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## **FROM DISFIGURED TO TRANSFIGURED PAST: MEMORY AND HISTORY IN *THE GOOD SOLDIER***

**Isabelle Brasme**

Narration in *The Good Soldier* has been most noted for its disconnectedness and deliberate unreliability. Dowell not only comes out as an undependable story teller, but repeatedly highlights his own untrustworthiness. I wish to argue that Ford uses this flawed narrator as a tool to investigate the process of storytelling and question the authority of the narrative stance, not only in the traditional novelistic genre inherited from the nineteenth century, but perhaps also in modernist fiction. Given the historical framework of the novel and the relentless focus on the 4<sup>th</sup> August date, the question of storytelling itself may also be considered as leading to a larger interrogation of the way in which history is written. My perspective will be mainly informed by Paul Ricœur's analysis of the relationship between time and narration, and between memory and history. It may indeed appear that Ford in *The Good Soldier* establishes and explores a phenomenology of memory. In *Time and Narrative*, Ricœur examines the 'refiguration' of time via narration. This paper contends that the unavoidable refiguration of the past, whilst it may initially appear as disfiguring truth, may ultimately be construed as a transfiguration which is in no way inferior to the original event. Ford intimates to us that in the awareness of the limits of recapturing time past through memory, which is key to his theory of literary impressionism, also lies an updated ethics of narrative.

### **History and Narrative**

Ford's involvement in history and history writing is well established. Some of his novels were unambiguously conceived as historical fiction, such as the *Fifth Queen* trilogy, or are directly steeped in historical events, such as *Parade's End*, the genesis of which Ford explained in these terms: 'I wanted the novelist in fact to appear in his really proud position as historian of his own time'.<sup>1</sup> Some of his non-fiction works are also explicitly presented as historical surveys, such as *A History of our Own Times*, or *The Cinque Ports*, whose subtitle is

‘A Historical and descriptive record’.<sup>2</sup> I wish to examine the way in which *The Good Soldier*, whilst less openly historical and primarily concerned with narration – its subtitle and Ford’s original title, which later became the first sentence of the novel, both describe it as a ‘tale’ and a ‘story’ – has in fact as much claims to being considered as a historical novel: a work not only on history, but also and perhaps more importantly, on history writing.

*The Fifth Queen* aims at an impressionist rendering of the innermost feelings of historical figures and of the private background behind public events. We might consider *The Good Soldier* as taking the reverse route: using private figures and individual drama with public events acting as a meaningful, albeit silent backdrop. Ultimately, however, the aim in both novels is the same. Ford’s vision of history writing is of course an impressionist one, building up layer upon layer of features, epiphenomena, personalities, that all participate in the big picture – and contribute to its eventual collapse in the case of the pre-war era described in *The Good Soldier*. In the International Ford Madox Ford Studies volume on History and Representation, Elena Lamberti reminded us that Ford ‘wanted to render “the spirit of an age, of a town, of a movement”, something that, Ford tells us, cannot be done with “facts”, but with “impressions”’.<sup>3</sup> The object of Lamberti’s essay was Ford’s explicitly historical work in *A History of Our Own Times*. Our focus here shall be on the historiographical dimension of *The Good Soldier*, and of its consequences on narration.

It is significant that Florence in the narrative displays erudition not only about history, but about major history writers, as she reads various classic historians before the visit to Marburg Castle: Ranke, Symonds, Motley, Luther.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, Florence herself is likened to Mrs Markham, who was known for writing a bowdlerised version of history. The question of how history is written thus becomes very early on a theme of the narrative. The characters are not only agents, but writers of history, and questionable writers at that. Significantly, soon after patronizingly likening Florence to Mrs Markham, Dowell denies his own competence as historian, confessing: ‘I am not an historian’ (GS 35).

The mingling of public history and private narrative is highlighted from the beginning of the novel. This is manifest from the very first pages, as Dowell likens the two couples to a ‘minuet de la cour’ (GS 11) on the eve of the French Revolution: ‘The mob may sack Versailles; the Trianon may fall, but surely the minuet – the

minuet itself is dancing itself away' (11). The intermingling of public and private history is made particularly salient when Dowell relates the visit to Marburg castle, as Florence insists on Henry VIII's private life as placing an inordinate weight on public affairs. Public and private history have a mutual influence upon one another: on the one hand, history imparts a fateful backdrop to the events, as is clear in the passage just mentioned since this visit to Marburg Castle marks a crucial step in the two couples' relationship. On the other hand, whilst the First World War is not directly referred to, it is however constantly in our minds, because of the time when *The Good Soldier* was published, of its title (fortuitous though Ford claims it to be in his dedicatory letter) and through the continual reference to the 4<sup>th</sup> August.

