

CHAPTER 4-NARRATOLOGICAL DEVICES IN THE GOOD SOLDIER

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to discuss the presence and use of narratological devices in The Good Soldier, specifically regarding text (Section 4.1), narrator (Section 4.2), character (Section 4.3) and chronological sequencing (Section 4.4). These strategies will be foregrounded, as within The Good Soldier these devices are used to draw attention to the narrative and the constructed nature of the world of the text. The employment of narratological devices to emphasize the constructed nature of the text will be considered in the light of Modernist and Postmodernist narratological usage.

Identifying similarities between narratological devices in The Good Soldier and the use of character, narrator, text and chronology in Postmodern fiction is an anomaly in the context of literary periodization, which confines texts to certain movements and establishes a clear demarcation between the texts of the various periods. To discuss the Postmodern traits of narratology in The Good Soldier is therefore to transgress the boundaries of periodization and engage in an interpretation of the text contradictory to the clear-cut demarcations of literary periodization.

The following chapter aims to discuss the possibility of identifying Postmodern elements of narratology in The Good Soldier. If such a relationship is discovered, it will challenge the accepted divisions of literary periodization, while at the same time providing an alternative and beneficial interpretation of The Good Soldier.

The first narratologically associated term that will be scrutinized in The Good Soldier concerns the issue of text and textuality. Section 2.3.3 introduced the issue of text and its relationship in narratological and poststructuralist thought. Section 4.2 aims to proceed from this introduction and discuss the issue of text as it relates to The Good Soldier.

4.2 THE GOOD SOLDIER AS TEXT

This section aims to discuss the interconnectedness of The Good Soldier with other fictional texts and the fact that the novel bears traces of other literary texts in its narrative. This issue

will first be discussed on the level of Dowell's diegetic narrative before considering the web-like interconnectedness of The Good Soldier as an extra-diegetic text.

This section also aims to discuss how the issue of texts bearing traces of each other foregrounds the fictional nature of The Good Soldier and highlights its status as a literary text. Throughout this discussion reference will be made to Postmodern and poststructuralist notions on the interrelatedness of texts in order to identify similarities between these views and The Good Soldier.

The world of The Good Soldier is scattered with texts which the characters engage with: telegrams, letters, newspapers, diaries, novels, poems, title deeds, police reports, wills and a pencil-draft of the Protest lie scattered through the novel. Dowell carries about with him, "as if it was the only thing that invisibly anchored me to any spot upon the globe - the title deeds of my farm" (Ford, 1988:12), while Florence relies on *Baedeker* as her source of historical knowledge (Ford, 1988:42). Edward enjoys reading Scott's novels and the Chronicles of Froissart (Ford, 1988:128) and Nancy learns of Edward's death through the newspapers (Ford, 1988:211).

On the level of Dowell's narrative, it is evident that his story is made up of a variety of other texts; of "spoken and written discourses" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1994:3) that undertake the telling of stories. His entire narrative is made up of what others have told him, of what his diaries said and of telegrams and letters that he has read or been informed about. Dowell's narrative for example, contains the text of Edward and Leonora's separate pasts as well as the text of their married life together. The text of Florence's past, her trip around the world and her relationship with Jimmy also forms part of Dowell's narrative, as does the text of the relationship between Florence and Edward as told to him by Leonora.

Derrida states: "There is nothing outside the text/ nothing except text" (Jefferson, 1993:116) which Bauman qualifies by stating that "anything we can possibly know is a text; the only thing a text can refer us to in our effort to grasp its meaning is another text; nothing we can possibly know of may claim a status better, more solid, or in any way different from that of the text" (Bauman, 1994:130).

Dowell's narrative adheres to Derrida's poststructuralist assertion that there is nothing but text, as his narrative is composed of nothing but an array of texts that he uses to tell his "saddest story" (Ford, 1988:11). In trying to understand one text, other texts are invoked, for example, in telling the story of what happened between Nancy, Leonora and Edward, numerous texts are involved, including the newspaper in which Nancy reads of the Brand's divorce, the letter Nancy's mother sent to her, the novels Nancy reads and the telegram Nancy sent Edward, as well as what Leonora and Edward verbally told Dowell about these events. All these texts are involved and recalled in the narrative that undertakes to tell what happened between Edward, his wife and his ward.

Meyer is aware of the abundance of texts in Dowell's narrative and speaking of the love triangle between Nancy, Edward and Leonora, he states: "Nancy Rufford's love of Ashburnham takes the form of 'remembering chance passages in chance books' (223). So the intertextual chain goes on and the reader attempting to unravel the novel finds only texts-referring-to-other-texts *ad infinitum*." (Meyer, 1990:509.)

Meyer's comment is justified when one notices the myriad of texts of which Dowell's narrative is composed. Dowell's narrative consists of what he has been told by the characters-the actual individual and personal verbal texts on the characters' pasts, actions and intentions. Dowell's text also consists of references to and inclusions of other texts that exist in his world, such as the story of Peire Vidal (Ford, 1988:22-23), the words of a tune by Herrick (Ford, 1988:201) and a poem by Swinburne (Ford, 1988:225). Dowell's text also consists of an anecdote about Uncle Hurlbird (as told to him by a family member), as well as references to his own diaries (Ford, 1988:93), which are significantly recalled in his narrative. These are all existing narratives that are present in Dowell's world and about which he has read or heard.

The story of Peire Vidal and the anecdote about Hurlbird and his generous gift of oranges are texts that exist in Dowell's world, which he has incorporated into his narrative due to their applicability at various points in his narrative. The information in Dowell's diary intersects with his narrative when his narrative repeats various events and dates in his diary, revealing that his narrative echoes another text. In this way it is evident that one text is linked to another and that in narrating his story Dowell's text invokes and links to a number of other existing texts.

The view of the interconnected nature of texts within The Good Soldier links it to the Postmodern concept of intertextuality, which is encapsulated by Thiher when he states that: "Texts are a tissue of all other texts. Perhaps the key postmodern understanding of writing is that every text, consciously or not, is penetrated with and composed of traces of other texts." (Thiher, 1984:90.) The prominence of the web-like nature of texts in Dowell's narrative demonstrates its similarities to the Postmodern foregrounding of intertextuality. By including other texts in his narrative, such as the story of Peire Vidal or the anecdote that was told to him, Dowell's narrative demonstrates its penetration by other texts and foregrounds its status as text.

Utilizing the poststructurally defined concept of intertextuality in a discussion of The Good Soldier challenges the notion of literary periodization, which demarcates the 1950's as the commencing years of Postmodernism as a literary movement. Being able to discuss the text's inclusion of, and interconnectedness with, a number of other texts using a poststructuralist term indicates that Postmodernism is not a closed literary period, but that it is relevant in a discussion and understanding of a certain element of The Good Soldier's narratology.

Dowell's narrative is intertextual and the novel foregrounds the interconnectedness of the texts of which Dowell's narrative and world are composed. It is therefore significant to note that the characters themselves seem composed of interrelated texts, thereby further foregrounding the issue of intertextuality on the level of Dowell's narrative. Florence, for example, is described as "*a mass of talk* out of guide-books, of drawings out of fashion-plates" (Ford, 1988:114, emphasis added) and Edward is described as being "*compounded of indifferent poems and novels*" (Ford, 1988:29, emphasis added). This is a demonstration of the juxtaposition of texts within the characters and the interconnectedness between the texts of which the characters are composed. Florence is literally composed of history texts and fashion texts, which lie juxtaposed with each other in a network of web-like interconnections.

