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FORD MADOX FORD’S PSYCHOLOGICAL AGES AND TYPES CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO HEGEL’S DIALECTIC

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ФОРД И ХЕГЕЛОВАТА ДИАЛЕКТИКА*

Типичната за Форд колизия между две противоположни исторически епохи лежи в основата на трилогията му „Петата кралица“. Първоначално конфликтът на главната героиня с нейното време е външен, но впоследствие този конфликт се превръща във вътрешен. Вината ѝ се състои в това, че тя извършва зло, за да излезе добро.

Ключови думи: психологически епохи и типове, Хегел, диалектика, конфликт, или... или, и..., и

*Asparouh Asparouhov. FORD MADOX FORD’S PSYCHOLOGICAL AGES AND TYPES
CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO HEGEL’S DIALECTIC*

Die vorliegende Studie befasst sich mit der Unversöhnlichkeit zweier entgegengesetzten Auffassungen von der Wahrheit in Ford Madox Fords Trilogie ueber der Fuenften Koenigin. Die eine stellt ein Entweder – Oder dar, die andere – eine Synthese. Zuerst ist der Konflikt der Fuenften Koenigin mit ihrer Zeit aussserlich, aber nachher wird er verinnerlicht. Ihre Schuld besteht darin, dass sie Uebel tut, damit Gutes daraus kommt.

Key words: psychological ages and types, Hegel, dialectic, conflict, either... or, both... and

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Like Ford, a number of his characters seek patterns and reflect upon their operation. "... You must have a pattern to interpret things by. You can't really get your mind to work without it", reasons Mark Tietjens at the end of *Last Post*. Thinking is impossible without interpretive patterns, and Ford, who takes a keen interest in the working of the mind, naturally relies on them, too. In *The Spirit of the People* (1907) the author emphasizes the instrumentality of theories and their significance to the individual:

[Theories] are merely convenient systems of thought by which a man may arrange in his mind his mental image of the mundane cosmogony... (SP, p. 64)

Ford felt the acute need of an overall pattern which would give order and meaning to the flux of English history, and determine an individual's relationship to his times. The author satisfied his own inner need of such a system by devising a theory of the psychological and historical evolution of the English people since the Middle Ages. It is a commonplace of literary criticism that the mature impressionist Ford seeks to eliminate abstraction, and emphasizes "a lived discipline rather than a theory" (Wiley 1962: 246), and yet I find it difficult to think of another major English novelist who suggested such a schematic theory and actually tried to follow it for many years. Echoes of this system reverberate in a number of Ford's works, especially in the books written in the first half of his career, and lend them that understanding of historical process which he had chosen to adopt. In the theory which he advances, Ford marries the logical to the biological, and reveals his deep indebtedness to Hegel and Darwin.

H. Robert Huntley has shown that Hegel and Darwin exerted a profound influence on Ford through the work of the Oxford historian John Richard Green. In *The Spirit of the People* the author writes about the strong impact which Green's *Short History of the English People* had upon him when he was confronted with it in his own later years at school (SP, p. 76). In this sociological work Ford highlights only the Darwinian dimension to Green's *Short History*. The Short Historian, Ford says, applies the theory of evolution to English history (SP, p. 78) and traces the "gradual and ordered growth of a democratic people" (SP, p. 77). With respect to Hegel's influence on the English novelist, H. Robert Huntley remarks

It is impossible to prove any direct influence of Hegel or Taine upon Ford, who may or may not have read them. What is known is that Hegel had a profound influence upon at least one school of British historians during the eighteen-sixties and -seventies – the so-called Oxford school. And it was the most successful and widely acclaimed scholar of this school from whom Ford drew most of his ideas about English history... (Huntley 1970: 37–38)

Despite the undeniably strong Darwinian influence upon Ford, I hold that some of his books (as well as Sir Walter Scott's) have more points of contact with Hegel's thought than the writings of any other English novelist of classic stature. Therefore, as far as English literature is concerned, works above all by these two authors can be illuminated when discussed in relation to certain Hegelian ideas. Georg Lucacs' *The Historical Novel* reveals the affinity between Sir Walter Scott and Hegel. To explore the points of similarity between Ford and Hegel is one of the main aims of the current investigation. I will attempt to throw light on Ford's dialectic, and, where possible, this will be done in reference to the great German dialectician, since a study of dialectic in the modern novel should take some Hegelian concepts as a point of departure. Besides, certain views of the Prussian military philosopher Carl von Clausewitz (on whose work Hegel also exerted influence) will likewise provide a point of reference.

