans.

In the aftermath of the Crete evacuation, Waugh, though remaining calm in describing Layforce’s experience for the official war diary, was vocal about his distaste for what had gone on. As Hastings explains, “Evelyn continued to admire Laycock’s courage and qualities of leadership, but after Crete things were never the same between them” (429). In a letter to his wife, Waugh referred to the evacuation as “[his] tale of shame,” and once in Alexandria, he told Randolph Churchill and General de Winton that “everyone on Crete had behaved in the most cowardly and shameful fashion” (Waugh as qtd. in Hastings 429; Hastings 430). The most vehement response about the evacuation, however, was saved for Ann Fleming, who, upon the 1955 publication of Officers and Gentlemen, which was dedicated to Laycock, sent Waugh the following telegram: “‘Presume Ivor Claire based Laycock dedication ironical’ (Fleming as qtd. in Hastings 430). To this rather innocent query, Waugh replied,

    Your telegram horrifies me. Of course there is no possible connection between Bob and Claire. If you suggest such a thing anywhere it will be the end of our beautiful friendship...For Christ’s sake lay off the idea of Bob=Claire...Just shut up about Laycock, Fuck You, E Waugh. (Waugh as qtd. in Hastings 430-1)

Although Fleming responded to this aggressive message in a composed fashion (“Panic is foreign to your nature and you rarely use rough words...Why do you become hysterical if one attempts to identify your Officers and Gentlemen?”), Waugh recorded his anxiety about her

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27 In his essay on the Crete episode in Officers and Gentlemen, Donat Gallagher points to two inconsistencies in Waugh's statement about his departure from the island: "What can one say to [Waugh's diary passage]? That Nizam was not at Sphakia on the night of May 31st, that Waugh left on HMS Kimberley, and that Kimberley sailed at 3:00am. Because the ship definitely sailed at 3:00am, the two statements—(a) 'we reached...Nizam at about midnight' and (b) the ship 'sailed as soon as we came aboard'—cannot both be true" (174).
analogy in his journal: “I replied [to Ann’s telegram] that if she breathes a suspicion of this cruel fact it will be the end of our friendship” (Fleming and Waugh as qtd. in Hastings 431, emphasis added).

Whether or not Waugh intended a parallel between Laycock and Ivor Claire, who violates orders by boarding one of the last boats to leave Crete, he does make it clear throughout the evacuation chapters of Officers and Gentlemen that the experience was disorienting and much different from the account that made its way into official publications. This he does by describing the debacle and the temporal confusion that ensued from the perspectives of both Guy and Major Hound, the fictional version of Colonel Colvin. As Guy, Major Hound, and the remainder of one Commando leave the ship on which they have arrived, for instance, the narrator remarks that “[t]his event, so large to Guy and Major Hound and the rest of them, would be recorded later in the official history: ‘A further encouragement was given to the hard-pressed garrison of Crete when at midnight on 26th May HMS Plangent (Lt.-Cmdr. Blake-Blakiston) landed HQ Hookforce plus remainder of B Commando at Suda and took off 400 wounded without incident’” (277, original emphasis). The last two words of this war diary entry already expose the discrepancy between actual events and retrospective military accounts, since even before Guy’s unit leaves the main ship, Tommy Blackhouse, the leader of Hookforce, falls and breaks his leg, which means that Guy’s Commando unit arrives on Crete without its leader. Moreover, soldiers and sailors keep arriving on the ship from the island with news that Crete is “a bloody shambles” (224). Indeed, just before Guy and the others board the lighter that will take them to shore, “a huge, bloody, grimy, ghastly Australian sergeant” appears in the sick bay, where, “grinn[ing] like a figure of death,” he says, “‘Thank God we’ve got a navy,’” then “[sinks] slowly to the deck” and “pass[es] into the coma of death” (224, 226).

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28 Donat Gallagher has recently offered a detailed account of Layforce’s role in the Crete evacuation. In Appendix B, I discuss his account, which problematically defends Laycock’s actions.
The irony of the Australian’s dying remark is threefold. First, “Thank God we’ve got a navy” was a standard line used in the days leading up to the outbreak of World War I, a war in which the Navy played a comparatively minor role. Second, the evacuation of Crete became necessary only after General Freyberg had misread Ultra signals and mistakenly assumed that, invading by sea, the Germans could be repulsed by the British Navy and by land-bound troops on the northern shore of the island. Finally, despite the Navy’s heroic attempts both to block the arrival of several German contingents by sea and to evacuate as many British troops as possible, the cost of their activity was extreme. Noting that by June 2, 1941, the cruisers Gloucester, Fiji, Juno, and Calcutta, as well as the destroyers Kashmir, Kelly, Imperial, and Greyhound, had been sunk by the Luftwaffe, 29 John Keegan explains that “the Battle of Crete, though less shocking in its effect on British morale than the future loss of the Prince of Wales and Repulse...was reckoned the costliest of any British naval engagement of the Second World War” (Keegan 170).

Given the events that transpire aboard their ship, it is little surprise that Guy’s unit faces an increasingly problematic situation once its members set foot on Crete. Indeed, as if to show that the passage of chaotic time is no longer measurable in large units, Waugh stops providing the dates of Guy and Major Hound’s days on the island and instead provides the hours. Mapped out schematically, the events of the Crete campaign can be seen in Table 1 in Appendix C. What should be noted about Waugh’s depiction of events, however, is not just that he provides a detailed timeline of the Crete debacle but that he layers different combatants’ perspectives of the debacle’s duration on top of one another. During the first full day they are on the island, for instance, Guy’s unit remains relatively cohesive, with only one or two desertions by enlisted men or NCOs, and by keeping Guy and Major Hound together in this fashion, Waugh is able to record their simultaneous responses to the evacuation. Initially, Guy seems to be wearing worse than Major Hound, who refuses to let the disruption around him interfere with his commitment to

29 Aside from the ships that were sunk, many more were seriously damaged. These included the battleships Warspite and Valiant, the aircraft carrier Formidable, the cruisers Perth, Orion, Ajax, and Naiad, and the destroyers Kelvin, Napier, and Hereward (Keegan 170).
carrying out orders. In fact, it is Major Hound who first expresses concern that Corporal-Major Ludovic “strike[s] [him] as queer” and who remarks how “awkward” it will be if Ludovic “cracks up” (237). Moreover, it is Major Hound who reassures Guy that an evacuee “incongruously clothed in service-dress, Sam Browne, and the badges of a Lieutenant-Colonel” is not a German spy but “merely a private soldier who had stolen officer’s uniform the better to effect his escape” (233-4, 235).

Within the first twelve hours on the island, however, the characters’ roles begin to reverse. First, Major Hound, who has asked Guy to call him “Fido,” becomes so hungry that he barters four cigarettes for an unknown sergeant’s ration of bully beef and, in the process, loses his “soul”: “Behind [Fido] lay a life of blameless professional progress; before him the proverbial alternatives: the steep path of duty and the heady precipice of sensual appetite. It was the great temptation of Fido’s life. He fell” (239-40). Second, Major Hound, who presumably did not hear Guy’s conversation with the “incongruously clothed” evacuee, begins to repeat portions of that conversation to others. In speaking to the evacuee several hours earlier, Guy had been disturbed not only by the man’s appearance but also by his “preposterous accent, the grossly exaggerated parody of the hot-potato, haw-haw voice; something overheard from Christmas charades” (223). Thus, when the evacuee had declared, “It’s sauve qui peut now, as the French say,” Guy had suspected that his interlocutor was a German spy who had been trained to mimic the stereotypical Englishman and who had been ordered to increase disorder among the Allied troops (233, 234). The likelihood of such a ploy succeeding would seem minimal, and even if the evacuee were a German paratrooper in disguise, the state of affairs on the island would probably have prohibited Guy and Major Hound from doing more than asking the man about his military affiliation. Yet our initial belief that Major Hound acted reasonably in leaving the evacuee alone becomes troubled when, less than twelve hours later, we see the major repeating the evacuee’s words. Informing a confused Colonel Tickeridge that “[t]hey say it’s sauve qui peut now,” Major Hound
seems to have succumbed to just that mood of chaos that Guy earlier worried the Germans, in the person of the evacuee-spy, were spreading (243).

For his part, Colonel Tickeridge claims ignorance of the French phrase, an ignorance that perfectly illustrates his and the Halberdiers’ commitment to order, discipline, and self-sacrifice. That Major Hound so quickly adopts the expression, however, indicates that his “fall” will have extensive consequences. Indeed, by the end of the day on which he has repeated the evacuee’s words, Major Hound is so concerned about saving his own skin that, despite receiving orders that Hookforce HQ should join in the rear-guard action, he forces that section of the Commando unit to move south, not north. In countermanding the orders of his superiors, Major Hound obviously wishes to get nearer the evacuation point in space, but Waugh is also careful to suggest that a concern with time is factoring into his decisions. On the island for less than a day, Major Hound has already learned, in Colonel Tickeridge’s words, that “[t]he Germans work a strict time-table,” and his anxiety just before ordering his men on their southward march is that the time is getting too advanced (243). Waiting for Ludovic and several others to return with a lorry, Major Hound asks Guy what time it is and, upon hearing that it is 9:30pm, remarks, “Only that. I thought it was much later” (256). Less than an hour afterwards, he once more asks Guy for the time and explains that he “must have forgotten” to wind his watch after his previous question (256). Finally, “just on midnight,” Major Hound hears “rifle fire some distance away and a motor-cycle stop” and tells his men that, with or without Ludovic and the others, they “must get as far as [they] can before daybreak,” since shortly thereafter the Germans will resume their bombing (256, 257). In the pages that follow, the remnants of Hookforce HQ are thus forced to march at a “pace…slower than a route march, [but] faster than anything else on the road that night,” and are only allowed to stop at 4:00am, when Guy declares that he and his section will march no farther (257).

The heightened attention to time that Major Hound shows, as well as his inability to measure accurately how much time has passed, becomes a central theme over the remainder of
the Crete episode. Eventually deserting the rest of Hookforce HQ, Major Hound sleeps only during the day for fear of the German bombers, and at night, despite “all his agitation,” he
“move[s] laboriously and crazily like a man photographed in ‘slow motion’” (262). Indeed, once he abandons the others, his only temporal and spatial coordinates seem to be those provided by
the “two deep needs [that] gnawed at him—food and orders” (262). In search of “orders,” he is
“led by instinct, nosing out his master,” toward Creforce HQ near Sphakia, but once arriving there, he realizes that he has “nothing to report, nothing to ask, no reason to be there at all” (267).
Moreover, when he leaves Creforce HQ after telling lies about the Commandos he has left behind him, he stumbles in his delirium upon Ludovic, who has also deserted, and shows signs of
alertness only when Ludovic says the word “dinner.” Continuing to believe that “[i]n bumf [lies]
salvation,” Major Hound first offers Ludovic a handful of drachmas and a chit from Creforce’s
Deputy Quartermaster General, and he then follows him despairingly until the pair come within
distance of the smell of food. Only when that smell reaches him does Major Hound regain any
sense of his whereabouts:

And in that moment of prayerless abandonment, succour was vouchsafed. Tiny, delicious, doggy perceptions began to flutter in the void. He raised his bowed nose and sniffed. Clear as the horn of Roland a new note was recalling him to life. Unmistakable and compelling, about the delicate harmony of bee-haunted flower and crushed leaf a great new smell was borne to him; the thunderous organ-tones of Kitchen. Fido was suffused, inebriated, transported. He pressed forward, he overtook Ludovic, he passed him, wordlessly, following his nose in and out of boulders, up treacherous scree, the scent stronger with every frantic step; until at length he came to a wide cave high in the cliff face and he stumbled into the cool gloom where amid steam and wood-smoke a group of shadowy men sat round an iron cauldron…(273–4)

Within this passage and others during the Crete episode, Waugh clearly has a great deal of fun describing his cowardly character with the kind of language suggested by the major’s
 canine name and nickname. The jokes at Major Hound’s expense are not entirely gratuitous,
however, since, as will be the case with Guy later, Major Hound’s characterization is used to
establish his difference from Ludovic. Not only interested in showing the dehumanizing effects of the evacuation on the “fallen” Major Hound, in other words, Waugh also intends to highlight how Ludovic’s sharp perceptions of time and place allow him to extricate himself from his predicament. Although Ludovic’s comparative steadiness despite disaster becomes clearest toward the end of the evacuation, his conversation with Major Hound after their dinner underscores how he has evaluated his situation and plans to use his cunning to secure his own survival. Once Major Hound has regained his wits after eating, for instance, he alludes to Ludovic’s desertion only to be told that they both have “made a miscalculation” (276). Pointing out that Major Hound miscalculated in expecting him to return to headquarters the previous day, Ludovic explains that he himself had miscalculated by supposing that soldiers unattached to officers would have been able to board the boats heading for Egypt. As he goes on to imply, Major Hound is useful to him only insofar as he Pretends to be the officer in charge of “a motley crowd” of soldiers assembled together for the purpose of evacuation. Thus, when Major Hound resumes his traditional officer’s demeanor and expresses dislike of this “entirely irregular” plan, Ludovic jerks him back to reality first by noting that such concerns will “be quite appropriate” only at a later date and then by advising him of his current poor bargaining position: “Don’t you think we might drop all that [business of military protocol]? Just between ourselves, sir. Tonight when we embark our party, later when we get back to Alex—it will be quite appropriate then; but just at the moment, as we are here, after what’s happened, sir, don’t you think it will be more suitable…to shut your bloody trap.”

After this exchange, Major Hound does not reappear in the trilogy, and in the synopsis Waugh provided for the third volume, The End of the Battle, he explained that “[i]t is to be supposed that Ludovic perpetrated or contrived at [Major Hound’s] murder” (xiii). Within Officers and Gentlemen itself, no hint of such violence emerges for some time, as, a paragraph

30 The English version of the last novel in Waugh's trilogy was titled Unconditional Surrender. As I am citing from Little, Brown and Company’s American edition, I will be using the American title for the final volume in the remainder of this chapter.
after the remark about Major Hound’s “bloody trap,” Waugh begins a new chapter that returns the narration to Guy. Having been searching over the course of the past day and a half for the Hookforce Commandos that arrived on the island before he did, Guy is nevertheless in much better shape than Major Hound. Although “weary, hungry and thirsty,” he is also “in good heart” and “almost buoyant” at the thought that he has been “eased at last of the lead weight of human company” (277). The problem with Guy’s mood, however, is precisely that many months earlier, when he was tired of being “accepted and respected” but “not loved,” he had enlisted in the army with the purpose of overcoming his tendency toward isolation (MA 8). Guy himself comes to understand the troublesome nature of his solitary delight several pages later, when he stumbles across his old regiment, the Halberdiers, at Babali Hani. Pleased with their continuing commitment to duty and wishing to join them in the only “battle” currently taking place on Crete, he is informed that “cross-posting in the middle of a battle” is not a possibility, at which point he loses his equanimity:

A few hours earlier he had exulted in his loneliness. Now the case was altered. He was a ‘guest from the higher formation,’ a ‘Hookforce body,’ without place or function, a spectator. And all the deep sense of desolation which he had sought to cure, which from time to time momentarily seemed to be cured, overwhelmed him of old. His heart sank. It seemed to him as though literally an organ of his body was displaced, subsiding, falling heavily like a feather in a vacuum jar; Philoctetes set apart from his fellow by an old festering wound; Philoctetes without his bow. Sir Roger without his sword. (284-5)

In reflecting on his difference from Sir Roger, the English crusader who had been unofficially “canonized” in the city of his Italian home, Guy understands that his modern crusade has not matched his expectations (MAA 9). Sir Roger, after all, kept his sword, despite never having made it to the Holy Land, and it was along this relic that Guy had “[run] his finger” as he prayed for protection at the beginning of the trilogy (MAA 9). Nevertheless, Guy manages to rein in his growing suspicion about the difference between modern and medieval warfare until he arrives at Sphakia, where he engages in a long discussion about the possibility of desertion with
Ivor Claire, a man whom he had previously considered to be “quintessential England, the man Hitler had not taken into account” (151). Remark ing during that conversation that honor is “a thing that changes,” Claire explains that both his and Guy’s trouble is that “[they’re] at the awkward stage [in history]—like a man challenged to a duel a hundred years ago” (299).

Arguing that, “in the next war, when we are completely democratic…it will be quite honourable for officers to leave their men behind” and to return home to “train new men to take the place of prisoners,” Claire provides a justification for his eventual desertion that obscures his fear of spending the duration of the war in a German prison camp. Although Guy observes that soldiers “[p]erhaps…wouldn’t take kindly to being trained by deserters,” he does not understand the enormity of Claire’s comments until he receives news of his friend’s desertion upon his return to Egypt. At that point, he realizes that “the man who had been his friend had proved to be an illusion,” and he asks himself what anyone is fighting and suffering for “if it [is] not for Justice” (323-4).

In these last reflections, Guy considers “Justice” for the first time since Men at Arms. By returning to the theme that opened the trilogy, Waugh not only underscores how far afield Guy’s thoughts have wandered in Officers and Gentlemen but also emphasizes his protagonist’s inability to square his understanding of the war’s purpose with others’ understanding. As Paul Fussell notes, the leading officers in the British army were having difficulties explaining the purpose of hostilities to their men around this time, as well. Suggesting that regimental loyalty, patriotic notions of duty, and romantic visions of martyrdom were no longer sufficient reasons for soldiers to fight, Fussell explains that troops and their leaders believed themselves to be fighting the war for the sole purpose of ending it:

[I]f loyalty to your unit might ever seem an insufficient reason to fight the war, there was always the fall-back reason, which close scrutiny might expose as equally irrational: namely, to get home. To get home you had to end the war. To end the war was the reason you fought it. The only reason….Even more-or-less official explanations often arrived, finally, at this lame reason for sacrificing oneself. General Montgomery knew that his soldiers...
were in no way to be motivated by ideological appeals. Hence, preparing to attack at El Alamein in October, 1942, in his ‘Personal Message from the Army Commander,’ which was read to the troops, he stressed only the motif of getting back home. ‘The sooner we win this battle,’ he proclaimed, ‘the sooner we shall all get back home to our families.’ (141)

Although Corporal-Major Ludovic has no family to return to, his response to the evacuation of Crete relies on the same logic as General Montgomery’s “Personal Message.” Believing that the modern world is a vacuum that one must cultivate to survive, Ludovic fights on the island with the sole aim of removing himself from the fighting. Indeed, Ludovic’s intention to escape from conflict becomes all the more evident when we reflect that he never fights the enemy but rather attacks those superior officers who wish him to remain on the island after the evacuation. The morning after Guy has the conversation about desertion with Ivor Claire, for instance, he comes across Ludovic, who, upon being asked about his earlier desertion, repeats the comment he had made to Major Hound a day or so before: “Perhaps we both made a miscalculation” (303). Recognizing immediately that Ludovic has failed to “make the ships” but not stopping to inquire what his own “miscalculation” might be, Guy subsequently inquires about Major Hound’s whereabouts only to be told that such questions are inappropriately timed: “Need we go into that, sir?” Ludovic asks. “Wouldn’t you say it was rather too early or rather too late for inquiries of that sort?” As was the case during his earlier conversation with Major Hound, Ludovic here believes that Guy’s inquiries are “too early” since he can do nothing to reinforce military discipline at the present moment; yet in this case, the inquiries are also “too late” since, though Guy does not know it, Major Hound is dead. Unaware of Major Hound’s death, Guy is, of course, equally unaware of its cause: namely, the major’s belated desire to privilege military obedience over the immediate demands of the moment and thus to interfere with Ludovic’s plan to “get back home” alive.

In looking at the final scenes that take place during the Crete episode, we should note that Ludovic’s language of “calculation” provides a useful means of registering the differences
between him and Guy. On his last morning in Crete, Guy is quite resigned to being captured by the Germans, preferring to let others do the calculating about his fate instead of actively responding to his situation. Indeed, even when Guy decides to board an abandoned fishing boat captained by an unknown sapper, the narrator records that he “made no calculation. Nothing was measurable that morning. He was aware only of…the satisfaction of finding someone else to take control of things” (305). In contrast, Ludovic, who originally seems disinclined to enter the rickety vessel, ultimately follows Guy into it because he is highly attuned to his surroundings and is calculating his chance of survival with regard to them. More specifically, the narrator remarks that after Ludovic follows Guy to the boat, “[t]he engine started up, drowning the sound which Ludovic had heard” (305). This sound, which no one else apparently hears and the source of which no one else apparently notices, turns out to be the Luftwaffe, which proceeds to bomb the soldiers on the shore. Ever aware of what is going on around him, Ludovic relies in this instance on his perceptions to alter his plans instantaneously, a pattern of behavior that continues as he, Guy, and a handful of men direct the fishing boat toward Egypt. Although the sapper captain of the boat initially directs the journey, he and the others, including Guy, become delirious once the fuel runs out and they are left adrift on the Mediterranean. Ludovic, however, remains surprisingly alert, though “godless at the helm,” and when he suspects that the sapper captain has become irretrievably insane and therefore a danger to his safety, he murders him just as he had murdered Major Hound (309).

For his part, Guy remembers very few details about his days on the ship, and in the chapter that begins immediately after the fishing boat heads out to sea, we find him in hospital some time after his rescue. Much like Mark Tietjens in Ford’s Parade’s End, the bed-ridden Guy refuses to speak to anyone who enters his room and spends his days trying to piece together his memories of his time on the boat. Concentrating on Guy’s efforts to determine what actually happened and when it happened, Waugh thus provides a corollary to his earlier depiction of
Major Hound’s struggle to determine his temporal and spatial coordinates during the evacuation proper:

Guy lay with his hands on the cotton sheet rehearsing his experiences.

Could there be experience without memory? Could there be memory where fact and fancy were indistinguishable, where time was fragmentary and elastic, made up of minutes that seemed like days, of days like minutes? He could talk if he wished to. He must guard that secret from them. Once he spoke he would re-enter their world, he would be back in the picture.

There had been an afternoon in the boat, in the early days of anxiety and calculation, when they had all sung ‘God save the King.’ That was in thanksgiving. An aeroplane with RAF markings had come out of the sky, had changed course, circled and hurtled over their heads, twice. They had all waved and the machine had soared away to the south towards Africa. Deliverance seemed certain then. The sapper ordered watches; all next day they kept a look-out for the boat which must be on its way, which never came. That night hope died and soon the pain of privation gave place to inertia…

What else was real? The bugs. They were a surprise at first. Guy had always thought of the sea as specially clean. But all the old timbers of the boat were full of bugs…They were real. But what of the whales? There was a hour of moonlight quite clear in Guy’s mind when he had awoken to hear all the surrounding water singing with a single low resonant note and to see all round them huge shining humps of meat heaving and wallowing. Had they been real? Had the fog been real that descended and enclosed them and vanished again as swiftly as it came? And the turtles? That night or another, after the moon had set, Guy saw the calm plain fill with myriad cats’ eyes. (309-12)

In an earlier section of this chapter, I cited Gorra’s claim that Waugh had “no interest in consciousness as such, except insofar as his characters’ lack of it, and their consequent flatness, [could] be made to tell.” At that point, I went on to say that, in the case of *Put Out More Flags*, Gorra’s remarks held true if we added additional qualifications: first, that Waugh was willing to explore a character’s consciousness if doing so showed up the impoverishment of the interior life in modernity; and second, that he was willing to engage in something like interior monologue when doing so illustrated that particular narrative device’s unfitness as a literary strategy at a precise historical moment. As the previous large quotation from *Officers and Gentlemen* suggests, however, Waugh was also not opposed to using interior monologue after *Put Out More Flags* if
that method allowed him to capture his characters’ experience of the duration of global war.

Within the passage I have quoted, Guy clearly struggles to measure the time he spent on the boat with Ludovic, but as a result of both “privation” and fatigue, he is unable to calculate how much time has passed (“that night or another”) and to distinguish between memory and hallucination (“Had they been real?”). More than just noting the confusion of days and memories, Waugh also uses interior monologue in this passage to show how the experience of wartime duration causes time itself to expand and contract. For Guy aboard the boat, time becomes both “fragmentary” and “elastic,” and minutes thus come to resemble days and days minutes. Indeed, in the case where minutes stretch out into days, time itself seems to share the “inertia” that Guy and the others aboard the boat suffer after their sighting of the RAF plane.

Although one might argue that Waugh is less concerned with the war’s duration than with the experience of delirium in his depiction of Guy’s thoughts after the Crete evacuation, the earlier characterization of Major Hound, who is both attuned to time’s passing and unable to measure it, suggests that Guy’s experience on the stranded fishing vessel is integral to the trilogy’s examination of combatants’ perception of the duration of the war. Moreover, Guy’s previous comparison of his Commando to toy soldiers who are “rubbed…bare of paint” by the war’s “unvarying cycle of excitement and disappointment”—not to mention his remark that such soldiers would benefit from “a drug” that would “put them to sleep until they were needed”—suggests that the experience of war more generally involves disorienting perceptions of time’s acceleration and deceleration (108). Somewhat unexpectedly, however, Officers and Gentlemen also offers evidence of both the soldier’s heightened attention to the time of war and his difficulty in measuring its duration when the author least intends it. By this, I mean that Waugh himself runs into trouble when calculating the length of time that Hookforce HQ spends on Crete.

In Appendix C, I describe the five most significant temporal errors in Waugh’s fictional account of the Crete evacuation. My goal in doing so, however, is not to point out the flaws for their own sake but rather to indicate how Waugh, in attempting to fuse his own memories of
Crete with the details of his fictional account, manages to misalign dates and times in much the same way that Guy misaligns the dates and times of his experience while stranded at sea. Like Guy, Waugh feels the need to map out events in a detailed fashion, but, again like Guy, he struggles to differentiate between “[t]hat night and another.” In other words: Waugh underscores the importance of temporal attention during the experience of combat and in the retrospective relation of that experience, but he also illustrates the soldier and soldier-author’s difficulty in accurately measuring the passage of the time of war. What’s more, in the section following Guy’s rescue, he shows both soldiers and civilians capitalizing on combatants’ tendency to experience temporal disorientation and doing so for their own self-interested purposes.

Beginning to speak once more after Mrs. Stitch, a diplomat’s wife and friend of Ivor Claire, enters his hospital room, Guy discovers that both Ivor and Mrs. Stitch hope to cover up the former’s desertion by claiming that “everyone [was] too tired and hungry to remember anything” about the evacuation (317). When Guy repeatedly affirms that he does remember orders being given about Hookforce surrendering to the Germans, Mrs. Stitch first provides a bogus story about Ivor receiving separate orders to embark and then lets slip that Guy and Ludovic’s reappearance has resulted in Ivor’s flight to India. As she explains, Ivor had originally believed that the entirety of Hookforce would be imprisoned or murdered and would therefore be unable to testify against him for the duration of the war: “[Ivor] couldn’t spend the rest of the war in the Mohamed Ali Club, I mean. It was seeing him so much about, made people gossip. Of course,’ she added, ‘there was no reason then to expect anyone from Hookforce to turn up until after the war’” (318).

From Guy’s perspective, the indignity of Ivor’s behavior, coupled with the news some weeks later that the Germans have invaded Russia, shatters his remaining illusions about the justice and morality of the British war effort: “Now that hallucination was dissolved, like the whales and turtles on the voyage from Crete, and he was back after less than two years’ pilgrimage in a Holy Land of illusion in the old ambiguous world, where priests were spies and
gallant friends proved traitors and his country was led blundering into dishonour” (325). Yet if Guy has lost faith in individual and national integrity by the conclusion of Officers and Gentlemen, the next volume in the trilogy, The End of the Battle (1961), demonstrates how the attention to time that was so valuable for survival on Crete is equally valuable for the preservation of the individual soul “in the old ambiguous world.” As noted previously, Waugh parallels the timeline of the war with significant dates in the liturgical calendar, and the references to the latter become more frequent over the course of the trilogy. Within The End of the Battle, which picks up some two years after Guy leaves Egypt in the last week of June 1941, this trend continues and does so with the result that the trilogy’s religious timeline comes to seem more important than the unfolding events of the war. Nevertheless, the impression that religion in some sense trumps the war as a theme—that the novel’s increased attention to Guy’s soul takes precedence over its interest in the political and military consequences of international hostilities—is just that: an impression.