Beyond the story, the chronology of the narrative itself is significant in terms of its mingling with History: Dowell starts writing it six months after he arrived in England (in the first page of the narration, he tells us: 'Six months ago I had never been to England' (GS 9), which was in September 1913, around a month after Florence's suicide on August 4<sup>th</sup> 1913: 'The fourth of August 1913, the last day of my absolute ignorance – and, I assure you, of my perfect happiness' (71). He thus started writing around March 1914. Further along the text, Dowell tells us he has been 'writing away at this story for now six months' (120), meaning we are now in the late summer of 1914, with the historical weightiness that this implies. Dowell then halts his writing for eighteen months, as is made clear in the fifth chapter of part IV when he resumes his narration: 'I am writing this now, I should say, a full eighteen months after the words that end my last chapter' (149). This eighteen-month interval means Dowell should now be writing in the spring of 1916; so that the ending of this 'saddest story' is supposed to take place a year after the novel was even published, in March 1915.<sup>5</sup> What can we construe of this anticipated bleak ending as regards Ford's view of his own time? Perhaps that he was despairing of the state of that civilisation which Dowell keeps referring to; that he believed the grounds of disaster for humanity were lying deeper than the war, and didn't stop there. This is also apparent in his later novel, *Parade's End*, where the framing of chapters or volumes concerned with the war by passages occurring pre- and post-war emphasizes the fact that the fate of the characters, and more largely of the civilisation they are steeped in, cannot be entirely determined by the war.

Beyond Dowell's attempt – and failure – at deciphering the events leading to his own 'saddest story', we may say that Ford thus also explores the circumstances in which World War One broke out. Ford's refusal explicitly to mention current events within his novel may indicate that he merely strives to approach the present peripherally, to render the impression of Edwardian England and Europe, without claiming to know whether the war was a cause of civilisation's collapse, or a symptom of a civilisation that was already collapsing.

Historian Paul Veyne argued about the process of history writing as similar to that of story-telling:

History does not explain, in the sense that it cannot deduct and foresee [. . .]; its explanations are not the referral to a principle that would made the event intelligible, but are the meaning that the historian gives to the account.<sup>6</sup>

The problem of causality in history is a survival of the paleoepistemological era [. . .] The physicist goes back from the phenomenon to its principle; he deduces from a more general theory the behaviour of a more limited system, for the explanatory process goes from top to bottom. The historian, on the other hand, confines himself to the horizontal plane.<sup>7</sup>

The interest for *The Good Soldier* is twofold: firstly, according to Veyne, history belongs more to the field of storytelling than to that of science. Events cannot be accounted for in the way physical phenomena can. Historians just tell events, and as soon as an event is being told, point of view enters into play. Secondly, Veyne insists on the absence of causality, or at least on the impossibility to delineate accurate and exhaustive causes for an event. Veyne thus distances himself from historicist tradition. It appears to me that this process is precisely the one Ford adopts in *The Good Soldier*, having Dowell undertake and eventually give up the task of travelling through the past to ascertain the causes of what happened. The 'Post hoc ergo propter hoc' tenet is thus exposed as a fallacy.

This argument can be related to Linda Hutcheon's position that there has been a recent 'shift from VALIDATION to SIGNIFICATION'<sup>8</sup> in postmodernist historiography. In *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon argues that:

Historiographic metafiction refutes the natural or common-sense methods of distinguishing between historical fact and fiction. It refuses the view that only history has a truth claim, both questioning the ground of that claim in

historiography and asserting that history and fiction are discourses; human constructs, signifying systems [. . .] The past is 'archaeologized [. . .] but its reservoir of available materials is always acknowledged as a textualized one.<sup>9</sup>

Veyne's work was considered as daringly novel when it was published in the 1970s; Hutcheon's work is even more recent, and focuses on postmodernism. However, exactly the same arguments can be found in Ford's thoughts on history. In his essay 'Creative History and the Historic Sense', written in 1903-04, Ford argues that 'History conceived as an exact Science is an impossibility'.<sup>10</sup> His impressionist technique aims at proposing a new epistemology, one that sets history and fiction on the same footing. The essay concludes thus:

In their really high manifestations History and Fiction are one: they are documented, tolerant, vivid [. . .] Fiction indeed, so long as it is not written with a purpose, is Contemporary History and History is the same thing as the Historic Novel, as long as it is inspired with the Historic Sense.<sup>11</sup>

This bears an uncanny resemblance to Hutcheon's equating of history and fiction as discourses, and invites us to ponder whether Ford wasn't ahead of his contemporaries in his reflection on history: his arguments sound much closer to a postmodern analysis than to those developed at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The question for *The Good Soldier* is whether Dowell himself can be considered as being 'inspired with the Historic Sense'. This is where conjuring up Ricœur's analysis of the relationship between memory and history may prove fruitful.