Largely in the tradition of Hegel, Ford sees English history as unfolding in stages (which he calls "psychological ages"). Each of these in effect negates the previous one. Ford presents his theory of history at some length in *The Spirit of the People*, and this sociological work is the source of the following brief summary. It provides the framework within which Ford's novelistic series can be brought into correlation. Both Ford's purpose and his language sound distinctly Hegelian when he sets himself the task

... to reconstitute the gradual development of this singular, but none the less veracious Historic Spirit (SP, p. 35).

In contradistinction to Hegel, however, Ford repeatedly emphasizes that he speaks impressionistically. When Ford modifies some of Hegel's objective thoughts on history, the English novelist relativizes them and gives them a highly personal form:

One theory is, of course, little better than another, but for me, my private and particular image of the course of English history in these matters is one of waving lines (SP, p. 14).

His "private picture" comprises three "great national waves" (SP, p. 72). The pre-Tudor times (as Ford terms the first of his psychological ages) and the medieval history of Western Europe before the fifteenth century leave

upon the mind the impression of being a matter, or a long series of matters, decided by sword blows (SP, p. 67).

Ford stresses not only the brutality of the Middle Ages but also the religious idealism typical of that period, and points out that while

the ideals of the chivalric age were altruistic, the ideals of the age that succeeded it were individualist-opportunist (SP, p. 70).

The author regards the Tudor-Stuart era (Ford's term) as one of "tortuous intrigues" (SP, p. 73) and manoeuvring, characterized by "the statesmanship... founded by Macchiavelli" (SP, p. 72). According to Ford, the Tudor-Stuart period is "as it were, a projection of realism between two widely differing but romantic movements" (SP, p. 74) – the Middle Ages and the Puritan Age. Whereas Thomas Cromwell, who "was more than anything an opponent of Christ, or was more than anything indifferent to Christianity" (CA, p. 17), turned England into a "Christless state" (CA, p. 18), Ford was later to write that in the works of the great seventeenth-century English poets "Christianity reached its last, finest and most rarified, apogee..." (ML, p. 443). The author stresses that "the modern Puritanism of English life began, not with the Cromwellians, but with the coming of William III" (SP, pp. 80–81). The post-Stuart period, Ford maintains, represents the triumph of protestantism, individualism and liberty.

Each time the end of the old era is marked by an outstanding historical event, which he brings into focus. In *The Spirit of the People* the author regards Henry VIII's attempt at invasion of France in the first year of his reign as the end of feudalism; Ford points out that the Tudor-Stuart period stretched down to the Glorious Revolution of 1688, whereas the Puritan Age came to a close during the Great War. In his fiction Ford explores the dramatic effect of beginnings and endings both in the characters' private lives and in the life of the nation. In the *Fifth Queen* series he evokes the beginning of the Tudor-Stuart period and the historically doomed attempts to revive the spirit of the previous age, while *Parade's End* deals with the end of the Puritan era in 1914 and the emergence of the post-War world, which negates it.

Robert Huntly points out that the concept of a "Time Spirit" is common to Hegel and Ford. In my view, however, one essential difference between these two writers should be stressed strongly at the very beginning. In *The Spirit of the People* Ford argues that Anglo-Saxondom is not

a matter of race but one, quite simply of place – of place and of spirit, the spirit being born of the environment (SP, p. 43).

Later on in this work Ford again emphasizes that the English spirit is the product of purely environmental factors:

So many things have gone to these makings – the fertility of the land, the pleasantness of the climate, the richness of its minerals, the spirit of security given to it by its encircling seas (SP, pp. 45–46).

When Hegel discusses the geographic basis of world history, he remarks

It is important that we should study the land not as an external circumstance, but the natural type of the geographic region which corresponds with the character of the people that is the son of this soil (Hegel 1996: 196).