A useful way of understanding how the final novel of the trilogy directly links Guy’s spiritual growth to his awareness of the ongoing war can be found in a passing phrase of Mark Rawlinson’s. In his chapter addressing the way that metaphors of prison were used during the war to describe the experience of civilians and combatants alike, Rawlinson briefly touches on Elizabeth Bowen’s short story “Mysterious Kôr” and notes that the author was “critical of identities-for-the-duration” (168). By this phrase, Rawlinson seems to be referring to Bowen’s dislike of the way people were redefined by and redefined themselves in keeping with wartime discourse, a discourse that eliminated “distinction and difference,” subjected “the individual to control, constraint, and coercion,” and overlooked the “total of unlived lives” produced by the war (Rawlinson 167, Bowen as qtd. in Rawlinson 168). As I have already suggested, Waugh, like Bowen, resisted the way that politicians, economists, and advertisers reduced the individual to a type during and after the war. For him, however, surviving the war did entail a willingness to assess and alter one’s identity without agreeing to one’s typification; indeed, Waugh seems to
have believed that the war provided a useful background against which to strip one’s identity down to its bare bones. Writing in his diary in August 1943, he noted that “very early in the war [he had said]…that its chief use would be to cure artists of the illusion that they were men of action,” and he goes on to acknowledge that the war has certainly “worked its cure with [him]” (Waugh as qtd. in Patey 191). Although he had not begun to plan his trilogy when writing this passage, he seems to have returned to the feelings behind it in his creation of Guy, who, while not an artist, also comes to the conclusion in The End of the Battle that he is not a “man of action.” More specifically, having discovered the monotony of military life with the Halberdiers in Men at Arms, Guy in that volume surrenders one imagined identity-for-the-duration, an identity based on notions of glory and heroism; and having witnessed Ivor Claire’s desertion and Britain’s acceptance of Russia as an ally in Officers and Gentlemen, Guy surrenders in that volume a second imagined identity-for-the-duration, an identity based on notions of justice and integrity.

By the start of The End of the Battle, then, Guy, who is also in London in August 1943, is struggling to understand his identity for a third time, but in this case, he is concerned with preserving his soul for the duration of the war.

The increased importance of Guy’s spirituality in The End of the Battle becomes clear in a conversation he has with his father toward the novel’s beginning. In that conversation, which takes place in early September 1943, Guy remarks that the recent surrender of the Italians “looks like the end of the Piedmontese usurpation” and reflects that the Catholic Church has erred in accommodating its mission to political changes in the secular world: “‘What a mistake the Lateran Treaty was,’” he says. “‘It seemed masterly at the time—how long? Fifteen years ago? What are fifteen years in the history of Rome? How much better it would have been if the Popes had sat it out and then emerged saying: ‘What was all that? Risorgimento? Garibaldi? Cavour? The House of Savoy? Mussolini? Just some hooligans from out of town causing a disturbance…’” (EofB 5-6). To these comments, Guy’s father, Gervase, responds by saying that
Guy is “really making the most terrible nonsense,” a point he follows up several weeks later in a letter:

_I haven’t been happy about our conversation on your last evening. I said too much or too little. Now I must say more._

Of course in the 1870s and 80s every decent Roman disliked the Piedmontese, just as the decent French now hate the Germans. They had been invaded. And, of course, most of the Romans we know kept it up, sulking. _But that isn’t the Church._

_The Mystical Body doesn’t strike attitudes and stand on its dignity. It accepts suffering and injustice. It is ready to forgive at the first hint of compunction._

_When you spoke of the Lateran Treaty did you consider how many souls may have been reconciled and have died at peace as a result of it? How many children may have been brought up in the faith who might have lived in ignorance? Quantitative judgments don’t apply. If only one soul was saved, that is full compensation for any amount of loss of ‘face.’_ (8 original emphasis)

Over the course of the remainder of the novel, especially after Gervase’s death, Guy struggles to accept his father’s words and to apply their meaning to his own life. Yet what should be emphasized about this letter is that, despite playing down the value of “quantitative judgments,” Gervase also stresses that qualitative judgments can be formed only with an attention to the historical moment. The merit of the Lateran Treaty, for instance, is precisely that by acknowledging and accepting changes in secular politics at a precise moment in time, the Church created a space for itself to continue its mission of saving souls. Guy’s task in embracing his father’s teaching is therefore to understand that two of the approaches he has previously taken in response to the modern world are both fraudulent: on the one hand, he cannot, as in _Men at Arms_ and _Officers and Gentlemen_, ignore the state of his soul and others’ souls in favor of secular notions of glory and honor, and on the other hand, he cannot, as he wishes to do at the start of _The End of the Battle_, ignore the morally troublesome events of the secular world by becoming apathetic. Instead, he must remain attentive to the world at war so that he can rescue any souls, including his own, that are in jeopardy.
Such a bifocal approach is, in fact, what Waugh himself tried to master during and after the war. As Patey explains, Waugh “developed [an] idiosyncratic notion of vocation during the war years,” a notion that centered on his “‘personal thesis’” that “‘a particular task [was set] for each individual soul, which the individual [was] free to accept or decline at will’” (Patey 296; Waugh as qtd. in Patey 296). Moreover, the individual’s “‘ultimate destiny [was] determined by his response to God’s vocation,’” by his agreement to perform the “‘single, peculiar act of service…which only [he] [could] do and for which [he was]…created.’” For Waugh, a person’s ability to respond appropriately to a divine call thus required that he be highly attuned to the world around him, since it was within that world that he would be invited to perform the task prepared for him before his birth. Waugh believed, that is, that God worked in real time and that a person’s responsibility was to remain aware that the service for which he was created could be demanded at any moment. In such a situation, neither closing oneself off from the secular world nor embracing the secular world at the cost of the soul was acceptable.

Interested in communicating these ideas in his fiction, especially in The End of the Battle, Waugh necessarily had to re-evaluate the direction of his satire. At the same time, he had to avoid repeating the errors he believed lay in his characterization of Catholicism in Brideshead Revisited. According to Gorra, Waugh recognized that he needed to correct the “‘flawed vision of the Church’” he had offered in Brideshead, but the first two volumes of Sword of Honour “seem[ed] like nothing so much as an affirmation and extension of [Brideshead’s] ethos” (190). With The End of the Battle, the major challenge was thus to present Catholicism respectably but not romantically and, in McCartney’s words, to reveal the novel’s “‘satiric objective’” as “metaphysical,” not “moral” (2). That Waugh set himself such a goal for the last novel in the trilogy may explain why he later removed many of the satirical passages from Men at Arms when Sword of Honour was published in one-volume form. If he desired to make his protagonist’s spiritual awakening believable and if he wished to depict the wisdom and authority of the Church, having his protagonist engage in juvenile fantasies during the opening stages of the war must
have come to seem undesirable. Whatever the reasons for the later deletions, the satiric targets in the final volume are precisely those individuals who either embrace the world and deny the soul or deny the world and embrace self-interest. Ludovic, for instance, who, despite his murderous streak, had been the only character in the previous novel to understand the threats posed to survival by sham notions of honor and discipline, becomes in *The End of the Battle* a recluse haunted by guilt and made absurd by his belief that others will overlook his low origins and lack of education if he writes a great novel.\(^1\) As if Ludovic’s novelistic ambitions were not a sufficient occasion for mockery, Waugh also suggests that his characters’ writing style has become less impressive over the course of the war. Whereas the narrator remarks in *Officers and Gentlemen* that Ludovic’s “journal comprised not only *pensées* but descriptive passages which reviewers in their season later commended,” Waugh underscores the ridiculousness of Ludovic’s late-war novel, *The Death Wish*, a novel that bears a striking resemblance to *Brideshead Revisited* (*OG* 211):

Admirers of [Ludovic’s] *Pensées* (and there were many) would not have recognized the authorship of [ *The Death Wish*]. It was a very gorgeous, almost gaudy, tale of romance and high drama, set...in the diplomatic society of the previous decade. The characters and their equipment were seen as Ludovic...had seen them, more brilliant than reality. The plot was Shakespearean in its elaborate improbability. The dialogue could never have issued from human lips, the scenes of passion were capable of bringing a blush to readers of either sex and every age. But it was not an old-fashioned book. Had he known it, half a dozen other English writers, averting themselves sickly from privations of war and apprehensions of the social consequences of the peace, were even then severally and secretly, unknown to one another...composing or preparing to compose books which would turn from drab alleys

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\(^1\) In the previous two volumes of the trilogy, Ludovic’s origins remain mysterious, with only Ivor Claire noting that Ludovic had once belonged to the Royal Horse Guards (“He just reported at the beginning of the war as a reservist and claimed the rank of Corporal of Horse. His name was on the roll all right but no one seemed to know anything about him...”) (*OG* 148). Toward the opening of *The End of the Battle*, however, the narrator provides details of Ludovic’s background, including the fact that he had once been the lover of a British diplomat and that “[h]is enlistment in the Blues [in the 1930s]...had certainly not been prompted by any familiarity or affection for the horse” (38). Eventually sending his former lover a copy of his *Pensées*, a copy written “in his small clerkly hand,” Ludovic is put in touch with the editor of *Survival* and thereafter becomes “proudly conscious of a change of status” (39, 41). But this change happens in his mind only, since Waugh takes pains to reveal that, despite his dreams of literary grandeur, Ludovic has no knowledge of Kafka, Logan Pearsall Smith, T.S. Eliot, or Freud (44, 57). Indeed when the editor of *Survival* notices a “Drowned Sailor motif” in Ludovic’s *Pensées* and inquires whether he had “Eliot consciously in mind,” Ludovic thinks of the sapper he murdered on the fishing boat and responds, “Not Eliot...I don’t think he was called Eliot” (57).
of the thirties into the odorous gardens of a recent past transformed and illuminated by disordered memory and imagination. Ludovic in the solitude of his post was in the movement. (245)

If Ludovic is satirized in this and other passages for his (and Waugh’s) wish to obliterate memories of the war through the composition of an elaborate work about the pre-war years, Waugh also directs his satirical gaze at a variety of Communist characters, whose concern with achieving a new world order causes them to overlook traditional moral precepts and to forget the importance of the individual soul. As Patey explains when discussing Waugh’s support of Mussolini’s actions in Abyssinia during the 1930s, “Fascism had its attractions [for Waugh and other Catholics] because Communism, with its longer record of religious persecution and its totalist world-view, appeared the greater evil” (145). More specifically, from Waugh’s perspective, “Communism was based on a philosophy: on an explicitly atheist creed, a utopian ‘faith, like a Christian’s’ that claimed to encompass all of life, to explain the telos of human life and history.” Thus, when Waugh later traveled with Randolph Churchill to Yugoslavia in 1944, he was disgusted to find the British supporting Tito and the Yugoslav partisans, most of whom had Communist inclinations.

Within The End of the Battle, Waugh’s own experiences in Yugoslavia once more get transferred to Guy, who travels to that country and testifies to both partisan atrocities and the moral blindness of the British Mission. In particular, Frank de Souza, a member of Guy’s original officer class in the Halberdiers, reappears for satirical purposes, since he not only supports Tito but also believes “the only relevant question” the British should ask themselves in determining whom to support should be, “[W]ho is doing the fighting?” (268). For his part, Guy,

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32 Waugh never seriously considered becoming a Fascist, despite its comparative “attraction.” Asked in 1937 to fill out a questionnaire for the Left Review regarding his feelings on the Spanish Civil War, he replied, “I know Spain only as a tourist and a reader of the newspapers. I am no more impressed by the legality of the Valencia government than are English Communists by the legality of the Crown, Lords and Commons. I believe it was a bad government, rapidly deteriorating. If I were a Spaniard I should be fighting for General Franco. As I am an Englishman I am not in the predicament of choosing between two evils. I am not a Fascist nor shall I become one unless it were the only alternative to Marxism. It is mischievous to suggest that such a choice is imminent” (Waugh as qtd. in Patey 146).
who is concerned about the treatment of Jewish refugees at the hands of the Communists, insists that, unlike the Jewish de Souza, he is incapable of putting anti-fascism above his religion. Indeed, when de Souza tells him that “this is no time for sectarian loyalties,” by which he means that Guy's concerns about religion are inappropriate, Guy inquires whether Communism itself is not “a sect,” to which de Souza replies “with absolute assurance” in the negative (270).  

If Guy is concerned about the religious persecution taking place in Yugoslavia, he also begins to reflect more deeply on the war’s effect on his own soul. As I noted, *Men at Arms* opens by describing how “eight years back [Guy’s soul] had suffered a tiny stroke of paralysis” that left “all his spiritual faculties….just perceptibly impaired.” Thus, when the war breaks out, Guy mistakenly believes that through military service he can heal the “deep wound [in his soul], that unstaunched, internal draining away of life and love” (*MAA* 7). Yet after “[f]our years of total war,” which even de Souza recognizes “can change a man,” Guy understands that his responsibility is not to obtain glory or ensure justice but to serve God (*EofB* 142). Furthermore, he realizes that such service requires his attention to the moment at which he lives. As the narrator records during Gervase Crouchback’s funeral,

> In the recesses of Guy’s conscience there lay the belief that somewhere, somehow, something would be required of him; *that he must be attentive to the summons when it came.* They also served who only stood and waited. He saw himself as one of the labourers in the parable who sat in the marketplace waiting to be hired and were not called into the vineyard until late in the day. They had their reward on an equality with the men who had toiled since dawn. One day he would get the chance to do some small service which only he could perform, for which he had been  

33 In his chapter on *Sword of Honour*, William Myers addresses this passage and describes it as "a moment of mutual understanding such as Guy could never experience with any other non-Catholic character" (125). Suggesting that “[t]he historical process has resolved itself into a struggle between the only institutions with a sense of history and a universal mission—Communism and Catholicism, each in its way a child of Judaism—and between the two characters representing them, de Souza and Guy," Myers argues that "[n]one of Waugh's Communists is a monster" (125, 124). Although Myers rightly draws attention to Waugh's belief that Communism and Catholicism presented competing "universal mission[s]," his claim that the trilogy's Communist characters are not monstrous is hard to support. Throughout the final volume of the trilogy, de Souza, though funny, is concerned with the Jews only insofar as they are "valuable anti-fascist propaganda in America": moreover, after he has staged a battle to amuse a visiting American general, he announces his plans to leave the country without showing any concern for how Guy and the others at his post might escape from Yugoslavia (268). When Guy inquires how he and the others are "supposed to get out," de Souza offers to leave him a jeep, remarking that Guy "might get through to Split" (297). This response causes Guy to reflect "that he had never really liked Frank de Souza," a sentiment the reader certainly shares.
created. Even he must have his function in the divine plan. He did not expect a heroic destiny. Quantitative judgments did not apply. *All that mattered was to recognise the chance when it offered.* Perhaps his father was at that moment clearing the way for him. “Show me what to do and help me do it,” he prayed. (81, emphasis added)

Over the course of the remainder of *The End of the Battle*, Guy “recognizes [two] chance[s] when [they are] offered.” The second of these chances emerges in the form of the Jewish refugees, whose misfortune at the hands of the Yugoslav Communists causes Guy to reflect that, “in a world of hate and waste, he [is] being offered the chance of doing a single small act to redeem the times” (250). Although his frequent cables to his superiors do eventually result in the Jews’ removal to Italy by a “private charitable organization in America,” Guy is unable to help them once they reach a displaced persons camp in Lecce; moreover, by giving two of his closest Jewish acquaintances, the Kanyis, American magazines, he also inadvertently contributes to their murder by the Communists (307). Originally envisioning himself as “Moses leading a people out of captivity,” Guy thus comes to understand that “there [is] no divine intervention to help the Jews of Begoy, no opening of the sea, no inundation of chariots” (298). Indeed, when he learns that even the Zionists will not help the refugees until their “State” has been “set up” and when he is assured by a British Communist that “justice has been done” in the execution of the Kanyis, he can only return to England with a “sense of futility” (309, 310, 311).

If Guy is unable to save the Jews—if, that is, their rescue is not “the small service which only he [can] perform, for which he [has] been created”—he does succeed in saving the soul of one British child. Confronted by his ex-wife, Virginia, some months before he heads to Yugoslavia, Guy learns that she is pregnant by a man named Trimmer, who, like de Souza, was in Guy’s original officer class with the Halberdiers. Recognizing that he is Virginia’s “last resort,” especially since she has been unable to get an abortion, Guy agrees to marry her and adopt Trimmer’s son (196). This he does despite being told by others that “Virginia is tough” and that he is “insane,” and the reason he does it is precisely because he remembers his father’s letter.
When, for instance, his friend Kerstie Kilbannock asks “[w]hat…one child more or less [means]” since “[h]alf the population of Europe are homeless—refugees and prisoners,” Guy once more reflects that “Quantitative judgments don’t apply” and that “any amount of loss of ‘face’” is more than made up for “[i]f only one soul [is] saved” (196 original emphasis). Indeed, even after Virginia is killed by a V-1 bomb during the summer of 1944 and after he himself remarries in the late 1940s, Guy continues to “be attentive to the [divine] summons” by treating Virginia’s son, Gervase, as his own.

Responding to Guy’s adoption of Virginia’s son in The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth-Century Literature, Christine Berberich concludes that Waugh “does the ideal of the gentleman in literature no favour,” since, in Guy Crouchback, he “present[s] his reading public with a character whose moral standards are depicted as unattainable by all and sundry around him” (134). According to Berberich, who examines several of Waugh’s novels, the author’s relationship to his gentlemanly characters, including Guy, not only changed over the course of his career but did so as his response to Bergson’s philosophy altered: “The young Waugh believed that people were either static or dynamic, a concept he took from the philosophical writing of Bergson….In his early work Waugh was ‘on the side of the life force’…In his later fiction, however, [he] celebrated the static character, whose goodness was impervious to the onslaught of The Common Man” (109). Because she believes that Guy’s “role in the Second World War is not so much to fight the German enemy as to fight the enemy in the shape of the dynamic new man,” Berberich concludes that Guy is “the static hero par excellence” of Waugh’s oeuvre (original emphasis). Yet more than finding fault with Waugh for creating a “perfect Christian, chivalrous and aristocratic gentleman…so far removed from the truth as to make it unbelievable,” she also suggests that Waugh himself made the mistake of becoming a static individual late in his life:

Waugh’s own life is crucial for our understanding of his application of the ‘gentleman’ trope. It can be read like a Bildungsroman—but a Bildungsroman in reverse, the main character not arriving at the final wisdom or truth, but closing his eyes to them. If we return to Waugh’s youthful interest in
Bergson, we can see that he turned from a dynamic, rebellious character into a static one, whose life was dominated by preconceived prejudices. In his youth, he was perceptive of the shortcomings of modern life, but targeted them with biting satire, in order to induce his readership to address them. In later life, Waugh became increasingly unhappy with a changing world. But his only attempts to remedy the world’s shortcomings consisted of creating a mythological fiction of ideal manhood, and becoming a cantankerous man himself…The fact that even he could not live up to his own ideal should have alerted him to the impossibility of his dream of the perfect knight-gentleman in the twentieth century. (133-4)

Putting aside Waugh’s “cantankerousness,” which is legendary, several problems emerge in Berberich’s account of Sword of Honour and, for that matter, in her characterization of Waugh’s entire body of work. While it is certainly true that Brideshead Revisited can be read as a celebration of the “Christian, chivalrous and aristocratic gentleman,” it remains difficult to see how the same thing can be said of Sword of Honour, which is very much invested in exposing Guy’s “preconceived prejudices” and illusions of “ideal manhood.” Moreover, if Guy is less dynamic a character than Anthony Blanche or Ambrose Silk, all three characters are heavily satirized in their respective novels, which suggests that Waugh supported neither a straightforward Bergsonian dynamism nor a straightforward stasis. In fact, even with regard to novels such as Decline and Fall and Vile Bodies, which much more openly address the Bergsonian distinction between Being and Becoming, Waugh does not seem to approve of dynamic characters such as Margot Beste-Chetwynde or Agatha Runcible any more than he does of the comparatively static Otto Silenus or Father Rothschild.

Those novels and characters aside, what should be noted is that Berberich fundamentally misunderstands the reasons behind Guy’s decision to adopt Virginia’s child. Suggesting that Guy “distinguishes between his family honour and his honour as a Christian” and that he “places the latter first,” Berberich mentions Guy’s conversation with Kerstie Kilbannock and claims that, “by rescuing Virginia,” Guy “fulfils his…dream of knight-errantry” (131). The problem with this reading is that Kerstie, not Guy, supplies the language of knight-errantry in the relevant passage
and that Guy, in reflecting on Kerstie’s analogy, rejects it: “Knights-errant,” he said, ‘used to go out looking for noble deeds. I don’t think I’ve ever in my life done a single positively unselfish action. I certainly haven’t gone out of my way to find opportunities. Here was something most unwelcome, put into my hands; something which I believe the Americans describe as ‘beyond the call of duty’; not the normal behaviour of an officer and a gentleman.”

Implicit in Berberich’s reading of Sword of Honour is her suspicion that, despite his personal cantankerousness, Waugh became sentimental in his later fiction. A hint of such a suspicion emerges in her final remark that, late in his career, “Waugh should have made better use of his changing times, by continuing to satirize declining moral standards instead of merely condemning them” (134). Although Berberich does not explain why satire and condemnation are incompatible, her criticism of Guy suggests that she finds Waugh guilty not only of “condemning” those who are not gentlemen but also of sentimentalizing or romanticizing gentlemanliness itself. Jonathon Greenberg makes a similar argument about Waugh’s sentimentalism in his discussion of A Handful of Dust. Suggesting more generally that “satire [is] a way of thinking, feeling, and writing central to modernism—to the very notion of what it meant for modernists to be modern”—Greenberg contends that late modernists like Waugh attempted to rewrite their literary predecessors’ “rejection of sentimentality…as merely an illusory break, a continuation of sentimentality by other means” (2, 27). Yet in adopting such “antisentimental

34 That Guy does reject Kerstie’s analogy is central to the novel’s characterization of his spiritual growth, since it was precisely because he conceived of himself as a knight-errant that he entered the war.

35 One wonders at times in reading Berberich’s account how Waugh could have characterized gentlemen in any way that would please her. On the one hand, Berberich is dismissive of Guy because he is too perfect to be a gentleman, but on the other hand, when Waugh satirizes gentlemanly characters such as Ivor Claire, Tony Last, and Sebastian Flyte, Berberich still manages to conclude that the author is celebrating gentlemanliness itself. This situation becomes all the more problematic when we reconsider Berberich’s claims about dynamic and static characters in Waugh’s work. Although she seems to resent Waugh’s turn toward static characters and to celebrate his early embrace of “the life force,” Berberich notes in her description of Decline and Fall that that novel “presents us with the gentleman [Paul Pennyfeather] as a bungling naïf who is pushed around by more dynamic characters” (114). Going on to describe Paul’s “gentlemanly values…[as] hollow,” Berberich neglects to note that the “dynamic characters” who take advantage of Paul, including Margot Beste-Chetwynde and Alistair Digby-Vane Trumpington, are members of the nobility (115). The very people whose gentlemanliness Paul tries to ape, in other words, are the dynamic characters in Decline and Fall. While one might expect Berberich to applaud Paul’s eventual separation from Margot and Alistair as a rejection of the gentlemanly, she goes on to conclude that “Paul’s return to the quiet life at Oxford can ultimately be interpreted as suggesting that the author embraces gentlemanly values after all.” On this reading, gentlemanliness itself can never be a positive attribute.
stances,” Greenberg argues, the late modernists not only evinced “a deep skepticism of inherited ideas of what it means to know and feel” but also risked “collaps[ing]…the distinction ‘between sentimentality and its denunciation’” (77). On his reading, such a collapse is precisely what happens in A Handful of Dust, where Waugh’s “own satiric sensibility, so acute in detecting the sentimental in others…cultivates readerly sympathy for Tony [Last] in a decidedly unsatiric, even sentimental manner” (78). Moreover, when the novel moves from England to South America, sentiment, which had been “combated so aggressively in the novel’s earlier episodes,” reappears “in an estranged, uncanny guise” (82). As Greenberg explains, “The collapse of satire into the uncanny [at the end of A Handful of Dust] suggests that the efforts of so many modernists to escape the sentimental might give rise to an undertow in which the claims of feeling reassert themselves in negative form” (82, 89).

The difference between Berberich’s account of Sword of Honour and Greenberg’s account of A Handful of Dust is, of course, that the former author sees Waugh willfully engaging in sentimentality, while the latter author believes that satire itself “is a contradictory phenomenon,” one that often “describes its own collapse or undoing” (xiv). Whether or not we accept Greenberg’s claims about satire as a genre, we should note that Waugh sought to avoid charges of sentimentality when writing the conclusion of Sword of Honour. In the original version of The End of the Battle, Waugh had the narrative close with Guy and his second wife, Domenica, living with Virginia’s son and children of their own in the “Lesser House” on the Crouchback family’s estate. When reviews of the novel began to appear, however, Waugh was “disconcerted” to find that readers of the novel found the ending “happy”: “This was far from my intention,” he wrote Anthony Powell. “The mistake was allowing Guy legitimate offspring. They shall be deleted in any subsequent edition. I thought it more ironical that there should be real heirs of the blessed Gervase Crouchback dispossessed by Trimmer but I plainly failed to make that clear. So no nippers for Guy & Domenica in [the] Penguin [edition]” (Waugh as qtd. in Hastings 596).
Although the “nippers” did manage to find their way into the Penguin edition of *The End of the Battle*, Waugh’s remark that the ending of the trilogy was not “happy” speaks to the kind of satire he believed himself to be writing. As I have already suggested, *Sword of Honour* belongs to the post-Great War tradition of durational satire not only because it stretches across multiple volumes but also because it explores the combatant’s experience of the duration of global war. Yet the trilogy also belongs to that tradition since, in ending as it does, it undermines our confidence in identifying the author’s moral or ethical stance with regard to the historical moment he satirizes. Certainly, we seem encouraged to believe that Guy has acted in accordance with his Church’s teachings by adopting Virginia’s son as his own, but looking at Guy’s position at the end of *Sword of Honour*, we might be forgiven if we hesitate to follow his example. For at the conclusion of the trilogy, Guy not only reports that he has sold his house in Italy to Ludovic but also explains to his brother-in-law that the farm on the family’s estate in England is paying “at the moment” only (318). While Waugh’s inclusion of these details makes Guy’s late-war behavior economically unappealing, those details also suggest that, whatever the state of Guy’s soul, his renunciations have done nothing to change the nature of the world. Indeed, by the conclusion of *The End of the Battle*, Waugh implies that, however nobly we act, our actions will have no visible effects on the direction of society or politics. What’s more, he suggests that those who act ignobly will meet with general esteem. Noting, for instance, that the officers in Guy’s Commando have forgotten the name of Jumbo Trotter, a colonel in the Halberdiers who assisted them immensely at the beginning of *Officers and Gentlemen*, the narrator explains in the Epilogue to *The End of the Battle* that the morally reprobate Ivor Claire has been accepted back into respected social circles: “[Ivor] was often in Bellamy’s now. His brief period of disgrace was set aside and almost forgotten” (316). If all this were not sufficiently disheartening, the

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36 The “nippers” were not included in the 1965 *Sword of Honour* trilogy or in the version of *The End of the Battle* from which I am citing. Even with them removed, however, errors of consistency still remain. In my edition, Guy’s brother-in-law tells an acquaintance that Guy and Domenica have “[n]o children of their own,” but when speaking directly to Guy, he asks, “Domenica’s all right, and the children?” (319, 318).
period in which the final pages of the novel are set seems to have nothing attractive about it. Opening in 1951 during the Festival of Britain, the Epilogue characterizes London as a place of “straightened people and dollar-bearing tourists,” the latter of whom “curtailed their visits [to England] and sped to the countries of the Continent, where, however precarious their condition, they ordered things better” (315).

Resembling Ford’s Parade’s End in its conclusion, Sword of Honour refuses like that earlier work to offer any solution to the problems it has diagnosed at such length or to suggest the kind of intervention that would allow the characters to reform their political and social institutions. Even the heightened attention to time that was central to the characters’ survival during the Crete debacle and to Guy’s spiritual transformation is downplayed in the Epilogue, which, set some six years after the preceding chapter, relies for its effect on the reader’s recognition that a great deal of time has passed without any of the characters changing in measurable ways. With a whole chunk of time signaled as beyond both the reader and author’s concern, the end of the trilogy thus manages to undercut the work’s earlier suggestion that both an awareness of time and the accurate measurement of its passing provide the foundation for meaningful action and spiritual growth. For all these reasons, critics’ continuing emphasis on the trilogy’s positive resolution proves just as troublesome as contemporary readers’ perceptions of the work. William Myers, for instance, problematically contends that the trilogy is brought “to a successful and happy conclusion,” while (as noted earlier) Lewis MacLeod equally problematically suggests that Guy’s return to his family’s estate can be read as a “modest kind of cultural reclamation” (Myers 131; MacLeod 73). Even Patey, who cites Waugh’s remark that “[o]nly [Guy’s brother-in-law] thought the ending happy,” follows that quotation by concluding that the trilogy’s “moral” is one of “limited hope” (256).

