



No More Parades

Ford Madox Ford

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English novelist, Ford's eccentric personality and varied output has been attributed to the obscurity of his achievements. *No More Parades* is the second book of his four-volume work titled *Parade's End*. The subject was the world as it culminated in the war; the story centers on Christopher Tietjens, an officer and gentleman, the last English Tory, and follows him from the secure, orderly world of Edwardian England into the chaotic madness of the First World War. Against the backdrop of a world at war, Ford recounts the complex sexual warfare between Tietjens and his faithless wife Sylvia.

No More Parades Details

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From Reader Review No More Parades for online ebook

Jane E says

I am getting more into this set of 4 books and found this second one more easily read and understood. The writing is still very scattered but that seems more purposeful in indicating the very scattered thought patterns of the characters. I still don't understand the motivation of the main character's seemingly appalling wife. Why does she want him with no money, why does she want to denigrate him in the eyes of his brother, social contacts and family friends? Perhaps that becomes more clear in the later books. (Purchased Ca Foscari bookshop, Venice)

Belinda Missen says

It has taken me a monumentally long time to get this far in the Parade's End saga, which I'm reviewing book at a time so I can get my thoughts out along the way.

I've learned over the last few days

- I still dislike Sylvia greatly.
- I still think Christopher is a wonderful character who's deeply misunderstood and taken for a ride by people around him.
- There is quite a bit of mundane, circular detail about the war in this one.

While I'm glad to see the back end of this installment, I still think it's a wonderful book. It's clear Ford had a certain fondness for the ellipses . . . for they're used almost every paragraph, to almost annoying affect. I thought perhaps it was just a dodgy digital copy of the book I had, but both my print copies confirm as much, too.

My recent French lessons are making it a little easier to pick up the foreign language littered throughout, too.

Rene says

At 90% finished I start this review. This second part of the "Parade's End" tetralogy is as well written as the first part. The author gives the information about the events bit by bit, often in the thoughts of the characters. And his characters are strongly developed. Take Sylvia, the estranged wife of Tietjens. She is the most terrible person I ever read about. You have to read the other two books, was it only to know how she ends up.

Sadly I am not at all familiar with the army and customs within the army at all, so especially the first part was difficult to get through at times. But this can of course not be a reason to give this book a lower rating. This definitely must be a four star rating. Maybe one of the last two books in will even reach five stars.

In the last chapter Tietjens has a long conversation with General Campion, who is his Godfather also. Some things become clear, but why the attitude of Tietjens towards his wife is as it is, remains a mystery to me, and probably also to Tietjens. You definitely need to read the whole tetralogy.

Eddie Clarke says

Disappointed; but perhaps that's just me. One hundred years of literary activity have created an expectation of what a WWI novel should be: although written in the shadow of that war by an ex-combatant this does not conform to those expectations.

The first book of the series seemed to set up a corrupt and decadent civilisation on the brink of disaster: Book two (this one) to me should therefore cover that disaster. However, Ford just repeats the drawing-room melodrama of Book one but now against the backdrop of the thundering guns on the Western front. The result seems ultimately to trivialise the war - or maybe this effect was part of Ford's objective?

I'm annoyed with Tietjens, annoyed with Sylvia - cannot be annoyed with Valentine as she does not appear in this book. However, I know from my experience of *The Good Soldier* Ford requires huge amounts of patience and super-aware reading, so no doubt my responses will develop throughout books three and four.

He writes astonishingly, and with such control. He carefully, indirectly, builds up a devastating picture of British incompetence and chaos, but not one which is foregrounded.

Dustincecil says

3.75..

Sylvia Tietjens... if I don't get some of this story from her perspective, she's going to leave a pretty awful taste in my mouth. Pretty ballsy of her to see the war as nothing but a roadblock on the path of her lifelong battle with her (equally reckless?)husband. This has turned out, so far, to be a very interesting study of a man's sense of duty to his country, marriage, and social structure.

It's difficult to feel any sense of compassion for these mega rich self obsessed characters- but they are drawn so completely, and so committed to their positions- I can't help but want to see how this plays out.

Realini says

No More Parades by Ford Madox Ford

Another version of this note and thoughts on other books are available at:

- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list...>

Christopher Tietjens is the Übermensch.