What looks like a point of similarity between Ford and Hegel is hardly a resemblance at all. To the great German dialectician “naturalness” represents the mode in which the spirit behaves in its particularization, when the particular features fall apart outside one another, and come on the scene as individual entities. According to Hegel, that which manifests itself in the spirit as a particular stage, of necessity appears as a particular natural image existing for itself. When this particularity presents itself in nature, it is a natural particularity i.e. it has being as a natural principle. Therefore, Hegel maintains, each people which functions as the bearer of “one particular stage in the development of the spirit is a nation; its natural character corresponds with what the spiritual principle is in the consecution of spiritual formations” (Hegel 1996: 196). One must not posit any relationship of dependence in the sense that the character of nations is formed only when the natural characteristics of the land come into play (Hegel 1996: 196–197).

In contradistinction to Hegel, Ford does not regard nature as being part of a given stage of the dialectic of the spirit. In *The Spirit of the People* he reduces the environment to a set of material circumstances, and his spirit represents a fine superstructure which rests upon them. In this respect Ford is closer to Marx than to Hegel. Besides, Ford attaches considerable importance to climate, whereas Hegel dismisses as idle talk the position ascribing a special influence to climate, and goes on to say:

Climate is determined by trivial details but we are not interested in them, and they exert no influence (Hegel 1996: 197).

The materialist elements in Ford’s thought, which lead him to attribute developments to economic causes, also affect his understanding of “dominant types”. In *The Spirit of the People* the author remarks

It may be granted for the sake of argument, that the psychology of the civilized world changes – that the dominant types of the world alter with changing, if mysterious, alternations in the economic or social conditions of the races (SP, p. 63).

One can recognize here, although in a modified form, the second Hegelian concept which reverberates in Ford’s schematization of history – ‘the world-historical individual’. In *The Philosophy of History* Hegel says:

These are the great human beings in history whose own particular purposes contain the substantial, which is the will of the world spirit. This content is their true power... (Hegel 1956: 75)

Of course, Hegel's philosophy of history is infinitely more complex than Ford's schematic version, and the German dialectician does not reduce the 'world – historical individuals' to three or four types. Ford's definition of these has a Darwinian emphasis. The dominant types in any given age are the "individuals most fitted to deal with the peculiar circumstances of that age" (SP, p. 64). Ford's dominant types include not only Hegel's "great human being in history" but also the typical Englishman of each of these periods. The influence of the mutations of the Darwinian legacy upon Ford can be seen even more clearly when he describes his dominant types as being also biologically different.

And indeed, the composite photograph that I have had made from the portraits left by Holbein does portray a definite type – a definite type that rather curiously coincides with Holbein's sketches of the typical Englishman of that day. This was a heavy, dark, bearded, bull-necked animal, sagacious, smiling, but with devious and twinkling eyes – a type that nowadays is generally found in the English rural districts... (SP, p. 70)

It is in accordance with these features that in the *Fifth Queen* series Ford portrays both Thomas Cromwell, "the great man" of his age, and "a number of men similar in type" (SP, p. 71). At the very beginning of the first of the Tudor novels the English Macchiavellians are summed up as Holbeinesque figures:

... all these New Learning men with their powers of language, these dark bearded men with twinkling and sagacious eyes (FQ, p. 41).

Ford holds that whereas in the Tudor-Stuart period England was ruled by "Italian-Celtic dominant types" (SP, p. 72), in the post-Stuart era the dominant type was Germanic, "fair-haired; ingenuous perhaps, unimaginative perhaps, but "sentimental" (SP, p. 73).

Many of the characteristics of the Puritan type are recognizable in Christopher Tietjens, the protagonist of Ford's tetralogy. In *The Spirit of the People* the author remarks

This type, efficient if not very splendid, is interesting, because it shows so very immediately a foreign origin (SP, p. 71).