Much closer to the truth is Lisa Colletta, who never discusses Sword of Honour but who describes Waugh’s earlier novels as “Modernist social satires [that] abandon any hope of understanding the world” (6). Yet even if we agree with Colletta’s claim that this “distinctly
Modern type of satire” has little to do “with the corrective function of exposing wickedness and foolishness,” we should not, I believe, apply her description of such satire’s alternative goals to *Sword of Honour*. More specifically, if we agree that modernist satires imply that “humor can no longer be used for a moral purpose,” we should not therefore conclude that humor in such works functions “as a defense and a weapon, a formula of personal survival that suspends the consciousness of death and dissolution and strengthens, if only momentarily, a hold on life” (7). For by the end of *Sword of Honour*, the trilogy’s central characters seem to be as exhausted and confused in London society as they were on the field of combat, and in finding their situation humorously pathetic, the reader does not seem to be asked to see humor itself as “a weapon” for strengthening his own, the author’s, or the characters’ “hold on life.” Indeed, Waugh himself appears to have sensed the limitations of his humorous novels in increasing such a “hold” before the trilogy was even completed. In an interview Gene D. Phillips conducted with Laura Waugh, the author’s second wife, Mrs. Waugh explained that after completing *Officers and Gentlemen*, her husband was so exhausted by the trilogy that he contemplated writing no more of it: “He broke it off because he was tired of it at the time. When the trilogy pushed to the forefront of his mind again, he finished it” (Laura Waugh as qtd. in Phillips 126).

Despite finishing the trilogy, Waugh’s feelings of exhaustion continued throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, especially once he began to see that his satires had had no visible effect on his nation. In 1952, for instance, the year in which he won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for *Men at Arms*, Waugh despaired to learn that the “hoodwinking” Tito had been invited to England by Anthony Eden, regardless of the fact that “a loyal multitude of Her Majesty’s subjects…recognize[d] in [Tito] one of the six or seven most deadly and most powerful enemies of all they hold holy” (*EAR* 427). Similarly, in an essay published in the *Daily Mail* four years after the publication of *Officers and Gentlemen*, Waugh lamented that the British were “fast losing all national character” and predicted that, by the end of the 1960s, they would be as eager for another world war as he himself had been in 1924: “[I]n about 1970 I expect to read of the
outbreak of the next world war. Most of my countrymen will welcome it as an escape from the slavery of boredom. Poor beasts, they will have forgotten. But they will soon learn” (EAR 540).

In his description of the operations of satire, Greenberg remarks that the genre is characterized by a “double movement”: “on the one hand, the satirist speaks for a community, exaggerating and ridiculing his target in order to urge reform; on the other, he is a renegade who enjoys the subversion of traditional values, delights in his own aesthetic powers, even savors the cruelty he inflicts” (7, original emphasis). While this characterization might accurately describe Waugh’s early satires, we should nevertheless note that, in the case of Sword of Honour, the author’s desire to “urge reform” and his “delight in his own aesthetic powers” is drastically reduced by his recognition of his earlier works’ seeming futility. Such a recognition may, indeed, account for the fact that Waugh wrote no more novels between the publication of The End of the Battle in 1962 and his death in 1966.37 Yet if such a recognition prohibited him from composing additional fiction, the spiritual danger of that recognition was not lost on him. Writing an essay entitled “Sloth” the year after the publication of The End of the Battle, he argued that “[m]an is made for joy in the love of God, a love which he expresses in service,” and he described sloth itself as “a refusal of joy…allied to despair” (EAR 573). Not just defining the deadly sin, Waugh also explained that it tended to be indulged in by the elderly: “It is in that last undesired decade, when passion is cold, appetites feeble, curiosity dulled and experience has begotten cynicism, that accidia lies in wait as the final temptation to destruction” (573, 576). Perhaps more important than the connection Waugh draws between sloth and age, however, is the one he establishes between the believer’s experience of sloth and the soldier’s experience of war. As he explains,

There are…very near parallels [to sloth in the secular world], especially in those whose calling has a superficial resemblance to monastic life, the armed services. These men accept higher standards of obedience than civilians and are expected on

37 Waugh did publish the first volume of his autobiography, A Little Learning, in 1964, but as Patey explains, “Waugh was in no doubt that [ The End of the Battle] was his ‘last novel’” (362). Even the prospect of the second volume in the autobiography proved unappealing, however, for by the time of his death, Waugh had only written five pages of the volume, which, somewhat ironically, was to have been called A Little Hope (364).
occasions to make greater sacrifices. ‘Browned-off’ and ‘bloody-minded’ troops present a type of Sloth. I have seen soldiers in defeat who could not be accused of laziness. They were making strenuous exertions to get away from the enemy. Nor were they impelled by fear. They had simply become bored by the mismanagement of the battle and indifferent to its outcome. There were ill-found camps and stations in the war where men refused to take the actions which would have alleviated their own condition, but instead luxuriated in apathy and resentment. There was a sense of abandonment there which, though it was not recognized as such, was theological in essence; instead it found expression in complaints, just or unjust, against the higher command and the politicians. (574)

This description of accidic soldiers most certainly echoes Waugh’s characterization of Guy Crouchback at the beginning of *The End of the Battle*, just as his linking of age and sloth echoes the pensée in which Ludovic reflects that “[t]he penalty of sloth is longevity” (115). At the same time, the passage seems to describe Waugh’s own wartime and post-war relation to the military and political establishments, especially as he planned and wrote his satirical trilogy. Indeed, Waugh’s decision to write a durational satire at all might be seen as a consequence of his own experience of sloth. As Daniel McInery notes in his essay on *Sword of Honour*, Waugh drew his characterization of sloth from St. Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae*, in which the latter had described the deadly sin as “‘undue rest’…a rest, often in the form of celebration, which does not take its ultimate rationale from the goodness of God” (47). Proceeding to cite Josef Pieper’s characterization of religious “festivity” as “a living out, ‘for some special occasion and in an uncommon manner, the universal assent to the world as a whole,’” McInery argues that “[by] all appearances sloth may look like the gayest pleasure” and “may bury itself underneath the most electric activity” but that such pleasurable activity “cannot utterly extinguish the cry of a sadness edging toward despair” (47, 53). According to McInery, sloth is therefore the state when “true festivity is replaced by ersatz, indeed antifestive, festivity,” a state that he sees multiple characters experiencing in the trilogy (47). What should perhaps be added to this account, however, is that “antifestive festivity” might equally describe Waugh’s practice in writing
durational satire. Combining the “electric activity” of satire with the “sadness edging towards despair” of duration, Waugh humorously underscores the absurdities of the world at war only to suggest that spiritual transformation, while perhaps personally rewarding, has no measurable impact on social and political ills.
CHAPTER FOUR

Paying It Forward: American Durational Satire and World War II

I was perplexed as to what the usefulness of the arts might be, with the possible exception of interior decoration. The most positive notion I could come up with was what I call the canary-in-the-coal-mine theory of the arts. This theory argues that artists are useful to society because they are so sensitive. The are supersensitive. They keel over like canaries in coal mines filled with poison gas, long before more robust types realize that any danger is there.

— Kurt Vonnegut, Wampeters, Foma, & Granfalloons (92)

In his introduction to The Pity of War, Niall Ferguson remarks that the limited treatment of World War I in postwar American literature may perhaps “testify to a genuine American detachment from—even lack of interest—in [that] war” (xxiv). Although Ferguson’s main goal is to counter those characterizations of the war that downplay the conflict’s economic and ideological implications for the United States, the statistical data he presents underscore American soldiers’ limited presence in the Great War. Noting, for instance, that only 4.3 percent of American men fought in the war, as opposed to 19.9 percent of French men, Ferguson also remarks that the 114,000 American fatalities during the war represented only 1.2 percent of the global death toll. As he goes on to explain, “Even the Indian army had a higher mortality rate than the American. Only 0.4 per cent of American men aged between 15 and 49 were killed in the conflict, compared with figures of 22.7 per cent for Serbia and 13.3 per cent for France.”

While Ferguson rightly contends that the effect of any war on a nation does not correlate to its number of dead soldiers, the United States’ comparatively low casualty figures during World War I directly relate to the country’s late entry into the conflict and the limited role its soldiers played therein. Only beginning to mobilize American troops in April 1917, Woodrow Wilson, along with his advisors, wished to maintain the independence of the American

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1 John H. Morrow Jr. provides slightly different casualty figures for the United States and France. On his account, the American Expeditionary Force “suffered some 50,000 deaths in battle and a total of 125,000 dead by 1 July 1919,” while the French lost 16.8 percent of all men mobilized, 22 percent of their officers, and 18 percent of soldiers (284).
Expeditionary Force (AEF) in Europe and consequently instructed General Pershing, the head of the AEF, that “the forces of the United States are a separate and distinct component of the combined forces, the identity of which must be preserved” (Trask as qtd. in Strachan 305). Though almost entirely reliant on French artillery, transport, and aircraft, Pershing seems to have thought that the American army’s distinctness could best be achieved by ignoring the lessons of modern warfare that the French and British had learned during the preceding years of combat (Morrow 229). A firm believer in the virtues of aimed rifle-fire and mobile warfare, Pershing continually “rejected the views of those who urged that machinery could substitute for manpower,” and as a result, American casualties in 1918, compared to those of the French and British, were “disproportionately large” (Strachan 311, Ferguson 312). Contrary to popular legend, then, the United States’ entry into World War I did not signal an advance in tactics or a change in Allied strategy; nor did it do much to accelerate the conclusion of the conflict. Indeed, as Hew Strachan notes, “Pershing’s insistence on [the AEF’s] independence seemed to have confirmed the Germans’ expectation that the United States army would not make an effective contribution [to the Allied war effort] until 1919” (310).

Because the United States entered World War I later than other countries; because its experience of total war was comparatively short in duration; and because its casualty figures were considerably lower than other fighting powers’, the narrow treatment of World War I in most American fiction of the postwar period is not surprising. Unlike their English counterparts, who wrote poems, long memoirs, and even longer novels about their experiences at the front, American authors, if they chose to mention the First World War at all, tended to give it little narrative space, to downplay its consequences, and to treat it without irony. Not only were lengthy literary accounts of the war thus few and far between in postwar American fiction; so, too, were satirical explorations of the war and its ramifications for the United States. The durational satire that had become characteristic of much postwar English literature did not make an appearance on American shores in the aftermath of World War I.
Flash forward to World War II. By V-J Day in 1945, the United States had been at war for nearly four years. Over the course of those years, the country had enlisted over 16,000,000 men and women in the armed services and had suffered more than 400,000 casualties, 292,000 of which were military deaths.\(^2\) In addition, soldiers who served in the American army had not, as was the case in World War I, been confined to combat operations in Western Europe but had faced the possibility of battle across the globe. In terms of its scope, duration, and casualty rates, then, World War II proved for the United States a beast much different from World War I. At the same time, however, the American experience of World War II also had striking similarities to England’s experience of the Great War. While separating England’s World War I casualty figures from the total losses suffered by the British Empire is a challenging task, England had, during the First World War, undergone a mobilization effort proportionally similar to that of the United States in World War II and had seen its soldiers fight for four years on the battlefields of multiple continents.\(^3\) Repeating to some degree England’s first experience of global conflict some thirty years later, the United States ultimately became familiar with the hallmarks of total war—its seeming endlessness, its astonishing breadth, its technological terrors—that had previously influenced post-World-War-I English life and literature.

Comparisons like those I have just advanced clearly run the risk of oversimplification. Here again, casualty figures do not neatly correlate to the impact of a war on a nation, and one should certainly take account of World War I’s and World War II’s different origins and

\(^2\) The number of American casualties mentioned in this sentence comes from John Keegan’s *The Second World War* (591). Other scholars, however, have provided different numbers. Martin Gilbert, for instance, contends that the United States “suffered 362,561 army, navy and air force and Marine Corps deaths” during World War II, while the website for the National WWII Museum in New Orleans lists 407,316 soldiers killed in the Army and Air Force, the Navy, the Marines, and the Coast Guard.

\(^3\) Most histories of the war list casualties for the British Empire as a whole. Chris Baker, however, suggests that, in addition to the 733,514 men already enlisted in the United Kingdom at the start of World War I, 4,836,700 soldiers were recruited in England, Scotland, Wales, and Monmouth (see *The Long, Long Trail*). Because the population of England, Scotland, and Wales in June 1914 was roughly 41,707,851 (Colby 310), Baker’s numbers, if correct, would suggest that 11.6 percent of the those regions’ total population was mobilized during the war. This percentage is comparable to that of American mobilization, since the total population of the Continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii in 1940 was 132,453,527 (US Census 1940) and since 16,353,659 Americans (see “U.S. Casualties in Major Wars,” PBS), over 10,000,000 of whom were drafted (see National WWII Museum), served in World War II. Percentage-wise, these figures mean that 12.3 percent of the American population was mobilized for combat.
technologies, as well as the different national and ideological compositions of the Allied and Axis forces. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I would like to stress that the experience of World War II for American authors who fought seems to have come to resemble in gravity and consequence the experience of English authors in World War I. For while the United States did not, as did England, see its literary marketplace flooded by war-related memoirs and novels in the aftermath of World War I, that marketplace did find itself inundated by such works in the wake of World War II. More specifically, American authors began producing the kinds of lengthy memoirs and novels that had appeared in England several decades earlier, and by the 1960s, they had begun to treat World War II in the same satirical vein that authors such as Ford Madox Ford, Wyndham Lewis, and Robert Graves had treated World War I in the 1920s and 1930s. A decade after the conclusion of World War II, in other words, durational satire had come to roost in the United States.

In considering the lengthy, though not necessarily satirical, novels composed about World War II shortly after that conflict’s end, one should include Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead* (736 pages), James Jones’s *From Here to Eternity* (864 pages), Irwin Shaw’s *The Young Lions* (696 pages), and Herman Wouk’s *The Caine Mutiny* (560 pages). Mailer’s 1948 novel seems to have set the precedent for the first wave of American fiction that emerged out of the Second World War, a wave characterized by realistic depiction and a half-ironic, half-romantic outlook. So influential, indeed, was Mailer’s novel that other would-be authors who had served in the war tended to hesitate before its example. Kurt Vonnegut, for instance, believed that *The Naked and the Dead* was “a great war novel” and that Norman Mailer was “royalty”; yet when he first met Mailer in 1951, he also understood, in Charles J. Shields’s words, that the “alignment” and “unity” he needed to transform his own war experiences into a work of art “hadn’t snapped into place yet” (Vonnegut as qtd in Shields 117; Shields 117). Similarly feeling that Mailer’s novel was a “masterwork” that had “put [him] in [his] place,” Joseph Heller
subsequently decided to “stay away from [the] subject [of war] until [he] had something different to write about [it]” (Heller as qtd. in Daugherty 125, 126).

If *The Naked and the Dead* had an overwhelmingly positive critical reception and succeeded in intimidating other writers, its merits were also, to some degree, its limitations. As Tracy Daugherty explains in his biography of Heller, “*The Naked and the Dead* declared itself a novel of now, but it looked firmly backward” toward the war novels of Crane, Dos Passos, and Hemingway, as well as to Depression-era naturalism; for these reasons, Daugherty concludes, Mailer’s first novel, despite its publication date, “was, spiritually, the last great American novel of the 1930s” (132, 126). Daugherty’s claims about *The Naked and the Dead* are to some degree supported by Mailer’s own remarks in *Advertisements for Myself* (1959), where he reveals that, within two days of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, he was “worrying darkly whether it would be more likely that a great war novel would be written about Europe or the Pacific” (28).

Moreover, soon after the publication of *The Naked and the Dead*, Mailer, though denying his status as a realist, emphasized his indebtedness to Melville, Dos Passos, and James T. Farrell and declared that “the book [would] stand or fall as a realistic novel” (Mailer as qtd. in Foster 21).

Precisely because Mailer was planning *The Naked and the Dead* before he had seen any combat, his personal wartime experiences in the Philippines ultimately appear to be grafted atop a novel of an earlier generation. Indeed, critics’ tendency to devote more space to Mailer’s later

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4 Mailer claims that he learned the hallmarks of naturalism from Dos Passos and Farrell: “That terrible word ‘naturalism.’ It was my literary heritage—the things I learned from Dos Passos and Farrell. I took naturally to it, that’s the way one wrote a book” (Mailer as qtd. in Foster 21). Although Mailer goes on to remark that he was on a “mystic kick” when writing *The Naked and the Dead*, a novel whose “biggest influence...was Moby Dick,” Richard Foster explains that *Moby Dick* itself can be considered a realist novel: “For Melville saw in the actual hazard and struggle of whaling, as Mailer did in war, the revealed pattern of the grandeur and tragedy of the whole human enterprise” (Mailer as qtd. in Foster 21; Foster 21). Melville aside, many critics have noted Dos Passos’s and Farrell’s indebtedness to American realism. Speaking of Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), for instance, Michael Spindler remarks that the author’s “broad concern remains that of the traditional realist—the heavily itemized portraiture of urban social life—” but he adds that Dos Passos “energize[s] and give[s] fresh impact [to that portraiture by using] new modes of description and new principles of narrative structure” (Spindler 391). Meanwhile, in his Introduction to *The Face of Time* (1953), Charles Fanning repeatedly mentions Farrell’s “realist aesthetic” and cites approvingly the following claim from Harry Smith: “Farrell was not the last great exponent of American Naturalism. Rather, he achieved the first great synthesis of realist tradition and the newer subjectivist fiction, bringing psychological exploration to social forces and the facts of ordinary life. Farrell was more concerned with consciousness, attitudes, personality, subjective time, dream and the irrational than was any ‘realist’ or ‘Naturalist’” (Fanning xxxi, xl, xlii; Smith as qtd. in Fanning xxvi). We might also note that Fanning’s selective bibliography to *The Face of Time* includes eight sources that “[place] Farrell firmly in the context of American realism” (i).
works than to his first novel stems, in part, from their belief that *The Naked and the Dead* is less innovative than, say, *The Armies of the Night* (1968) or *The Executioner’s Song* (1979). Richard Foster, for instance, describes *The Naked and the Dead* as “a conventional novel in a realist-naturalist vein,” while Robert Merrill characterizes the work as “a rather traditional novel,” which, in its emphasis on character and action, “lacks the formal and stylistic innovations of Mailer’s [later] novels” (Foster 17; Merrill 17). Perhaps the most extreme verdict on *The Naked and the Dead* comes from Ihab Hassan, who, as early as 1961, declared that it was “a serious critical error to identify [Mailer’s] achievement with his first novel” (91).

Despite the critical preference for the works Mailer wrote during and after the 1950s—a decade in which he began placing his personality center stage, changed (again and again) his political stripe, and started writing about his peculiar brand of existentialism—*The Naked and the Dead* should continue to hold our interest if only because the second wave of American literature to come out of World War II—the durational satires proper—were written in response to its style and texture. Rejecting the realist techniques and romantic impulses of Mailer’s first novel, authors such as Heller and Vonnegut believed that an authentic take on American involvement in World War II would necessarily involve a departure from the traditional novel’s straightforward plot, well-rounded characters, and reverence for the *mot juste*. In fact, at the same time that Heller was fretting about Mailer’s accomplishment in *The Naked and the Dead*, he was also reflecting that “that type of writing was going to go out of style” (Heller as qtd. in Daugherty 132). Thus, when Heller did finally begin to write about his war experiences, his novel resembled Mailer’s first book in terms of length but also deviated from it by ratcheting up an understated irony to the level of satire. Meanwhile, Vonnegut, though writing shorter satires about the war, managed to have his novels bleed over into each other is such a way that they came to appear like one immense satirical project.5 Finally, within their war-related novels, both

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5 In an interview he gave with C.D.B. Bryan in 1969, Vonnegut explained that he “deliberately [kept] his books short because he want[ed] to be read by men in power and he [knew] politicians have neither the time nor the inclination to
Heller and Vonnegut responded to the occasional “Time Machine” chapters in Mailer’s first novel by thematically prioritizing the complexities of combatants’ temporal experience. Having discarded a linear chronology in *Catch-22*, for instance, Heller composed his narrative by relying on repetitions, flashbacks, and flash-forwards and by making the temporal bass-line of his book dependent on Yossarian’s increasing number of missions, rather than on the movements of the clock or progressions in the calendar year. For his part, Vonnegut structured *Slaughterhouse-Five* so that it set his experience of the bombing of Dresden alongside the story of Billy Pilgrim, who, without having willed it, travels through time and acquires a deterministic philosophy about the universe from an extraterrestrial civilization.

So striking is the difference between *The Naked and the Dead* and the war novels of Heller and Vonnegut that critics often overlook the influence that Mailer’s early success had in shifting his peers in other stylistic and generic directions. Perhaps the greatest injustice done to Heller’s and Vonnegut’s works, however, is not the critical underestimation of *The Naked and the Dead*’s influence on them but rather the way in which those later novels are regularly viewed through the lens of Mailer’s 1950s and 1960s politics and philosophy. Here, a brief timeline proves useful. Having published *The Naked and the Dead* in 1948, Mailer set himself the task of writing additional novels during the 1950s while also trying through essays and columns, especially 1957’s “The White Negro,” to cast himself as the “hipster” voice of his generation. By the time *Catch-22* was published in 1961, in other words, Mailer’s seminal essay on hipster existentialism was already four years old, *Advertisements for Myself* was two years old, and the author’s much-publicized run for the New York City mayoralty was fresh on the public’s mind. If Mailer had begun to dominate the literary scene when Heller’s first novel appeared, his cultural

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read thick books” (5). Even if Vonnegut kept individual works short, however, his tendency to have his novels refer to each other can cause readers to sense that his *oeuvre* is one massive satirical undertaking. Characters who appear in one novel, for instance, more likely than not appear in at least one other work (e.g., Kilgore Trout, Howard Campbell, Eliot Rosewater). Indeed, in some cases, Vonnegut wrote one longer novel only to divide it into two separate books before publication. As he noted in 1973, “*Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Breakfast of Champions* used to be one book. But they just separated completely. It was like a pousse-café, like oil and water—they simply were not mixable. So I was able to decant *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and what was left was *Breakfast of Champions*” (WFG 281).
influence had become incontrovertible by the time of *Slaughterhouse-Five*’s publication. Having seen his first war-related novel, *Mother Night*, appear in the same year Heller published *Catch-22*, Vonnegut published *Slaughterhouse-Five* in 1969, the same year that Mailer ran once more for the New York City mayoralty and received both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for *Armies of the Night*.

Given Mailer’s prominence as an author and would-be politician during the 1950s and 1960s, it is perhaps unsurprising that critics have viewed and continue to view *Catch-22* and *Slaughterhouse-Five* as works that toe the line of Norman Mailer’s philosophy and politics. To be clear, no one has argued that either novel should be read as a blanket endorsement of Mailer’s philosophical or political positions, but the typical characterizations of both novels as existential, postmodern, or absurdist does betray critics’ belief that they are part of the Mailerian era. Indeed, when critics discuss Heller’s and Vonnegut’s novels as postmodern and absurdist, they tend to support their positions by making two related points, both of which situate those works in dialogue with, if not in outright support of, the kind of political existentialism Mailer first espoused in “The White Negro.” First, suggesting that Heller and Vonnegut share an understanding of human existence as chaotic, irrational, and meaningless, critics argue that the temporal complexities of *Catch-22* and *Slaughterhouse-Five*—that is, their nonlinearities, circularities, and repetitions—ultimately privilege a present-centered philosophy and imply that political change, though desired, is unlikely to occur. Second, having concluded that, again by way of their characterizations of time, Heller and Vonnegut deny their readers a firm moral or political stance, critics contend that these authors produced not satire but exercises in black humor or dark comedy. Here, “black humor” and “dark comedy” become aligned with the “postmodern” or the “absurd,” while “satire” becomes linked to the traditional novel, in general, and to novels written before the 1950s, in particular.

In the remainder of this chapter, I wish to counter the critical consensus that *Catch-22* and *Slaughterhouse-Five* are postmodern in spirit by suggesting that the novels are not only
satires but durational satires of the kind that first appeared in England after World War I. More specifically, I will argue that Heller’s and Vonnegut’s narrative strategies, while certainly avoiding linearity and thus seeming to accord with the postmodern insistence on synchronicity rather than diachronicity, ultimately work toward the authors’ satirical end of exposing the limitations of a present-centered philosophy, a philosophy that, in the authors’ view, depends on a rejection of collective memory and personal responsibility. Before turning to the novels themselves, I will discuss the influence of Oswald Spengler on Mailer’s The Naked and the Dead and the Bergsonesque characterization of time in “The White Negro,” both of which Heller and Vonnegut implicitly work against in their novels of the 1960s. My aim throughout will be to demonstrate that, despite common critical characterizations of their works, Heller and Vonnegut use their fictions to make a point familiar to readers of Parade’s End, Time and Western Man, and The Sword of Honour trilogy: namely, the importance of an attention to clock-time, to duration rather than durée.

Arms and Mailer: The Influence of Spengler and Bergson

In a 1963 essay for Esquire magazine, Norman Mailer evaluated the literary works of several of his contemporaries, including Joseph Heller. Although Heller’s Catch-22 had been published two years earlier, the Esquire essay includes Mailer’s first public comments on the work, comments that largely point to the novel’s limitations. Taking issue with Catch-22’s concentration on “the military world of total frustration,” for instance, Mailer lamented that Heller had failed to capture “the anguish, the existential angst, which wars enable one to forget”:

6 The claim that postmodernism celebrates synchronicity rather than diachronicity originates with Frederic Jameson. As he explains in Postmodernism, “The waning of affect [that has accompanied the emergence of postmodernism]...might also have been characterized in the narrower context of literary criticism, as the waning of the great high modernist themes of time and temporality, the elegiac mysteries of durée and memory (something to be understood fully as much as a category of the literary criticism associated with high modernism as with the works themselves). We have often been told, however, that we now inhabit the synchronic rather than the diachronic, and I think it is at least empirically arguable that our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time, as in the preceding period of high modernism” (16).
Give talent its due, *Catch-22* is the debut of a writer with merry gifts. Heller may yet become Gogol. But what makes one hesitate to call his first novel great or even major is that he has only grasped the inferior aspect of Hell. What is most unendurable is not the military world of total frustration so much as the midnight frustration of the half-world, Baldwin’s other country, where a man may have time to hear his soul, and time to go deaf, even be forced to contemplate himself as he becomes deadened before his death. (Much as Hemingway may have been.) That is when one becomes aware of the anguish, the existential angst, which wars enable one to forget. It is that other death—without war—where one dies by a failure of nerve, which opens the bloodiest vents of Hell. And that is a novel none of us has yet come back alive to write. (*CC* 119, original emphasis)

That Mailer, the author of perhaps the most famous novel to come out of World War II, here argues that war itself obscures “the existential angst” about which one should be writing seems, at first glance, a shocking turn of events. Yet the names Mailer invokes in this passage provide us with a key to his literary preferences, which, until the late 1960s, seemed to lie in the direction of what we might call existential realism. As noted earlier, Mailer understood that *The Naked and the Dead* would be judged as a realist novel, even though he denied being a realist, and he also provided a literary genealogy for the novel that, by including the names of authors such as Melville, Dos Passos, and Farrell, confirmed a realist strain in his first book. Within the *Esquire* piece, Mailer, in a sense, extends this genealogy by mentioning Hemingway, one of his long-time idols, and James Baldwin, whom, some six years earlier, he had labeled the most effective spokesman of the existential program he outlined in “The White Negro.” Extending the existentialist realist canon in this fashion, Mailer manages to imply in his remarks about *Catch-22* that Heller, by writing a novel that is neither realist nor sufficiently existential, does not have a place on the literary family tree Mailer has traced.

What is especially striking about Mailer’s verdict on Heller and *Catch-22* is that his preference for existential realism seems to coincide with his antipathy for the genre of satire. Indeed, despite never using the word “satire,” Mailer appears not just to underscore the inadequate existentialism of traditional satire but also to criticize the specific features of
*duration*al satire, which Heller was trying to introduce into American literature. Earlier in the essay, for instance, Mailer remarks that *Catch-22* resembles “yard goods,” since, like those goods, “one could cut it anywhere”: “One could take out a hundred pages anywhere from the middle of *Catch-22*, and not even the author could be certain they were gone.” Moreover, suggesting that “the length and similarity of one page to another gives a curious meat-and-potatoes to the madness [of Heller’s world],” he laments that “every character goes through a routine on every page which is as formal as a little peasant figure in a folk dance” (original emphasis). What Mailer neglects to consider is that the length and repetitions in *Catch-22* are the hallmarks of the kind of satire Heller was striving to write. By creating a work that stretches to great length and often seems longer than it is precisely because of its repetitions, Heller, as I argue at greater length in the next section of this chapter, manages to allow his reader to experience a version of the war’s duration—and the exhaustion that comes with it—much as his characters do.

If Mailer’s fondness for realism and opposition to satire led him to underestimate Heller’s accomplishments, his philosophical preferences, which, in some respects, had remained consistent since the mid-1940s, also reinforced his distaste for *Catch-22*. In particular, Mailer’s fondness for the work of Oswald Spengler—who, we might recall, was one of the bugbears of Wyndham Lewis—influenced not only his construction of *The Naked and the Dead* but also his philosophical pronouncements during the 1950s. As J. Michael Lennon explains in his biography of the author, Mailer began reading Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* shortly after completing his artillery training in August 1944 and found that the work “gave him a sense of historical scope and flux that he had not encountered before” (63).