### **A Phenomenology of Memory**

In *Time and Narrative*, Volume II, Ricœur argues that narrative action is the means for man of dealing with time, which otherwise only exists as a non-signifying, inexpressible, inhuman reality – something that we cannot grasp. Ricœur talks here of a 'fictive experience of time'<sup>12</sup> as our only possible approach of the past. Although Ricœur conjures a variety of thinkers and modes of thinking, the phenomenologist approach is openly favoured. Dowell himself is a clear advocate of phenomenology when he argues:

If for nine years I have possessed a goodly apple that is rotten at the core and discover its rottenness only in nine years and six months less four days, isn't it true to say that for nine years I possessed a goodly apple? (*GS* 12)

This comes early on in the narrative, and may sound programmatic of his epistemological posture in the novel. Additionally, Dowell's seemingly irrelevant mention of the 'black and white cow land[ing] on its back in the middle of a stream', which he is the only one to see through the train window on his way to Marburg castle, is perhaps also an echo of Forster's presentation of phenomenology in the opening pages of *The Longest Journey*, published in 1907. Forster's novel begins with the following dialogue:

'The cow is there', said Ansell [...].  
 'You have not proved it', said a voice.  
 'I have proved it to myself'.  
 'I have proved to myself that she isn't', said the voice. 'The cow is *not* there'.<sup>13</sup>

Some of Forster's stories were published in *The English Review* at the same time when *The Longest Journey* came out, which does render plausible the hypothesis that Ford had indeed read this novel. The mention of the cow in Dowell's narrative underlines the utter unreliability of his account, but also, its absolute irreplaceability, since he is the only witness to tell the events.

In the third volume of his work on *Time and Narrative*, Ricœur describes *The Magic Mountain* as 'a novel about time, a novel about illness, and a novel about culture'.<sup>14</sup> This description – and indeed, Ricœur's whole analysis of *The Magic Mountain* – may apply to *The Good Soldier*. Like *The Magic Mountain*, *The Good Soldier* is a novel where the experience of time has a structural impact on the narration. Narration allows a 'refiguration' of time into a graspable entity. The question, however, is whether Dowell's work as a narrator enacts a 'configuration' or 'refiguration' of time, to take up Ricœur's phrasing, or whether his storytelling only achieves a disfiguration of the past.

In one of his latest works, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Ricœur goes on to re-examine and somewhat qualify his thoughts developed in *Time and Narrative*, addressing in particular the flaws inherent in the representation of the past available through a memory that is always inevitably at a distance from it – if not openly mistaken or defective.

Ricœur chooses to revisit and revalidate Bergson to differentiate between the two kinds of memory. Bergson, in *Matière et Mémoire*, argues that 'Spontaneous recollection is perfect from the outset; time can add nothing to its image without disfiguring it'.<sup>15</sup> Bergson's ideas were highly favoured among English intellectuals in the early 1910s,

and his theories on time and memory do help understand *The Good Soldier* better.<sup>16</sup> Bergson (and Ricœur in his wake) favour the process of *mneme*, spontaneous memory, as it appears closer to the original event on what Ricœur calls the ‘gradient of distancing’;<sup>17</sup> conversely, *anamnesis*, which corresponds to the more active, self-conscious process of remembering, appears as twice removed from the past. Ricœur argued that ‘the interference of the pragmatics of memory [. . .] has a jamming effect on the entire problematic of veracity’.<sup>18</sup>