This is the lasting impression I have after reading the second tome of *Parade's End* by the stupendous Ford Madox Ford...

For this reader, Christopher Tietjens is a complex character.

Like the Übermensch in the propositions advanced by Nietzsche, which had many flaws, the protagonist of No More Parades is a complex Superman that only qualifies him as a superhero for a limited fan club.

The hero is a genius, with a brilliant mind.

He is the only one capable to understand, use and fix the numbers in the statistics department of his Majesty's Government.

In war, he acts with exemplary discipline, dedication, sense of duty and honor, taken to some extremes.

There is a moment when he is training or supervising soldiers under his command and his attitude appears farfetched.

Yet, like always with this Superhero, there is a good sensible reason for his insistence on an overbearing exercise

If they reach the gates of Paradise- and a good number in this heinous conflict will- the Supreme Deity will see clean and organized men.

His attitude towards his wife has an Angelique, otherworldly quality about it, although he can be as cold as ice.

Indeed, Sylvia played for me the role of the dark angel, a villain that is cheating on the hero and tormenting him.

Until I realized I might be very wrong.

The wife of the protagonist might be in love with an insensitive man that she tries desperately to entice and seduce.

Having to do with an exceptional character, who is extraordinary in his abilities to work with numbers, understand so many aspects of life, prove bravery, honesty, generosity and an indifference to worldly possessions, Sylvia Tietjens must play an extreme game.

Her philandering is a manifestation of yet another complicated, hard for me to understand personage, but one which seems to try and get her husband back...

So to say.

It is true that I have been overwhelmed and annoyed often by the idiosyncrasies of a woman that takes lovers, if only to tease and torment them in turn, then dispatches a supposed lover of her spouse- and I thought why not let him be, unless she is really head over heels...but here we may have a situation wherein one allows oneself acts that one does not accept for others.

But Sylvia tells general Campion that her husband is a...socialist.

The general is not amused and in fact takes this statement so seriously as to consider excluding Christian from his will.

When told about this, the hero is first inclined, in jesting, to accept this preposterous accusation to avoid an inheritance that he does not want- after all, he refused to take advantage of his rights as heir after his father died- and then he goes as far as to protect and explain the position of his wife in a baffling manner.

I hate communism and left wing systems and I would have been mad.

In another instance, when his wife is in a restaurant room with his lover, instead of showing any

dissatisfaction or aggression, this Superman tries to be as cavalier as to defy ordinary people's feelings and pretends not to see them, so as to avoid embarrassment for her.

He is as composed and unaffected as possible.

Or so it seems.

To end with another positive aspect... what a name the author has:

- Ford Madox Ford!

- I love it

I'd name a child Madox and since there would be no more but I have children with fur and feathers and their number increases, the next one might be called Madox

Or maybe Tietjens, albeit that is rather difficult and unusual.

Simon Mcleish says

It is clear that the second part of Ford's four novel sequence Parade's End is of pivotal importance to the quartet even before starting to read it, because it provides the title for the series as a whole. It covers only a short period, a few days in the middle of the First World War; their importance is that they are a high water mark in Sylvia Tietjens' bad treatment of her husband.

The events of the novel illuminate Sylvia's character more than Christopher's, and show the reader the reasons behind her actions much more sympathetically and fully than in Some Do Not.... What she actually does is to travel to the war zone in France without papers and attempt to cause a fight between Christopher and one of her ex-lovers, while continuing to spread the baseless rumour that Christopher has a hidden child by another woman. This all takes place at Christopher's unit, behind the Western Front.

The basic motivation behind her actions is to force a reaction from her husband, whose determination to maintain "normal" relations with Sylvia will not even permit him to have a row with her. She obviously causes him a great deal of difficulty and distress, but never has the satisfaction of causing him to break down in public.