It is not only on the level of Dowell's narrative that texts interrelate and invoke each other. Meyer states that The Good Soldier interrogates its status as text and that it is "permeated by references, allusions and citations of the many intertexts that constitute it" (Meyer, 1990:511). Meyer's comment is significant, as it not only speaks of Dowell's narrative, but also of the world of The Good Soldier as text, the printed document that the real world reader has access to. By interrogating its status as text, The Good Soldier draws attention to its existence in an

extra-textual world, a world in which all these numerous and interconnected fictional texts exist.

Eagleton states that: "All literary texts are woven out of other literary texts....every word, phrase or segment is a reworking of other writings which precede or surround the individual work. There is no such thing as a literary 'originality', no such thing as a 'first' literary work: all literature is 'intertextual.'"(Eagleton, 1988:138.) Eagleton is speaking from a poststructuralist position and it is appropriate to investigate how The Good Soldier foregrounds its status as a fictional, literary text through its interconnectedness with other literary texts.

In relating Postmodernism's notion of intertextuality to The Good Soldier it is possible to observe how the novel's foregrounding of its textuality links it to Postmodern texts, such as Barthelme's Snow White in which intertextuality is blatantly foregrounded, or The French Lieutenant's Woman in which Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking-glass and Darwin's The Origin of Species, among many others, are quoted. The following examples discuss the instances of intertextuality in The Good Soldier and as such link it to Postmodern texts which use this narratological device to foreground the textual and fictional nature of their world.

Reference has already been made to the story of Peire Vidal the Troubadour, which is included in The Good Soldier. This is the first example of intertextuality, as it is a fictional tale as told by Ernest Hoepffner in 1800's. It is therefore a story that might be known by various readers of The Good Soldier. The effect of the inclusion of the story of Peire Vidal introduces the issue of intertextuality into the world of the reader and makes the reader aware of the intertextual nature of The Good Soldier. The reader is reminded that this is a fictional text that bears reference to other fictional texts and as such is not a mirror reflecting reality, but is rather a fictional construct.

Another example of intertextuality in The Good Soldier is where Nancy goes insane after Edward's death and repeatedly utters "*Credo in unum Deum Omnipotentem*" (Ford, 1988:210) and "shuttlecocks" (Ford, 1988:226). Eggenschwiler has recognized Nancy's repeated utterance of "shuttlecocks" as an example of intertextuality, as Kipling, in his short story, The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin (Kipling, 1911:111) includes a character who becomes aphasiac and "among the few disconnected words that he utters as he becomes

speechless is, inexplicably, the word ‘shuttle-cock’” (Eggenschwiler, 1992:51). Eggenschwiler’s statement makes it evident that The Good Soldier as text did not exist in isolation from all the other texts that were already published by 1915. This fact is further demonstrated in The Good Soldier through the text’s link with James’s What Maisie Knew (1897), significantly also regarding the use of ‘shuttlecocks’.

In his preface James tells the story of a tale told to him about a child whose parents divorced and who was passed to and fro between the estranged couple. James states: “The wretched infant was thus to find itself practically disowned, rebounding from racquet to racquet like a tennis-ball or a shuttlecock.” (James, 1966:1.) In The Good Soldier when Nancy first utters “Shuttlecocks!” (Ford, 1988:226) Dowell states: “I know what was passing in her mind, if she can be said to have a mind, for Leonora has told me that, once, the poor girl said *she felt* like a shuttlecock being tossed backwards and forwards between the violent personalities of Edward and his wife. Leonora, she said, was always trying to deliver her over to Edward, and Edward tacitly and silently forced her back again.” (Ford, 1988:226.)

In this example intertextuality is overtly foregrounded through the repetition of the word ‘shuttlecocks’ and the description of its meaning for the characters. A reader of James’ 1897 novel would be surprised by this repetition in The Good Soldier and would be reminded of the fictional nature of the text he or she is reading. A text that bears reference to another text foregrounds its relation to other fictional texts while at the same time highlighting its own fictionality.

Another example of intertextuality between The Good Soldier and What Maisie Knew is the use of the proper name ‘Maisie’ which occurs in both novels. The Maisie of The Good Soldier shares similarities with her namesake in that she is an innocent pawn used by those with more power than her. Edward and Leonora control her like Maisie’s parents control her and in the end Maisie Maidan can only say “I didn’t know you wanted me for an adulteress” (Ford, 1988:72).

Acknowledging the similarities between The Good Soldier and What Maisie Knew, Skinner, tongue-in-cheek, provides a number of alternative titles to The Good Soldier such as “*What Dowell Knew* or *What Dowell Didn’t Know*; even *What Only Dowell Knew* or, to sacrifice economy for precision, *What Only Dowell Didn’t Know*” (Skinner, 1989:288). Such

comments recognize the overlapping and intertwined nature of texts and the similarities between the text under discussion and James' novel⁶.

Moser states that James' The Golden Bowl (1904):

echoes in The Good Soldier so strikingly as to have inspired an ingenious if perverse interpretation of Ford's masterpiece as a conscious parody of James's own four-square coterie. To an impressive list of parallels between the two little, naïve, cuckolded American millionaires, Adam Verver and John Dowell, can be added such precise details as their blue ties and their habit of carefully counting their steps. Both the wife-dominated Prince and Ashburnham not only are successful with other women but are termed, with a complex irony, 'stupid' (Moser, 1980:122).

In this case the intertextual nature of The Good Soldier cannot be overlooked and the reader must come to accept Dowell's world as a fictional construct that is connected to other fictions, rather than a mirror submissively and accurately reflecting the reality of the reader's world.

Commenting on the similarities between The Good Soldier and another of James' novels, Poole states: "The structural relations between the characters, motives and events of *The Good Soldier* and *The Wings of the Dove* are so close that there is a case for suspecting that the one is a metastatement about the other." (Poole, 1990:394.) Poole goes on to state that The Good Soldier is "a completely mendacious simulacrum put in the place of James and Conrad's novels, it is a copy so good that no one ever suspected that it was not genuine, a latter-day Golden Bowl" (Poole, 1990:394). This comment is significant in the light of a discussion on intertextuality as it demonstrates the interconnectedness of texts by acknowledging the similarities in motive, characters and events between The Good Soldier and various of James and Conrad's novels.

The above examples indicate that The Good Soldier foregrounds its fictionality through incorporating evidence of other literary texts. From a Postmodern perspective Broich (1997:252) states: "If we assume that a literary work is nothing but a collocation of an endless number of echoes of other texts and that there is nothing outside these texts, the idea that

⁶ Interestingly, Maisie becomes a transworld identity (term used in McHale- 1987:57) in No Enemy (Ford, 1984:160-161) where the character from James's novel enters the world of the other novel. In this case a character's appearance in another fictional text foregrounds a blatant and literal kind of intertextuality, as the character can travel across texts, spreading repetitions and copies. The notion of transworld identities is prominent in Postmodern fiction and occurs in a novel such as English Music in which the characters from Great Expectations, Alice in Wonderland and Sherlock Holmes make appearances in Ackroyd's novel.

literature imitates nature will also have to be abandoned.” Broich’s postmodern statement can be applied to The Good Soldier, as in the area of intertextuality it is more a reflection of fictionality than reality and as such cannot be accepted as simply a reflection on the real world. The Good Soldier not so much imitates nature as it does other literary texts, thereby foregrounding its own textuality and fictionality.