In *The Good Soldier*, Dowell is unwilling (or at least unable, as in states of post-traumatic stress disorder, which might be another interesting perspective to adopt) to gain access to the past otherwise than through painstaking retrospection, or what Ricœur termed ‘laborious recollection’ (‘rappel laborieux’), as opposed to ‘spontaneous recollection’. Dowell keeps resisting the fact that he as a subject is faced with a flux of data that are forever changing and reconfiguring. He tries for instance to decompose past duration through well-defined phases and steps. This perception of time, however, is a construct, and as such, pushes the actual past event even further away. This is highlighted by the many flaws of Dowell’s apparently precise reconstitution of the past. The most significant errors concern those related with the fateful 4<sup>th</sup> August. On the day Florence dies, that is to say 4 August 1913, Dowell remarks to Leonora that their acquaintance started ‘on that day, exactly nine years before’ (GS 69). The two couples are said to have met in the evening (23). However, 4 August 1904 is also referred to as the day when Maisie Maidan dies: ‘The death of Mrs. Maidan occurred on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1904’ (57). This is supposedly also the day when Florence takes the foursome to Marburg Castle in the afternoon: ‘That enables me to fix exactly the day of our going to the town of M—. For it was the very day poor Mrs Maidan died’ (51). This excursion was prepared several days ahead on the part of Florence, and implied an already settled relationship between the Ashburnhams and the Dowells.<sup>19</sup> The more precise Dowell attempts to be, the more mistakes he makes, and the more befuddling his narration is for the reader. The ‘interference of the pragmatics of memory’ does have the ‘jamming effect’ described by Ricœur.

Dowell’s obsession with keeping track of time, which is made evident through his compulsive counting of days, months, or years all along the narrative, can be related with his ‘habit of counting [his]



footsteps', which is mentioned at the beginning of the novel (*GS* 22). Dowell boasts of his perfect memory of distances: 'I know the exact distances' and proceeds to give us the exact number of steps leading from one place to another in Nauheim:

From the Hotel Regina you took one hundred and eighty-seven paces, then, turning sharp, lefthanded, four hundred and twenty took you straight down to the fountain. From the Englischer Hof, starting on the sidewalk, it was ninety-seven paces and the same four hundred and twenty, but turning lefthanded this time. (*GS* 22)

Similarly, Dowell keeps mentioning specific dates in order to claim accuracy, to the point that some passages are written 'in a diary form' (*GS* 142):

Thus: on the 1st of September they returned from Nauheim [. . .] By the 1st of October they were all going to meet together [. . .] About the 6th of that month Edward gave the horse to young Selmes [. . .] On the 20th she read the account of the divorce case [. . .] On the 23rd she had the conversation with her aunt in the hall. Her aunt's coming to her bedroom did not occur until the 12th of November. (*GS* 142)

The tone and rhythm of this passage, with its short, matter-of-fact sentences, is strikingly similar to the passage where Dowell charts the town of Nauheim through the number of his footsteps.

Simultaneously, and within the same page, however, Dowell admits the unfeasibility of this kind of exact cartography of the past:

I have been casting back again; but I cannot help it. It is so difficult to keep all these people going. I tell you about Leonora and bring her up to date; then about Edward who has fallen behind. And then the girl gets hopelessly left behind. (*GS* 142)

Dowell here keeps mentioning memory in terms of space: 'back', 'going', 'fallen behind', 'left behind'. This is precisely why the kind of reconstruction that Dowell hopes for, cannot work: he tries to summon up the past by rendering time through space. This handling of time, however, is a construct, as Bergson underlines, and as such, pushes the actual past even further away. According to Bergson, the difference between life and this kind of reconstruction is a difference between the temporal plane and the spatial plane. Dowell's endeavour may seem as bound to fail because he cannot, or will not, embrace a Bergsonian approach to memory.

However, one of Ricœur's main points in *Memory, History, Forgetting* is that this imperfect reconstruction of time is our only way to the past:

We have no other resource, concerning our reference to the past, except memory itself. To memory is tied an ambition, a claim – that of being faithful to the past. In this respect, the deficiencies stemming from forgetting [. . .] should not be treated straight away as pathological forms, as dysfunctions, but as the shadowy underside of the bright region of memory, which binds us to what has passed before we remember it. If we can reproach memory with being unreliable, it is precisely because it is our one and only resource for signifying the past-character of what we declare we remember. No one would dream of addressing the same reproach to imagination.<sup>20</sup>

This admission that memory, albeit flawed, is our only access to the past, is very much akin to what we the readers may be led to conclude on reading Dowell's meandering narrative. As Samuel Hynes pointed out in his remarkable essay on 'The Epistemology of *The Good Soldier*':<sup>21</sup>

the factors which seem to disqualify Dowell – his ignorance, his inability to act, his profound doubt – are not seen in relation to any norm; there is neither a 'primary author' nor a 'knower' [. . .] There is only Dowell.<sup>22</sup>