Significantly, the Tietjenses of Groby can trace their descent back to the Dutch that came with William of Orange, whose coronation marks the beginning of Ford's third psychological age. Christopher's endeavours to live up to his

high principles make him romantic; in *The Spirit of the People* Ford highlights the centrality of principles to the Tudor-Stuart era (which he writes down as romantic) and goes on to say that “principle is wrong-headedness wrought up to the sublime pitch – and that, in essentials, is romance” (SP, p. 74). Both in *The Spirit of the People* and in *Some Do Not...* the author uses Byronism as representative of the strong leaning towards romanticism, characteristic of his third dominant type. Ford writes in the former work that his English grandfather was

... a romantic of the romantics, a man who never survived his early Byronism (SP, p. 74),

and Christopher Tietjens declares:

I don't read poetry except Byron (SDN, p. 18).

Christopher's sentimentality is also in line with the spirit of the Puritan Age as Ford sees it. Besides, the author makes his protagonist reflect the very English tendency towards Christism, which reached its apogee in the post-Stuart period. In *The Spirit of the People* Ford notes:

... in the course of the centuries that had succeeded the sixteenth, there had grown up in England a cult which was almost solely that of Christ (SP, p. 117).

The Englishman takes the Saviour for his master and his model (SP, p. 119).

According to Ford, “Christist” and “Christian” do not coincide. Whereas in the seventeenth century England was “... a country Christist, almost more than Christian” (ML, p. 442), the author calls attention also to the curious phenomenon that Englishmen, without being religious, adhere to Christism. Even professing unbelievers in England, Ford maintains, “will defend to the last word, to the utmost comma of the English New Testament, the teachings and the person of Christ” (SP, p. 119). Christopher has hardly any Christian faith; nevertheless (although very imperfectly) he upholds the tradition of Christ. His wife Sylvia rightly says about him:

He desires... to model himself upon Our Lord... (NMP, p. 417)

Like the respective psychological ages, Ford's dominant types have their rise, their “crest of the wave” (SP, p. 71) and decline. After that they cease to be dominant, and their prominent position is taken by the new type. The author often renders the tension created when a type and a psychological age do not match. H. Robert Huntley has shown that the central conflict in Ford's novels stems from the

protagonist's "struggle against an uncongenial Time Spirit" (Huntley 1970: 34) i.e. the dramatic conflict is "between the prevailing spirit of the age and a protagonist exemplifying the Time Spirit of an earlier age" (Huntley 1970: 63). Thus, the fundamental Fordian collision involves two opposed stages in the dialectic of the Historic Spirit: the condemned earlier stage (which is drawing to a close or has already been superseded by the next age) is presented as an anachronism, supported by noble protagonists, fighting a lost battle. Christopher Tietjens's words to General Campion, "... it is not a good thing to belong to the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries in the twentieth" (NMP, p. 494) convey the protagonist's heroic failure. In the Tudor trilogy, which centres round the great historical conflict between the old faith and the New Learning, Katharine Howard, Henry VIII's fifth queen, represents the fervent religious idealism of the Middle Ages in the unsympathetic world of Tudor political intrigues, where both the Lutheran and the Catholic leaders are shown to act according to the maxims of Macchiavelli. Thomas Cromwell, her formidable antagonist, has many of the characteristics of Hegel's 'world-historical individuals': he is a thinking man who has "an insight into the requirements of the time – what was ripe for development" [*italics Hegel's*], and applies his energy to this, "the very Truth for" his age and for his world (Hegel 1956: 75). However, in the Tudor trilogy Ford presents Thomas Cromwell as being aware of his historical mission and achievement to a greater extent than is usually the case with Hegel's 'world-historical individuals', who prosecute their own particular aims through which the general and fundamental ethical life is realized. Ford makes the Lord Privy Seal sum up his life's work in the following way:

"God is above us all", he answered. "But there is no room for two heads of a State, and in a State is room but for one army. I will have my King so strong that ne Pope ne priest ne noble ne people shall here have speech or power. So it is now; I have so made it, the King helping me. Before I came this was a distracted State; the King's writ ran not in the east, not in the west, not in the north, and hardly in the south parts. Now no lord nor no bishop nor no Pope raises head against him here (SP, p. 298).