There are references in The Good Soldier to Ford’s earlier novels. Cassell recognizes that the anecdote about Uncle Hurlbird’s trip around the world and philanthropic gesture of handing out oranges (Ford, 1988:24) to everyone is the repetition of a scene in Ford’s An English Girl in which “another aging American, a Mr. Huston, also travels on board ships with a carload of oranges to give to people in out-of-the-way places” (Cassell, 1961:151). Cassell (1961:193) also recognizes the repetition of a simile used by Dowell in Ford’s The New Humpty-Dumpty, which involves what happens when a man finds his consummate passion, “he will travel over no more horizons; he will never again set the knapsack over his shoulders; he will retire from those scenes. He will have gone out of the business” (also in The Good Soldier, 1988:109). This again emphasizes the fictionality of The Good Soldier and its interconnected relationship with other fictional texts.

Witkowski (1998:291) refers to “the handful of scenes and character types” in The Good Soldier that are reminiscent of “Cranford, Elizabeth Gaskell’s enormously popular novel of 1853” (Witkowski, 1998:291). Witkowski goes on to state that The Good Soldier is a “novelistic parody” (Witkowski, 1998:291) of Cranford. The presence of parody is further evidence of intertextuality as it uses the names, places or descriptions of another text for comic effect. Dowell compares Florence’s home in Stamford to Cranford and states that the inhabitants there “are even more old-fashioned than even the inhabitants of Cranford, England, could have been” (Ford, 1988:12). In this case one fictional text invokes another and the intertextual play of texts is foregrounded.

Bauman describes Derrida’s notion of intertextuality as “an endless conversation between the texts with no prospect of ever arriving at, or being halted at an agreed point” (Bauman, 1994:13). This applies to The Good Soldier and Cranford, where a conversation between the texts takes place through one’s parody of the other, but neither text is in a stronger position. The Good Soldier itself can be parodied and form part of other texts, which in fact happens in the following two examples.

Allen (2000:214) quotes Genette who defines hypertextuality as “any relationship uniting a text B (... the hypertext) to an earlier text A (...the hypotext) upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary”. Up to this point in the discussion, The Good Soldier as hypertext has been considered, as all the above examples concern traces of other texts within The Good Soldier. It is now appropriate to consider examples where other texts bear traces of The Good Soldier, thereby making it a hypotext.

Miller (1999) recognizes the influence of The Good Soldier on Graham Greene’s The Heart of the Matter (1948) and goes on to mention the parallels between the two stories, most specifically regarding the similarities between the characters and how all the characters in The Good Soldier have equivalencies in Greene’s novel. A study such as Miller’s indicates the place of The Good Soldier in the greater scope of intertextuality, as the text not only incorporates other texts, but is itself incorporated into a succeeding fictional text.

Brookes focuses on the intertextuality between The Good Soldier and Barnes’ Flaubert’s Parrot. He discusses the similarities and differences between the two and states that the story of the narrator of Flaubert’s Parrot is the story of John Dowell (Brookes, 1999:46). Through his study Brookes demonstrates that there are no original texts and that the process of intertextuality is an ongoing and never-ending occurrence.

At this point it is appropriate to note that the occurrence of elements of The Good Soldier in Flaubert’s Parrot is significant in the context of Postmodernism as a watertight literary compartment and sequential literary period. Flaubert’s Parrot is a Postmodern novel and the fact that it contains influences from a text belonging to an earlier movement serves to challenge the notion that literary periods are chronological and closed. In this case, a Postmodern text published in 1984 highlights intertextuality through its textual relation to another text, while at the same time foregrounding the dynamic, rather than chronological relation between texts, by evidencing elements of a text published in 1915.

This section elucidated the fact that The Good Soldier is web-like in its interconnectedness with other fictional texts. It was discovered that Dowell’s narrative is composed of a variety of other texts that are juxtaposed throughout the narrative. Reference was made to comments on Postmodernism, which acknowledge the interrelated nature of texts through the concept of intertextuality.

The discussion ascertained that the result of foregrounding this interconnectedness is to highlight the fictional status of the text and remind the reader that he or she is reading a literary text that is not a mirror on reality, but rather a mirror on its own fictionality. Attention was paid to Postmodern and poststructuralist notions of intertextuality and fictionality throughout the course of this section and it was discovered that The Good Soldier's emphasis on intertextuality and fictionality demonstrates certain similarities with Postmodern thought.

It was also discovered that the relation between The Good Soldier and Postmodernism regarding the notion of intertextuality foregrounded the anti-chronological and unsequential nature of Postmodernism as a literary movement. The notion of literary periodization was challenged due to the appropriateness of applying the poststructuralist term of intertextuality to The Good Soldier, while the notion of Postmodernism as a watertight compartment was challenged through the traces of The Good Soldier in a Postmodernist text, namely Flaubert's Parrot.

This section has considered text as a narratological term that can be utilized to foreground the constructed nature of the world of the novel. It is now appropriate to consider The Good Soldier's incorporation of narrator as a narratological device and any congruencies between its status in The Good Soldier and Postmodern fiction.

4.3 NARRATOR AS NARRATOLOGICAL DEVICE IN THE GOOD SOLDIER

This section aims to discuss The Good Soldier's use of narrator as a narratological device in order to reveal how the narrator foregrounds the constructed nature of his world. The following section (4.3.1) aims to discuss the self-conscious comments the narrator makes during the course of his narrative in order to discover the effect this has on his narrated world. Reference will also be made to comments within Postmodernism on the role of narrator in Postmodern fiction. Section 4.3.2 aims to elucidate how Dowell's fabrications foreground his role as creator of this fictional and imaginative world.

4.3.1 NARRATOLOGICAL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE GOOD SOLDIER

The narrator of The Good Soldier foregrounds his role in creating the world of narrative through drawing attention to himself. In this way he introduces himself into the narrative and highlights the fact that he is creating a world as he writes and that this is not reality, but the

construct of a narrator's world-building attempts. This section aims to discuss this issue and discover any congruencies such a use of narrator as narratological device has with practices within Postmodern fiction.

Nearing the end of his narrative Dowell mentions Nancy and states that: "She is, I am aware, sitting in the hall, forty paces from where I am now writing." (Ford, 1988:212.) At this point he also states: "I am writing this, now, I should say, a full eighteen months after the words that end my last chapter. Since writing the words 'until my arrival', which I see end that paragraph, I have seen again for a glimpse, from a swift train, Beaucaire with the beautiful white tower, Tarascon with the square castle, the great Rhone, the immense stretches of the Crau." (Ford, 1988:210.) With these words Dowell draws attention to himself as the narrator of the text and the creator of the world that emerges where his pen meets the paper.

The narrative world depends on Dowell for its completion and is left hanging in suspension for the eighteen months that Dowell travels. He is the literal world-builder and with this comment foregrounds his constructive role in the text. As more and more indications of Dowell's role in creating the text emerge, it becomes impossible for the reader to forget the image of Dowell writing away at the story and accept the story as a mirror on reality, a simple reflection of the real world.

Dowell's comments are self-reflexive as they draw attention to his presence as narrator and creator of the text. In the following example Dowell reminds the reader that he or she is reading a fictional text, a world that has been created by a narrator who foregrounds his own battle to narrate his story. He states: "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. I wish I could put it down in diary form. Thus: On the 1st of September they returned from Nauheim." (Ford, 1988:200.) In this example Dowell broods over his narrative and his role as narrator, as he shares with the reader his battle to narrate and "keep all these people going" (Ford, 1988:200). Lauzen states that "when the narrating—the-telling-the-story- becomes a major part of the subject-matter, we are in the realm of overt self-consciousness" (Lauzen, 1986:98) and it is evident that this is what occurs in Dowell's narrative due to his comments and references to his role as narrator.

Postmodern fiction has self-reflexivity as one of its defining qualities (Kotze, 1998:220) and according to Gräbe, Postmodern texts are “usually distinguished by their self-conscious reflections on the art of story-telling or the artifice of writing” (Gräbe, 1989:145). It is evident that The Good Soldier demonstrates this Postmodern trait due to the narrator’s references to himself and his role in constructing the narrative.