[Mailer] was astonished by Spengler’s ability to seize the relationships among developments in widely separated fields—warfare, astronomy, architecture, medicine, agriculture, the arts, statescraft—and align them to reveal a culture’s tendencies, to show its movement in the inevitable cycle of development and decline as well as to identify parallel cycles in other cultures... Spengler saw the past as an organism. Every culture moved through stages of flowering, decadence, ossification, death, and rebirth. Mailer’s pronounced preference for the organic over the
analytic, for metaphor over measure, has its origin in *The Decline of the West*. An invincible dualist, Spengler based many of his arguments on the superiority of the second term in a set of paired opposites—causality-destiny, space-time, nature-history, thought-will. He distrusted the rational scientist...while admiring the forceful, intuitive artist...Whatever the roots of Mailer’s own dichotomous thinking, Spengler deepened the cleft. (63-4)

If Mailer developed a fascination with Spengler’s organic and dualist conception of the universe before he headed overseas, that fascination continued to increase while he was stationed in the Pacific. Carrying along a copy of *The Decline in the West* during his time on Luzon, he would supplement his readings of the book by writing letters about its subject matter to his wife Bea, who had been told to expect regular communications about the war, all of which were to be used, instead of a journal, to help him write his novel after the conclusion of the conflict (68, 60).

In these same letters, Mailer also began to discuss one of the central themes that would inform his writing from *The Naked and the Dead* on: his distrust of machines. Although he registered little concern about the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, since “he approved of anything that got Americans home sooner,” his “suspicion of all things mechanical and electronic” was, according to Lennon, “irreversible by August 1945” (77). Writing to Bea on August 8, for instance, Mailer ended his letter with the following sentence, one that Lennon characterizes as particularly “Spenglerian”: “‘We have come to the age when we love machines and hate women’” (original emphasis).

When *The Naked and the Dead* finally appeared in print three years after the end of World War II, Spengler’s influence on Mailer was clearly visible, especially in the detail with which he described the natural environment of Anopopei, the fictional island on which the novel is set. As Richard Foster explains, the novel makes up for its lack of a “true hero” and a “forceful antagonist” by implying that “[a] great spasm of nature, an inevitable motion of history, has superseded the efficacies of individual men” (22). Moreover, in the figures of his two most complex characters, Mailer advances his belief that people, while certainly having social and
psychological backgrounds, are also “impersonal units of energy...are a kind of battleground where external forces which inhabit the soul or psyche war for possession” (Poirier 94). Such is certainly the case with General Cummings, who, towards the end of the novel, travels to a battery close to the front, fires a howitzer, and contemplates that “[a]ll the deep dark urges of man, the sacrifices on the hilltop, and the churning lusts of the night and sleep, [are] all contained in the shattering screaming burst of a shell, the manmade thunder of light” (ND 566). This reflection, while perhaps closer to Mailer’s philosophy than Spengler’s, nevertheless provides Mailer with an opportunity to introduce Spengler into the text. For with the thought of the shell’s movement through space and time still fresh in his mind, General Cummings soon thereafter composes a journal entry in which he draws four parabolas of varying steepness, remarks their similarity to “Spengler’s plant form for all cultures,” and concludes that, more than just representing the plant form, the parabolas represent “the form line of all cultures” (569, emphasis added). As he goes on to reflect, the parabola whose highest point is past the midway mark is the “tragic curve,” since “[a]n epoch always seems to reach its zenith at a point past the middle of its orbit in time” (569-70). What’s more, the significance of the tragic curve lies in its comprehension of all human desire and striving:

It is the curve of all human powers (disregarding the plateau of learning, the checks upon decline) and it seems to be the curve of sexual excitement and discharge, which is after all the physical core of life...It is the curve of the death missile as well as an abstraction of the life-love impulse; it demonstrates the form of existence, and life and death are merely different points of observation on the same trajectory. The life viewpoint is what we see and feel astride the shell; it is the present, seeing, feeling, sensing. The death viewpoint sees the shell as a whole, knows its inexorable end, the point toward which is has been destined by inevitable physical laws from the moment of its primary impulse when it was catapulted into the air. (570)

Although Cummings ultimately rejects his conception of the tragic curve despite his desire “to mold the curve” in accordance with his own ambitions, his decision to throw away the journal entry stems not from a disbelief in what he has written but from a fear that he has waxed
too poetic (571). Immediately after writing the passage recorded above, in other words, Cummings finds himself equating the wind resistance encountered by a flying shell with the “mass inertia or the inertia of the masses” that slows “the upward leap of a culture.” And as he looks back over that claim, he becomes upset not because he has reduced whole sections of the population to an inanimate force but because he has allowed himself the impractical luxury of creating a “conceit.” Indeed, the dislike the reader feels for Cummings after having read his journal entry occurs precisely because the General takes issue with his use of metaphor qua metaphor rather than with the thoughts that drove him to metaphor in the first place: namely, his belief that one can productively “consider weapons as something more than machines, as having personalities, perhaps, likenesses to the human” and that one can equally productively consider “men [in battle as] closer to machines than humans...[as] thousands of man-machines who dart with governing habits across a field, sweat like a radiator in the sun, shiver and become stiff like a piece of metal in the rain” (568, 569). From Mailer’s perspective, a perspective the reader is presumed to share, then, Cummings’s error is not to have given credence to Spengler’s views but to have used his reflections on those views to arrive at a theory that depends on the mechanization of humanity.

That Mailer encourages this line of analysis is also supported by his characterization of Lieutenant Hearn, who, as a would-be liberal, stands in opposition to the proto-fascist Cummings. In his early encounters with Cummings, Hearn feels both attracted to the General’s “almost unique ability to extend his thoughts into immediate and effective action” and repelled by the General’s philosophical and political position (77). In particular, Hearn is bothered by the General’s remarks that “every man [must be] fitted into a fear ladder,” that “the idea of individual

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7 For the reader of The Naked and the Dead alone, Mailer’s support of Spengler’s theories may be harder to trace. Nevertheless, within the “Time Machine” chapters, it becomes clear that the General’s description of “the curve of all human powers” is an idea with which Mailer agrees. Indeed, even outside those chapters, Mailer seems to divide his characters into two groups: those who, like Wilson, adhere to the “life-viewpoint” and those who, like Sergeant Croft, adhere to the “death-viewpoint.” Add to this Mailer’s continuing support of Spenglerian ideas in the late 1950s (see below), and we can gather that Mailer’s issue with the General’s theory is its turn toward an endorsement of mechanized humanity.
personality is just a hindrance,” and that “the only morality of the future is a power morality” (77, 176, 181). Yet at the same time that he resists the General’s ideology, Hearn fears that Cummings, who has called him “nothing but a shell” and has told him that he has “a great future as a reactionary,” may be more like him than he has thought (79, 84).

While the reader may wish to reject Hearn’s suspicion that he has anything in common with the General, Mailer does not allow for such a dismissal. In the “Time Machine” chapter dedicated to the Lieutenant, for instance, Mailer not only captures Hearn’s apathy and sense of superiority but also has him describe himself as a “dilettante skipping around sewers” (350). This last characterization, in fact, comes less than nine pages after the novel’s other mention of Spengler’s *The Decline of the West*, which, as was the case with General Cummings’s reference, is used to present the immobility of the lower classes as an unavoidable side-effect of the growth of culture. In that scene, having gone on “an undeviating tour of all the [lower-class Boston] bars and dives” and having remarked to a friend that the bars’ patrons lead “animal existences,” Hearn hears his friend reply, “What do you expect...they’re the by-product of an acquisitive society, refuse, that’s all, the fester in Spengler’s world-city” (339, 340). Although Hearn labels his friend a “phony” for making this remark and claims untruthfully that he himself has had much experience with the horrors of an “acquisitive society,” the remainder of the chapter illustrates that he has no fellow-feeling for the downtrodden and, as much as his friend, sees them as a necessary if unfortunate consequence of civilization’s development. Indeed, by the end of the chapter, not only is Hearn once more called, though by someone other than the General, “nothing but a goddam shell”; he also has a Communist ask him to leave the Party for precisely the same reasons that the General later labels him a pseudo-liberal: “You’ve reacted against the lies of the system, but it’s a nebulous rebellion. You want perfection, you’re a bourgeois idealist, and therefore you’re undependable” (347, 343).

If neither Hearn nor the General emerges as the clear-cut hero or villain of *The Naked and the Dead*, their failure to do so stems not from their fundamental belief in Spengler’s
characterization of culture but from their tendency to misappropriate Spengler’s work in an attempt to shore up two political positions that Mailer finds untenable: liberalism and fascism. Somewhat surprisingly, however, liberalism, on Mailer’s account, proves more troubling than fascism, if only because fascism seemed to have been dealt a lethal blow with the Allied victory in World War II. As T.H. Adamowski explains, Mailer, in the aftermath of the war, began “to see in liberalism forms of totalitarianism itself, marked by an instrumentalist rationalism that used the methods of modern technical and managerial success” (897, original emphasis). Moreover, believing that liberalism “had been corrupted by sentimentality” and that “there [was] about liberals something weak and compromising,” Mailer began to target “liberalism’s inner life” while characterizing himself as a Radical Conservative (894, 897, 900, original emphasis).

According to Adamowski, Mailer’s political self-designation was not meant to suggest that he was “a left-leaning conservative, or a right-leaning radical. As with a hovering accent, he means both. He wants...to pursue the goals of Edmund Burke by using the analytical tools of Karl Marx” (900, original emphasis).

In his essay on Mailer’s anti-liberalism, Sean McCann makes many of the same points as Adamowski but directly discusses The Naked and the Dead as a novel in which Mailer “mocks the liberal vision of a society joined by tolerance and shared institutions” and demonstrates that “[t]he reactionary and the reformist both fall before the bureaucratic and contingent” when they attempt to impose their wills on the world (303). On McCann’s account, in fact, the book is less about “the coming of a fascistic regime” than about a “crisis of public authority,” a crisis brought about by liberalism’s “reification [of] an impoverished version of the self, [which] prevent[s] us from making ‘human agency....an object of continuing attention and concern’” (303, 309).

“Agency” is here the key word, since, as McCann notes, individuals for Mailer are “‘forces’ rather than ‘beings,’” forces whose sense of self “is never so much on the line, never so full of character and moral depth, as when people are prepared to fight and die for what they believe” (309). Because Mailer suggests “that there are no autonomous selves, only contingent identities
constantly in flux,” and because he implies that “the self only becomes a coherent body...when it is engaged in...defining conflict,” combat of any kind becomes “not just a struggle for mastery...[but] a heuristic for knowledge of the self and other” (309, 314). Indeed, in Mailer’s own formulation, “Form,” whether of the self or of a culture, “is the record of a war” (Mailer as qtd. in McCann 309).

Although McCann concludes that Mailer’s belief in “contingent identities” makes him “a good postmodernist,” what should be stressed at this point is that both Mailer and his characters also prove to be good modernists. By this, I mean that Mailer’s philosophy—and, in consequence, his narrative strategy in The Naked and the Dead—owes a great deal of debt not only to Oswald Spengler but also to Henri Bergson. To make this point, one need only recall General Cummings’s contention that the “life viewpoint is what we see and feel astride the shell; it is the present, seeing, feeling, sensing,” while the “death viewpoint sees the shell as a whole, knows its inexorable end.” A quite accurate, if perhaps unintentional, characterization of Bergsonian durée, Cummings’s description of the “life viewpoint” is also one that Mailer seems to support in his “Time Machine” chapters. Featuring ten such chapters, The Naked and the Dead strives to give the reader a sense of the lived time of its characters by following major events in certain characters’ present experience with chapter-length descriptions of those characters’ pasts. The “Time Machine” chapter dedicated to Lieutenant Hearn’s past, for instance, follows immediately upon Hearn’s ultimate humiliation by the General, and the point of the chapter, which comes just after Hearn’s realization that he will “have to react or die,” is to illustrate in condensed form how his life has brought him to this moment of decision-making (327). The effect of this narrative strategy, both in Hearn’s case and in others’, is to create a sense of simultaneity or, to be more exact, a sense that the heterogeneous elements of the past continue to impinge on the present. Yet because the events of the past are highly condensed and because they are more often than not delivered through stream-of-consciousness narration, the reader’s sensation is not that one event has led to or caused another but rather that each event, or the memory of it, co-exists with the
present moment. To borrow General Cummings’s language, in each of the “Time Machine”
chapters, we relive in shortened form what any given character “[saw] and [felt] astride the shell,”
and we come to understand that the moments captured just before the commencement of those
chapters are what a character is currently “seeing, feeling, sensing.” Thus, by the end of any
“Time Machine” chapter, Mailer has encouraged us to see the shell—that is, any individual
character—as almost indistinguishable in the present moment from its total past trajectory.

While there is no evidence that Mailer was familiar with Bergson’s philosophy, the
similarities between the two authors’ characterizations of time nevertheless became more
pronounced during the 1950s, when Mailer began discussing his particular form of
existentialism. Here, for instance, is the opening passage of his 1957 essay “The White Negro,”
which manages to link together World War II, matters of time, and the problems of cause and
effect:

Probably, we will never be able to determine the psychic havoc of the concentration camps and the atom bomb upon the unconscious mind of almost everyone alive in these years. For the first time in civilized history, perhaps for the first time in all of history, we have been forced to live with the suppressed knowledge that the smallest facets of our personality or the most minor projection of our ideas, or indeed the absence of ideas and the absence of personality could mean equally well that we might still be doomed to die as a cipher in some vast statistical operation in which our teeth would be
counted, and our hair would be saved, but our death itself would be unknown, unhonored, and unremarked, a death which could not follow with dignity as a possible consequence to serious actions we
had chosen, but rather as a \textit{deus ex machina} in a gas chamber or radioactive city; and so if in the midst of civilization—\textit{that civilization founded upon the Faustian urge to dominate nature by mastering time, mastering the links of social cause and effect}—in the middle of an economic civilization \textit{founded upon the confidence that time could indeed be subjected to our will}, our psyche was subjected itself to the intolerable anxiety that death being causeless, \textit{life was causeless as well, and time deprived of

\footnote{Bergson’s influence on existential philosophy has been noted by many scholars. According to William Barrett, for instance, “[T]he figure of Henri Bergson (1859-1941) cannot really be admitted from any historical sketch of existential philosophy. Without Bergson the whole atmosphere in which Existentialists have philosophized would not have been what it was. He was the first to insist on the insufficiency of the abstract intelligence to grasp the richness of experience, on the urgent and irreducible reality of time, and—perhaps in the long run the most significant insight of all—on the inner depth of the psychic life which cannot be measured by the quantitative methods of the physical sciences” (14-5).} See also P.A.Y. Gunter’s “Bergson and Sartre: The Rise of French Existentialism”
cause and effect had come to a stop. (AFM 338, my emphasis)

In looking at the last sentence of this passage, one feels compelled to conclude that Mailer, who was never known for his sense of humor, did not intentionally wish to imply that the cause-and-effect relationship of “If...Then” syntactical structures had also ceased to obtain in the wake of the war. Whatever that sentence’s syntactical irregularities, the influence of Spengler, who described Western civilization as “Faustian” largely because of its “capacity for expansion,” is evident in this passage, as is Mailer’s Bergsonesque belief that lived time can no longer be comprehended through the tickings of a manmade clock or by way of logical thought (Frye 13). Yet if the essay’s first paragraph seems to lament the postwar state of affairs—to lament, especially, man’s lack of mastery over time—Mailer soon makes it clear that he regards with excitement the possibilities opened to Americans as a result of their war-related change in perception. For just after he concludes the essay’s first section by bemoaning “the collective failure of nerve” that has characterized post-war America, he proceeds to suggest that “our collective condition [of] liv[ing] with instant death” actually encourages us “to explore that domain of experience where security is boredom and therefore sickness, and [compels us to exist] in the present, in that enormous present which is without past or future, memory or planned intention” (338, 339). According to Mailer, this “burning consciousness of the present,” which has historically been associated with black men, mystics, and psychopaths, is now a possibility—and a liberating one—for anyone who is willing to face “the possibilities within death” and to recognize that “life [is] war, nothing but war” (342, 341).

For those interested in following Mailer’s existential program, the first and most important tenet of belief is that dynamism is preferable to stasis and that the universe is “a changing reality whose laws are remade at each instant by everything living” (354). Within such a universe, Mailer explains, man is “not only his character but his context,” and “[w]hat dominates both character and context is the energy available at the moment of intense context”
While Mailer’s repeated emphasis on the virtues of energy throughout “The White Negro” causes him at times to sound like a latter-day Ezra Pound, it is precisely the energy he associates with black American men that makes him a devotée of Hip. Suggesting that black men resemble psychopaths—and “psychopath” is here a term of endearment—in their constant attempts “to create a new nervous system for themselves,” Mailer contends that the black man’s language of Hip is “a language of energy, how it is found, how it is lost” (345, 349). Indeed, the “pictorial language” of Hip, which he awkwardly tries to explain in the concluding sections of the “The White Negro,” is, for Mailer, a language “imbued with the dialectic of small but intense change”: “What makes Hip a special language is that it cannot really be taught...[It is] a language for the microcosm, in this case, man, for it takes the immediate experiences of any passing man and magnifies the dynamics of his movements, not specifically but abstractly so that he is seen more as a vector in a network of forces than as a static character in a crystallized field” (348-9).

In sum, then, Mailer asks his readers to see each individual “as a collection of possibilities”; to cultivate “primitive passion,” even if (and perhaps because) this entails psychopathic violence; and to recognize Hip as a departure from “the authoritarian philosophies which now appeal to the conservative and liberal temper” (353, 354).

Although Mailer’s philosophy and politics continued to evolve after the publication of “The White Negro,” his preoccupation with energy and dynamism never thereafter abated. The literary criticism of Mailer’s oeuvre, in fact, usually involves the interrelatedness of combat, existentialism/mysticism, and dynamism in a given work. In “Mailer’s Cosmology,” for instance, J. Michael Lennon argues that Mailer sees “[m]ovement...[as] preced[ing] morality” and that he understands man’s ultimate choice to be between “stagnation and growth,” while Richard Poirier contends that “Mailer’s style, very much in [a] Faulknerian mode, keeps everything in motion...[and] tend[s] to collapse the rational insistence on distinctions between time and place” (Lennon 148, 151; Poirier 105). Similarly, remarking Mailer’s “fascination with force, whether as power in social spheres or energy in more individual ones,” Robert Solotaroff contends that “[o]ne of the
most interesting struggles that runs through Mailer’s writing is his attempt to ground the intuitive in the factual, the mystical in the phenomenal, the psychic in the biological and the apocalyptic in the historical” (123, 124). Yet if most critics would agree with Solotaroff that Mailer’s fascinations and philosophies “ground dynamic growth-time and deade[n] clock-time in biological and historical processes,” they also tend to run the risk of confounding Mailer’s very public interests and idiosyncrasies of the 1950s and 1960s with the literary aims of other authors publishing in the same decades (121). So repeated, in other words, were Mailer’s political, philosophical, and literary positions in the media of those decades that the author’s strain of “postmodern” existentialism and mysticism, particularly as these related to conceptions of time, often became and still are associated in critical accounts with a whole generation’s literary productions.

Although there were certainly artists and authors who shared Mailer’s perception of the universe as “neither clock nor chaos,” the fact remains that literary critical interpretations of novels published in the late 1950s and the 1960s tended and still do tend to see a correlation between those works’ preference for achronology and something like Mailer’s philosophy and politics (Lennon 145). In identifying such correlations, critics do not usually mention Mailer’s name or his body of work, but precisely because Mailer was the self-proclaimed poster-child of his era—because he was, in Norman Podhoretz’s words, a man “endowed with the capacity for seeing himself as a battleground of history”—his presence loomed large and continues to do so in analyses of novels that happened to appear in the same decades as his own writings (Podhoretz as qtd. in Lennon 226). In the following sections of this chapter, I want to turn to Heller’s *Catch-22* and Vonnegut’s *Mother Night* and *Slaughterhouse-Five*, novels that despite being frequently characterized as sharing Mailer’s commitment to the “existential” and the “postmodern,” refuse both Mailer’s political position and his philosophical position on time. Indeed, far from joining Mailer in the “postmodern” fold, Heller and Vonnegut use what are regularly considered
postmodern narrative strategies to privilege a linear conception of time and to encourage a temporal awareness that extends beyond “the enormous present.”

**Heller Skelter: Satirized Circularities and the Privileging of Temporal Attention in Catch-22**

Soon after *Catch-22* appeared in print, Orville Prescott, a reviewer for the *New York Times*, informed the readers of that paper that Heller’s first book, though “not an entirely successful novel” or “even a good novel by conventional standards,” was nevertheless “the strangest novel yet written about the United States Air Force in World War II.” Although Prescott went on to describe *Catch-22* as a “dazzling performance” that was “[w]idely original, brilliantly comic, and brutally gruesome,” many other reviewers were unable to agree that the book had merits despite its oddity. Disparagingly citing Prescott’s review in a 1963 essay in *Daedelus*, for example, one reviewer, operating under the cover of anonymity, declared that *Catch-22* was not only an immoral novel but also one that depended on a deficient conception of satire: “[Heller’s] conception of satire, if he has one, is that it is any mixture of the repellent and ridiculous...It’s not that we are horrified by [what he writes]. We are a little disgusted and greatly bored” (161-2). The *Daedelus* reviewer’s most barbed comments, however, were reserved not for *Catch-22’s* immorality but rather for its supposed indebtedness to other authors and its apparent lack of organization. Having snidely noted that, unlike another critic, he fails to find a correlation between Dante and Heller, the anonymous reviewer proceeds to take on members of the critical establishment who have dared to like Heller’s novel:

> [Finding links between Heller and other authors] is a game all may easily play, and if given time [reviewers] might have found Heller a fusion of Stephen Crane and P.G. Wodehouse, Shakespeare and Ezra Pound, Louisa May Alcott and James Joyce, St. Paul and Henry Miller. What they fail to see is that plus and minus numerals add up to zero, that the indiscriminate mixture of colors gives not the spectrum of the rainbow but the brown of mud...In addition to arbitrary mixture, formlessness and excess are being increasingly accepted as the badge of ‘true art.’
Because Heller’s book reads as if the pages of the manuscript had been scrambled on the way to the printer, it is viewed as experimental and ‘modern’—like the work of the painter who squirts colors on the side of a barn with a firehose and thus triumphs in a new ‘technique.’ The idea has still failed to penetrate that formlessness is not a new kind of form, and that true modern art is not formless. (162)

No doubt as a reaction to heated arguments of this kind, subsequent critics have attempted to defend *Catch-22* along two related lines. First, they wish to emphasize that, despite its seemingly chaotic structure, the novel does have an underlying organization and a conscious design. Second, they suggest that the style of the novel, which depends on repetitions, circularities, and gradual clarifications, has a direct relation to the meaning of the text, a meaning that is usually seen to be “existential,” “absurdist,” or, more broadly, “postmodern.” Clinton S. Burhans, Jr., for example, argues that Heller’s use of flashbacks represents “an ingenious fusion of time planes into the simultaneity of existential time, a fusion entirely consistent with what seems [to be]...the fundamental existential theme of the work” (41). Meanwhile, Brian Way, who describes *Catch-22* as a novel that “develops, not in time, but through a deepening sense of the absurd,” diagnoses Heller as one of the “new writers” who have “turn[ed] to the literature of non-reason...for the appropriate means of exploration and criticism” (Way 267, 257).

Although I will return to Heller’s presentation of time shortly, what I would like to emphasize here is that the “existential,” “absurdist,” and “postmodern” readings of *Catch-22*, while usually attempting to defend the novel against detractors like the *Daedalus* reviewer, tend to make claims similar to that reviewer’s when considering the novel’s genre. More specifically,

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9 Robert Merrill, for instance, concludes that “[w]hat appears to be [the novel’s] formless chaos is in fact a brilliant strategy,” while Clinton S. Burhans, Jr. contends that *Catch-22* “is an apparent—but only apparent—jumble of comment, character, and event” (Merrill 139; Burhans 40).

10 Gary Davis provides a version of Burhans’s and Way’s claims that has a distinctly postmodern flavor. According to Davis, *Catch-22*’s “peculiar logic...demands that we think of ourselves as unrelated moments of discourse rather than as a continuous or creative entity”; moreover, the novel “‘ask[s] us whether what we might have thought to be ‘life’ must not also be thought of in terms of a freplay which is inseparable, even indistinguishable, from those processes known as ‘fiction’ and ‘interpretation’” (Davis 66, 73).
such readings tend to conclude that *Catch-22* is not a satire. Whereas the *Daedalus* reviewer seemed to be advancing that claim in an attempt to preserve the sanctity of satire,\(^{11}\) later critics have, without successfully explaining their reasoning, avoided the term “satire” when discussing Heller’s novel and have instead categorized the book as an exercise in “black humor” or “dark comedy.”\(^{12}\) Because critics who discuss *Catch-22* as a work of “black humor” rarely explain their decision to use that term; and because they equally rarely describe their understanding of the difference between “satire” and “black humor,” one is more often than not left to conclude that any work with an existential or absurdist theme is, by that very fact, not a satire and that satire itself, given the postwar proliferation of existential and absurdist works, is a dead letter.

Perhaps the clearest formulation of this distinction between satire and dark comedy as regards Heller’s novel occurs in Daniel Green’s “A World Worth Laughing At: *Catch-22* and the Humor of Black Humor.” In his article, Green wishes to demonstrate that *Catch-22* is “first and

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\(^{11}\) Just before the passage cited above, the *Daedalus* reviewer discusses Heller’s jokes at the expense of “the soldier in white,” which he finds distasteful. As he explains, “No kind of matter is denied the artist, providing he finds the right mode and possesses the right skills. Swift might have been able to adapt the matter of the ‘soldier in white’ to the mode of satire as he adapted the idea of butchering Irish babies for the English meat market in his ‘Modest Proposal.’ Swift’s persona is consistent and *serious*, the powerful thrust of the piece deriving from his frightening obtuseness; the material, as it must be in such a risky case, is under perfect control, the intention unmistakable. Heller, pace Leo Lerman, in not ‘our Swift’” (162, original emphasis). Putting aside the reviewer’s unfounded claim that satire must be “serious,” we might also add that he seems not to spend much time in the classroom, since many high school students and undergraduates continue to mistake Swift’s “intention” in “A Modest Proposal.” This is to say nothing of the first readers of the piece, who were appalled at its contents.

\(^{12}\) Although many critics have described *Catch-22* as “satirical” in passing, use of that word is rarely followed up by a discussion of what satire is or does. Leon F. Seltzer, for instance, argues that “view[ing] *Catch-22* solely in terms of metaphysical chaos... is to ignore the novel’s heavily satirical thrust, and in consequence, he wishes to consider “how Heller’s wildly unorthodox fictional methods, routinely interpreted as the technical corollary of his absurdist vision, are also the vehicle for his largely traditional, even orthodox, moral satire” (291). Yet in the remainder of his essay, Seltzer concentrates on Milo Minderbinder as an example of Heller’s “blistering attack on our capitalistic system” without returning to a discussion of how one might define “traditional, even orthodox, moral satire.” Perhaps the lengthiest consideration of *Catch-22*’s status as a satire occurs in Robert Merrill’s *Joseph Heller*. In a section headed “*Catch-22* and Satire,” Merrill reviews critical accounts related to the novel’s satirical bent and then offers definitions of satire from *Webster’s*, Edward Rosenheim, Matthew Hodgart, Dryden, and Alvin Kernan. Having assessed the ways in which *Catch-22* departs from each of these definitions, however, Merrill concludes that Heller’s novel is a fable, not a satire, and he ultimately claims that “read[ing] *Catch-22* as a satire is...to arrive at an incomplete understanding of Heller’s achievement” (29). Important to Merrill’s argument is not only his belief that satire “simplifies its materials in order to present clear-cut emblems of vice and folly as judged by both writers and readers”; equally important is his insistence, pace Rosenheim, that satire is “a momentary, localized affair” concerned with “discernible, historically authentic particulars” (27, 25). Suggesting that *Catch-22* cannot be a satire because it “does not really depict a satiric world in which good and bad are clearly distinguishable,” Merrill also remarks that the extreme length of the work prohibits its generic identification as satire: “I doubt that Rosenheim would accept either 1984 or *Catch-22* as a satire, for it is inherently unlikely that a three-hundred page novel such as 1984—let alone the expansive *Catch-22*—would be continuously concerned with such discernible, historically authentic particulars” (25, original emphasis).
foremost a comic novel whose primary structural principle is the joke,” and to make this point, he argues that the novel’s “brand of comedy...[diverges] from the primary line of twentieth-century comic fiction which uses comedy as a strategy to clearly satirical or otherwise discursive ends” (187, 188, original emphasis). While it remains unclear why a claim about the novel’s dominant structural principle must entail a rejection of the book’s status as a satire, Green subsequently turns to Jerry Palmer’s characterization of the “comic process” in The Logic of the Absurd and, applying that characterization to Catch-22, argues that the novel is a work of black humor. For Green, black humor “is perhaps most appropriately defined as an unapologetic, unalloyed use of comedy in extreme situations which implicitly raise very large, even profound questions”; moreover, such humor is “ultimately unregenerative,” since it “does not finally call attention to situations, issues, or problems that could be improved, resolved, or eliminated through increased human effort” (194). In other words, Green believes that black humor points to serious matters but points to those matters only to suggest that no one can do anything about them. Here, the very meaning of the word “serious,” a word that Green uses repeatedly, is called into question, since nothing would seem to be truly serious—that is, deserving of our concern or attention—if it remains forever outside of our control. Thus when Green ends his essay by saying with no trace of uneasiness that “Catch-22 will not tell you how to live or what to think or even what’s worth thinking about,” we are left asking ourselves why Heller wrote the novel in the first place (195, my emphasis).