These words express Ford's own opinion of Thomas Cromwell's achievement. Whereas, as Georg Lukács points out, Hegel overrates the role of the individual in history (Lucács 1981: 40), Ford usually does not, but he attributes great importance to Thomas Cromwell as a bearer of the spirit of his age. In *The Spirit of the People* the author remarks that Cromwell "welded England into one formidable whole" (SP, p. 71), and in *The Critical Attitude* (a book of essays which were originally contributed to the *English Review*) Ford maintains that "Thomas Cromwell, indeed gave us Modern England... He destroyed Catholicism and the rule of the noble" (CA, p. 16) and rendered "a return to Catholicism economically and temperamentally impossible in these islands..." (CA, p. 16).

According to Hegel's theory of drama formulated in his *Aesthetics*, tragedy stems from the particularization of the substance of ethical life. Albert Schweitzer points out that to Hegel ethics is only one phase in the development of the spiritual, and he quotes Hegel's words that "the ethical should be understood in a broader sense, in which it means not only the morally good but the spiritual, the intellectual in general" (Schweitzer 1990: 211). In Hegel's view the substance of ethical life represents a concrete unity, "an ensemble of different relations and powers" (Hegel 1975: 1196). When actualized in reality, "the mere *difference* of the constituents of this ensemble becomes perverted into *opposition* and collision" (Hegel 1975: 1196). The ethical powers are differentiated and "actualized as the specific aim of a human 'pathos' (ibid.: 1196), as a result of which "their harmony is cancelled" and they appear in the mundane sphere "in opposition to one another in reciprocal independence" (ibid.: 1196).

The original essence of tragedy consists then in the fact that within such a conflict each of the opposed sides, if taken by itself, has **justification**; while each can establish the true and positive content of its own aim and character only by denying and infringing the equally justified power of the other (Hegel 1975: 1196).

For although the characters have a purpose which is valid in itself, they can carry it out in tragedy only by pursuing it one-sidedly and so contradicting and infringing someone else's purpose (Hegel 1975: 1197).

Since each of the self-validating forces, which denies the other, equally represents a part of the general and fundamental ethical life, the resulting opposition and collision is between one-sided right and one-sided right (not between right and wrong) i.e. right is relativized. The logical consequence of this is Hegelian reconciliation. Since the unresolved contradiction set up in this way cannot maintain itself in the real world as "the substance of reality and what is genuinely true" (Hegel 1975: 1197), "it is annulled as a contradiction" (ibid.: 1197) and the substance and unity of ethical life are restored.

The idea of reconciliation is important to Ford, as will be shown in the course of the current investigation. Fundamentally, however, the central ethical conflict in the *Fifth Queen* series is logically irreconcilable. The author reveals that reconciliation is possible at the level of interpersonal relationships and at the political level.

Katharine Howard's Christian forgiveness of Thomas Cromwell and her intercession for him with the king make manifest how reconciliation can be effected in interpersonal relationships.

Katharine Howard and Thomas Cromwell represent two radically different conceptions of the role of the ruler. In *The Critical Attitude* (1911) Ford describes

Thomas Cromwell as “a cold scientist” who was “logically remorseless” (CA, p. 19) in exercising statecraft without mercy. The author refers to Cromwell’s “panacea for the poor” (i.e. the rope) as being “perfectly logical” (CA, p. 17), “the logical consequence”, “the inevitable result of a strong, of a Christless state” (CA, p. 18). In this case, Ford writes in support of political pragmatism, and his sympathies are with the attitude which he considers logical. In the same book Ford regards humanitarianism as the direct opposite of the “logical” attitude. Katharine Howard represents the latter in the Tudor trilogy. Henry VIII’s passionate fifth wife knows full well that “it was fitting for a queen to be feared and deemed awful” but she would “rather be loved and deemed pitiful” (FQ, p. 472).

In this trilogy the logic of political pragmatism triumphs. However, a compromise between the two attitudes is not only possible but, according to Ford, has in fact been characteristic of the English political scene since the Renaissance. In *The Critical Attitude* the author remarks that English “rules since then have wavered between statecraft and mercy” (CA, p. 18), which means that “we have compromised, as we are perpetually compromising” (CA, p. 17). To Ford, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, the future belongs to the “logical” attitude (i.e. the “strong state made up of efficient individuals” [CA, p. 18]).