Commenting on Postmodern fiction, Mepham states that Kundera’s The Unbearable Lightness of Being is “‘postmodernist’ and ‘antirealist’ in having a fictional author who self-reflexively muses on how he comes to create his characters, and who intervenes with commentary on the action in ironic mood” (Mepham, 1991:155). This comment could arguably be applied to Dowell, who also muses about his role in creating the characters and who openly reflects about his narrative.

Dowell’s self-reflexive comments pervade the novel and have been noted by commentators such as Nigro (1992:387) and McCarthy (1997:134). Skinner makes a comment particularly appropriate in this regard when he states that “the novel’s drastic shifts in chronology and its elaborate self-consciousness...are of a range and scope rarely encountered outside postmodernist fiction” (Skinner, 1989:288). Dowell is chronically self-reflexive and as such resembles the narrators in Postmodern fiction who constantly draw attention to their own presence. The narrator of The French Lieutenant’s Woman, for example, states: “I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind.” (Fowles, 1987:85.) Dowell similarly ‘does not know’ and even though he does not state that his characters are created from his imagination, he makes the reader aware of his role in their creation through the many references to his narratological presence⁷.

Skinner’s comment is also significant in the light of the study’s emphasis on the anti-chronological nature of Postmodernism and the problem with literary periodization. Skinner’s comment acknowledges the congruency between The Good Soldier and Postmodern self-

⁷ The narrator of French Lieutenant’s Woman has been identified as the author, John Fowles, and it is evident that Fowles intrudes into the world of his novel and that his intrusion foregrounds the fictionality of the textual world. This may differ from The Good Soldier, which does not exhibit intrusion from Ford. Nevertheless, this study aims to demonstrate that Dowell’s intrusion into his narrative world has the same effect on the reader of foregrounding the fictionality of the world of the text.

reflexiveness, and even though he does not regard The Good Soldier as a Postmodern text, Skinner's comment demonstrates that a text "outside postmodernist fiction" (Skinner above) contains such similarities in narrative self-reflexiveness. The very fact that Skinner acknowledges that a text beyond the borders of Postmodernism as a movement may demonstrate Postmodern qualities, challenges the notion of literary periodization and the view of Postmodernism as a watertight literary compartment.

Keep states that the novels of Barth, Pynchon, Calvino and Ashberry share "a self-reflexive interest in the process of narrative itself and the means by which it constructs both text and reader" (Keep & McLaughlin, 1995) and the discussion aims to demonstrate this same interest in the following examples from The Good Soldier.

At the commencement of his second chapter Dowell states: "I don't know how it is best to put this thing down- whether it would be better to try and tell the story from the beginning, as if it were a story; or whether to tell it from this distance of time, as it reached me from the lips of Leonora or from those of Edward himself." (Ford, 1988:19.) By referring to his dilemma Dowell draws attention to himself as narrator and the process of narrative construction. Dowell foregrounds his role in deciding how the story is told, what order the events are told in and what is presented about the characters and at what point in the narrative.

Dowell's role in determining the unfolding of the plot and narrative development is foregrounded by his following comments: "And it occurs to me that some way back I began a sentence that I have never finished..."(Ford, 1988:28); "Well, I must get back to my story" (Ford, 1988:110) and "The little digression as to my Philadelphia experiences was really meant to lead around to this" (Ford, 1988:144). The chain of events that unfold in the narrative are determined by a narrator who digresses from his topic and apologizes to the reader who has been following the narrative only to be reminded of the presence of a narrator who draws attention to the fact that he digresses and that he has left a sentence unfinished. Dowell's references to himself foreground his role in what the reader is told, and when, in the development of the plot.

Another example of where Dowell draws attention to his act of narrating and constructing the narrative plot is where he asks: "Is all this digression or isn't it digression? Again I don't know. You, the listener, sit opposite me. But you are so silent. You don't tell me anything. I

am at any rate, trying to get you to see what sort of life it was I led with Florence and what Florence was like.” (Ford, 1988: 20.) The reader is aware that the sequencing of events and the unfolding of the plot depend on a narrator who foregrounds his role in text production through referring to his act of plot construction. Dowell’s apologetic and uncertain comments about his narrative foreground his role in text production.

The narrator of Lost in the Funhouse demonstrates a similar acknowledgement of his role in the construction of the plot. At one point he states: “All the preceding except the last few sentences is exposition that should’ve been done earlier or interspersed with the present action instead of lumped together. No reader would put up with so much with such *prolixity*.” (Barth, 1972:97.) Barth’s narrator also states: “We should be much farther along than we are; something has gone wrong; not much of this preliminary rambling seems relevant.” (Barth, 1972:83.) These comments draw the reader’s attention to the construction of the narrative and to the presence of a narrator who determines what is told, and when, in the narrative. From these comments it is evident that the narrator of Lost in the Funhouse is as self-conscious as Dowell and that the self-conscious comments of these narrators result in the same effect of foregrounding the fictionality of the text.

Dowell’s direct references to his role in constructing the narrative cannot be overlooked by the reader who is faced by the narrator’s self-conscious role in creating the text. In this he is like the meta-fictionists who, according to Lambeth, “force the reader’s awareness of the production of the text” (Lambeth, 1990:82). Dowell may not be as forceful as the meta-fictionists, but the result of Dowell’s many self-conscious comments is to foreground the production of the text.

Dowell is instrumental in determining what the reader knows about the characters and what attitudes the reader forms based on the information he provides. Dowell’s role in constructing character is foregrounded when he states: “But, looking over what I have written, I see that I have unintentionally misled you when I said that Florence was never out of my sight... When I come to think of it she was out of my sight most of the time” (Ford, 1988:84) and “I have given you the wrong impression if I have not made you see that Leonora was a woman of a strong, cold conscience, like all English Catholics” (Ford, 1988:59). With remarks such as these the narrator draws attention to how he has constructed character only to deconstruct the image he has just formed in the mind of the reader.

One example of how Dowell's comments on character foreground his role in constructing character is when he states that Edward talked of "Martingales, Chiffney bits, boots; where you got the best soap, the best brandy...by heavens, I hardly *ever* heard him talk of *anything* else. *Not in all the years that I knew him did I hear him talk of anything but these subjects*" (Ford, 1988:30, emphasis added). This comment presents a certain image of Edward as secretive, formal with Dowell and perhaps superficial as he talks about unimportant generalities with his best friend.

This picture of Edward is changed and deconstructed when Dowell on the next page states: "And I have given you the wrong impression of Edward Ashburnham if I have made you think that literally never in the course of our nine years of intimacy did he discuss what he would have called 'the graver things.'" (Ford, 1988:31.) Instead of talking about boots and soap, Dowell now states that Edward would often blurt out "something that gave an insight into the sentimental view of the cosmos that was his. He would say how much the society of a good woman could do towards redeeming you, and he would say that constancy was the finest of virtues" (Ford, 1988:31). Acknowledging that Edward spoke to Dowell about serious and personal issues such as virtue, women and the cosmos presents a very different characterization of Edward than as a superficial friend who did not share his opinions or ideals with his supposed best friend.

In the above examples Dowell creates the character qualities that the reader likes or dislikes about Edward and comes to accept, only to have the narrator change this and come up with different character traits. The result of this is to foreground the narrator's role in creating the narrative and the text in which the narrative is contained. The reader comes to realize that all he or she knows of this fictional world has been told by a narrator who determines what the reality of his world is and what is known about the characters.