Because Green’s analysis of Catch-22 ultimately reduces the novel to a book of jokes whose only goal is to “tell [us] what’s worth laughing at,” black humor itself begins to seem like a narrative tool that aims at the destruction of narrative. Although the unproductivity of this line of thought would seem to be self-evident to anyone whose profession is the study of literature, such thinking also does an injustice to Catch-22, in particular, since that novel not only identifies “serious matters” but does so to a satirical end. Indeed, even if we grant Green’s point that Heller’s work includes a humor that is “ultimately unregenerative,” we can continue to regard the
novel not only as a satire but also as one that participates in a specific tradition: that of durational satire. It is in this connection, in fact, that the issue of time once more becomes important. For like Ford, Lewis, and Waugh before him, Heller not only offers a satire that avoids the genre’s traditional corrective prerogative but also underscores that an attention to temporal duration is key to the individual’s increased chance of physical and psychological survival. The difference between Heller and his predecessors is that where the latter parodied modernist narrative styles as a means of pointing out the limitations of a Bergsonesque approach to existence, Heller uses “absurdist” or “postmodern” narrative techniques—including repetitions and circularities—to highlight the dangers of an existential philosophy that, in its Mailerian vein, owed a debt to both Bergson and Spengler.

To understand how Heller manages to encourage temporal attentiveness through techniques that seem designed to achieve the opposite effect, we first need to consider the chronology of *Catch-22*, which many critics have tried to unravel. Despite Robert Merrill’s claim that Heller “creates a large canvas which is hospitable to repetitions [that] no one will be tempted to place within [a traditional time] sequence,” many critics have felt compelled to trace the novel’s chronology in their attempts to demonstrate that *Catch-22* does have an organizational principle and a structural design (141). That Heller intended the novel to make sense chronologically becomes clear in the note cards and blotters he used to track his characters’ movements through time. Relying on the blotters, in particular, Clinton Burhans, Jan Solomon, Doug Gaukroger, Stephen J. Potts, and Craig M. David have taken pains to map out the chronology of *Catch-22* and to point to discrepancies in Heller’s overarching timeline using

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13 Despite Merrill’s claim that “no one will be tempted to place [ *Catch-22*’s repetitions] within [a traditional time] sequence,” he himself seems to have tried to trace the novel’s chronology. Objecting to the chronological work done by Clinton Burhans and Doug Gaukroger not only in the article cited here but also in the expanded version of the essay that made its way into *Joseph Heller* in 1987, Merrill clearly had to work through the novel’s chronology on his own in order to claim that “Heller presents his story in such a way that at certain points it is literally impossible to determine the order of events” (*JH* 36).
temporal cues in the novel. More often than not, however, these authors, in attempting to show errors in Heller’s or other critics’ calculations, ultimately make mistakes of their own and do so mainly because they overlook the timeline of World War II itself. Burhans, for example, claims that Yossarian’s first two missions over Bologna occur in May 1944, even though Yossarian travels to Rome the day after the second mission. Because Rome was not retaken by the Allies until June 4, 1944, Yossarian, on Burhans’s account, manages to walk straight into a city filled with Germans. Similarly, Potts finds fault with Burhans’s contention that Yossarian was in training in 1941, since the United States did not declare war until after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 (22). What Potts fails to consider is that in September 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the Selective Service and Training Act, an act which initiated a peace-time draft and allowed for up to 900,000 men, some of whom were Heller’s friends, to be in training for a twelve-month period. Thus, while it may be unlikely that Yossarian voluntarily enlisted in the Army prior to Pearl Harbor, it is quite possible that he was drafted some time in early or mid-1941.

Critical errors aside, Heller’s timeline is not without inconsistencies. Major Major, for instance, is said to become squadron commander after Colonel Cathcart takes command, even though other portions of the novel have him as squadron commander before the colonel’s arrival on Pianosa. Moreover, Heller’s blotter places Yossarian’s mission to Ferrara in March 1944, despite the fact that the Ferrara mission has to happen after the mission to Orvieto, which other details in the novel suggest occurred in either late April or May 1944. In Appendix D, I address these inconsistencies and others in Heller’s timeline, but my concern in doing so is to illustrate

14 Appendix D contains two tables reflecting critical attempts, including my own, to unravel the novel’s chronology. Relevant dates and events from Heller’s blotter are also included in the first of these tables.

15 Just to be clear, Burhans does not seem to recognize that Yossarian will, in fact, be walking into an occupied Rome.

16 As Tracy Daughtery explains, Heller had heard “rumors” early in 1940 that Congress might pass an act that “could mean military conscription for boys his age” (59). Moreover, after the act’s passage in September 1940, he saw three of his friends, George Mandel, Henny Ehrenman, and Abie Ehrenreich, depart “for the induction ritual [in lower Manhattan], where they were tested, processed, and labeled” (59, 60-I).
how they ultimately prohibit the reader from determining how long any one character’s war lasts.

If Major Major, for example, becomes squadron commander after Colonel Cathcart arrives on Pianosa, he must act in his new capacity from late 1943 to the conclusion of hostilities; if, however, he was already squadron commander at the time Yossarian arrived overseas, he has to fill that role from at least early 1943 on.

Although Heller may not have intended to make the length of Major Major’s time as squadron commander ambiguous, the effect of that ambiguity is to heighten the reader’s sympathy for the character, who is horrified at his promotion and thereafter becomes a recluse. As Heller’s narrator explains, “All his life, Major Major longed for but one thing, to be absorbed, and in [his early days on] Pianosa he finally was...Men whose names he didn’t even know said ‘Hi’ and invited him to go swimming and play basketball,” and “on the lopsided basketball court,” he “found true happiness...with the officers and enlisted men who were almost his friends” (98). Once appointed squadron commander, however, he discovers not only that the work required of him is painfully “monotonous” but also that his higher rank has caused him to become an outcast (103). Realizing that, “[a]lmost on cue, everyone in the squadron [had] stopped talking to him and started staring at him,” Major Major “flounder[s] bewilderedly from one embarrassing catastrophe to another,” especially after he assumes a disguise of dark glasses and a false mustache, attempts to rejoin the squadron’s basketball games, and is attacked by the other players (99).

The others pretended not to recognize him, and he began to have fun. Just as he finished congratulating himself on his innocent ruse he was bumped hard by one of his opponents and knocked to his knees. Soon he was bumped hard again, and it dawned on him that they did recognize him and that they were using his disguise as a license to elbow, trip and maul him. They did not want him at all. And just as he did realize this, the players on his team fused instinctively with the players on the other team into a single, howling, bloodthirsty mob that descended upon him from all sides with foul curses and swinging fists...His paramount concern throughout the entire assault was to keep his dark glasses and false mustache in place so that he might continue pretending he was somebody else and be spared the dreaded necessity of
having to confront them with his authority. (108)

Both a little sad and very funny, this passage underscores the degree to which Major Major’s more powerful position results in his increased alienation. For the sympathetic reader, then, the length of time Major Major actually has to act as squadron commander is a serious matter, since we know he finds that position unbearable. To put the matter simply: Heller’s inconsistency in dating Major Major’s promotion directly affects our appreciation of what Major Major suffers and the amount of time during which he has to suffer it.

If Heller’s confusion surrounding the date of Major Major’s promotion reinforces our sense that the painfulness of an experience depends in part on the length of that experience, his portrayal of Dunbar in the novel makes the relationship between unpleasant experience and temporal duration a thematic concern. Whereas Major Major would presumably wish to have pleasurable experiences during the war so that time would seem to pass more quickly, Dunbar, who is terrified at the idea of death, “work[s] hard at increasing his life span...by cultivating boredom” (17). Indeed, the first time we meet Dunbar, we learn that he is “working so hard at increasing his lifespan that Yossarian thought he was dead.” As the novel progresses, Dunbar’s strategies for living longer evolve from doing nothing to seeking out boring activities with boring or irksome people, and for this reason, Clevinger, who trained with Yossarian stateside, becomes an invaluable resource. Liking Clevinger because “Clevinger annoyed him and made the time go slow,” Dunbar also appreciates Clevinger’s argumentative streak, since it enables him to extend time by debating how time can be extended (28). Pointing out to Clevinger with a snap of his fingers “how long a year takes when it’s going away,” for instance, Dunbar shoots down every one of Clevinger’s objections until Clevinger is willing to agree that life does not just “seem”

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17 The extent of Major Major’s distress at his position as squadron commander becomes most evident toward the end of the novel, when Yossarian tells Havermeyer that “Major Major is gone” (412). Although the two characters speculate that the military authorities may have “disappear[ed]” their leader, it is equally likely than Major Major simply deserted.
longer but “is longer if it’s filled with periods of boredom and discomfort” (47, original emphasis).

Implicit in Dunbar’s project, of course, is his desire to stop time from unfurling, to stop time, that is, from proceeding linearly. By attempting to make every moment identical in its level of pain or frustration, in other words, Dunbar is endorsing not only a present-centered philosophy but a present-only one. In fact, the reason Yossarian suspects early in the novel that Dunbar might be dead lies precisely in the latter’s ability to make time seem to grind to a halt: cultivating boredom by refusing to move, Dunbar effectively tries to stop the hands of the clock from moving. Although Yossarian never openly accepts Dunbar’s theories, his sympathy with the impulse behind them does become clear in his own reactions to Colonel Cathcart’s constant raising of the number of required missions. Judging the passage of time not by the calendar year or the clock but by increases in the mission count, Yossarian, like Dunbar, attempts to stop the gaps between successive moments in time—that is, he attempts to stop the progression of time represented by each hike in the required missions—by, among other things, refusing to wear clothes, checking in to the hospital for fictitious ailments, and going AWOL. Perhaps the clearest instance of Yossarian’s effort to stop time, however, occurs when he moves the bomb line during the Great Big Siege of Bologna. Having prayed with his fellow soldiers for a continued pattern of bad weather and having, once the skies become clear, stared at the bomb line “in brooding entreaty as though hoping to move the ribbon up by the collective weight of [the aviators’] sullen prayers,” Yossarian hears Clevinger remark that the men are “confusing cause and effect” by believing that no more missions will have to be flown “if someone would only tiptoe up to the map in the middle of the night and move the bomb line over Bologna” (129). For Yossarian, who resents cause and effect precisely because it suggests the linearity of time and thus additional opportunities for him to meet his demise, Clevinger’s comment proves too fruitful to ignore, since it suggests to him that he can disrupt linear time in two ways. One the one hand, by relocating the bomb line, he will convince his superiors that the Allied advance is farther along in time (and
space) than it really is, and on the other hand, he will ensure that his own present position remains static, since the relocated line will point to the needlessness of further missions.

Although Heller allows Yossarian to succeed for a short time in fooling everyone but the Germans, he also makes it clear that Yossarian’s strategies to stop the flow of time are not only ineffective in the long run but also psychologically dangerous. For each time one of Yossarian’s ruses is uncovered, he must once again repeat the same cycle of behavior—that is, he must re-experience the anxiety of having to fly more missions, must revisit his superiors to protest those missions, and must devise a new scheme that, in the best case scenario, will buy him a few days of grounding. The cyclical nature of the novel and its frequent repetitions are therefore as much a result of Yossarian’s insufficient attempts to halt the passage of time as they are a stylistic means of satirizing the bureaucracy and illogic of the American army. Indeed, as Heller makes clear, to repeat the same behaviors over and over again and to expect different results is not only the definition of insanity but also a formula for achieving life in death and death in life. This is certainly the case with Dunbar, who, in his attempts to have every moment resemble the one preceding it, gives off the impression of death despite being alive, but it is also the case with Doc Daneeka and Lieutenant Mudd, “the dead man in Yossarian’s tent.” Mudd, for instance, dies over Orvieto on his first mission but can never become officially dead, since he mistakenly reported at the operations tent instead of the orderly room upon his arrival in Pianosa: “Because [Mudd] had never officially gotten into the squadron, he could never officially be gotten out, and Sergeant Towser sensed that the multiplying communications relating to the poor man would continue reverberating forever” (117). Meanwhile, Doc Daneeka, whose idea of hell is being transferred to the Pacific, finds himself in a state worse than hell—that is, in limbo—when the plane he was supposed to have been on flies into a mountain. Although he repeatedly protests to others in the bomber group that he is alive, the presence of his name on the flight manifest of the downed plane means that he is, for all official purposes, dead; furthermore, it means that each of the letters he sends to his wife begging her to believe that he is living is immediately countered by
another letter from the United States government letting her know that he no longer exists. In the world of the novel, then, to be caught up in endless circularities and repetitions is to belong to the realm of the undead, to be simultaneously alive and deceased.

If Heller characterizes as troublesome the circular behaviors of Yossarian and Dunbar and the circular traps in which the dead Lieutenant Mudd and the living Doc Daneeka are ensnared, he also suggests a more positive way of judging time’s passage and responding to temporal duration through his characterization of Yossarian’s tentmate, Orr. Before I turn to Orr’s three major appearances in the novel, I should remark that, since the publication of *Catch-22*, literary critics have usually agreed that the book has a tripartite structure. Although they tend to locate the divisions in the text according to their understandings of particular characters’ significance or their identification of drastic shifts in the novel’s tone, the general consensus is that the first third of the novel relies on a series of hijinks that, in the second third of the book, are explored with a critical edge and that, in the third section of the novel, are exposed as horrifying moral lapses. Thus, Brian Way concludes that *Catch-22* “moves...from farce to protest to horror,” while Robert Merrill argues that “[t]he repetitions crucial to Heller’s argument are organized into three narrative ‘cycles’” so that events “that first seem harmlessly comic, then [become] cause for some concern, and finally [become] the basis for genuine moral protest” (Way 269; Merrill 147). Built into these arguments is also a recognition that the final third of the novel relies, unlike the other two parts, on a straightforward chronological narration. Merrill, for instance, notes that “the final chapters differ [from the earlier ones] in that time does seem to advance,” while Burhans remarks that “the novel’s final third [focuses] on the narrative present and its immediate problems” and does so “with increasingly less fragmentation” (Merrill 147; Burhans 42,41).

Because critics largely agree that the novel can be divided into three parts and that the third of those parts switches to traditional linear narration, it is surprising that no one has argued either that *Catch-22*’s three sections correspond to Orr’s three major appearances in the text or
that the novel’s ultimate shift toward a clear-cut chronology coincides with the final stage of Orr’s preparations for his escape to Sweden. The virtue of conceiving of the novel in this unexplored fashion lies in the recognition that it is precisely through his interactions with Orr over time that Yossarian ultimately realizes that his attempts to stop time have all along been ineffective. In creating Orr, in other words, Heller intends to present a different course of action—one that relies on an attention to elapsing time as a means of ensuring survival—that will counter Yossarian’s problematic strategies for stopping time altogether. Indeed, Heller’s penchant for making his characters’ names have multiple registers becomes most evident in his christening of Orr, whose name acts as a homophone not only for the device he later uses to row to Sweden but also for the alternative possibilities—the “or”s—he presents to those characters who are caught up in cycles of unproductive behavior.

Over the course of the novel, Orr plays a role in three major scenes, each of which sets the stage for his final escape. The first of these scenes, which involves a conversation between him and Yossarian, appears in the novel’s third chapter but is actually set in August 1944, roughly four months before the final event described in the book. In that scene, Yossarian, who has just been released from the hospital, returns to his tent and is disturbed to find Orr disassembling and then reassembling the faucet of a stove “over and over and over and over again, with no loss of patience or interest, no sign of fatigue, no indication of ever concluding” (32). Reflecting that he “[will] be compelled to murder [Orr] in cold blood if he [does] not stop [tinkering],” Yossarian becomes even more irritated when Orr begins describing how, as a child, he used to walk around with crab apples in his cheeks. As the following passage indicates, Yossarian is annoyed by Orr’s story both because Orr refuses to explain the motivations behind his actions and because he seems to take perverse pleasure in making his story as nonsensical as possible:

‘Why did you walk around with crab apples in your cheeks?’ Yossarian asked again. ‘That’s what I asked.’ ‘Because they’ve got a better shape than horse chestnuts,’ Orr
answered. ‘I just told you that.’

‘Why,’ swore Yossarian at him approvingly, ‘you evil-eyed, mechanically-aptituded, disaffiliated son of a bitch, did you walk around with anything in your cheeks?’

‘I didn’t,’ Orr said, ‘walk around with anything in my cheeks. I walked around with crap apples in my cheeks. When I couldn’t get crab apples I walked around with horse chestnuts. In my cheeks.’

Orr giggled. Yossarian made up his mind to keep his mouth shut and did. Orr waited. Yossarian waited longer.

‘One in each cheek,’ Orr said.

‘Why?’

Orr pounced. ‘Why what?’

Yossarian shook his head, smiling, and refused to say.

‘It’s a funny thing about this valve,’ Orr mused aloud.

‘What is?’ Yossarian asked.

‘Because I wanted—’

Yossarian knew. ‘Jesus Christ! Why did you want—’

‘—apple cheeks.’

‘—apple cheeks?’ Yossarian demanded.

‘I wanted apple cheeks,’ Orr repeated. ‘Even when I was a kid I wanted apple cheeks someday, and I decided to work at it until I got them, and by God, I did work at it until I got them, and that’s how I did it, with crap apples in my cheeks all day long.’

He giggled again. ‘One in each cheek.’ (32-3)

In citing this passage at length, I mean to draw attention to three of its most prominent features. First, this section of dialogue, coupled with Yossarian’s earlier distress at Orr’s repeated “tinkering,” demonstrates that Yossarian is not only given to noticing circular patterns but is also liable to be distracted by them. Irritated by the circular conversation concerning the crab apples, for instance, he remains momentarily silent but soon feels compelled to reenter the discussion when Orr comments on maintaining the stove, a process that, as we have already seen, is circular in its own right. Moreover, having been distracted by the remark about the stove, Yossarian finds himself unwittingly brought back into the conversation about the crab apples, which he had initially protested because of its circularity. Yet if this passage shows Yossarian’s simultaneous dislike of and attraction to circular patterns, its second most salient feature is its suggestion that Orr has an understanding of circularity and repetition that is different from his tentmate’s. More specifically, the passage hints that Orr sees value in repeated actions, provided one is performing them consciously and views them as a kind of practice for initiating future change. This is
certainly the case regarding the stove, since Orr later reveals that he is striving to perfect it for Yossarian “while there’s still time”—that is, while there is still time before he makes his escape to Sweden and leaves Yossarian to face the winter alone on Pianosa (321). Even the seemingly pointless story about the crab apples suggests that Orr is dedicated to planning and practicing, since the purpose of putting the apples in his mouth is not only to make his cheeks larger over time but also to cultivate an air of simplicity, if not outright stupidity, that will allow him to survive for a longer period of time. Placing the apples in his cheeks, in other words, Orr both distorts his physical appearance and tacitly exhorts those who might pose a threat to him to believe that his mind is as distorted as his face.

Although we might expect that Orr’s wish to appear deranged would work to his detriment, Heller indicates that Orr’s strategy actually empowers him, since it enables him to use the circularities and perverted logic of the world in which he lives to manipulate others and to achieve his desired ends. The viability of this strategy is, in fact, the third major feature of the passage cited above, a passage that depends for its effectiveness on Orr’s verbal sleight of hand in relating a story about his skill at physical sleights of hand. Telling the seemingly nonsensical tale about the crab apples, for instance, Orr exploits Yossarian’s attraction to circularities in order to direct him away from serious discussions about the purpose of the stove and, by consequence, his own plans for escape. Yet in trying to distract Yossarian from the particular details of his planned desertion, Orr also wishes more generally to demonstrate to his tentmate how one can manipulate others’ perceptions to achieve his or her desired ends. That this is Orr’s wish becomes clear later in the same scene, when he informs the exasperated Yossarian that he also had a tendency in adolescence to walk around with rubber balls in his hands. Asked why he would do such a thing, Orr goes on to explain that “[w]ith rubber balls in [his] hands [he] could deny there were crab apples in [his] cheeks”: “Every time someone asked me why I was walking around with crab apples in my cheeks, I’d just open my hands and show them it was rubber balls I was walking around with, not crab apples, and that they were in my hands, not my cheeks. It was a good story.
But I never knew if it got across or not, since it’s pretty tough to make people understand you when you’re talking to them with two crab apples in your cheeks” (33).

Unsurprisingly, Yossarian has as little tolerance for the end of this story as for its beginning and decides that it is “futile” to ask Orr any more questions. Immediately thereafter, however, he finds that the story about the crab apples and rubber balls has triggered the memory of another unaccountable incident: the time when Orr, in a fit of giggles, was beaten over the head by a high-heel-wielding prostitute. Although Yossarian ponders this incident briefly during the novel’s third chapter, it is not until Orr makes his second appearance in Chapter Twenty-Two that the reader begins to suspect that there is a deeper connection between the prostitute and the crab apples. Taking place in April 1944, some four months before the previous scene, this second episode involves Yossarian and Orr traveling across three continents with Milo Minderbinder, the business-minded squadron mess officer. Because Milo’s dealings are illegal, secretive, and complex, Yossarian and Orr more often than not end up alone together in strange cities, and during their time in Palermo, Yossarian notices that Orr has not only managed to find first crab apples and then horse chestnuts but has also placed these objects successively in his cheeks. For his part, Orr realizes that Yossarian’s patience is wearing thin with the crab apples and horse chestnuts and therefore offers to make a deal: he will reveal the reason why the prostitute beat him over the head in Rome as long as he can keep the chestnuts in his mouth while he does so. That Yossarian will accept this bargain is guaranteed, since he has an insatiable desire to understand why people act as they do. Equally certain, at least from the reader’s perspective, is the outcome of Yossarian’s acceptance, since Orr’s proposed deal has a clear kinship with his rubber-ball ruse: “Yossarian nodded, and Orr told him the whole fantastic story.

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18 Although one can be certain that Yossarian and Orr’s first conversation in the novel occurs in August 1944, the date of the second conversation is less certain. Because Heller informs the reader that “April [is] the best month of all for Milo” and because we know that Milo’s troubles only begin after he attempts to corner the world’s market on cotton, which he does at the end of his trip with Orr and Yossarian, we can assume that Yossarian and Orr’s second conversation occurs in early April 1944.
of why the naked girl...was hitting him over the head with her shoe, but Yossarian was not able to understand a single word because the horse chestnuts were back in his mouth” (246).

The significance of this scene in the novel is twofold. On the one hand, by repeating almost verbatim the conversation the reader previously overheard between the two characters, the scene confirms both that Yossarian has a tendency to get caught up in circularities and that Orr, as a master of circularities, is able to manipulate his friend for his own pleasure. On the other hand, the scene allows us to see how Orr uses circularities not only to obscure others’ perceptions of passing time but also to conceal his own attention to time as he develops his plans to escape the war. Because Orr’s second appearance in the novel occurs in April 1944, in other words, and because his first appearance occurs in August 1944, we can ascertain that he has succeeded in manipulating the unwitting Yossarian with the same circular conversations for at least four months. Yet because Orr’s first appearance in the novel involves his tinkering with the stove—a stove that is designed for Yossarian’s comfort in the winter of 1944—we can also conclude that, at some point between April and August 1944, Orr began planning for his escape and, in doing so, consciously decided to keep up his shenanigans in order to direct others’ attention away from his own temporal vigilance. Simply put, knowing that he must practice and prepare for his escape, Orr exploits the circularities and illogic of the American army and its personnel to ensure that he can safely flee their reach at an appropriate moment in the future.

The effectiveness of Orr’s strategy is, of course, evident in his successful arrival in Sweden at the end of *Catch-22*. Before Heller reveals Orr’s escape, however, he also has his minor character make a third appearance in the novel, an appearance that shows Orr wavering in his resolution to keep his future desertion a secret from Yossarian. Just prior to the third episode involving Orr, Yossarian, who is once more in the hospital, learns from Major Danby that his tentmate, who has a track record of not only attracting flak but also crashing planes, has managed to wreck yet another plane off the coast of Marseilles. According to Major Danby, the aftermath of this wreck “was the funniest goddam thing you ever saw,” since Orr used his time waiting for
the rescue launch to prepare soup and tea from the survival gear, to fish for cod, and to examine a waterproof map and a small magnetic compass (317-8). Adding that watching Orr was “like watching some kind of moron,” Major Danby also explains that Orr discovered a “little blue oar about the size of a Dixie-cup spoon” and “began rowing with it, trying to move all nine hundred pounds of us with that little stick” (318, 319).

Upon hearing this news, Yossarian reflects that he should arrange with another pilot to “fake a crippled engine,” head toward neutral Switzerland, and “destroy the evidence of deception with a belly landing,” but he immediately concludes that Orr cannot be that other pilot (318). What’s more, when he returns to his tent from the hospital and is asked by Orr why he never flies with him, Yossarian silently rejects his friend as a potential accomplice yet another time. In part, Yossarian’s second dismissal of Orr occurs because he discovers him once more engaged in working on the stove, a sight that causes him to “[search] the nape of Orr’s neck for the probable site of the medulla oblongata,” which he contemplates puncturing to “solve so many serious, agonizing problems for them both” (324). Indeed, so frustrated is Yossarian with Orr’s “three hundred[th]” reconstruction of the stove that he neglects to pay attention to his friend’s suggestive remark that “[j]ust because [things are] small doesn’t mean they’re unimportant” (321). Perhaps more significant than Yossarian’s distraction by Orr’s tinkering, however, is his inability to see how Orr, in shifting the conversation back and forth between the stove repairs, the wrecked planes, and the prostitute in Rome, is once more trying to demonstrate the value of what he refers to as “good practice,” especially the kind of practice that allows one to make a good escape (322). Although Yossarian does at one point ask whether Orr is “trying to tell [him] something,” Orr’s hint that the answer lies in the incident of the Roman prostitute only results in Yossarian requesting additional superficial explanations and ignoring the logical connections between Orr’s activities over the previous five months.19 Thus, by the conclusion of the chapter, when

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19 I say five months, since we know that Yossarian is shot in the leg over Leghorn in late August 1944 and that he does not emerge from the hospital for a week or two. His third conversation with Orr must therefore take place in early
Yossarian learns that Orr has disappeared on the third mission to Bologna, he is no farther advanced in his estimation of his friend than he was toward the beginning of the chapter, where he reflected that Orr was “an eccentric midget, a freakish, likeable dwarf with a smutty mind and a thousand valuable skills that would keep him in a low income group all his life” (323).

Between Orr’s final appearance in the novel, which occurs in the twenty-eighth chapter, and the end of the book, Yossarian continues to try to stop time much as he has in the preceding three hundred pages. Yet when the news reaches him that Orr has not died but has made it to Sweden, he finally understands the reasons behind Orr’s circular activities and conversations. Telling Major Danby to “[b]ring [him] crab apples and horse chestnuts before it’s too late” and to “bring [him] buck teeth too, and a valve to fix and a look of stupid innocence that nobody would ever suspect of any cleverness,” Yossarian comprehends that Orr has “planned [his desertion] from the beginning” and wishes to secure his own escape in a similar way (459, 460). Even the matter of the Roman prostitute receives clarification with the news of Orr’s arrival in Sweden, since Yossarian finally comprehends that Orr had first attempted to escape military service by paying the woman to injure him severely and, when that failed, had next begun “practic[ing] getting shot down.” In repeating words such as “practice,” “plan,” and “rehearse” in the final pages of the novel, Yossarian underscores what Orr has all along been trying to teach him: namely, that only by an attention to time’s passing and a conscious strategy of preparing for the future can one effect any change in an otherwise disturbing situation. Indeed, it is precisely because he has learned this lesson that Yossarian first rejects the chaplain’s claim that Orr’s escape is a divine miracle and then approves when the chaplain concludes that Orr’s arrival in Sweden is “a miracle of human intelligence and human endurance” (459). “Endurance” is here the key word, both for Yossarian and the reader, since it is not only by continuing to hold out despite bureaucratic obstacles but also by understanding his situation in relation to passing time—

September and definitely before September 21, 1944, since Orr makes his escape after the Greeks have captured Rimini. At a minimum, then, five months elapse between Yossarian and Orr’s whirlwind trip with Milo and their final recorded discussion.
his situation in duration—that Orr manages to make his escape. Thus, when Yossarian resolves at the conclusion of the novel to desert the army as a means of “running to,” not away from, “[his] responsibilities,” one of the responsibilities he implicitly embraces is temporal attentiveness, an attentiveness that will ensure his physical and emotional survival (461, original emphasis). To put the matter somewhat differently: By accepting linear time instead of relying on a present-centered, reactive philosophy, Yossarian transforms from a captain in the United States Army Air Forces into the captain of his own fate.