The narrator's limitations in *The Good Soldier* have been time and again highlighted and analysed: sometimes as deliberate, at other times as unintentional on the part of Dowell. Ultimately, beyond Dowell's own constant feeling of failure, these limitations are Ford's own narrative goals. By choosing a blatantly limited narrator as our only access to the story, Ford wishes to emphasize the vanity of any form of reconstruction of events. In the essay 'Techniques', Ford stresses the unreliability of the narrator as a major device of impressionism, one that was inspired to him by Maupassant:

The novel must be put into the mouth of a narrator – who must be limited by probability as to what he can know of the affair that he is adumbrating [. . .] The narration is thus a little more limited in possibilities [. . .] A narrator, that is to say, being already a fictional character, may indulge in any prejudices or wrong-headedness and any likings or dislikes for the other characters of the book, for he is just a living being like anybody else.<sup>23</sup>

The phrase 'limited in possibilities' finds a striking echo in Ricœur's conclusion to Volume III of *History and Narrative*:

It ought not to be said that our eulogy to narrative *unthinkingly* has given life again to the claims of the constituting subject to master all meaning. On the contrary, it is fitting that every mode of thought should verify the validity of its employment by taking an exact measure of the limits to its employment.<sup>24</sup>

In *The Good Soldier* indeed, it may appear that Ford is pushing the same kind of reasoning to its ultimate point by using a blatantly unreliable narrator, in order to demonstrate the way in which memories, remembered impressions, are better than nothing at all – are valid because they exist. The interest of Dowell's narration does not lie in its validity or absence thereof; it is, therefore it has some legitimacy. This is where the layering of narrative instances in *The Good Soldier* comes into play. An alternative narrative emerges beyond that of Dowell's; a narrative that is effected between Ford and his reader, and that may vary with each reading.

To take up again Hutcheon's phrasing, Dowell's endeavour can definitely be termed as 'archaeological', trying to dig out layer upon layer of memories. His problem is that he doesn't seem to accept the fact that this 'reservoir' is inevitably 'textualized'. The aporia is Dowell's, not Ford's.

This may help confirm the idea that Ford's works not only encompass modernist aesthetics, but also prefigure what later came to be considered as postmodernist views, especially in terms of deconstructionism. Instead of offering an alternative, satisfying artwork to the witnessed chaos of the world, as other modernists did, Ford leaves us with a mere adumbration and a variety of possible ways to redefine the world. His means of representation is ultimately a gesture forever suspended *towards* representation.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ford Madox Ford, *It Was the Nightingale* (1933), Manchester: Carcanet, 2007, p. 180.
- <sup>2</sup> The International Ford Madox Ford Studies volume on History and Representation published in 2004 focused on Ford's status as 'historian of his own time'. Joseph Wiesenfarth, ed., *History and Representation in Ford Madox Ford's Writings*, IFMFS 3, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004.