Commenting on Postmodern fiction, Cornis-Pope, paraphrasing Hunt states: "Self-referential techniques are used here both to challenge the common assumptions about 'transparent' reality and 'unmediated communication' and to remove/reshape 'the distance between writing and experience,' fact and fiction, public and private." (Cornis-Pope, 1997:263.) Similarly, The Good Soldier demonstrates that the text is not a mirror on reality through using self-referential techniques to foreground the fictionality of the text and the existence of a subjective narrator.

Skinner comments on Dowell's self-consciousness and the effect this has on the credibility of the fictional world in the following comment: "And where Dowell's self-consciousness is concerned, we must first distinguish between the hesitations and uncertainties of his own account and the dubious ontological status of any fictional account at all." (Skinner, 1989:292.) Through his reference to the ontological status of fiction, Skinner acknowledges that Dowell's self-exposure as narrator and creator of the story foregrounds the fictional and constructed nature of the text, which prevents the reader from accepting the world of the text as a continuation of his or her own reality.

This section has focused on Dowell as a self-conscious narrator who draws attention to his own role in constructing the world of the text. In Postmodern fiction the term 'self-reflexivity' can also be used to refer to the way in which some Postmodern novels foreground the ontology of the text through drawing attention to the language of the text and the role of language in creating the text (Kotze, 1998: 220). These Postmodern texts foreground fictionality and textuality through radicalizing the text's existence in and through language. It is important to qualify that The Good Soldier is self-reflexive in the sense of a narrator who draws attention to his own role in constructing the narrative and not in the sense of various experimental Postmodern novels, which draw attention to the text's existence as language. In the context of this section it is necessary to acknowledge that The Good Soldier departs from Postmodern texts in not overtly and radically foregrounding its existence as words.

In the light of the above discussion it is evident that Dowell as the narrator of The Good Soldier is self-reflexive and that his comments on the narrative, on plot construction and character development foreground the constructed nature of the world of the text. The world Dowell creates cannot simply be accepted as a reflection on the real world, as the comments on his role in creating the narrative demonstrate. By incorporating a self-conscious narrator who foregrounds text production, The Good Soldier shares certain similarities in narrative strategy with Postmodern texts.

Foregrounding the similarities between The Good Soldier's narrator and the self-reflexive narrators in Postmodern fiction, challenges the notion of literary periodization which divides texts on the basis of chronology and presents a view of movements as watertight compartments. The following section aims to discuss the narratological inventiveness of the narrator in The Good Soldier and any similarities Dowell may have with Postmodern

narrators in this regard. Successfully demonstrating such similarities will further challenge the notion of literary periodization by identifying traces of Postmodernism in a Modernist text.

4.3.2 NARRATOLOGICAL INVENTIVENESS IN THE GOOD SOLDIER

The following section aims to briefly discuss another area in which the narrator of The Good Soldier foregrounds the fictional nature of his narrative. This area concerns the fabrication of events and the inclusion of scenes that are clearly the product of Dowell's fervent imagination. The practice of Postmodern narrators in this regard will also be considered in order to identify any similarities between the narrators of Postmodern fiction and The Good Soldier.

At one point Dowell, seemingly innocently and sincerely states: "Heaven knows what happened in Leonora after that. She certainly does not herself know. She probably said a good deal more to Edward than I have been able to report; but that is all she told me and I am not going to make up speeches." (Ford, 1988:192.) With this promise to truthful reportage, Dowell implies that he has been totally truthful and factual in his version of the Dowell and Ashburnham tragedy and that his narrative is true to life and to the characters. He avers that everything in the text has been told to him by the other characters and that nothing in his narrative is inaccurate.

For the alert reader however, it becomes evident that Dowell does in fact "make up speeches" (Dowell above) at various parts of the narrative. He narrates of events and scenes that he could not possibly have had access to or been told about. One such example is when Dowell tells of Maisie kissing the pillows of Edward's bed when she was alone in his room. He states: "Edward had lent her one of his fascinating cases containing fifteen different sizes of scissors, and, having seen, from her window, his departure for the post-office, she had taken the opportunity of returning the case. She could not see why she should not, though she felt a certain remorse at the thought that she had kissed the pillows of his bed. That was the way it took her." (Ford, 1988:65.)

From this comment it may quite rightly be queried how Dowell knows that Maisie kissed Edward's pillows and how he knows that she felt remorse for having done it? Dowell and Florence only knew Maisie for a month before she died and this would not have given them

time to build up an acquaintanceship so intimate as to allow such revelations. It is also unlikely that Maisie told Edward's wife that she had kissed her husband's pillows, since Leonora was already angry with her and accusing her of adultery (Ford, 1988:55, 63). It is therefore evident that Dowell had no way of knowing this intimate fact about Maisie and as such he must have invented the whole scene.

For the reader it is obvious that Dowell could not have known this information and that this must be a scene from his fertile imagination. The tragic scene of the "poor, dark-eyed, dying young thing" (Ford, 1988:63) secretly kissing the pillows of the man she respected and innocently loved is a romantic notion, made even more tragic by the scene of Leonora slapping Maisie as she leaves Edward's room, thinking that she had been alone with Edward. This scene adds drama and intrigue to a tale of love and deception.

Another incident that Dowell could not plausibly have been told about concerns Nancy. On one of the terrible evenings at Branshaw Teleraph Dowell tells of how Nancy got drunk on Edward's whisky and how for Nancy "flame then really seemed to fill her body; her legs swelled; her face grew feverish. She dragged her tall height up to her room and lay in the dark. The bed reeled beneath her; she gave way to the thought that she was in Edward's arms; that he was kissing her on her face that burned; on her shoulders that burned, and on her neck that was on fire. She never touched alcohol again. Not once after that did she have such thoughts" (Ford, 1988:203). How could Dowell know that Nancy had such a fantasy and that she *never* had such passionate thoughts about Edward again? The very intimate and personal nature of Nancy's thoughts at this point would not allow her to share her experience with Leonora, Edward or Dowell. It is therefore plausible to conclude that Dowell has invented this scene.

It is significant that Dowell should specifically include a comment about the validity of his report and the factuality of his story ("I am not going to make up speeches") as it draws the reader's attention to the issue of fabrication and creation in the fictional world. Despite the believability and seeming truthfulness of this comment, the reader comes to discover that Dowell does make up speeches and invents scenes due to the fact that he could not possibly have had access to such personal and intimate revelations. Dowell's platitude that he is not going to invent conversations or scenes does not grant the usually desirous result of credibility to his narrative, but instead foregrounds his role as fabricator and creator.

The result of Dowell's fabrications and contradictory promises of factuality and truthfulness result in the fictional nature of Dowell's narrative being manifested. Dowell exposes himself as fabricator and as a result foregrounds the created and textual nature of the world of the Dowells and Ashburnham's. Through these examples of fabrication, Dowell leaves traces of himself as fictional world-builder. Dowell is unlike other first-person narrators such as Nick Caraway in The Great Gatsby or Marlow in Lord Jim where the reader never doubts the truthfulness and believability of the narrator's tale and is not reminded of the fictional nature of these worlds.

Dowell is more like the narrator of Lost in the Funhouse, for example, who acknowledges his role in creating the world of the text by stating that: "Is there really such a person as Ambrose, or is he a figment of the author's imagination? Was it Assawoman Bay or Sinepuxent? Are there other errors of fact in this fiction?" (Barthes, 1972:92.) By presenting these questions, this Postmodern narrator draws attention to the created and fictional nature of the world of the text and the fact that the characters are a result of an author's fertile imagination. Dowell is not as blatant as Bath's narrator, but he achieves a similar effect of foregrounding the fictional nature of the text through demonstrating the influence of his imagination in creating the world of the text.