In another respect, however, the possibility of reconciliation is entirely ruled out. Underlying the conflict between Henry VIII’s fifth queen on the one hand, and Thomas Cromwell and the other “men similar in type” on the other hand, is the clash between two irreconcilable methodologies of truth in the area of morality. It is upon this incompatibility that Ford firmly bases his trilogy. This fundamental opposition is made an essential part of the thematic content. In a scene which lies at the heart of *The Fifth Queen*, Throckmorton, “this emperor of spies” (FQ, p. 518), contrasts the old concept of good and evil with the new one. He affectedly regards himself as being something of a philosopher (FQ, p. 344), and makes a “philosophic gesture” (FQ, p. 173). Despite the obvious use of irony, here Ford also calls the reader’s attention to the fact that to distinguish between right and wrong is ultimately a philosophic exercise. While Throckmorton defines the Macchiavellian position, he necessarily negates the biblical one, since these are mutually exclusive:

‘But, if a man be formed to fight he must fight, and call the wrong side good.’

‘God help you,’ Katharine said. ‘What can be good that is set in array against the elect of God?’

‘These be brave words,’ he answered, ‘but the days of the Crusades be over. Here is a King that fights with a world that is part good, part evil. In part he fights for the elect of God. Then he must call all things well upon his side, if he is not to fail where he is right as well as where he is wrong.’

‘I do not take you well,’ Katharine said. ‘When the Lacedaemonians strove with the Great King...’

‘Why, dear heart,’ he said, ‘those were the days of a black and white world; now we are all grey or piebald’ (FQ, pp. 170–171).

Accordingly, she is condemned by a grey world, and the king, who represents it, is also repeatedly referred to as being grey.

The patterns “Either ... or ...” (either black or white) versus “both ... and ...” (both black and white i.e. grey) form an opposition of which Ford is particularly fond; in the former the opposites are kept strictly separate, in the latter they interpenetrate. Katharine Howard’s perception in terms of black and white is the expression of the biblical view that the distinction between good and evil is absolute, whereas “grey” implies that these are relativized. To Throckmorton the fact that “here we have no yea-nay world of evil and good” (FQ, p. 173) means that

... a man may act most evilly, even as Privy Seal, and yet be the best man in the world. And... a man may be most evil and yet act passing well for your good (FQ, p. 174).

Yet, as Katherine Howard realizes, black or white vision is not impracticable; she admits that the Lady Mary (Mary Tudor) “assuredly was all white or black” (FQ, p. 186). However, what Katharine does become aware of, is that the world of Tudor political intrigues conforms not to the biblical pattern but to a relativist one:

It was not, precisely, any more a world of black and white that she saw, but a world of men who did one thing in order that something very different might happen a long time afterwards (FQ, p. 186).

By not allowing her admirer Throckmorton to help her fight her battles, the heroine refuses to place Macciavellianism at the service of the Christian ideal. However, Katharine Howard herself is infected with the virus of the times. Her conflict with them, initially external (when she represents black-or-white morality in a grey world) becomes internalized. While fighting for God and the saints, the heroine commits “a sin that good might ensue” (FQ, p. 589) (she takes the crown from Anne of Cleves). Thus, she compromises with her conscience, since the “Let us do evil that good may result” attitude is strongly condemned by the Apostle Paul as being unchristian (Romans 3:8). Katharine Howard stumbles when she finds it difficult to see the right in the matter of the marriage; at the same time her gaze is also fixed upon absolute good and right:

The only way is to be firm for God and for the cause of the saints (FQ, p. 338).

It should be emphasized that in the Tudor trilogy Ford maintains a clear-cut distinction between these two conflicting conceptions of morality. Although the

world around her is dishonourable, Katharine Howard believes that “kings and princes are here to be above the world” (FQ, p. 338), which they must change, purify, chasten and amerce as instruments of God.

Francis A. Schaeffer stresses strongly that in the modern world Hegel’s “methodology of synthesis” has largely supplanted “the methodology of antithesis”, which is based upon the first law of classical logic i.e. that “If you have A it is not non-A”. According to the latter (which represents the Aristotelian as well as the biblical position), in the area of Being (or knowledge) if anything is true, its opposite is false, and in the area of morality if one thing is right, its opposite is wrong (Schaeffer 1990: 6). Schaeffer points out that the relativism which dominates modern thought, began with Hegel but this shift in methodology has spread and affected large sections of Europe’s population above all since 1890.