Although the conclusion of *Catch-22* points to a rejection of the circularities that have plagued its characters and endorses an attention to elapsing time as a strategy for survival, one should stress that the novel does not end altogether optimistically. Just after declaring that he is running to his responsibilities, for instance, Yossarian jumps out of a hospital window and is nearly killed by the homicidal inamorata of one of his dead friends. Indeed, Heller closes the novel by describing the downward movement of the woman’s knife, which “miss[ed] [Yossarian] by inches” (463). Because the novel concludes in this fashion, critical responses to the book’s ending that characterize Yossarian’s desertion as either wholly liberating or too convenient fail to account for the ambiguity that surrounds the protagonist’s flight. Among those who have misjudged the complexity of the novel’s conclusion is Norman Mailer, who, in the same *Esquire* essay discussed in the previous section of this chapter, contended that the book’s final fifty pages were ultimately “marred by an ending over the last five pages which is hysterical, sentimental, and wall-eyed for Hollywood” (*CC* 114). That Mailer found the conclusion of *Catch-22* “sentimental” is not surprising, since, as noted earlier, he believed the entire novel lacked the existential seriousness that could be found in the works of Hemingway and Baldwin and presumably in works of his own. What he failed to consider, however, was that Heller, precisely through his repetitions and circularities, wished not only to satirize American bureaucracy (military and otherwise), American-style capitalism, and the witch-hunts of the McCarthy era but also to demonstrate how certain institutional structures and his characters’ ineffective responses
to them result in just that “deaden[ing] before...death” that Mailer had found absent in the novel (CC 119).

Perhaps the greatest irony of Mailer’s response to *Catch-22*, however, is that, in criticizing Heller for not following the existential lead of Hemingway, Baldwin, and himself, Mailer overlooked the possibility that his contemporary was trying to underscore the limitations of war novels like *The Naked and the Dead* and to point up the flaws in present-centered characterizations of time, including Mailer’s own characterization in “The White Negro.” As Tracy Daughterty explains, Heller had entered Columbia University after the war believing that he “hadn’t read enough” to write a novel of any lasting merit (129). What he had read was *The Naked and the Dead*, about which the Columbia campus was astir, but once he concluded the novel, he felt that though “Mailer had been trying to grasp something essential...his attempt, for all its boldness, its undeniable greatness, was finally pretty clumsy.” For this reason, when Heller began to create a reading list, he turned not to Mailer or Mailer’s idol, Hemingway, but to writers such as Kafka, Céline, and Nabokov, from whom he drew both “the sense of being trapped in a system that could not withstand scrutiny” and the insistence on “surviv[ing] with a certain brand of humor” (186). Also on Heller’s reading list were the early novels of Evelyn Waugh, who, at the same time Heller was drafting *Catch-22*, was writing a durational satire of his own: the *Sword of Honour* trilogy. As David Seed notes, Heller saw in Waugh’s earlier satires a “method of deflating the tragic and inflating the ludicrous,” a method that was central to the design of *Catch-22* when it finally appeared in print in 1969 (42).20

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20 Despite his appreciation of Waugh’s satires, Heller felt that the final volume in the *Sword of Honour* trilogy was not a success, since, in Seed’s words, “Waugh’s capacity to treat the important as if it were unimportant had become a liability because his protagonist [was] so wooden” (42). For his part, Waugh seems not to have been overly impressed with *Catch-22*, or at least with Simon & Schuster’s advertising manager, Nina Bourne. Believing that *Catch-22* was as much her “baby” as Heller’s, Bourne “wrote ‘crazed’ cover letters” to renowned authors, including Waugh, Graham Greene, and S.J. Perelman (224, 225). No doubt infuriated that his much-beloved privacy had been violated by Bourne’s letter, Waugh responded to her communication in the following manner: “Dear Miss Bourne:  Thank you for sending me *Catch-22*.  I am sorry that the book fascinates you so much.  It has many passages quite unsuitable to a lady’s reading...You are mistaken in calling it a novel.  It is a collection of sketches—often repetitious—totally without structure.  Much of the dialogue is funny.  You may quote me as saying: ‘This exposure of corruption, cowardice and incivility of American officers will outrage all friends of your country (such as myself) and greatly comfort your enemies’” (Waugh as qtd. in Daugherty 225).
What should perhaps be added to Seed’s tracing of influence is the argument that Heller not only uses simultaneous deflation and inflation as a narrative technique but also suggests, by way of his characters’ temporal views, that such downplaying of the tragic and heightening of the ludicrous is, in fact, an unfortunate byproduct of attempts to stop the hands of the clock from moving. Although unwilling to have his novel end on a wholly optimistic note, Heller does make it clear throughout Catch-22 that denials of time’s passage result in vicious cycles of behavior that threaten the integrity of the self, both physically and psychologically. Yet in using circularities and repetitions both to show up the troublesome behaviors and philosophies of his characters and to increase the humor of his novel, Heller introduces perhaps the most significant ambiguity into his satire. For by the end of Catch-22, the reader is left wondering whether the survival that comes from temporal attentiveness is really preferable to the fun that ensues from privileging circularities and repetitions.

Insidious Imaginings: Temporal Responsibility in Vonnegut’s Postwar Satires

If Catch-22 is invested in exploring the individual’s relationship to time as it passes, Kurt Vonnegut’s Slaughterhouse-Five takes this exploration a step further by considering the connections between linearity, memory, and imagination. Following Billy Pilgrim, a soldier who “come[s] unstuck in time” shortly before the 1945 bombing of Dresden and who thereafter travels at random to different moments in his life, the novel foregrounds the protagonist’s abduction by extraterrestrials and his subsequent adoption of their deterministic philosophy, especially as this relates to time. According to the extraterrestrials, who are from a planet called Tralfamadore, “All time is all time. It does not change. It does not lend itself to warnings or explanations. It simply is” (109). Moreover, because each moment is “structured” in a way that cannot be altered, all those who exist in time are like “bugs in amber” (149, 109). Confronted by Billy Pilgrim’s initial confusion and his queries about free will, the Tralfamadarians explain that “[o]nly on Earth
is there any talk of free will,” since only Earthlings are compelled to live each moment as it comes (109). In contrast, the Tralfamadorians themselves “can look at all the different moments just the way [humans] can look at a stretch of the Rocky Mountains,” and as a result, they recognize that linear understandings of time are nothing but an “illusion” (34). The extraterrestrials’ insistence that “one moment [does not follow] another, like beads on a string,” is also reinforced in their literature, which Billy asks to see (34). Presenting him with a book composed of “brief clumps of symbols separated by stars,” the Tralfamadorians explain that each of the clumps is “a brief, urgent message—describing a situation or scene”: “There isn’t any particular relationship between all the messages, except that the author has chosen them carefully, so that, when seen all at once, they produce an image of life that is beautiful and surprising and deep. There is no beginning, no middle, no end, no suspense, no moral, no causes, no effects” (111, 112).

Because Billy ultimately espouses the Tralfamadorians’ philosophy, even if he remains unable to read their books, criticism of Slaughterhouse-Five has tended to concentrate on whether Vonnegut endorses or disapproves of the temporal beliefs advocated by his main character. This critical tendency has been reinforced by Vonnegut’s insertion of himself into the novel and his claims to have known Billy personally. Tim Woods, for instance, argues that “Vonnegut’s aim is to allow human actions to be freed from the ideology of linear time” and to suggest that “linear concepts [of time] need to be supplemented with non-linear concepts,” while Lawrence R. Broer contends that “[t]he Tralfamadorian view of reality is the antithesis of Vonnegut’s position that artists should be alarm systems—specialized cells for giving warning to the body politic” (Woods 107; Broer 8). Even those critics who do not discuss Vonnegut’s preference or distaste for the Tralfamadorians’ philosophy frequently concentrate on the relationship between the author’s narrative techniques and his understanding of time, which they more often than not imply is Tralfamadorian-esque. Remarking, for example, that the novel uses literary strategies akin to the cinematographic techniques of hard cuts, associative fades, and montage, Peter Freese suggests
that Vonnegut “employs his unusual mode of presentation to escape the yoke of narrative succession” (79). In a similar fashion, Ann Rigney maintains that Vonnegut “eschews” traditional narration by “moving forward and back in time along with his main character in a way that breaks down the notion of before and after, cause and effect”; according to Rigney, the “associative shifts” on which Vonnegut relies “undermin[e] the very notion of sequence” and allow “new connections [to be forged] between events that are neither chronological nor logical, but affective” (15).

In wading through the critical debates that have emerged since Slaughterhouse-Five’s publication, one should acknowledge the influence of Vonnegut’s biography on critics’ positions, especially as these positions relate to the reality or unreality of Billy Pilgrim’s time travel. Because Vonnegut never hid the fact that he himself was a survivor of the bombing of Dresden, critics more often than not align his wartime experience with Billy’s and see in Billy’s adventures the author’s endorsement of the imagination as a tool for dealing with war-related trauma. Indeed, the number of critics who have contended that both Billy and Vonnegut suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which they are said to work through by way of imaginative acts, including the writing of Slaughterhouse-Five, boggles one’s own imagination.21 Yet even those who do not mention PTSD or war-related trauma in their explorations of the novel tend to imply that a connection exists between Vonnegut’s war experience and the genre of the work, which is usually considered not as a satire but rather as an absurdist novel characterized by black humor or dark comedy. One of the earliest accounts of Vonnegut’s fiction as black humor—an account that is still cited frequently after nearly fifty years—is contained in Robert Scholes’s

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21 Susanne Vees-Gulani, for instance, claims both that “Vonnegut’s writing of Slaughterhouse-Five can be seen as a therapeutic process that allows him to uncover and deal with his trauma” and that a “diagnosis of PTSD help[s] to explain and summarize the different facets of Billy’s state of mind in the novel” (176, 177). In his biography of Vonnegut, Charles J. Shields makes much the same point when he writes, “Soldiers in terror of their lives, confused, hyperalert, often speak of time speeding up or slowing down—becoming weirdly elongated or even missing as they pit their rational senses against an avalanche of stimuli. Perhaps the root of Vonnegut’s...time-disordered fables lies in a psychological condition not understood until later: post-traumatic stress disorder” (253).
1967 book, *The Fabulators*.22 Primarily addressing *The Sirens of Titan* (1959) and *Cat’s Cradle* (1963) in his section on Vonnegut, Scholes differentiates between satire and black humor by pointing to the absence of a “rhetoric of moral certainty” in the latter (82). On his account, Vonnegut, like other modern-day fabulators, has “some faith in art but...reject[s] all ethical absolutes,” and instead of the “traditional satirist’s faith in the efficacy of satire as a reforming instrument,” he has “a more subtle faith in the humanizing value of laughter” (74). For these reasons, Scholes contends, Vonnegut’s novels, as well as other works of black humor, are dominated by a “spirit of playfulness” and “a care for form” that transforms “the materials of satire and protest into comedy” (74).

As I noted in connection with *Catch-22*, critics’ decision to create new generic categories for satiric works that “reject all ethical absolutes” or employ an “unregenerative” humor frequently causes more problems than it solves, since the features of those new categories are often less clear than the features of the satiric genre. Such proves the case with Scholes’s discussion of black humor, especially when he tries to elucidate the difference between that kind of humor and satire in relation to Vonnegut’s 1961 novel *Mother Night*. Citing a review of that novel, in which an unnamed author expressed confusion about Vonnegut’s “refusal to turn his material into satire,” Scholes offers the following confusing response (78):

[This critic’s] reaction, it seems to me, is clearly better than assuming either that Vonnegut has produced works of satire or that he is trying to and failing. But it is still an unfortunate reaction and, in a word, wrong. It is based, I should judge, on the assumption that satire is ‘better’ than comedy. Why anyone should assume this, I do not know, though I suspect such an assumption goes along with a belief that the world is sick and the satirist can cure it by rubbing its nose in the filth it produces.

22 Although Charles B. Harris and Mary Sue Schriber do not use the term “black humor,” their characterizations of the novel do have fundamental similarities with Robert Scholes’s early description of Vonnegut’s fiction as “black humour.” Harris, for instance, argues that Vonnegut’s novels, including *Slaughterhouse-Five*, cannot be regarded as works of “social protest,” since the author’s “disparaging view of man, along with his belief in a purposeless universe, constitutes [an] absurdist vision” (133-4). Meanwhile, advancing the claim that “the form of *Slaughterhouse* is itself an anti-norm and therefore a dimension of the grotesque,” Schriber suggests that the novel relies on “discontinuity rather than continuity” and that “it creates juxtapositions signifying absurdity rather than plot signifying meaning through causal sequences” (183).
This assumption is one that I want to reject...[W]hether the world is especially sick, now, or not, there is no evidence that satire ever cured any human ailment, or any social disease either. In fact the whole notion of ‘great satire’ seems rather suspect from this point of view. What are the great satires? And what are the hard targets they attack? Is Dr. Pangloss a hard target? Or Stalinist Communism? Even Jonathon Swift’s finest achievement, the fourth book of *Gulliver’s Travels*, is hard to call a great satire, precisely because its greatness is problematic and not satiric at all. (78)

Although Scholes tries in the sentence following this paragraph to provide a “more precise” term for black humor, the phrase he lights upon does nothing to resolve the many logical complications of the passage cited above. On the one hand, the questions that end the passage are almost entirely unanswerable, since Scholes does not explain what he means by a “hard target” and gives no hint how one might distinguish such a target from a “soft” one. Similarly troublesome is his characterization of the fourth book of *Gulliver’s Travels*, a characterization that relies on an apparently idiosyncratic definition of the word “problematic.” On the other hand, the movement of the paragraph from a perhaps understandable defense of comedy to a rejection of any satire as “great” entails a complete refutation of precisely those criteria by which Scholes differentiated black humor from satire in the first place. As we have already seen, he separates the black humorist from the satirist on the grounds that the former lacks the “satirist’s faith in the efficacy of satire as a reforming instrument,” and in a later incarnation of the same idea, he adds that black humorists, unlike satirists, do not expect their readers to be changed by the “dramatic renunciations of vice and folly postulated by traditional satire” (74). Yet if Scholes believes that no work of satire has ever been “great”—that is, if he believes that no satire has ever reformed anybody—he implicitly redefines the genre of satire even as he bases his characterization of black humor on its supposed departure from satire’s traditional definition. To say the same thing differently: If satirists endeavor to reform others through their works but

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23 The “more precise” term Scholes lights upon is “stoical comedy,” which he borrows from Hugh Kenner (78). In a book review he wrote of *Slaughterhouse-Five* two years after the publication of *The Fabulators*, Scholes repeats the term and applies it to Vonnegut’s most recent novel: “The comic is the only mode which can allow itself to contemplate absurdity. That is why so many of our best writers are, like Vonnegut, what Hugh Kenner would call “Stoic Comedians” (38).
never succeed in doing so, the difference between satire and black humor boils down entirely to a difference in authorial intention. Shelving the difficult question of how one can tell the difference between, say, Voltaire’s reformative intention and Vonnegut’s lack thereof, the fact remains that, on Scholes’s account, all satirists must be as foolish as their targets, since they continue aiming for reform without recognizing that they will never see it.

If the logic of Scholes’s claims is problematic in the abstract, it becomes even more troublesome when we consider Vonnegut’s novels as test cases for the critic’s larger theorization of black humor. For to read novels like *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Mother Night* is to discover that Vonnegut does advocate a set of values, even if they are not absolute, and that he does encourage a particular moral system, even if he remains realistic in believing that not everyone will adopt it. What’s more, Vonnegut cultivates a “spirit of playfulness” and “a care for form” not because he has a nebulous faith in “the humanizing value of laughter” but because he desires to make his ethical position both palatable and clear to his audience. In a moment, I will soon demonstrate the ways in which we can ascertain that Vonnegut is taking a particular moral stance; first, I wish briefly to elucidate what that stance looks like. Here, the matters of linearity, memory, and imagination in *Slaughterhouse-Five* once more become important. As my brief sketch of the novel’s reception has shown, critics largely agree that, by way of its achronological structure, the novel celebrates the imagination for its ability to help individuals come to terms with trauma. Yet this argument about the value of imaginative acts as a tool for psychological recovery too quickly collapses the distinctions that Vonnegut makes between himself and his

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24 Vonnegut himself pressed back against Scholes’s application of the term “black humor” to his *oeuvre* in an interview he gave in 1973. Asked repeatedly by Scholes to agree that his works not only depended on black humor but also deviated from traditional conceptions of satire, Vonnegut responded that he found “black humor” a “mystifying” term that seemed more like “a sales-promotion label”: “It’s as though someone took a great bell jar and caught a certain number of crickets under it and gave a name to all those crickets, and this is, what, Bruce Jay Friedman [has done in *Black Humor*]” (115). Although he went on to add that “anything that gets people interested in books is good for all authors,” Vonnegut continually dodged Scholes’s subsequent attempts to place his novels under the black humor bell jar.

25 Far from believing in “the humanizing value of laughter,” Vonnegut argued in a 1973 interview with *Playboy* that “laughter is a response to frustration, just as tears are, and it solves nothing, just as tears solve nothing. Laughing or crying is what a human being does when there’s nothing else he can do” (256).
protagonist and too easily overlooks the author’s insistence on the necessity of collective and personal memory and on the connection between memory and linear understandings of time. For Vonnegut, in other words, imagination is not a good in itself but a faculty that can be used responsibly or irresponsibly depending on one’s willingness to address painful memories and to situate them in the order that they occurred. Those who fail to confront their memories, Vonnegut suggests, have a dangerous bias against chronology and, in consequence, privilege imaginative acts over social responsibility and activism. Precisely because Billy Pilgrim chooses imagination instead of temporal attentiveness and memory, he stands at odds with Vonnegut’s ethical position and becomes the target of the author’s satire, not a figure of black humor.

To prepare the reader for his ultimate rejection of Billy’s stance regarding time, memory, and imagination, Vonnegut takes pains early in the novel to demonstrate his protagonist’s preference for silence and isolation. In looking at the novel as a whole, one is struck both by the infrequency of Billy’s direct speech and by the fact that that speech, when provoked, usually consists of one or two words alone. That Billy does not, as many critics imply, become withdrawn and silent only as a result of the war emerges clearly in descriptions of events in his childhood, events that he is forced to relive when he begins traveling through time. On the first occasion that he “come[s] unstuck in time,” for instance, Billy “swing[s] grandly through the full arc of his life” only to find when this movement has stopped that he is once more a little boy at the Y.M.C.A swimming pool (34). “[T]errified” because his father plans to throw him off the deep end of the pool in order to teach him “to swim by the method of sink-or-swim,” Billy eventually has to be rescued from the bottom of the pool and discovers in being saved that he “resent[s]” the intervention (35). During this episode, as well as during several other traumatic childhood events, Billy neither speaks nor screams but accepts his fate resignedly and silently. Thus, when he survives the Battle of the Bulge over a decade later and finds himself “cold, hungry, embarrassed, incompetent,” he quite predictably responds to his fate in the same unquestioning and acquiescent fashion that characterized his youth (43). Indeed, prior to being
captured by the Germans, Billy refuses to “do anything to save himself” and speaks to his comrades only when he desires to capitalize on opportunities for his own demise: “He wished everybody would leave him alone [in the snow]. ‘You guys go on without me,’ he said again and again.”

Because Billy does come unstuck in time just before his capture during World War II, his time travels seem less like real events than imaginative fantasies designed to permit his escape from the present moment. That his travels in time do not actually occur is reinforced by narrative motifs that are repeated across the novel, motifs that appear to represent unconscious associations in Billy’s mind. For instance, shortly after he sees his first Russian prisoner, whose “flat face...glow[s] like a radium dial,” Billy is ordered to take a shower in a German delousing station and discovers in the process that he has “zoomed back in time to [a moment in] his infancy” when his mother, having just removed him from his bath, is “patting his little jelly belly” (104, 107). Shortly thereafter, he travels forward in time to 1967, where he finds himself aboard the Tralfamadorians’ flying saucer and learns both that the extraterrestrials see time just as humans “see a stretch of the Rocky Mountains” and that their literature depends for its beauty on the individual’s ability to perceive “the depths of many marvelous moments...all at once” (109, 112).

As if the mention of the Rocky Mountains and the word “depths” triggers his movement through time, Billy next discovers that he is a twelve-year-old taking a terrifying trip with his parents first to the Grand Canyon, where he wets his pants from fear of falling in, and then to Carlsbad Caverns, where he sees his father remove a watch with “a radium dial” from his pocket (114). Unsurprisingly, Billy’s awareness of the watch’s dial results in his arrival back at the German delousing station, which he eventually leaves only to discover “more starving Russians with faces like radium dials” (114, 115).

In looking at this chain of events, one could object that Billy’s time travel is not entirely an enjoyable imaginative experience, since he is forced to revisit unpleasant events in his past. On this reading, Billy would be as much a victim of his memory as a master of the imagination.
Although such an objection is a sound one, it can, I believe, be accommodated if we consider Billy’s creation of Tralfamadore itself as a strategy for handling the uncontrollable surges of memory. For essentially, what Billy learns on Tralfamadore is a philosophy that, while not allowing him to escape from his memories altogether, does underscore their irrelevance. With the capacity to see all time in a panoramic fashion, the Tralfamadorians never have to rely on their memories, or the memories of others, to envision or recreate an event. Indeed, the uselessness of memory on Tralfamadore is complemented by the extraterrestrials’ unwillingness to concentrate on any moment in time that might have an unpleasant register. When Billy is informed, for example, that the universe ends after a “Tralfamadorian test pilot presses a starter button” while experimenting with new kinds of flying-saucer fuel, he first inquires whether the Tralfamadorians can stop the pilot from pushing the button and then asks whether “the idea of preventing war on Earth is stupid” (149). In response to his first question, the extraterrestrials repeat that the moment the universe ends is as “structured” as any other and therefore cannot be altered, and in answer to the second query, they both acknowledge the unavoidability of war and encourage a method for ignoring its constancy:

“So—” said Billy gropingly, “I suppose that the idea of preventing war on Earth is stupid, too.”
“Of course.”
“But you do have a peaceful planet here.”
“Today we do. On other days we have wars as horrible as any you’ve ever seen or read about. There isn’t anything we can do about them, so we simply don’t look at them. We ignore them. We spend eternity looking at pleasant moments—like today at the zoo. Isn’t this a nice moment?”
“Yes.”
“That’s one thing Earthlings might learn to do if they tried hard enough: Ignore the awful times and concentrate on the good ones.”
“Um,” said Billy Pilgrim. (149-50)

As this passage suggests, the Tralfamadorians’ perception that “[a]ll moments, past, present, and future, always have existed, always will exist” allows them not only to deny responsibility for crimes and atrocities but also to overlook those events that, from a human...
perspective, would seem to elicit moral uneasiness and invite corrective or preventative action (34). And if we believe that Billy does not actually travel to Tralfamadore but imagines the planet and its inhabitants to avoid traumatic memories, we must also believe that he creates the Tralfamadorians’ philosophy, which, by refusing linear conceptions of time, ultimately does away with the need for memory and the point of protest or reform. To say the same thing differently: By thus imagining a civilization founded upon the denial of memory and the disavowal of responsibility, Billy justifies his apathy in the present moment and attempts to downplay the seriousness of those memories that, as a human, he must continue to have.

Although Billy ultimately embraces the Tralfamadorians’ philosophy—a philosophy that is, under the reading just proposed, his own creation—his humanness does at times interfere with his ability to accept the tenets of that belief-system wholeheartedly. This discomfort with certain Tralfamadorian principles is already evident in the passage cited above, which ends with Billy uttering the highly skeptical “Um” in response to the extraterrestrials’ suggestion that he concentrate on the good moments only. Underscoring that Billy does not entirely buy into the notion that ignoring unpleasant moments solves the difficulty of their existence, this “Um” also implicitly points to the protagonist’s unwillingness to give up the linear understanding of time and the concern with memory that make him human. Billy’s desire to push back against his Tralfamadorian beliefs also becomes clear during a party for his eighteenth wedding anniversary, when he listens to a song sung by a barbershop quartet and begins to feel as if he is “being stretched on the torture engine called the rack” (220, original emphasis). Asked by Kilgore Trout, a science-fiction writer in attendance at the party, whether he has “suddenly [seen] the past or the future” through a “time window,” Billy uncharacteristically denies that he has traveled in time and reflects to himself that he has “a great big secret somewhere inside [himself]” that he cannot begin to imagine (222, 221, original emphasis). Later grasping that his response to the quartet “was definitely associated with those four men and not what they sang,” Billy realizes that the quartet’s performance has triggered his memory of the aftermath of the Dresden bombing, when,
along with four German guards and a handful of other P.O.W.s, he emerged from the
slaughterhouse of the novel’s title:

It wasn’t safe to come out of the shelter until noon the
next day. When the Americans and their guards did come out, the
sky was black with smoke. The sun was an angry little pinhead.
Dresden was like the moon now, nothing but minerals. The
stones were hot. Everybody else in the neighborhood was dead.
So it goes.

... 

The guards drew together instinctively, rolled their eyes.
They experimented with one expression and then another, said
nothing, though their mouths were often open. They looked like a
silent film of a barbershop quartet.
“So long forever,” they might have been singing, “old
fellows and pals; So long forever, old sweethearts and pals—God
bless ‘em—” (227)

The significance of this episode lies not only in Billy’s conscious association of the
barbershop quartet with the German guards but also in his insistence, first to Kilgore Trout and
then to himself, that he has “not traveled in time to the experience” but “remember[s] it
shimmeringly” (226, emphasis added). Because neither Billy nor the narrator labels any other
memory as a memory in Slaughterhouse Five, Billy’s willingness to confront this particular
remembrance, not to engage in another flight of fancy, takes on additional weight. For by
insisting that the quartet reminds him of a real experience—an experience that was gruesome and
horrifying—Billy implicitly stresses that atrocities like the Dresden bombing should not be
forgotten or imagined away. Implicit in this scene, then, is Vonnegut’s belief that, in the face of
appalling events, one must not flee to the safety of the imagination but must confront just those
traumatic memories that allow one to arrive at self-awareness and self-understanding.

If Billy’s experience with the barbershop quartet illustrates the importance of conscious
engagement with personal memories, his discussions with Bertram Copeland Rumfoord, a
Harvard historian commissioned to write “a one-volume history of the United States Army Air
Corps in World War Two,” demonstrate the importance of first-hand testimony in the
construction of historical accounts. In the hospital after surviving an airplane crash in Vermont, Billy meets Rumfoord, who has broken his leg while skiing, and overhears the conversations he has about Dresden with his much younger lover. As the narrator explains, “Rumfoord had a problem about Dresden,” since in the “twenty-seven-volume Official History of the Army Air Force in World War Two....there was almost nothing...about the Dresden raid, even though it had been such a howling success” (244). Because Rumfoord understands that “Americans have finally heard about Dresden” twenty-three years after the fact and that “[a] lot of them know now how much worse it was than Hiroshima,” he realizes he must put something in his book about the bombing despite having no source of information on which to rely. Learning of Rumfoord’s difficulty, Billy offers himself as a reliable witness only to discover that the older man doubts his testimony: “There in the hospital, Billy was having an adventure very common among people without power in time of war: He was trying to prove to a willfully deaf and blind enemy that he was interesting to hear and see” (245, 247).

Although Billy does finally convince Rumfoord that he was in Dresden in February 1945, the conversations the two men subsequently have about the bombing suffer both from Billy’s tendency to cower before authority and from his growing reliance on Tralfamadorian philosophy. Confronted first by Rumfoord’s assertion that the bombing of Dresden “had to be done” and next by his demand that those who executed the bombing should be pitied for “[having] to do it,” Billy remarks not only that he is “all right” with the memories of his personal experience but also that “[e]verything is all right,” since “everybody has to do exactly what he does” (253, 254, original emphasis). As the reader, of course, recognizes, the first of Billy’s claims has no basis in reality, since, aside from acknowledging the connection between the barbershop quartet and the German guards, Billy is so far from “all right” with his memories that he continues his imagined time travels to Tralfamadore to avoid them. Perhaps more troubling than the lie he tells himself and Rumfoord, however, is his parroting of the Tralfamadorians’ beliefs, since by refusing to contest the veracity of Rumfoord’s assertions, Billy ensures that the “willfully deaf and blind” historian
will write an account of Dresden based on his own assumptions rather than on the testimony of those who lived through the event. Billy’s decision to privilege the Tralfamadorian philosophy he has created rather than his personal memories of Dresden thus results in the continued distortion of the causes and effects of the Dresden bombing in the collective memory of the American public.