If Christopher Tietjens is meant to represent the idea of the English gentleman, an obvious question to raise is what does Sylvia symbolise? It seems to be something like Britain itself, a country which exploited the best of its upper class with the First World War being the final betrayal of any true decency that still existed. (And, despite all the hypocrisy of the Victorian age, there was much to admire.) The title itself could be seen as a reference to this idea. The only way in which the government were prepared for the war, so far as Tietjens knew, was to come up with a ritual to use in demobilisation: after a band played, an adjutant would say, "There will be no more parades". This utterly fatuous way to plan for four years of grisly death, the decimation of the male youth and the overturning of the foundations of society has a deeper meaning that Ford skilfully brings out: things will be changed by the war; pomp and circumstance (the music the band plays is Land of Hope and Glory) will no longer be important as the old order is overthrown. This is a double sided coin, of course, for it does not just mean the destruction of the cruelty and fickleness of Sylvia but also

of the virtue and decency of Christopher.

Jamie Bradway says

Too obviously an intermediary step of a larger work.

Eleanor says

I wonder if these books actually work better read aloud than reading them on the page. It can be quite hard working out sometimes whether an individual is speaking aloud to others, or thinking to himself, and I found myself needing to reread passages to clarify this.

The book covers the period of a couple of days of Christopher's life in the midst of the Great War and gives some idea of how maddening the whole experience must have been, both in terms of horror and also in the constant changing of orders about the movement of troops. It is a wonder that anyone involved survived with any sanity left.

Sylvia's viciousness is given free rein, as she manages to turn up in France and cause even greater turmoil in Christopher's life than the Germans or the British commanders, which is quite a feat.

I shall continue reading the tetralogy, but need a break from it!

Stephen Beckett says

Read Ford Madox Ford's Some Do Not, and No More Parades. If I'm honest, I can't say I really enjoyed them, in that immersive kind a way I hanker after - asides from a few chapters, that is; especially the first two in No More Parades. An extraordinary description of officers and ranks, in a hut, under bombardment during an air raid. Very impressionistic - dreamlike - hallucinatory; and haunting - truly, the main character (Tietjens) becomes haunted. Ford could write, there's no doubt. And I know there are a dedicated band of people who love him and I can see why. Just not for me, I suppose, overall.

But this is not to say they weren't interesting. Quite an eye opener of life behind the lines during WW1; of all the vanity, and social considerations, that could take precedence over the lives of the ordinary soldiers, which was very disturbing. But away from that I often found it quite hard to relate to or even understand the cause of all the strength of embarrassment and shame these officer gentlemen, the upperclass ladies, all suffered for one reason or another in the course of their social lives; while at the same time, quite happily endorsing very dubious behaviour, as long as appearances were maintained. Very odd.

One thing I did relate to though, was the sense Tietjens had of being of the 18th century, out of water in the 20th... he even thought of France as a 17th century country, fighting a country very much of the (disturbing) 20th century; ushering in the modern age, while stamping out the old. I think he's right. Last week someone said they often wondered "Whose thoughts are these?". They meant which character was talking or thinking at any one moment, but I wondered how much of Ford was in Tietjens - he said he was based on a man who died, and that his marital situation was based on someone he knew (also dead) from Philadelphia... but I

wonder. I think he may have been indulging in a bit of misdirection here... I suspect he felt all these things himself. Does anyone know? I'll have to dig up a biography - and I will read the other two novels in this sequence... who knows, I may be won over.

Devon Flaherty says

***REVIEW FOR PARADE'S END TETROLOGY.**

Parade's End, by Ford Madox Ford. First published as a series of books, Some Do Not..., No More Parades, A Man Could Stand Up-, and The Last Post, in the 1920s. I read the Vintage edition of all four stories together, published in 1950/1978.

All authors have their overused words. For Rowling in the Potter series, it was "pant." For Rowling later on, it was all about "thick legs." For me, it seems to be "face" or "gaze." For Tolstoy, it was "superfluous" (at least in translation). And for Ford, well, he has a number of them, which at times he is doing on purpose. The worst one, by far, is "lachrymose." If I have to read "lachrymose" one more time...

This book is a tetralogy. Ford, in fact, never saw it as the omnibus Parade's End, even though he suggested the title. However, when Graham Greene did a release of it many years ago, he left off the last book, saying that Ford himself wrote The Last Post superfluously (tee hee) and that he later regretted its inclusion. I was, therefore, torn between reading it as a trilogy or in its entirety. It helped that I had a terrible time getting through it at all. I left it at the trilogy. Many Parade fans would be appalled, for even though the last book is supposedly very different, it does have its proponents. Okay, I'll admit, I skimmed it, and nothing called out to me.