Ford Madox Ford, writing decades before Francis A. Schaeffer, brings into focus the emergence of moral relativism as the attitude predominant during historical periods characterized by the decline of intrinsic Christian values. As Ford presents it, moral relativism rose to the surface more than once, and either it or the opposite framework of truth in the area of morals underlies each of his psychological ages. In the *Fifth Queen* series a shift in the concept of good and evil (similar to the one noted by Schaeffer) marks the supercession of the Middle Ages by the Renaissance. In *Parade’s End* the author implies that such a shift is typical of the transition from the Post-Stuart period to the next phase, which the world entered after the Great War. Thus, Ford suggests that the Middle Ages and the Puritan Age share the same basic concept of truth in the area of morality, and, therefore, belong together in this respect, as contrasted with the Tudor-Stuart period and the post-World War One phase.

Thus, Ford, who was only nominally Catholic, does justice to the true Christian mentality by revealing what many Christians have failed to realize: namely, that true Christianity and moral relativism are mutually exclusive, and that religious rhetoric, so far as it goes, can mean anything and, therefore, nothing. Since every definition implies a negation (Spinoza, Hegel), the Macchiavellian worldview acquires well-defined outlines when Ford presents it in antithesis to the medieval one, which the New Learning denies. However, the author also shows how Macchiavellian logic masquerades as its opposite i.e. as Katharine’s “childish logic” (FQ, p. 347), and appropriates its religious language.

The central conflict in the Tudor trilogy is rendered in terms of the clash between two major patterns, each of which can assert itself only at the expense of the other. One is the pattern of restoration *ABA* which Katharine Howard seeks to impose upon England. In Ford’s view, by 1530 or so the momentous change had fully set in; the Middle Ages (*A*) had been superseded by a world in many respects their opposite (*B*). Katharine Howard’s mission in life is to bring back the past exactly as it was i.e. to restore “the Kingdom of God within the realm” (FQ, p. 446),

once more to set up “abbeys and chapters and the love of God” (FQ, p. 514), and then all things shall “be as they were before the Queen Katharine... of Aragon was undone” (FQ, p. 434). Katharine Howard’s romantic dream of the restoration of Roman Catholicism finds expression also in her hope that it would be possible to recover for England the Golden Age. She regards it as a model and example, of which (as Throckmorton points out) Tudor political intrigues represent the total negation. For Katharine Howard the distance between the Golden Age and her contemporary world is temporal and/or spatial; temporal and spatial because she equates the former with the Golden Age of Rome; spatial because she believes that the Golden Age still remains in the Hesperides or the city of Atalanta, which could be discovered by sailing westward over the seas (PS, p. 348). In an earlier conversation two kinds of quest are suggested but the issue is left undecided whether the Islands of the Blest are to be sought beyond the Western Isles or “hidden in this realm of England...” (FQ, p. 191). In any case, the *ABA* pattern of restoration requires that one should go beyond *B*, and, once and for all overcome the distance separating it from *A*.

This restoration would break the mechanistic pattern of vacillation, (where *A* [a given state of mind or of affairs or a political party] gives way to its opposite *B*), which recurs continually and governs the world of Tudor politics including even its most powerful exponents. Katharine’s words to Cromwell “We rise, we fall” (FQ, 296) apply equally to both. To Ford the perpetual rise and fall of political fortunes is a manifestation of historical inevitability, which in his trilogy shatters the heroine’s dream of the restoration of Roman Catholicism in England. In order to overcome the see-saw, Katharine Howard allows herself to become involved in it. Her tragic flaw consists in the fact that she commits a sin when she does the wrong thing *for the right reason*, and, inexorably, the pattern which the heroine tries to overcome from within, is enacted in her own life as well. Eventually, she can only exercise her free will in committing another sin, hoping “that this sin that brings me down shall counterbalance that other that set me up... but whether the one shall balance the other only the angels that are at the gates of Paradise shall assure me” (FQ, p. 589). The freedom which she has, is shown to be awareness and acceptance of historical inevitability (Hegel).