Precisely because Billy accepts Rumfoord’s claims without objections, those critics who argue that Vonnegut approves of his protagonist fundamentally misunderstand the underlying message of Slaughterhouse-Five and its satirization of those who privilege irresponsible imaginings at the expense of personal and collective memory. That such individuals are, indeed, the target of the novel’s satire becomes clear in the opening and closing chapters of the book, where Vonnegut speaks in his own voice. In the first chapter, for instance, he discusses at length his conversations with the wife of a soldier friend, who forces him to promise that his novel will not “pretend” that the soldiers of World War II “were men instead of babies,” and toward the end of the same chapter, he reveals that, in rereading the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah, he has discovered his appreciation for Lot’s wife, who dramatizes both the pull of memory and the humanity involved in acknowledging that pull: “And Lot’s wife, of course, was told not to look back where all those people and their homes had been. But she did look back, and I love her for that, because it was so human” (18, 28). Similarly, in the concluding chapter of the novel, Vonnegut acknowledges that he is “not overjoyed” at the Tralfamadorians’ temporal philosophy and their related belief that “we will all live forever,” and in describing a trip he takes back to

26 Somewhat oddly, Daniel Cordle concludes that, “[d]espite the passivity with which [Billy Pilgrim] is characterized throughout the novel, he is left with an opportunity at the end to do something to transgress the pattern of the rest of his life, refuting the Tralfamadorians’ beliefs” (175). Since Vonnegut makes it clear that Billy Pilgrim is killed in 1976 while preaching the Tralfamadorians’ philosophy to a stadium-sized Chicago audience, it is hard to understand how Cordle arrives at his reading of the novel’s end. Similarly troublesome is Alberto Cacicedo’s characterization of Slaughterhouse-Five’s conclusion. Although Cacicedo begins by suggesting that the novel is “concern[ed]...not so much [with] taking responsibility as [with] getting to the point at which responsible action is possible,” he undermines the solidity of his initial observation by claiming that, “[i]n bringing the message of Tralfamadore to human beings, Billy is not urging a detached acceptance of death or the horrors of war” but is rather “r-e-presenting the gospel message of Christ to the disciples” (358, 365). If Cacicedo’s alignment of Billy and Christ is not sufficiently bizarre, his insistence that the Tralfamadorians’ beliefs resemble “the gospel message” certainly does merit a serious objection, since he himself argues earlier in the same article that Vonnegut “takes an ethically responsible stance that denies the quietism of Tralfamadorian philosophy” (360).
Dresden some twenty years after the war, he suggests that no human dignity is possible when, far from remembering the lessons of World War II, people across the globe allow others to be starved, assassinated, and bombed every day (269). 27

If Vonnegut’s stance on the importance of memory and the perils of the imagination were not sufficiently clear in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, one might also turn to his other satirical war novel, *Mother Night*, which he published in the same year as Heller’s *Catch-22*. Narrated by Howard W. Campbell Jr., a former American secret agent and Nazi propagandist, *Mother Night* not only resembles *Slaughterhouse-Five* in thematizing the consequences of unconstrained imagination but also echoes *Catch-22* in establishing a relationship between atrocity and an insufficient attention to the passage of time. At the opening of the novel, which is set in 1961, the reader learns that Campbell is being held for trial as a war criminal in Israel and that the succeeding pages will feature his “confessions” about his wartime activities. Among these confessions are Campbell’s general disaffection with nations and nationalities and his pre- and mid-war belief that, as neither a soldier nor “a political man,” he has a responsibility only to his art and his marriage (3, 38). Indeed, emphasizing that nations and nationalities “just [didn’t] interest [him] as much as they probably should [have],” Campbell acknowledges that his literary output before and during the war centered on the notion that, “in a world gone mad,” “a pair of lovers…could survive by being loyal only to a nation composed of themselves—a nation of two” (34). As Campbell goes on to note, this last phrase not only served as the title for one of his uncompleted plays but also acted as the thematic bass-line for both his poem “Reflections on Not Participating in Current Events” and his erotic journal, *Memoirs of a Monogamous Casanova*. While the poem illustrated the notion of “a nation of two” by following Campbell and his wife as they fled before

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27 The passage I am pointing to in this sentence involves Vonnegut and his friend, Bernard V. O’Hare, consulting statistical material in the back of a “little notebook” as they fly over Europe (270). Among the data contained in the notebook’s back pages are figures relating to global birth and death rates and an estimation of the world population in 2000. Looking at these figures, Vonnegut remarks that he “suppose[s]” the 7,000,000,000 people who will be alive on Earth in 2000 “will all want dignity” (271). Because the notebook also mentions the fact that 10,000 people die each day from starvation or malnutrition and because the final chapter of *Slaughterhouse-Five* opens by describing the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as the daily bombings in Vietnam, Vonnegut implicitly suggests that individual dignity will remain an impossibility until human life is respected.
“[t]he great machine [that] is history,” the memoir related his “conquests of all the hundreds of women [his] wife...had been”: “It was a diary,” Campbell explains, “recording day by day for the first two years of the war, [my and my wife’s] erotic life—to the exclusion of all else. There [was] not one word in it to indicate even the century or the continent of its origin” (122, 127).

Although Campbell claims that his art allowed him an imaginative escape from the brutalities of the war, one might expect that his role as an American agent would have interfered with his flight from reality. As he later explains, however, his work as a spy at the German Ministry of Popular Entertainment and Propaganda actually presented him with “an opportunity for some pretty grand acting,” an opportunity that he capitalized on by “fool[ing] everyone with [his] brilliant interpretation of a Nazi, inside and out” (39). So convincing, in fact, was his performance that, by the end of the war, he finds himself “high on the list of war criminals, largely because [his] offenses were so obscenely public” (28). From Campbell’s perspective, this postwar turn of events is troubling not only because no one in the American government will acknowledge his status as a wartime spy but also because the charges against him are related less to his particular actions than to the exuberance with which he carried them out. Noting, for instance, that “the crime of [his] times” was to “serv[e] evil too openly and good too secretly,” he ultimately concludes that the only offenses for which he can actually be held accountable are “crimes against [himself],” crimes that include his refusal “to separate the real from the fake” (xiii, 268, 57). This last point, indeed, is one with which Vonnegut seems to agree, since in the Introduction to the second edition of *Mother Night*, which appeared in 1966, he clarifies that the “moral” of the novel is as follows: “We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be” (v).

If Howard Campbell initially seems to resemble Billy Pilgrim in escaping the present moment through his imaginative fantasies, he nevertheless differs from Billy by coming to
appreciate the importance of memory and the significance of temporal attentiveness. More specifically, Campbell repeatedly stresses his disgust that World War II has been “forgotten” by soldiers and civilians alike, and he criticizes those who, in an attempt to avenge the wrongs done during the war, defend their actions by relying on the same problematic logic that led to the war’s outbreak (iv). Sickened, for instance, that Americans have renamed Armistice Day Veterans’ Day so that the living can lay “their grubby hands...[on] the glory of the dead,” Campbell remarks that while the only purpose of world wars is for people to “be changed” by them, the United States has, in “typical” fashion, chosen to celebrate combat more generally with parades of scantily-clad majorettes “kicking at the moon, twitching their behinds, and twirling chromium dildos” (132, 133, 139). Similarly, when confronted by a former American soldier who calls him the incarnation of “pure evil” and threatens his life, Campbell declares that the man has failed to see the similarity between himself and the Germans whom he fought in the 1940s: “Where’s evil?” he asks. “It’s that large part of every man that wants to hate without limit, that wants to hate with God on its side...It’s that part of an imbecile...that punishes and vilifies and makes war gladly” (249, 251).

Perhaps the clearest indication of Campbell’s postwar belief in the necessity of memory and the importance of temporal attention emerges in his characterization of “the totalitarian mind.” Finding himself in the presence of a white-supremacist dentist and his cronies, including a Catholic priest and a black man from Harlem, Campbell is shocked to discover that these men, though separated on every point of ideology, have nevertheless banded together under the notion that the United States has “fall[en] into the hands of the wrong people” and that “some heads are
going to [have to] roll” (223). In response to this baffling group and their bizarre collaboration, Campbell writes,

    I have never seen a more sublime demonstration of the totalitarian mind, a mind which might be likened unto a system of gears whose teeth have been filed off at random. Such a snaggle-toothed thought machine, driven by a standard or even a substandard libido, whirls with the jerky, noisy, gaudy pointlessness of a cuckoo clock in Hell...
    The dismaying thing about the classic totalitarian mind is that any given gear, though mutilated, will have at its circumference unbroken sequences of teeth that are immaculately maintained, that are exquisitely machined.
    Hence the cuckoo clock in Hell—keeping perfect time for eight minutes and thirty-three seconds, jumping ahead fourteen minutes, keeping perfect time for six seconds, jumping ahead two seconds, keeping perfect time for two hours and one second, then jumping ahead a year.
    The missing teeth, of course, are simple, obvious truths, truths available and comprehensible even to ten-year-olds, in most cases.
    The willful filing off of gear teeth, the willful doing without certain obvious pieces of information—
    That was how a household as contradictory as the one composed of [the white supremacist, the Catholic, and the Negro] could exist in relative harmony—
    ....That was how Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of Auschwitz, could alternate over the loudspeakers of Auschwitz great music and calls for corpse-carriers—
    That was how Nazi Germany could sense no important differences between civilization and hydrophobia—
    That is the closest I can come to explaining the legions, the nations of lunatics I’ve seen in my time. (223-225)

Although Campbell ends this disquisition by problematically remarking that he himself has “never...willfully destroyed a tooth on a gear of [his] thinking machine,” his alignment of the totalitarian mind with a malfunctioning clock has significance not only for the topic at hand but also for Vonnegut’s insistence on memory and linear time more generally. Moving ahead by fits and starts rather than proceeding at regular intervals, the hellish cuckoo clock that is the totalitarian mind denies the importance of linear sequence and memory and thus accommodates itself to inconsistencies and contradictions, both of which, on Vonnegut’s account, lead to
atrocities. Indeed, as *Mother Night* and *Slaughterhouse-Five* make clear, the rejection of sequence, memory, and consistency is not a trait of the totalitarian mind alone but rather a feature of the kind of mind that Vonnegut loosely describes as “schizophrenic.” Within *Mother Night*, schizophrenia is first linked to Campbell’s acquaintance Kraft-Popatov, a Soviet spy who, despite arguing that Alcoholics Anonymous is “the greatest contribution America has made to the world,” uses A.A. meetings “as spy drops” and who, though sincerely believing himself Campbell’s “true friend,” simultaneously “think[s] of a way to use [him] in advancing the Russian cause” (53). Recognizing Kraft-Popatov’s diseased thought-process, Campbell understands that he, too, suffers from schizophrenia—“that simple and widespread boon to modern mankind”—since he can listen to recordings of his wartime broadcasts without “[breaking] into a cold sweat” and since he can “live with what [he] did” during the war without having a troubled conscience (179). As the descriptions of both Kraft-Popatov’s and Campbell’s schizophrenia demonstrate, the disease from which they suffer is, on Vonnegut’s account, one in which the individual, by dividing his mind in two, enables himself to ignore the incongruities that memory and temporal attention might make obvious and objectionable.29

Having shown in *Mother Night* how those with compartmentalized minds are prone to treachery and cruelty, Vonnegut uses *Slaughterhouse-Five* to illustrate that schizophrenia itself results from a particular way of understanding time. More specifically, he suggests that schizophrenia originates in the minds of those who, ignoring the tickings of the clock and perceptions of temporal duration, privilege instead a Bergsonian or Spenglerian conception of

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29 As these examples make clear, Vonnegut is not considering schizophrenia as a medical condition; rather, he uses the term “schizophrenic” to describe any person (or character) who chooses to block out a part of the mind that might interfere with wish-fulfillment or damage self-estimation. To put the matter simply: The Vonnegutian schizophrenic is one who brackets the conscience when conscientious thinking or action poses a threat to the self. Precisely because Vonnegut defines schizophrenia in this fashion, we can hazard that he would have been as opposed to Deleuze and Guattari’s celebration of the “schizo” in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) as he was to the schizophrenic characters he himself created. For where Deleuze and Guattari envision “social relations...[that] conform to the syntheses of the unconscious” and conceive of schizophrenia under capitalism as “free-form desire in the psyche,” Vonnegut suggests throughout his fiction that those who follow the whims and desires of the unconscious are the least responsible and the most dangerous (Holland 15, 93). Indeed, if any author in this chapter might have endorsed Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of schizophrenia, it would not have been Vonnegut but Norman Mailer, whose description of the “psychopath” in “The White Negro” sounds eerily like Deleuze and Guattari’s “schizo.”
time. As Peter G. Jones notes in his study *War and the Novelist*, Billy Pilgrim’s “slipping and sliding through time sounds Bergsonian,” since Bergson contended that “the moments of true duration in time are interpenetrating, like ‘notes from a tune’ melting in the air,’ elements which pass over into one another” (220). Yet the Tralfamadorians’ insistence on the metaphor of “bugs in amber” also makes time in the novel seem Spenglerian, since Spengler believed that “time defines space” and that space “then becomes a form of duration, thenceforward always present” (219).

Whatever the exact mixture of Bergsonian and Spenglerian philosophy in Billy and the Tralfamadorians’ understanding of temporality, what should be stressed is that Vonnegut connects that hybrid conception of time to the schizophrenic’s manner of existing in the world. Although the word “schizophrenia” does not, as in *Mother Night*, appear in the text of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, it does make an appearance on the book’s title page, where just beneath his name Vonnegut writes, “[T]his is a novel somewhat in the telegraphic schizophrenic manner of tales of the planet Tralfamadore, where the flying saucers come from.” Aligning schizophrenia with the Tralfamadorians, Vonnegut implies that Billy Pilgrim suffers from the disease, as well, since he not only creates and then endorses the Tralfamadorians’ belief system but also wishes to learn to read their books.

Aside from allowing us to understand Billy Pilgrim’s “time travels” as a symptom of his schizophrenic refusal of linearity and memory, Vonnegut’s descriptions of the disease also enable us to connect his satires of the 1960s with *Catch-22*. As I suggested previously, *Catch-22* satirizes those who, like Yossarian, ignore the passage of time and consequently find themselves caught in circular traps that prohibit agency. Billy, too, finds himself caught in a circular trap.

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30 Jones says no more about Spengler than what I have quoted above. He seems, however, to be getting at two related notions. On the one hand, he appears to be making an argument that Franklin Merrell-Woolf has advanced regarding Spengler. According to Merrell-Woolf, Spengler “saw time as the father of space” and “recognized all cultured consciousness as essentially space-like”; yet he “also realized that culture ever turned upon time and life with a view to conquering them” (207). On this reading, space, the child of time, ultimately tries to dominate time in particular cultural formations, formations that might include the Tralfamadian culture, in which time is essentially spatialized as “bugs in amber.” On the other hand, Jones seems, like Annie Pfeiffer, to be addressing an apparent contradiction in Spengler’s thought. According to Pfeiffer, Spengler, despite privileging “the dynamic ‘Philosophy of Becoming’” over “the static ‘Philosophy of Being,’” made the mistake of treating History like an organism: “Paradoxically, under Spengler’s microscope, history becomes a study of ‘things-become,’ where even ‘things-becoming’ are transformed into lifeless forms” (Pfeiffer web).
since he is compelled to revisit the same moments of the past, present, and future over and over again, but unlike Yossarian, he ends up in this predicament not simply by ignoring time’s passage but by constructing an imaginative fantasy that aims at the complete obliteration of linearity and memory. Billy’s wish to do away with memory seems, indeed, to precede his creation of the Tralfamadorians and their philosophy, since he first “travels” to the extraterrestrials’ planet in an attempt to escape his experiences during the aftermath of the Battle of the Bulge and to block off that portion of his mind that might record those experiences as memory.

Regardless of the different origins of Yossarian’s and Billy’s schizophrenia, Vonnegut’s decision to satirize those who willfully cultivate the disorder also causes his novel to resemble Heller’s in challenging present-centered philosophies, including the present-centered existentialism advocated by Norman Mailer in “The White Negro.” Indeed, the schizophrenic whom Vonnegut satirizes in his novels is nearly indistinguishable from the “psychopath” whom Mailer praised in 1957 for letting “the very intensity of his private vision” become a “reality more real than the reality of closely reasoned logic” (342). Like Mailer’s psychopath, as well, Vonnegut’s schizophrenic characters have been in contact “with instant death” and have thereafter “divorce[d] [themselves] from society, exist[ed] without roots, [and] set out on [an] uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self” (339). Yet in contrast to Mailer, who approves of those who “[exist] in the present, in that enormous present which is without past or future, memory or planned intention,” Vonnegut demonstrates that the perception of “an enormous present” depends on the irresponsible use of the imagination and the dangerous neglect of memory and linear time.

By foregrounding the way in which the imagination can interfere with temporal vigilance, Vonnegut creates in Mother Night and Slaughterhouse-Five durational satires that illustrate the connection between personal integrity and personal memory and between social integrity and collective memory. As Charles J. Shields explains, Vonnegut’s belief that personal and social integrity were mutually dependent developed during his postwar studies in anthropology at the
University of Chicago. In particular, Vonnegut was impressed by Robert Redfield’s series of lectures on “folk societies,” and following Redfield’s lead, he “concluded that extended family—or any folk society created out of any variety of beliefs, for that matter—could validate a person, give him or her a place to be in the world, and alleviate the pain of loneliness” (Shields 89). Speaking of such societies in a 1973 interview with Playboy, Vonnegut contended that meaningful communities could hold together only when “you [didn’t] have to wonder what the person next to you [was] thinking”—that is, when the values of the group would be so widely shared that the feeling of un-belonging would become an impossibility (WFG 243). Although he acknowledged in the same interview that “[a]rtists of different kinds constitute a sort of extended family,” since they “usually understand one another fairly well, without anybody’s having to explain much,” he also noted that this sort of community had become increasingly unlikely in the aftermath of World War II (244). Whereas the United States had, on Vonnegut’s account, weathered the Great Depression by everyone “band[ing] together,” the advent of the Second World War caused American citizens to believe that their government was not only “[lying] very elaborately to them” but was also no longer “a respecter of life” (274, 264). Indeed, according to Vonnegut, the Vietnam War resulted in “broken [American] hearts” not because it marked a moral departure in American history but because it “prolonged something we started to do to ourselves at Hiroshima”: “[Vietnam is] simply a continuation of that: an awareness of how ruthless we are. And it’s taken away the illusion that we have some control over our Government...Vietnam made it clear that the ordinary citizen had no way to approach his Government, not even by civil disobedience or mass demonstration” (271).

31 According to Charles J. Shields, Redfield’s studies of modernization in Mexico and Central America “convinced him that there was a common denominator in how people came together—it was a stage, really, in human relations”: “He called it the ‘folk society’ and wrote that the ideal folk society was small, homogeneous, respectful of sacred rituals, and held together by strong primary personal relations” (88). In a speech Vonnegut gave to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1971, he mentioned that Redfield had been “the most satisfying teacher in [his] life” and went on to acknowledge the importance of memory in Redfield’s conception of folk societies: “The members [of those societies] communicated only by word of mouth. There was no access to the experience and thought of the past, except through memory. The old were treasured for their memories. There was little change” (176, 177).
Aside from pointing out the uselessness of public protest in the *Playboy* interview, Vonnegut also argued at the 1973 P.E.N. Conference that the arts no longer have any power in effecting political change. Remarking that “[f]iction is harmless” and “so much hot air,” he went on to describe how contemporary literature had failed to alter the course of the Vietnam War:

The Vietnam war has proved [the ineffectiveness of fiction]. Virtually every American fiction writer was against our participation in that civil war. We all raised hell about the war for years and years—with novels and poems and plays and short stories. We dropped on our complacent society the literary equivalent of a hydrogen bomb.

I will now report to you the power of such a bomb. It has the explosive force of a very large banana-cream pie—a pie two meters in diameter, twenty centimeters thick, and dropped from a height of ten meters or more.

My own feeling is that we should turn this awesome weapon over to the United Nations, or to some other international peacekeeping organization, such as the C.I.A. (226-7)

As this passage suggests, Vonnegut believed the message of the Vietnam era was identical to the message he had earlier suspected lay behind the 1972 Republican National Convention: namely, “Ignore Agony” (*WFG* 204). In consequence, his decision to continue writing fiction after the publication of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, which debuted during the height of the Vietnam War, might seem bizarre. As he explained in the same speech to the attendees at the P.E.N. Conference, however, artists, despite having an “influence [that] is slow and subtle,” also have the capacity to provide the young with “myths [that] resonate with the mysteries of their own times” (229). Because “[t]hose who rule us now are living in accordance with myths created for them by writers when they were young,” Vonnegut argued that the writers of his generation would “become influential when those who [had] listened to [their] myths [had] become influential” (229, *original emphasis*). Among those myths he personally wished to encourage was “the most ridiculous superstition of all: that humanity is at the center of the universe, the fulfiller or the frustrator of the grandest dreams of God Almighty” (163). Only when Americans accepted
this superstition as truth, Vonnegut told his audience, would “[h]uman beings...stop treating each other like garbage...[and] begin to treasure and protect each other instead” (164).

In suggesting that the artist’s task is “to catch people before they become generals and presidents...and [to] poison their minds with [...] humanity,” Vonnegut assigns writers a goal that is both tiny and immense (Scholes Interview 123). “Tiny,” because writers cannot realistically achieve, by way of their works, the overthrow of a government or the abolishment of social classes, but also “immense,” because those same writers can potentially aim at a fundamental reconfiguration of the human heart and mind. We might note that in describing the writer’s duties as he does, Vonnegut does not set out into uncharted territory but rather joins the durational satirists of his own and preceding generations, all of whom simultaneously doubted and hoped that their fictional works would contribute to political and societal reformation. Like Ford Madox Ford, Wyndham Lewis, Evelyn Waugh, and Joseph Heller, Vonnegut recognizes the difficulty of achieving reform, especially in the wake of world war, and like those authors, as well, he refuses to provide a concrete plan that would alter national or international politics. Nevertheless, with the hope that his satires might incite some change in future generations, he insists in both Mother Night and Slaughterhouse-Five that no change is likely to occur if memory is denied and time’s passage is ignored.
APPENDIX A
List of Publication Dates – Abbreviations

Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939)

“On Impressionism”...1913
*The Fifth Queen* trilogy...1906-8
*The Good Soldier* (*TGS*)...1915
*On Heaven and Other Poems*...1918
*Thus to Revisit*...1921
*Parade’s End*
  *Some Do No*...(*SDN*)...1924
  *No More Parades* (*NMP*)...1925
  *A Man Could Stand Up*—(*MCSU*)...1926
  *The Last Post* (*LP*)...1928

Geoffrey Keynes (1887-1982)

*The Gates of Memory*...1981

Robert Graves (1895-1985)

*Over the Brazier*...1916
*Good-bye to All That*...1929

Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957)

*Blast*...1914-5
*Tarr*...1918
*The Art of Being Ruled* (*ABR*)...1926
*Time and Western Man* (*TWM*)...1927
*The Wild Body* (*WB*)...1927
*The Apes of God* (*AofG*)...1930
*Satire and Fiction*...1930
*Hitler*...1931
*The Doom of Youth*...1932
*Men Without Art* (*MWA*)...1934
*The Revenge for Love*...1937
*Blasting and Bombardiering* (*BB*)...1937
*The Hitler Cult*...1939
*Rude Assignment* (*RA*)...1950
*Self Condemned*...1954
*The Human Age*...1955-6
Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966)

Decline and Fall...1928
Vile Bodies...1930
A Handful of Dust...1934
Put Out More Flags (POMF)...1942
Work Suspended...1942 (written 1939)
Brideshead Revisited (BR)...1945
The Loved One...1948
Helena...1950
Sword of Honour trilogy
   Men at Arms (MA)...1952
   Officers and Gentlemen (OG)...1955
   The End of the Battle (EofB)...1961
The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold...1957

Norman Mailer (1923-2007)

The Naked and the Dead (ND)...1947
“The White Negro”...1957
Advertisements for Myself...1959
Christians and Cannibals (CC)...1966
Armies of the Night...1968
The Executioner’s Song...1979

Joseph Heller (1923-1999)

Catch-22...1961

Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007)

The Sirens of Titan...1959
Mother Night...1961
Cat’s Cradle...1963
Slaughterhouse-Five...1969
Wampeters, Foma, & Granfalloons...1974
APPENDIX B

In “Guy Crouchback’s Disillusion: Crete, Beevor, and the Soviet Alliance in *Sword of Honour*” (2011), Donat Gallagher discusses Evelyn Waugh’s involvement in the evacuation of Crete. Despite acknowledging Waugh’s belligerent letter to Ann Fleming and the “cruel fact” mentioned in his journal entry,¹ Gallagher argues that the historical record does not support the contention that Waugh or the leader of his Commando, Robert Laycock, acted dishonorably in leaving Crete. To make this point, he cites military records from May 28, 1941, in which Generals Freyberg and Weston, planning for the evacuation on the nights of May 31 and June 1, ordered Layforce to hold an “intermediate position” until they were able to “disengage and embark” (179). According to Gallagher, who later remarks that he “does not pretend to expertise in the relevant military law beyond knowing some basic principles and famous cases,” the fact that Layforce was scheduled to embark at some point during the evacuation troubles the notion that the unit acted wrongly by not remaining to be taken as prisoners of war (199). Proceeding to note that Layforce was scheduled to embark fifth on a list of twelve fighting units remaining on the island, Gallagher also argues that Laycock and his men did not “jump the queue,” since they had been told by Weston early on the morning of May 31 that either his staff or an embarkation officer would make sure that the Commandos could retire from their rear-guard positions and board the boats waiting in Sphakia (196). Although he goes on to admit that no order ever arrived from Weston’s staff or an embarkation officer on the night of May 31, he emphasizes that the absence of Weston, his staff, and the embarkation officer—all of whom were already in or on

¹ Somewhat bewilderingly, Gallagher concludes that the telegram to Fleming and the diary entry should be understood as a sign of Waugh’s “rage” that spurious gossip might be taken for the truth in England. Although he remarks that “[t]he exchange and the diary raise issues too complex for this space,” Gallagher proceeds to offer the “tentative suggestion…that Waugh already knew the gossip about Laycock’s ‘take-off’ from Crete, and that it was baseless” (202). As he goes on to write, “[Waugh] also knew that Fleming (a mischief maker as he was) would enjoy spreading the rumor that *Officers and Gentlemen* endorsed the gossip, which could destroy his friendship with Laycock and his wife. He therefore boiled over. Rage caused incoherence, as did old-fashioned use of the word *fact* as *alleged fact*. (Even today, *fact* is used to mean ‘untrue’ fact. In response to a claim that he had made a certain payment, a modern editor retorted, ‘This fact is not correct.’) In short, I explain Waugh’s incoherence as the effect of his knowing that the gossip about Laycock’s departure from Crete was a cruel and potentially very damaging reversal of the truth…” (202).
their way to Egypt—proves that Laycock rightly acted on his “own authority” in sending his men to the beach and in boarding the last destroyer himself (199). For all these reasons, Gallagher contends, “[m]aking Laycock and Waugh’s alleged personal dishonor on Crete [Sword of Honour’s] ‘crux’ decenters the novel’s profound moral and political themes” (176).

Several problems arise with Gallagher’s version of events, the first of which is his own acknowledgment that no record, aside from Waugh’s account and a secondhand account from F.C.C. Graham, the brigade major, exists of Laycock’s conversation with Weston on the morning of May 31. This is a crucial matter, since elsewhere in the essay Gallagher questions Waugh’s reliability and emphasizes the necessity of turning to military records instead of engaging in speculation. Despite his own warnings, however, he not only endorses Waugh’s and Graham’s accounts, which differ in wording; he also argues that Laycock correctly interpreted Weston’s remarks during the unofficial meeting of May 31 as a facilitating directive: “[I]f Weston had specified that Layforce withdraw ‘only’ after staff sent a message (as he might well have done if the Germans had been active), then Layforce would have been obliged to stay in place. But Laycock correctly understood that Weston’s directive was facilitating: it basically indicated the manner in which the primary order to leave Crete was to be carried out (‘my staff will see to it’)” (199, original emphasis).