Caramello quotes Putz who states that "many hero-and narrator-figures" (Caramello, 1983:21) in American fiction of the sixties "invent concurring worlds of the imagination" (Caramello, 1983:21). This implies that these narrators are like Dowell in that the events they narrate are not implicitly factual in their world, but are creations of a narrator's fervent imagination. According to Caramello, Putz labels most of the characters in contemporary fiction as 'role inventors', 'fabricators' and 'fabulators' (Caramello, 1983:22) in that they invent roles for themselves and put on imaginary graces. From this it is evident that the characters and narrators in Postmodern fiction engage in fabrication and imagination in which inventions become reality for them. These narrators are similar to Dowell in that they are inventors who present the worlds of their imagination as truth.

In conclusion, this section has briefly aimed to demonstrate that in The Good Soldier it is evident that Dowell as narrator, is the creator of his textual world through his inclusion of conversations and reminiscences that he could not possibly have had first hand knowledge about. Dowell draws attention to himself as fabulator and creator through his obvious

invention of scenes in the text. It was discovered that Dowell's self-exposure is similar to various authors and narrators within Postmodern fiction who foreground their own presence and role in creating the fictional world.

4.4 CHARACTER AS NARRATOLOGICAL DEVICE IN THE GOOD SOLDIER

As an exercise, lets imagine character- Apple in McHale (1992:35).

This section aims to discuss the use of character as a narratological device in The Good Soldier, which is used to foreground the fictional and created nature of the world of the text. The use of character as a narratological device in Postmodern fiction will also be considered in order to identify any similarities between its use in The Good Soldier and within Postmodern texts.

It is particularly concerning the character of John Dowell that The Good Soldier demonstrates its deviation from the traditional portrayal of character. Dowell's various idiosyncrasies foreground his fictional and created nature and demonstrate that neither he nor his world are simply a reflection on reality. Forster's Aspects of the Novel (1927) is an example of Modernist expectations about character and characterization. In a comment about character, representative of Modernism, Forster states: "And that is why novels, even when they are about wicked people, can solace us: they suggest a more comprehensible and thus a more manageable human race, they give us the illusion of perspicacity and of power." (Forster, 1993:44.)

For Forster, characters must provide solace for the reader in their portrayal of core Modernist values such as comprehensibility, order, manageability, insight and power. In The Good Soldier the device of character is foregrounded as incomprehensible to the reader as well as contingent and powerless, specifically through the character of Dowell who is at points unexplainable, adrift and without motive (as will be elaborated on below). As such character in The Good Soldier does not reflect the world of the reader and instead draws attention to its own creation and use as a narratological device in fiction. In this The Good Soldier's incorporation of character is similar to texts within Postmodernism, as Docherty states: "It is now a commonplace that postmodern fiction calls into question most of the formal elements

of narrative that an earlier mode took for granted. The notion of character is no exception.” (Docherty, 1991:169.)

According to Docherty Postmodern fiction questions narrative devices and foregrounds their role in narrative construction. From Section 4.2 and Section 4.3 it is evident that The Good Soldier bears similarities with Postmodern fiction in foregrounding text and narrator as narratological devices and this section aims to consider similarities between The Good Soldier and Postmodern fiction’s portrayal of character as compared to Modern fiction’s characters.

In discussing The Good Soldier’s foregrounding of character as a narratological device, attention will be bestowed on the traits that make Dowell centreless. In foregrounding Dowell’s lack of centre, the text draws attention to its own created and fictional nature through the notion that if the characters are centreless and unlife-like, the idea that the novel is an imitation of reality is shattered and the textual and fictional nature of the text is foregrounded. A character that cannot be understood and that seems to lack motivation, depth and consistency - in short, a centre - undermines the believability of the text as a reflection on the real world of the reader, due to the fact that the reader is not able to identify with such unrealistic characters.

The notion of character being decentred is evident in Postmodernism as demonstrated by Shusterman’s comment: “Rather than something unified and consistent emerging from an autonomous, stable and rational core, *the self is seen as ‘centerless’*, a collection of quasi-selves’, the product of ‘random assemblages of contingent and idiosyncratic needs’, shaped and modified by ‘a host of idiosyncratic, accidental episodes’ transformed by distorted memories.” (Shusterman, 1988:341, emphasis added.)

Hawthorne states that “in the work of Jacques Derrida the term centre is used to represent ‘a point of presence, a fixed origin’” (Hawthorne, 1993:18) and that “much of the energy of deconstructive criticism is directed towards freeing the structures from the tyranny of whatever centre or centres to which they are seen to be subject” (Hawthorne, 1993:18). Hawthorne goes on to comment on the decentering of the subject, whereby the human subject is “denied a unity underwritten and orchestrated by a controlling centre which, like an all-powerful micro-chip in a super-computer, brings the whole system into synchrony with and through its all-pervasive presence and discipline. In the light of such an approach the human

subject becomes site rather than point of origin, and a site, moreover, on which unrelated campers come and go (and sometimes fight) rather than one united by an all-powerful scout-master" (Hawthorne, 1993:18).

Hawthorne's comment provides an introduction to the poststructuralist notion of decentering in which the subject is foregrounded as lacking in fixed origin and as a meeting place of presences that are not stable or fixed. Hawthorne's comment demonstrates the poststructuralist rejection and deconstruction of centres and its anti-logocentric stance.

It is evident that the notion of the decentring of the subject is a point of interest within Postmodernism and this section aims to discuss this decentering in The Good Soldier, which involves discussing how Dowell is just as centreless as Shusterman's self (above) through Dowell's traits of inconsistency, lack of depth and motive as well as reader's lack of knowledge about him. The traits that contribute to Dowell's centrelessness are traits identifiable in Postmodern fiction (according to Graff and Bertens below) and attention will be paid to the similarities between the characters of The Good Soldier and those within Postmodern texts.

Graff states that "in Postmodern fiction, character, like external reality, is something 'about which nothing is known', lacking in plausible motive or discoverable depth" (Graff, 1979:53) and the following discussion aims to reveal that this comment is appropriate in describing John Dowell in The Good Soldier.

Through the course of the narrative it becomes obvious that Dowell is a character about whom little, if anything is known, as his past and family life remain a mystery and he seems to simply drift through his world, not having enough substance to anchor himself down. Dowell states: "I carried about with me, indeed - as if it were the only thing that invisibly anchored me to any spot upon the globe - the title deeds of my farm" (Ford, 1988:12) and these title deeds seem the only thing that link Dowell to a comprehensive past.

The other characters do not seem to share Dowell's elusive past, as the reader is informed about Nancy's Catholic education and Leonora's sheltered upbringing with her six sisters. Information is also supplied regarding Edward's parents as well as Florence's uncle and two aunts, the Misses Hurlbirds. No such information is supplied regarding Dowell and the only

information the reader gleans is that Dowell is from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At one point he returns to Philadelphia where he visits his relatives, “handsome, but careworn ladies, cousins of my own” who “talked principally about mysterious movements that were going on against them” (Ford, 1988:143). It seems to the reader that Dowell is part of these mysterious movements that keep secrets and never present the truth about themselves. Meixner states that Dowell is baffling and that his background “is scarcely explained at all. We learn nothing, for example, of his immediate family, nor are we given any cause, psychological or otherwise, for his lack of masculine vitality” (Meixner, 1962:158).

There is also no indication why Dowell should have left Philadelphia for Stamford. He states: “I had no occupation - I had no business affairs. I simply camped down there in Stamford, in a vile hotel, and just passed my days in the house, or on the verandah of the Misses Hurlbird.” (Ford, 1988:76.) It is obvious that Dowell did not leave Philadelphia for financial reasons or as an ambitious career move. His intentions are not clear, nor is his desire to stay in Stamford in a hotel that he obviously disfavours and in a small town that is the opposite of the metropolitan city from which he has come.