This is another one of those books listed without fail in the top one hundred best books, wherever you might find that list. It has been called the greatest war novel(s) of all time, as well as the best of the 20th century. It does not have the large base of obsessive followers as many of the other chart-toppers (Anna Karenina, The Great Gatsby, Don Quixote, etc.), and it is clear why. It is a difficult read. Or, in the words of some article I read months ago and can not now find, it is a dying novel. Sure, it has themes and stories that could transcend, but its language and literary devices are wearing thin.

The writing style is somewhere between stream-of-consciousness and chunky time jumps (backwards and forwards). Ford's writing is replete with repeated words and phrases, amazingly sustained run-on sentences, and ellipses. (If ellipses vex you, I beg you not to pick up this book.) Particular moments in time are relived again and again, the whole 730 dense pages adding up to maybe a total of ten actual scenes. Points are driven into the reader's head until it's simply buzzing. I believe all of this comes from the stream-of-consciousness thing, and it's a style I have a very hard time enjoying. Perhaps it's because I don't think in meandering tirades of words. I think in pictures. Meandering, messy, repetitive tirades of words are tiresome to me.

And yet I can appreciate many things about this novel(s). You are really able to get in to a couple of the character's heads. The characters, in general, are extremely finely drawn. So is leftover Victorian England. So is war, or at least WWI. You've got this great love triangle, and an exploration of fresh topics, like one's upbringing and theories versus their passion and circumstances. And Sylvia? She's just one big train wreck of a personality disorder, and I heartily enjoyed reading her on tenterhooks.

But I found myself wishing, very frequently, that Ford's writing style had been very, very different. I

appreciate his care and perspective; I can't tolerate his voice. I want to play editor, and demand that he cut the whole thing by at least half, re-order it into sequential events, and flesh out a few of the supporting characters and subplots. Plus, give us more action! Then, I'm afraid, the whole thing would be dead, a mangled, lifeless thing, the harrowing tension gone. Which is what the book is, really: a very tight winding in the distinct voice of the times.

Not a re-read for me. Can't say I regret having read it. It took me forever. If I was forced to choose one to re-read, it would definitely be *A Man Could Stand Up*—, which has some achingly beautiful language and moments.

I had decided to move this book up on my queue when I saw that the new British TV series was written by Tom Stoppard. (For Stoppard reviews, see [here](#) and [here](#).) Of course, Cumberbatch fever helped.

I ended up watching the whole five-part series while I was on a break from reading the novel, which has confused me considerably. From what I can recall, the series is a great representation of the novel(s). It has that sort of fractured, in-his-head, finely-drawn characters feel, and it covers just about all the scenes, at least in the middle two books. There were some plot changes that I am not sure about. It could have been that I misunderstood something. It could have been that not reading the last book put me at a disadvantage. It could have been Stoppard added things for translation into movie. Plus, for a book which gathers most of its sexual steam by being definitively demure, the series was a bit too overtly sexy for itself.

Otherwise, fans of British TV and/or Cumberbatch will be happy with this series. It is true, as has been widely said, that he does a great job acting, as does Rebecca Hall. I can imagine these were two of the most difficult characters to play, of all time, which may be why *Parade's End* doesn't seem to have hit the big or small screen until now. Beautiful cinematography, fun costumes. Enjoyable, at the very least, for anyone who tolerates period films.

“...the oddnesses of friendships are a frequent guarantee of their lasting texture” (p5).

“Such calamities are the will of God. A gentleman accepts them” (p12).

“Disasters come to men through drink, gambling, and women” (p14).

“...you live beside a man and notice his changes very little” (p17).

“Damn it. What's the sense of all these attempts to justify fornication?” (p18).

“It's the tradition, so it's right” (p18).

(About England:) “We're always, as it were, committing adultery—like your fellow—with the name of Heaven on our lips” (p21).

“The gods to each ascribe a differing lot: / Some enter at the portal. Some do not!” (p24).

“But Sister Mary of the Cross at the convent had a maxim: ‘Wear velvet gloves in family life.’ We seem to

be going at it with the gloves off" (p41).