The key words in these last cited sentences are, of course, “basically,” “only” and “understood.” On the one hand, Gallagher does not explain how we can know that Laycock “correctly understood” something that was said to him only in the presence of Waugh, whose

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2 In his personal diary, Waugh recorded that, during the meeting, Weston had repeated the “order of priority for disembarkation which said Layforce was to be last, but all fighting troops had precedence over others”; he also noted that “Weston said that we were to cover the withdrawal and that a message would be sent to us by the embarkation officer on Sphakia beach when we could retire” (Waugh as qtd. in Gallagher 183). Although Gallagher acknowledges that Waugh’s diary entry is written “elliptically,” he moves on to say that F.C.C. Graham’s secondhand account “is different from, but not inconsistent with Waugh’s [firsthand] version.” According to Gallagher, Laycock “hurried to Creforce headquarters” after his and Waugh’s meeting with Weston and “blurt[ed] out [to Graham] on arrival that Weston had given him ‘counter-orders’” (183). More specifically, Graham later reported that Laycock had said, “We are to take as many of our troops with us as we can…General Weston said my staff will see to it” (Graham as qtd. in Gallagher 183). The crucial “difference” between Waugh's and Graham's versions, of course, is that the former underscores that "Layforce was to be last" of the fighting troops, while the latter suggests no order of embarkation priority.
reliability he elsewhere questions; on the other hand, since Waugh’s reliability is questionable, one wonders whether the word “only” was not, in fact, included in the conversation between Weston and Laycock. Whatever the case, it seems doubtful that officers would be allowed to act on their “own authority” any time communication faltered in the field. Gallagher may therefore be right that Laycock was not censured for evacuating Crete by the Inter-Services Committee (ISC), and he may also be right that Weston subsequently recommended Laycock for a C. in C.’s Award. Yet to conclude that lack of disciplinary action and praise for service mean Laycock acted appropriately is to rush to judgment, especially since Gallagher himself notes that “Winston Churchill was furious about the Crete debacle” and that the ISC’s report on Crete “was so ‘controversial’ that it circulated only at the highest levels” before both “[it], and its author, were…buried” (197). In such a situation, official lying—even to the extent of handing out medals—does not seem out of the realm of possibility, a consideration that is all the more credible since Weston, in accusing Laycock of misbehavior, would have had to accuse himself of wrongdoing: he, after all, was the one who left the island without giving adequate orders and without having put an adequate staff in place.

Several other problems arise in Gallagher’s attempt to exculpate Laycock. Just to provide one glaring example: Despite stressing that Layforce was the fifth unit listed on the embarkation orders, Gallagher several times insists that Laycock did not act incorrectly by allowing 120 of his men to board the final boats, even though this left “550 Australians and Marines” with higher embarkation priority on the island to be taken prisoners by the Germans (201). To make his point that Laycock did not “jump the queue,” Gallagher repeatedly emphasizes that “[t]he path to the beach [at Sphakia] was sunken and narrow” and was “fatally easy for truculent stragglers to block” (187). On his account, the Marines and Australians, who, following orders, withdrew from their positions before Layforce, took the main “road” to Sphakia,” which “ended in a goat track down a 500-foot escarpment”; and by taking this route, they were therefore placed behind the stragglers blocking the path to the beach (187).
What is troublesome about this characterization of the plight of the Marines and Australians is that Gallagher describes 120 of Laycock’s men “[running] onto the beach at 2:30am [on June 1]” and doing so ahead of an Australian battalion, which was prevented from gaining access to the beach by “large numbers of rabble” (190). Given this description of the Australians’ predicament, one wonders how Laycock’s men were allowed to “run” anywhere, let alone onto the beach. The only way this would have been possible was if Laycock and his men purposely chose to avoid the main route into Sphakia, and the only reason they would have had for avoiding that route would have been to “jump the queue.” Gallagher overlooks the logical reason for Laycock’s avoidance of the main route, and this he does despite citing the following sentence from Layforce’s War Diary: “22 hrs, 31 May: On finding that the entire staff of CREFORCE had embarked, in view of the fact that all fighting forces were now in position for embarkation and that there was no enemy contact, Col. LAYCOCK on own authority, issued orders to Lt. Col. YOUNG to lead troops to SPHAKION by route avoiding the crowded main approach to town and to use his own personality to obtain priority laid down in Div. orders” (198, emphasis added). Because Laycock must have suspected that both the Australians and the Marines would not have “avoid[ed] the crowded main approach,” his decision to encourage his men to take an alternative route seems like a conscious attempt to place them on the beach before those with higher embarkation priority. Moreover, if Lt. Col. Young’s responsibility was “to obtain priority laid down in Div. orders,” those orders explicitly stated that Layforce should not embark before the Australians and the Marines. Thus, Young would have better followed the Division’s orders if he and the members of Layforce who arrived in Sphakia had set themselves the task of dealing with the “rabble” and clearing the main route to the beach for the Australians and Marines.
## APPENDIX C

Note: The dates and days that are italicized and placed behind asterisks are instances of miscalculation on Waugh’s part. For a discussion of these instances, see below.

### Table 1

**Timeline of the Crete Episode in *Officers and Gentlemen***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page #</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 223    | ONE (5/26/1941) ** Possibly 5/27/1941** | After 12:00AM | - Australian sergeant dies  
- Guy et al. arrive on Crete |
| 231    |     | 2:30 AM | - Guy et al. encounter miles of retreating troops  
- Major Hound meets with Creforce HQ |
| 236    |     | Dawn | - Ludovic reports that officers are being killed and their vehicles stolen  
- A reconnaissance plane fires on the soldiers  
- Major Hound asks Guy to call him “Fido”  
- Major Hound, overcome with hunger, succumbs to “the first great temptation of his life” and barter four cigarettes for an unknown sergeant’s ration of bully beef |
| 242    | **TWO (6/28/941)** | | |
| 243    | ONE | 8:00AM | - Colonel Tickeridge arrives for orders at Creforce HQ  
- Germans bomb the area around Creforce HQ  
- Creforce G.O.C. says the island will be abandoned |
| 245    |     | 9:00AM | - Ludovic reveals that Major Hound’s driver has deserted  
- Germans bomb the area around Brigade HQ  
- Guy and Ludovic set off to find rations  
- Guy and Ludovic find X Commando and the Greek General Miltiades  
- Guy spots a German on a motorcycle |
<p>| 250    |     | 12:00PM | - “Luncheon recess” in German bombing |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:00PM</td>
<td>German bombing resumes and then stops once more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30PM</td>
<td>Major Hound asks Guy the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15PM</td>
<td>Major Hound asks Guy the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00AM</td>
<td>Guy reflects that Hookforce now comprises eight men&lt;br&gt;- Major Hound tells the men, despite orders, to march southward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00AM</td>
<td>Major Hound allows the men to rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>Guy encounters a group of “liberated” Italian prisoners&lt;br&gt;- Guy leaves to find food&lt;br&gt;- Major Hound crouches in a culvert under the road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Towards Evening”</td>
<td>Major Hound encounters a car containing injured New Zealand officers&lt;br&gt;- Major Hound and the New Zealanders run into a road block that has been made by British sappers who have “cleared out” without orders&lt;br&gt;- Major Hound does not stop to clear the road block but ventures down a mountain-side on his own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00am</td>
<td>Major Hound discovers Creforce HQ in a series of caves&lt;br&gt;- Major Hound lies about the situation to the north and is informed that he and his unit will not be evacuated&lt;br&gt;- Major Hound deserts once more, falling off a cliff through the top of a tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>Major Hound, upon waking from his fall, finds himself near an old Greek shrine&lt;br&gt;- An unattached Cretan confiscates Major Hound’s pack and gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midday</td>
<td>Major Hound finds Ludovic, who leads him to a cave containing the Spaniards from Sidi Bishr&lt;br&gt;- Guy, further north, encounters a straggling platoon, whose leader informs him the Halberdiers have surrendered&lt;br&gt;- Guy is led by a young girl to the body of a dead British soldier&lt;br&gt;- Guy arrives in Babali Hani to find the un-surrendered Halberdiers and is told by Colonel Tickeridge that he...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>277</td>
<td>Nightfall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>287</td>
<td><strong>5/31/1941 10:00pm</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>297</td>
<td><strong>5/31/1941 10:00pm</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Dawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305</td>
<td>Midday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

As noted in my chapter on Waugh, the author arrived on Crete just before midnight on May 26, 1941, and left the island in the early morning hours of June 1, 1941. Remarking some years after the evacuation that he had “collected enough experience [during the war] to last several lifetimes of novel-writing,” Waugh thus turned to his memories of his five days on Crete when writing *Officers and Gentlemen* (*EAR* 301). Yet within the novel, as he attempts to map Guy’s experience atop his own, Waugh not only miscalculates the amount of time that is said to have passed but also resembles his characters in perceiving the duration of that time to be longer than it is. In the table above, I have placed asterisks next to details in the novel that do not line up with the remainder of the temporal cues provided in the episode.

The first of Waugh’s errors involves the remark that Hookforce HQ lands on Crete “at midnight on 26th May,” which would place the unit on the island nearly twenty-four hours before
Waugh’s own Commando disembarked.\(^1\) Even if we understand “midnight on 26th May” to mean 12:00am on May 27, however, Waugh’s timeline gets ahead of him. On page 242, for example, he has Guy write on his notepad that it is the morning of “28/6/41,” a notation that involves two errors of calculation: on the one hand, the month is certainly May, not June,\(^2\) and on the other hand, whether or not Hookforce HQ arrived on May 26 or May 27, the date on which Guy writes is most certainly not May 28 (original emphasis). We can confirm this by paying attention to other details in surrounding scenes. First, immediately before Guy records the date on his notepad, his sergeant informs him that the food he has recently eaten was found “on the quay last night” (241, emphasis added). Because Hookforce HQ moved inland to set up headquarters during the early morning hours of the 26th or the 27th, it seems implausible that one man, a Sergeant Smiley, would have been allowed independently to wander back to the quay after leaving it; much more likely is that Sergeant Smiley, seeing the “ragged mob” of “barefooted, unshaven, haggard, but seemingly whole [men]” that greeted his unit upon its disembarkation, decided to pilfer whatever rations he could find before heading inland (227). Second, attending a meeting at Creforce HQ on the same morning that he records the date in his notepad, Guy reflects that “the rabble of the previous night” must have been the first wave of the evacuation described by the General Officer Commanding during that meeting (244, emphasis added).\(^3\) Combined with his subsequent notation of an “Enemy recce plane 0610,” which appeared during the men’s

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\(^1\) In other words, if Waugh landed on the island around 11:30pm on May 26th, his characters, who arrive at 12:00am on May 26th, would be on the island nearly twenty-four hours longer than the author himself was.

\(^2\) Although Waugh may have written the date correctly in typescript, he certainly missed the error when reading the proofs of both *Officers and Gentlemen* and the one-volume *Sword of Honour* trilogy.

\(^3\) One might also note that it is highly unlikely that Guy and Major Hound would have made contact with Creforce HQ only after having spent a full twenty-four hours on the island. Before their disembarkation, in fact, Tommy Blackhouse had outlined what their initial orders were upon reaching land. Among these was the directive that Guy and Major Hound would immediately “report to Lt. Col. Prentice at B Commando HQ and give him the written orders from GHQ”; once receiving these orders, Lt. Col. Prentice would, in his turn, “report to G.O.C. Creforce and present [the] orders” (223). When Guy and Major Hound arrive on the island, however, they learn that Lt. Col. Prentice is dead, which means that, instead of reporting to him, their immediate task becomes delivering the orders from GHQ to G.O.C. Creforce personally. To have wasted an entire day without doing this would have been unconscionable.
first morning on the island, these details confirm that the date is May 26 or, at latest, May 27 (242).

The consequence of these initial errors is that many of Waugh’s subsequent dates become skewed. On page 277, for instance, when he switches back to Guy after describing Ludovic’s final conversation with Major Hound, he mistakenly says that Guy has been on the island “four days” instead of three. Similarly, on page 297, when he places Guy on the beach at Sphakia “[o]n the 31st of May,” he ignores the fact that the hourly timeline he has provided, along with various other details in the novel, makes the date either May 29 or May 30, depending on whether the original “midnight on May 26” means May 26 or May 27, respectively. Finally, whereas the May 31 date, if accurate, would mean that Guy boards the fishing vessel around midday on June 1, the majority of the details in the episode suggest that he and Ludovic escape from Crete at midday on May 30 or May 31. What is striking about these latter dates is that Waugh actually has his characters leave the island some fifteen or thirty-nine hours before he himself boarded the last official boat supplied by the Navy for the Crete evacuation.\(^{4}\)

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\(^{4}\) As I note in Appendix B, Donat Gallagher places Waugh on board the HMS Kimberley at 3:00am on June 1. If Guy and Ludovic leave at midday on May 31, they therefore leave fifteen hours before Waugh; if they leave at midday on May 30, they leave thirty-nine hours before the author.
# APPENDIX D

## Table 2

Side-by-Side Timelines of *Catch-22*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Miss. #</th>
<th>Elizabeth Steedley</th>
<th>Miss. #</th>
<th>Joseph Heller (from the author’s blotter)</th>
<th>Clinton S. Burhans, Jr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yossarian at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver, CO; spends Thanksgiving in the hospital¹</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Relevant page numbers (RPN): 188)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yossarian and Clevinger at Cadet School in Santa Ana, CA; Yossarian spends Thanksgiving with Col. Schiesskopf’s wife</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(RPN: 188)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 1943</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Yossarian heads overseas; the Splendid Atabrine Insurrection occurs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(RPN: 70, 116)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Salerno Beachhead:</strong> Hungry Joe completes his 25 missions; Yossarian in the hospital with the clap</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td></td>
<td>(RPN: 62)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Fall</td>
<td>30</td>
<td><strong>Arrezo:</strong> Col. Nevers is killed; Col. Cathcart arrives as his replacement and raises the mission count</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>HELLER’S TIMELINE STARTS HERE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date/Location</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Notes/Notes on Notes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perugia</strong>; Major Duluth dies; Major Major chosen to replace him as squadron commander; the Great Loyalty Oath Crusade begins[^2]</td>
<td>(RPN: 62, 66, 122)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Late December 1943 or Early January 1944</strong></td>
<td>In Colorado, ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen discovers oil; Chief White Halfboat forced to relocate; Milo Minderbinder arrives on Pianosa[^3] and becomes mess officer</td>
<td>(RPN: 115, 70, 71, 381)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>January 1944 to March 1944</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Hungry Joe completes his 25 missions at Salerno beachhead; Yossarian in the hospital with the clap; <strong>Arrezo</strong>: Col. Nevers is killed; Col. Cathcart arrives as his replacement and raises the mission count; <strong>Ferrara</strong>: Kraft dies when Yossarian goes over the bomb site twice; Lt. Coombs dies</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April 1944</strong></td>
<td>Yossarian and Orr go with Milo to Cairo; Milo corners the market on cotton; <strong>Orvieto</strong>: Milo makes a deal with the</td>
<td><strong>Perugia</strong>: Major Duluth dies; Major Major chosen to replace him as squadron commander; the Great Loyalty Oath Crusade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Page</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| May 1944   | Germans and the Americans; Lt. Mudd dies  
                        (RPN:117, 131, 245, 265)                                      | 35   |
|            | Milo corners the market on cotton  
                        **Ferrara:** Kraft dies when Yossarian goes over the bomb site twice; Lt. Coombs dies  
                        Milo bombs the unit on Pianosa  
                        **First and Second Bologna:** Yossarian poisons the unit with soap flakes; Yossarian moves the bomb line; Yossarian sleeps with Luciana and the maid in the lime-green panties  
                        Arriving back in Pianosa, Yossarian learns of the mission increase and goes into the hospital for a week or two |      |
| June 4, 1944 | Axis Occupation of Rome Ends                                                                 |      |
| June 6, 1944 | D-Day                                                                                     |      |
| June 1944 | Major – de Coverley acquires officers’ apartments in Rome; the Great Loyalty Oath Crusade ends; Clevinger disappears in a cloud over Parma  
  **Ferrara**: Kraft dies when Yossarian goes over the bomb site twice; Lt. Coombs dies; Chief White Halfcoat arrives as a replacement for Lt. Coombs  
 (RPN: 107, 114, 115, 122, 125, 181, 294) | Orvieto: Milo makes a deal with the Germans and the Americans; Lt. Mudd dies  
 Yossarian and Orr go with Milo to Cairo  
 **Avignon**: Yossarian comes out of the hospital for ten days; Snowden dies over Avignon; refusing to wear clothes, Yossarian is awarded his medal for bravery over Ferrara |  |
| Late June 1944 to early July 1944 | Milo bombs the unit on Pianosa  
 (RPN: 40, 115) | **First and Second Bologna**: Yossarian poisons the unit with soap flakes; Yossarian moves the bomb line; Yossarian sleeps with Luciana and the maid in the lime-green panties  
 Arriving back in Pianosa, Yossarian learns of the mission increase and goes into the hospital for a week or two  
 Upon leaving the hospital, Yossarian learning of the newest mission increase and goes back into the hospital |  |
| July 1944 to August 1944 | **First and Second Bologna**: Yossarian poisons the unit with soap flakes; Yossarian moves the bomb line; Major |  |
— de Coverley is killed or captured in Florence; Yossarian sleeps with Luciana and the maid in the lime-green panties.

Learning of the mission increase, Yossarian goes into the hospital for a week or two.

Avignon: Yossarian comes out of the hospital for ten days; Snowden dies over Avignon; refusing to wear clothes, Yossarian is awarded his medal for bravery over Ferrara.

FIRST CHAPTER BEGINS HERE

Learning of the newest mission increase, Yossarian goes back into the hospital; there, he meets the Chaplain, the soldier in white, and the Texan; Yossarian begins writing Washington Irving’s name on censored letters.

Yossarian, out of the hospital, learns that the mission number has been raised again; he goes to see ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen, who tells him that the number is now 55.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>60</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>Late August 1944</th>
<th>FIRST CHAPTER BEGINS HERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Yossarian goes to see Major Major about the 55 missions</td>
<td>Clevinger disappears in a cloud over Parma</td>
<td>The Chaplain sees Col. Cathcart about the 60 missions; tries to see Major Major about the missions; and is accused of stealing one of Col. Cathcart’s plum tomatoes</td>
<td>Yossarian ENTERS THE HOSPITAL IN GRIEF OVER CLEVINGER; there, he meets the Chaplain, the soldier in white, and the Texan; Yossarian begins writing Washington Irving’s name on censored letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Yossarian is shot in the leg over Leghorn; in the hospital, Dobbs approaches him about killing Col. Cathcart; Yossarian begins an affair with Nurse Duckett; while Yossarian is in the hospital, Orr is shot down and fishes from a raft</td>
<td></td>
<td>(RPN: 30, 68, 74, 111-2, 118, 128-41, 143, 174-5, 199, 236, 299, 317)</td>
<td>(RPN: 208, 288)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 25, 1944</td>
<td>The Allies Re-Take Paris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 29, 1944</td>
<td>The Russians Re-Take Romania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 21, 1944</td>
<td>The Greeks Capture Rimini</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late September 1944</td>
<td><strong>Third Bologna:</strong> Orr makes his escape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Col. Scheisskopf arrives on Pianosa; the air crews bomb an undefended village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McWatt accidentally kills Kid Sampson and then kills himself; Col. Cathcart raises the number of missions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Col. Cathcart learns that Doc Daneeka was supposed to have been in McWatt’s plane and raises the number of missions again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(RPN: 326, 328, 335, 348, 350, 351)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1944</td>
<td>Yossarian gets new roommates; Chief White Halfoat develops signs of pneumonia; Yossarian goes to Rome;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HELLER'S TIMELINE STOPS HERE**

Yossarian is shot in the leg over Leghorn; while Yossarian is in the hospital, Orr is shot down and fishes from a raft.

**MISSIONS AT 65**

**MISSIONS AT 70**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 23, 1944</td>
<td>Nately’s whore falls in love</td>
<td>(RPN: 356, 359, 367)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 23, 1944</td>
<td>Yossarian punches Nately in the nose on Thanksgiving</td>
<td>(RPN: 371)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 24, 1944</td>
<td>Yossarian, Dunbar, the Chaplain, and Hungry Joe join Nately in the hospital; the soldier in white returns; Nately is “disappeared”</td>
<td>(RPN: 373)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late November 1944</td>
<td>Chief White Halfboat dies; Milo convinces Col. Cathcart that the men should fly his missions; Col. Cathcart raises the number of missions</td>
<td>(RPN: 378-80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1944</td>
<td>La Spezia: Nately and Dobbs die</td>
<td>The chaplain is interrogated for stealing the plum tomato; Gen. Peckem replaces Gen. Dreedle; Dr. Stubbs is sent to the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Col. Scheisskopf is promoted to Lt. General and made head of Special Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yossarian refuses to fly, heads to Rome, and tells Nately’s whore about his death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yossarian returns to Pianosa but soon goes back to Rome without leave; Arfy rapes and kills Michaela; Yossarian is arrested by M.P.s

Back in Pianosa, Yossarian makes the “odious” deal with Cols. Cathcart and Korn; is stabbed by Nately’s whore and then sent to the hospital

Hungry Joe dies

Yossarian speaks to Major Danby and learns from the Chaplain that Orr has made it to Sweden

(RPN: 386 and thereafter)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doug Gaukroger’s (Timeless) Timeline of <em>Catch-22</em></strong></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaukroger</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yossarian talks to Wintegreen at Lowery Field, CO; soon thereafter, Wintergreen hits oil; Yossarian spends Thanksgiving in the hospital</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A year later, Yossarian is in Santa Ana, CA

Splendid Atabrine Insurrection

Hungry Joe complete 25 missions while Yossarian is in the hospital with the clap

Col. Nevers dies and is replaced by Col. Cathcart, who increases the missions to 30

Ferrara: Yossarian flies over the bomb site twice; Kraft dies; Milo Minderbinder arrives in Pianosa sometime after Ferrara9

First Bologna: Yossarian moves the bombline; Major –de Coverley disappears

Yossarian and Orr go with Milo to Cairo

Milo makes a deal with the Germans and Americans regarding Orvieto; he also makes a deal to bomb his own squadron10

Second Bologna: After the mission, Yossarian goes to Rome and sleeps with Luciana

Back in Pianosa, Yossarian learns that the missions have been raised to 40 and goes into the hospital

Avignon: Out of the hospital for ten days, Yossarian flies the Avignon mission; Snowden dies; Yossarian receives his medal for bravery over Ferrara and attends Snowden’s funeral; Clevinger disappears in a cloud

Col. Cathcart raises the mission number to 45, and Yossarian returns to the hospital; there, he meets the Chaplain, the Texan, and the soldier in white; he also begins signing Washington Irving’s name on censored letters

Col. Cathcart raises the number of missions to 50 and then to 55; Yossarian goes to see Major Major and Doc Daneeka about the mission number

Col. Cathcart raises the number of missions to 60

Late August: Dobbs approaches Yossarian in his tent about killing Col. Cathcart; the Chaplain visits Col. Cathcart and “steals” the plum tomato
Yossarian is shot in the leg over Leghorn (here Parma); while Yossarian is in the hospital Orr is shot down and fishes from a raft

Third Bologna: Orr makes his escape

1 Because Heller has Yossarian in a Moroccan hospital when Hungry Joe completes his twenty-fifth mission over Salerno, the only possible way for Yossarian to have spent two consecutive Thanksgivings in the United States is for him to have been in the army in November 1941. As I note in Chapter 4, Yossarian’s enlistment prior to Pearl Harbor suggests that he was drafted under the Selective Service Act. Even if we grant that Yossarian was drafted early in 1941, some of Heller’s other dates are confused. Although Yossarian seems to be in Colorado at the same time as Chief White Halfoat and Wintergreen, Heller remarks later that Chief White Halfboat strikes oil in Colorado seven months before Milo bombs the squadron on Pianosa (115). This means that Chief White Halfboat and Wintergreen would have stayed in Colorado for nearly two years (November 1941 to December 1943). Because the American war effort was in full swing by mid-1942, it seems unlikely that two able-bodied men would be kept digging ditches in Colorado for an additional year and a half.

2 Although Heller indicates that Major Major becomes squadron commander after Perugia, which has to happen in 1943, he remarks earlier in the novel that Appleby, upon his and Yossarian’s arrival on Pianosa, tries to report Yossarian’s refusal to take his Atabrine tablets to Major Major, who is already squadron commander. Because Yossarian has already flown some twenty missions by fall 1943, Major Major must have been promoted before that time. Also problematic is the fact that Heller dates the beginning of the Great Loyalty Oath Crusade a few days after Perugia. Because he later says that Major — de Coverley stops the Crusade once he returns from securing officers’ quarters in Rome, the Crusade itself would have gone on for nearly six months. This is highly unlikely, since Major — de Coverley interrupts the Crusade because it interferes with his meals. Because Major — de Coverley had to have eaten something between fall 1943 and June 1944, we can ascertain that Heller erred in dating the beginning of the Great Loyalty Oath Crusade.

3 Nearly every temporal cue in the novel suggests that Milo arrived on Pianosa some time in December 1943 or January 1944. Nevertheless, Heller slips up in recounting Milo’s first meeting with Yossarian, since he has Yossarian refer to Nately’s whore during that meeting. Since Nately could not possibly have met his Roman whore until after the Americans had re-taken Rome from the Germans (June 4, 1944), it is impossible for Yossarian to refer to her six months earlier.

4 Burhans claims that the mission to Orvieto occurred in April 1944 and then suggests that Milo cornered the cotton market in May 1944. Since Heller makes it very clear that Milo, in an attempt to prevent going bankrupt from the decrease in cotton prices, accepts the German contract for the Orvieto mission, there is no way that Milo could have cornered the cotton market after Orvieto.

5 Burhans argues that Yossarian goes to Rome (and sleeps with Luciana) in May 1944. As I note in Chapter 4, this is impossible since Rome was not re-taken by the Americans until June 4, 1944. On Burhans’s account, Yossarian would be walking straight into a German-held city.

6 Dating the Ferrara mission is exceedingly difficult. (Indeed, it is quite possible that there are multiple missions to Ferrara.) I have ultimately placed Ferrara in late June 1944, since Heller indicates that Chief White Halfboat arrives as a replacement for Lt. Coombs, who dies on the Ferrara mission. Since Heller elsewhere writes that the newly arrived Chief White Halfboat punches Colonel Moodus in the nose two months before the Chaplain sees Colonel Cathcart about
the sixty missions; and since he also makes it clear that Colonel Cathcart raises the missions to sixty in late August 1944, Ferrara must have happened in June 1944. To place Ferrara in the spring of 1944, as Burhans does and as Heller’s blotter suggests, is to have three or fourth months elapse between Lt. Coombs’s death and his replacement’s arrival. Since the Italian Campaign was the going concern for the American army during the first half of 1944, it seems unlikely that so much time would have elapsed between an officer’s death and his replacement’s arrival.

7 Burhans has Yossarian and Orr traveling to Cairo with Milo in June 1944. Because Milo decides to corner the cotton market while in Cairo, it is unclear why Burhans separates the cornering activity from the Cairo trip. See footnote 4.

8 Burhans incorrectly places the Leghorn incident in September 1944. Because Yossarian is in the hospital when the missions are raised to sixty and because the missions are raised to sixty in late August (see footnote 6), the Leghorn incident has to take place in late July or early August.

9 Despite admitting all the difficulties in dating the Ferrara mission, Gaukroger goes on to claim that it is “[o]ne of the first acts of Colonel Cathcart upon taking command” (78). Nowhere in the novel does Heller indicate that the Ferrara mission occurs soon after Colonel Cathcart takes command. Even if Heller did provide such information, that information would create additional problems. For if Colonel Cathcart authorized the Ferrara mission soon after he took over command in the late fall of 1943, Yossarian does not receive his medal for bravery during the Ferrara mission until July 1944. While Heller certainly makes it clear throughout Catch-22 that the military moves slowly, it seems unlikely that an officer—especially one flying many dangerous missions—would have to wait over seven months to receive a medal. This slowness would be especially troublesome in Yossarian’s case, since Colonel Cathcart—recognizing that Yossarian was foolish, not brave—wishes to recast the disastrous Ferrara mission as an heroic one. In such circumstances, Yossarian would need to receive his medal as soon as possible after the mission itself.

10 Gaukroger claims that Milo makes his Orvieto contracts during the Great Big Siege of Bologna, but this does not square with the text. The first time Yossarian reflects on the Orvieto mission, the narrator remarks that that mission took place “three months earlier” and that the Great Big Siege of Bologna will take place “the very next week” (118). Since we know that the first mission to Bologna has to happen after the re-taking of Rome; and since we know that Milo did not corner the cotton market until April, we have to conclude that the Orvieto mission, which was designed to prevent Milo’s bankruptcy, occurs in mid-April and that the first mission to Bologna occurs in July 1944.
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