- 3 Elena Lamberti, 'Writing History: Ford and the Debate on 'Objective Truth' in the Late 20th Century', *History and Representation in Ford Madox Ford's Writings*, p. 99.
- 4 Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Martin Stannard, New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995, p. 34; henceforth *GS*.
- 5 For more detail about the narrative's chronology, see George Letissier, 'Fatalité des dates et chronologie déboussolée' in *Synthèse d'une œuvre: The Good Soldier*, Paris: Editions du Temps (2005), pp. 118-123; and Max Saunders' appendix to the Oxford World's Classics edition of *The Good Soldier*, Oxford: OUP, 2012, pp. 214-24.
- 6 Paul Veyne, *Writing History: Essay on Epistemology*, trans. Mina Moore-Rinvulcri, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 90. Original text: 'L'histoire n'explique pas, en ce sens qu'elle ne peut déduire et prévoir [. . .]; ses explications ne sont pas le renvoi à un principe qui rendrait l'événement intelligible, elles sont le sens que l'historien prête au récit'. Paul Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'histoire, Essai d'épistémologie* (1971), Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1996, p. 127.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 91. Original text: 'Le problème de la causalité en histoire est une survivance de l'ère paléo-épistémologique [. . .] Le physicien remonte du phénomène à son principe ; il déduit d'une théorie plus générale le comportement d'un système plus limité ; le processus explicatif va de haut en bas. L'historien se cantonne au contraire dans le plan horizontal'. Paul Veyne, *op. cit.*, p. 128).
- 8 Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, New York: Routledge, 1988, p. 90.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 93.
- 10 Ford Madox Ford, 'Creative History and the Historic Sense', in *Critical Essays*, ed. Max Saunders and Richard Stang, Manchester: Carcanet, 2002, p. 5.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 12 'expérience temporelle fictive'.
- 13 E. M. Forster, *The Longest Journey*, London: Penguin, 2001, p. 3.
- 14 'un roman du temps, un roman de la maladie et un roman de la culture'. Paul Ricœur, *Temps et Récit 2*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1984, p. 219. Translation: *Time and Narrative, volume 2*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990, p. 116.
- 15 'Le souvenir spontané est tout de suite parfait; le temps ne pourra rien ajouter à son image sans le dénaturer'. Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire* (1896), quoted by Ricœur in *La Mémoire l'histoire, l'oubli*, Paris: Seuil, 2000, p. 31. Translation Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer, London: George Allen, 1911, p. 95.
- 16 'Quand nous nous remémorons des faits passés, quand nous interprétons des faits présents, quand nous entendons un discours, quand nous suivons la pensée d'autrui et quand nous nous écoutons penser nous-mêmes, enfin quand un système complexe de représentations occupe notre intelligence, nous sentons que nous pouvons prendre deux attitudes différentes, l'une de tension et l'autre de relâchement, qui se distinguent surtout en ce que le sentiment de l'effort est présent dans l'une et absent de l'autre. Le jeu des représentations est-il le même dans les deux cas?' (Bergson, *L'Énergie spirituelle* [1919], in *Œuvres*, Paris: PUF, 1963, p. 930)

- 17 Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, translated by Kathleen Blamey, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, p. 25. Original text: 'gradient de distanciation', Paul Ricœur, *La Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Paris: Seuil, 2000, p. 30.
- 18 Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 4. Original text: 'l'interférence de la pragmatique de la mémoire [. . .] exerce un effet de brouillage sur la prétention de la mémoire à la vérité.' Paul Ricœur, *La Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Paris: Seuil, 2000, 4.
- 19 This discrepancy is noted by Thomas Moser in *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 161-2.
- 20 Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 21. Original text: 'Nous n'avons pas d'autre ressource, concernant la référence au passé, que la mémoire elle-même. A la mémoire est attaché une ambition, une prétention, celle d'être fidèle au passé; à cet égard, les déficiences relevant de l'oubli [. . .] ne doivent pas être traitées d'emblée comme des formes pathologiques, comme des dysfonctions, mais comme l'envers de l'ombre de la région éclairée de la mémoire, qui nous relie à ce qui s'est passé avant que nous en fassions mémoire. Si l'on peut faire reproche à la mémoire de s'avérer peu fiable, c'est précisément parce qu'elle est notre seule et unique ressource pour signifier le caractère passé de ce dont nous déclarons nous souvenir. Nul ne songerait à adresser pareil reproche à l'imagination'. Paul Ricœur, *La Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Paris: Seuil, 2000, p. 26.
- 21 Samuel Hynes, 'The Epistemology of *The Good Soldier*', *Sewanee Review* 69:2 (Spring 1961), pp. 225-35; reprinted in the Norton edition of *The Good Soldier*, pp. 310-17.
- 22 Samuel Hynes, 'The Epistemology of *The Good Soldier*', *GS* 312.
- 23 'Techniques', 1935, *GS* 298.
- 24 Paul Ricœur, *History and Narrative III*, trans. Kathleen Blamey, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990, 274. Original text: 'La pertinence de la réplique du récit aux apories du temps diminue d'un stade à l'autre, au point que le temps paraît sortir vainqueur de la lutte, après avoir été tenu captif dans les filets de l'intrigue. Il est bon qu'il en soit ainsi: il ne sera pas dit que l'éloge du récit aura sournoisement redonné vie à la prétention du sujet constituant à maîtriser le sens. Il convient au contraire à tout mode de pensée de vérifier la validité de son emploi dans la circonscription qui lui est assignée, en prenant une exacte mesure des limites de son emploi.' (*Temps et Récit* 3, Paris: Seuil, 1985, p. 488). [. . .] *Il ne sera pas dit, non plus, que l'aveu des limites du récit, corrélatif de l'aveu du mystère du temps, aura cautionné l'obscurantisme* ; le mystère du temps n'équivaut pas à un interdit pesant sur le langage ; il suscite plutôt l'exigence de penser plus et de dire autrement. (p. 489)