"“What’s to stop it?” the priest asked. ““What in the world but the grace of our blessed Lord, which he hasn’t got and doesn’t ask for?”” (p45).

“Cats and monkeys. Monkeys and cats. All humanity is there” (p85).

“It’s the person who does the thing he’s afraid of who’s the real hero, isn’t it?” (p88).

“I could harangue the whole crowd when I got them together. But speak to one man in cold blood I couldn’t” (p89).

“In every man there are two minds that work side by side, the one checking the other; thus emotion stands against reason, intellect corrects passion...” (p93).

“Who knows what sins of his own are heavily punishable in the eyes of God, for God is just?” (p129).

“I shall write in my bedroom on my knee. I’m a woman and can. You’re a man and have to have a padded chair and sanctuary...” (p132).

“It was as if for a moment destiny, which usually let him creep past somehow, had looked at him” (p147).

“Obviously he might survive; but after that tremendous physical drilling what survived would not be himself, but a man with cleaned, sand-dried bones” (p200).

“If you hunch your shoulders too long against a storm your shoulders will grow bowed...” (p201).

“He considered that, with a third of his brain in action, he was over a match for Mark, but he was tired of discussions” (p216).

“This civilization had contrived a state of things in which leaves rotted by August. Well, it was doomed!” (p232).

“No! ‘Pasteurized’ was the word! Like dead milk. Robbed of their vitamins...” (p294).

“An enormous crashing sound said things of an intolerable intimacy to each of those men, and to all of them as a body” (p315).

“The distrust of the home Cabinet, felt by then by the greater part of that army, became like physical pain” (p320).

““If you let yourself go,’ Tietjens said, ‘you may let yourself go a tidy sight father than you want to”” (p325).

“He used the world hell as if he had first wrapped it in eau-de-Cologned cotton-wadding” (p348).

““Don’t think I’m insulting you. You appear to be a very decent fellow. But very decent fellows have gone absent”” (p364).

“The man looked you straight in the eyes. But a strong passion, like that for escape—or a girl—will give you

control over the muscles" (p364).

"English people of good passion consider that the basis of all marital unions or disunions, is the maxim: No scenes" (p368).

"He would, literally, rather be dead than an open book" (p368).

"...she had seemed a mere white phosphorescence..." (p370).

"You cannot force your mind to a deliberate, consecutive recollection" (p371).

"My wife must have been more aware of my feelings for Miss Wannop than was I myself" (p373).

"Obviously he was not immune from the seven deadly sins" (p377).

"One reserved the right so to do and to take the consequences" (p377).

"That whole land was to be annihilated as a sacrifice to one vanity" (p386).

"The world was foundering" (p387).

"But it's better to go to heaven with your skin shining and master of your limbs" (p390).

"...he might be just in time for the last train to the old heaven..." (p394).

"The French were as a rule more gloomy than men and women are expected to be" (p437).

"You cannot keep up fits of emotion by the hour" (p436).

"They wanted the war won by men who would at the end be either humiliated or dead. Or both. Except, naturally, their own cousins or fiancee's relatives" (p533).

"...the telephone began, for Valentine, to assume an aspect that, years ago it had used to have—of being part of the supernatural paraphernalia of inscrutable Destiny" (p543).

"...flee away and eat pomegranates beside an infinite washtub of Reckitt's blue" (p546).

"You had to keep them—the Girls, the Populace, everybody!—in hand now, for once you let go there was no knowing where They, like waters parted from the seas, mightn't carry You" (p551).

"To save three thousand, two hundred pounds, not to mention interest—which was what Vincent owed him!—Edith Ethel with the sweetest possible smile would beg the pillows off a whole hospital ward full of dying She was quite right. She had to save her man. You go to any depths of ignominy to save your man" (p570).

"I didn't consciously want to bother you but a spirit in my feel has made me who knows how That's Shelley, isn't it?" (p571).

"Then... What should keep them apart? Middle Class Morality? A pretty gory carnival that had been for

the last four years!” (p576).

“If people wanted you to appreciate items of sledge-hammering news they should not use long sentences” (p578).

“Thoughts menaced him as clouds threaten the heads of mountains” (p588).