Ironically, it is the idea of a balance that represents the point of intersection between Christian ethics, which depends upon retribution (and, in Katharine Howard’s case, between the intended outcome of self-punishment for sin) on the one hand, and Henry VIII’s political manoeuvring “upon no settled basis of principle” (FQ, p.73) on the other hand. In *The Spirit of the People* Ford expresses his personal view that

... the modern world began with the discovery of the balance of power as an international factor (FQ, p. 63).

Accordingly, in his Tudor trilogy the author carefully traces the changing alliances between the great European powers of the day. Far from being above the world as a sovereign responsible for exerting a positive influence on it, Henry VIII manages to be above the world (Katharine Howard realizes) “even as a crow... blown hither and thither by every gust that blows” (FQ, p. 588). Ford reveals that, for all his power, King Henry VIII is essentially a weak man who seems to rule but is actually ruled by the see-saw. The pattern of restoration (*ABA*) fails to materialize in Ford’s trilogy because the devious monarch will not and cannot commit himself to the course of action through which the see-saw could be overcome.

‘But you – never will you cross any Rubicon; always you blow hot in the evening and cold at dawn. Neither do you, as I had dreamed you did, rule in this your realm. For, even as a crow that just now I watched, you are blown hither and thither by every gust that blows. Now the wind of gossips blows so that you must have my life. And, before God, I am glad of it.’

‘Before God!’ he cried out, ‘I would save you’

‘Aye,’ she answered sadly, ‘to-day you would save me; to-morrow a foul speech of one mine enemy shall gird you again to slay me. On the morrow you will repent, and on the morrow of that again you will repent of that. So you will balance and trim. If to-day you send a messenger to Rome, to-morrow you will send another, hastening by a shorter route, to stay him...’

... Thus I tell you it will fall about that for many days you will waver, but one day you will cry out – let her die this day! On the morrow of that day you will repent you, but, being dead, I shall be no more to be recalled to life (FQ, pp. 588–589).

This view of Henry VIII is not peculiar to Katharine Howard, who articulates it, but is confirmed by the trilogy as a whole. In the first novel Throckmorton describes the king in a similar way:

He is a thunderbolt and a glorious light; he is a storm of hail and a beneficent sun. There are few men more certain than he when he is certain. There is no one so full of doubts when he doubteth. There is no wind so mighty as he when he is inspired to blow; but God alone, who directeth the wind in its flight, knoweth when he will storm through the world. His Highness is a balance of a pair of scales. Now he is up, now down (FQ, p. 174).

The conflicting aspects of Henry’s personality are seen as existing side by side, and, thus, they provide a picture of what the king represents essentially: a delicate balance of opposites like nature itself. The fact that its sharply contrasted manifestations make him “a balance of a pair of scales” (FQ, p. 174) implies that, despite the pretence of sovereignty, the king’s behaviour is adjusted to the mechanistic forces which shape Ford’s historical ages including the Tudor-Stuart era. Unlike *Parade’s End*, where during the Great War the characters’ sense of logic

fails miserably, and their painful internal divisions find expression in flagrant verbal contradictions, in Ford's picture of Tudor England the rules of logic are not deliberately ruptured and none of his Renaissance figures there develops the habit of mechanical and obsessive contradiction. With respect to the tendency towards contradiction, the difference between Ford's rendering of these two periods is quantitative as well as qualitative. The world of *Parade's End* marks a much more advanced stage in what Ford saw as the process of England's deterioration, which was going on in his own day. In contradistinction to Hegel's understanding of progress, the historical movement that Ford traces in these novelistic series is change, not development. (As is well-known, development proceeds from the lower to the higher.) Besides, when the author matured and was able to exercise full control over his material, he concentrated on more acute internal conflicts and mental crises, which also accounts for the prominence given to contradiction in his tetralogy.

Thus, while keeping within the framework of Hegel's dialectic, Ford follows his own bent, and relies heavily upon certain patterns and their interrelation (the *ABA* pattern of restoration and the "see-saw"), and this imparts a flavour to his work. The high frequency of the occurrence of these patterns is a distinguishing feature also of Ford's later fictions.

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