From the above example Dowell seems ‘lacking in plausible motive’ and ‘discoverable depth’ (Graff above) as he has no career or ambition and for no reason descends on Florence and her aunts where he seems content to ‘camp down’ for an undetermined period of time. Dowell’s lack of motive and depth are substantiated in the following comments.

About courting Florence Dowell states: “I just drifted in and wanted Florence. First I had drifted in on Florence at a Browning tea, or something of the sort in Fourteenth Street, which was then still residential. I don’t know why I had gone to New York. I don’t know why I had gone to the tea.” (Ford, 1988:21.) Dowell simply drifts through life, having “no attachments, no accumulations” (Ford, 1988: 26) and also no motivation to do anything. When Florence’s aunts ask him what he does, he states “- the first question they asked me was not how I did but what did I do. And I did nothing. I suppose I ought to have done something, but I didn’t see any call to do it. Why does one do things?” (Ford, 1988:21). Dowell lacks motivation as he simply drifts through life with no purpose, plan or desired destination. Dowell also lacks the depth of character that accompanies motivation and ambition and which could anchor him down and stop his aimless drifting.

Commenting on Howe's article Mass Society and Postmodern Fiction, Bertens states that characters in Postmodern novels "lack social definition, they too have become amorphous and are basically adrift in a world from which the connections established by tradition and authority have disappeared" (Bertens, 1986:13). Dowell is adrift in his world and seems to have lost all connections with his family and past traditions. He is an undefined shape, lacking the qualities that provide depth and shape to a character, such as drive, aspiration, intention and purpose.

Dowell's lack of motive and depth are all characteristics that result in a character without a centre. His lack of ambition, purpose and intention as well as his indeterminacy all result in him being a void, a figure without a stable and identifiable core. Dowell is not definable through what he is, but through what he is not. He is not a unity of positive and present traits, but a meeting place of absences and of lack. Dowell's lack of traits result in his lack of core and centre.

Levenson states that: "Dowell is nothing. No 'paradigm of traits' can describe him, because there is nothing substantial to describe: no determining past, no consistency of opinion, no deep belief, no stable memory. He cannot be 'justified.' There is no accounting for Dowell." (Levenson, 1984:383.) Levenson's comment illustrates that the reader finds it difficult to believe Dowell and identify with him as he finds Dowell's motives and actions perplexing. Dowell invokes suspicion as he lacks justification and this as a result foregrounds his fictionality and questions his existence as a real world figure. Dowell's lack of centre prevents him from providing the solace that Modernists such as Forster (see above) sought in fictional characters, as Dowell cannot be accepted as a representation of a human being in the world of the reader.

Bertens states that Postmodern characters are "radically inconsistent and if they are not inconsistent they should be, for all consistency smacks of essence and thus of metaphysics. It goes without saying that their Postmodern characters act gratuitously, for motivation too, suggests metaphysics" (Bertens, 1987:140). In The Good Soldier it is evident that Dowell acts gratuitously and inconsistently, as the following section aims to elucidate.

Dowell acts gratuitously in the sense that certain of his actions are unexplainable and unjustified. About his period of courting and engagement to Florence Dowell states: "I was as

timid as you will, but in that matter I was like a chicken that is determined to get across the road in front of an automobile. I would walk into Florence's pretty, little, old-fashioned room, take off my hat, and sit down." (Ford, 1988:76.) There is no plausible reason or motive for Dowell's determination and resolve at this point. The above examples state how Dowell "just drifted in and wanted Florence" (Ford, 1988:21) and therefore when he states that he was determined to win her hand and would risk life and limb to do so, it seems unmotivated and uncalled for. Dowell's unwavering determination to marry Florence remains unexplainable and unwarranted as he shows no affection towards Florence after their wedding and does not even seem to love her.

Florence does not love Dowell, but she has justifiable motives in marrying him, such as access to a European establishment (Ford, 1988:77) and a marriage in which she could continue her affair with Jimmy. The reader is therefore able to understand Florence's reasons for marrying Dowell, even if they are deceitful and selfish, while Dowell's actions remain unexplainable. In this behaviour Dowell is also radically inconsistent as he acts like an infatuated suitor, queuing up for time with Florence and then after marriage does not love her or even try to consummate their marriage.

Dowell's inconsistency pervades the novel and the following discussion aims to emphasize this inconsistency through the following examples. One example of Dowell's inconsistency is when he comments on Maisie and states that: "She was so - so submissive. Why, even to me she had the air of being submissive - to me that not the youngest child will ever pay heed to." (Ford, 1988:52.) Dowell is passive and gentle, a "trained poodle" (Ford, 1988:114) and a "male sick nurse" (Ford, 1988:68). He is docile and acquiescent and it is therefore unsettling to discover that Dowell has another, less placid side. On their honeymoon Dowell states that Florence got "a pretty idea of my character" (Ford, 1988: 88) when he strikes his servant Julius and threatens to strangle him. Dowell then states that Florence was afraid of him and afraid that he would murder her if he found out about Jimmy (Ford, 1988:87-88).

Here there is an inconsistency between Dowell as submissive, gentle, subservient and as racist, violent, bad-tempered and authoritarian. Throughout most of the novel Dowell seems harmless, but with this incident an opposite Dowell is revealed who states that being violent is part of his character and that Florence is justified in being scared of him. The result is that Dowell cannot be considered as either submissive or violent, but as a combination of both

these conflicting traits, just as he is both nurse (Ford, 1988:68) and invalid (Ford, 1988:37); cuckold (Ford, 1988:181) and would-be polygamist (Ford, 1988:212-213).

Discussing Virginia Woolf's Between the Acts as "the most impressive of Postmodern novels", Waugh states "what we have here is not modernism's balanced 'either-or' but as contemporary critics are fond of saying, postmodernism's more comprehensive 'both-and' " (Waugh, 1992:20). Fokkema (1991:62) states that Postmodern characters are "multiple" and "decentred" and this is due to their inconsistency; to their being not an identifiable, centred 'either/or', but a multiple and indeterminate, decentred 'both/and'.

In The Good Soldier, Dowell is inconsistent and his centrelessness is demonstrated through his being a 'both/and' character. Dowell's inconsistency and subsequent lack of centre is succinctly demonstrated through his sexual ambivalence where he exhibits neither heterosexual nor homosexual preferences, but a mixture of both.

Throughout the novel Dowell presents an ambiguous position regarding his sexual preference. Dowell is married to a beautiful woman, yet leaves the marriage unconsummated, he is friends with Edward, yet reveals an intense love for him. Dowell is inconsistent in his preferences and reveals attractions to both the male and female characters of the text. Dowell's sexual ambiguity does not take the form of Postmodern fiction's androgynous (Hassan, 1993:152) and hermaphrodite (Lodge, 1977:229) characters, but presents a complex emotional picture that foregrounds his inconsistencies and ambivalence.

Dowell describes himself as a "eunuch" (Ford, 1988:18) and an "old maid" (Ford, 1988:115) and states that Edward regarded him as "a woman" (Ford, 1988:32, 224). He watches with the ladies as Edward plays polo (Ford, 1988:33) and is enamoured with Edward's blue eyes (Ford, 1988:32). He states that he liked Edward "so infinitely much" (Ford, 1988:89) and that he "liked him so intensely" (Ford, 1988:89) that he felt comfortable with him and trusted him. About his feelings for the Ashburnhams, Dowell states: "It was an affection so intense that even to this day I cannot think of Edward without sighing." (Ford, 1988: 66.) Dowell finally states: "For I can't conceal from myself the fact that I loved Edward Ashburnham - and that I love him because he was just myself." (Ford, 1988:227.) Dowell reveals an intense love for Edward that has been recognized as "repressed homosexuality" by Kirschstein (1994:2589).