“Probably because they—the painters—drew from living models or had ideas as to the human form But these were not limbs, muscles, torsos. Collections of tubular shapes in field-grey or mud-colour they were. Chucked about by Almighty God? As if He had dropped them from on high to make them flatten into the earth” (p594).

“How the devil had that fellow managed to get smashed into that shape? It was improbable” (p597).

“In the trench you could see nothing and noise rushed like black angels gone mad; solid noise that swept you off your feet Swept your brain off its feet” (p602).

“You imagined that the heavenly powers in decency suspended their activities at such moments. But there was positively lightning. They didn’t!” (p603).

“It appeared to him queer that they should be behaving like that when you could hear... oh, say, the winds of the angel of death” (p622).

“But Great General Staff likes to exchange these witticisms in iron. And a little blood!” (p655).

*REVIEW WRITTEN FOR THE STARVING ARTIST BLOG

Caroline says

That is something Ford Madox Ford is quite emphatic about; this war is the end of life as it used to be, and there will be no more parades of any kind—not military, not marital.

In ‘Some Do Not’ we saw Tietjens as he prepared to leave England for his assignment in the war. Now we see him at that job, but not at the front. Instead, his task is to prepare the requisitioned troops to be sent up the line, and his thankless job is to try to outfit the incoming soldiers from the dominions who the English military stores keepers don’t want to help. Once again everyone’s perceptions are the product of prejudice and ill will and it’s impossible to set right a rumor once started; the store keepers are convinced the provincials are reluctant draftees rather than the volunteers they really are.

The book is about evenly divided between Tietjens military and marital trials. FMF is still furious, as he writes several years after the armistice, about the consequences of civilian meddling in military affairs during the war. The meddling runs from the annoying and time wasting—lectures on the causes of the war—to really dangerous, the cutback in rifle training—to the insanely murderous: contemplation back in London of abandoning France, which would have led to mass slaughter of the English troops in a country angry with them for leaving and thus indifferent to whether the Germans wiped them out, especially as the English troops were untrained in how to retreat.

There is repeated reference to a unit being starved of reinforcements at the front so that the general in charge of it will suffer resounding defeat when the weather gets good enough for a German attack. This set up is 'required' so that he can be returned to England without causing the politicians there any trouble. This truly devastating indifference to human life is hard to comprehend. FMF's deft means of bringing it home is to show just one casualty in the whole book: a single soldier serving under Tietjens, who dies in his arms and haunts his thoughts for the next 250 pages. There is a backstory to the event, which keeps the elements of chance and English civilian interference bubbling under everything.

And of course there is Sylvia, also haunting Tietjens. Of course she does evil things, but I think Ford mostly wants you to feel her mad frustration. What does Ford think about her? Is it her character, that needs drama and conflict more than she needs food and water to survive? Her Catholic upbringing and girl's school culture? Lack of anything productive to do? All of the above? Does she love Tietjens or just lust for him?

There are several really wonderful characters here, from Tietjens's lunatic Scottish tent mate to his wise old sergeant-major to the delightful Colonel Levin, who develops from a seeming wimp to a true friend. And Sylvia's slimy Perowne reappears. The French characters, in a brief scence, are very French--in the way you would expect an Englishman of FMF's class to portray them.

We are bordering on Tietjens becoming a bit too Christlike, but FMF steers it more explicitly toward the schoolboy who still believes in schoolboy codes. Also, there is more suggestion that his forbearance in his marriage, although very much due to his abhorrence of exposing his private life to public view, is also due to protecting his son from a scandalous story. A few slant references raise questions about whether there is something in Tietjens own family background that will explain some of this.

Of Valentine, we hear nothing.

Mollie Johnson says

Really couldn't get into it. Whilst I can appreciate the literary talent that Ford has employed, I couldn't enjoy reading it.

Laura says

Free download available at eBooks@Adelaide.

Opening lines:

When you came in the space was desultory, rectangular, warm after the drip of the winter night, and transfused with a brown-orange dust that was light.

It is becoming better and better....

The sequel of this book is A Man Could Stand UP.

Leslie says

Audiobook edition narrated by Stephen Crossley, very good job.

This second book in the Parade's End series gives more insight into the character of Sylvia Tiejens.