The notion that Dowell prefers Edward to the female characters in the novel is demonstrated by his comments about them. Commenting on his feelings for Leonora, Dowell states: "But I am sure I never had the beginnings of a trace of what is called the sex instinct towards her...I seemed to feel chilled at the end of my lips when I looked at her..." (Ford, 1988:36.) About his honeymoon night he states: "Well, it was the first time I had ever been embraced by a woman- and it was the last when a woman's embrace has had in it any warmth for me..." (Ford, 1988:80.) He states that he "was ready enough" (Ford, 1988:83) to refrain from "any manifestations of affection" (Ford, 1988:83) and his image of Florence in the bathing house as "stripped and white and straight" (Ford, 1988:84) is sterile⁸ and sexless rather than passionate, attractive or erotic.

Dowell wishes to marry Nancy and he states: "Well, I guess that I was a sort of convent myself; it seemed fairly proper that she should make her vows to me." (Ford, 1988:115.) This comment is significant in the light of Dowell's repressed homosexuality (Kirschstein above) as it implies sterility and formality, which seem to characterize Dowell's relationships with women. Tracy acknowledges Dowell's frigid view of Nancy and states: "Dowell now both has everything he always desired and in the way he desired it: Nancy Rufford, in the nonsexual, unilateral relationship in which he is most comfortable..." (Tracy, 1988:90).

At this point it seems plausible to conclude that Dowell is homosexual and even repulsed by women, but in keeping with his 'both/and' nature, Dowell is not so consistent as to be labeled either homosexual or heterosexual. Instead, Dowell demonstrates that he has both sexual preferences, even though he never acts on either and to an extent is sexless.

Near the end of his narrative Dowell makes a seemingly incongruent and contradictory comment when he admits: "Yes, no doubt I am jealous. In my fainter sort of way I seem to perceive myself following the lines of Edward Ashburnham. I suppose that I should really like to be polygamist with Nancy, and with Leonora, and with Maisie Maidan and possibly even

⁸ It is significant that Dowell and Florence's marriage is sterile, as Fokkema states that in Postmodern fiction unions are sterile or distorted (Fokkema, 1991:157). The Dowell's marriage is distorted in the sense that they do not have sex and that Dowell is a cuckold while Florence has at least two extra-marital relationships, both of them childless. Edward and Leonora also have a sexless and sterile marriage, while Edward's numerous affairs are also sterile. Only Leonora eventually falls pregnant, with Rodney Bayham, but this is not regarded in positive terms, as their conception is closely connected to breeding rabbits (Ford, 1988:101, 227).

with Florence.” (Ford, 1988:213.) Dowell also states: “If I had the courage and virility and possibly also the physique of Edward Ashburnham I should, I fancy, have done much what he did. He seems to me like a large elder brother who took me out on several excursions and did many dashing things whilst I just watched him robbing the orchards, from a distance.” (Ford, 1988:227.) Dowell demonstrates typical male fantasies as he too wishes he could enjoy the female conquests that Edward has. Here Dowell reveals that he has sat as a spectator of Edward’s exploits with women and has wished for the same satisfaction and pleasure that Edward has enjoyed.

Dowell’s comments reveal that he is not purely homosexual, as he wishes to have been polygamous with all the major female characters in the novel, but that he is not purely heterosexual as he demonstrates a rather emotional and feminine attraction to Edward. It is therefore obvious that Dowell is contradictory and ambiguous. Meyer states that Dowell is aptly named Dowell [do-well? dual?] (Meyer, 1990:507) and this is fitting in the light of the above discussion. Dowell does not have a single, stable core identity, but is a mix of contradictory traits. He is both trained poodle and possible murderer; homosexual and heterosexual; fiction-writer (Ford, 1988:167) and historian (Ford, 1988: 13) and even, as Dreiser states “a profound psychologist” (Dreiser, 1987:42) while being at the same time “as blind as a bat and as dull as a mallet” (Dreiser, 1987:42).

The product of Dowell’s inconsistency and ambivalence is his centrelessness; his instability and lack of an identifiable core. Instead of being definable and knowable, Dowell is fragmented and multiple. In this Dowell adheres to Fokkema’s description of Postmodern character. Fokkema states that “the postmodern character has not become ‘whole’ and totalized: rather, fragmentation, discontinuity, or multiplicity in characters is preferred to the ideology of unity and continuity” (Fokkema, 1991:183).

This is unlike Modern character where, as Wilde states of Woolf, and other early Modernists “the tracking down of a character’s (or for that matter, the world’s) unity or truth, its essence” (Wilde, 1981:107) is pursued and discovered, even if with difficulty. According to Wilde, in Modern novels such as Jacob’s Room, “the faith in some central core of being” (Wilde, 1981:107) persists and “however speculative and inferential knowledge has become, the center - Jacob, ‘a young man alone in his room’ (p.94) - holds; and we are enjoined ‘to penetrate’ (p. 92) the reality behind phenomena: ‘the skeleton that is wrapped in flesh’ (p.

162)” (Wilde, 1981:107). Modern fiction writers sought to portray depth behind their characters, which included a centre of stability, unity and coherence. By contrast Postmodern characters, according to Fokkema (above) foreground fragmentation, instability and discontinuity.

Dowell is not continuous or predictable and is instead composed of conflicting and uncertain selves, many sides that compete and contradict each other. As such he has no stable identity or core-self that defines who he is and provides him with consistent knowledge about himself. Dowell is aware of his lack of identity and centre in the following comment. Remarking on his visits to numerous towns and cities around the world Dowell states: “Not one of them did we see more than once, so that the whole world for me is like spots of colour in an immense canvas. Perhaps if it weren’t so I should have something to catch hold of now.” (Ford, 1988:20.)

In his retrospective act of narrating, Dowell does not have anything to hold on to, he has no centre or identity. His past is unknown and severed; he is inconsistent; he lacks depth and motive and is indeterminate. These qualities foreground his heterogeneity and lack of a stable, definable core of self and identity. From a Postmodern perspective Hassan states: “We no longer know where centre and circumference of self may lie, unless, like Giordano Bruno’s God they lie everywhere, nowhere” (Hassan, 1988:435) and this comment applies to Dowell who is adrift, multiple and discontinuous, without a definable sense of self to anchor him down to any one spot on the globe.

Dowell seems to lack substance as he drifts through life without anything to hold on to. He states: “We are all so afraid, we are all so alone, we all so need from the outside the assurance of our own worthiness to exist.” (Ford, 1988:109.) This comment refers to his lack of a core-self that he can rely on and be sure of. Fredrick states that “Dowell is unable to conquer the void within him” (Fredrick, 1986:3345) and this is evident from his acknowledgement that he has no sense of self to hold on to and that he has to justify his existence through external means.

From a Postmodern perspective, Tester states: “After all, ‘we’ do not really know who ‘we’ are anymore. It is even questionable whether ‘I’ know who ‘I’ am. That is also the mark of contingency.” (Tester, 1993:150.) Dowell experiences his self as contingent as he looks

outward for his own assurance to exist. His self is unpredictable and inconsistent and instead of an identifiable core of consistent and definable self, there is a void and a meeting of contradictory and multiple selves, none of which dominate or form a comprehensive core.

The following comment applies to Dowell in his lack of a stable self and centre. Russell states:

Characteristically in contemporary fiction individual characters are presented as fragmentary, barely self-conscious creatures subject to constantly changing conditions. The concept of integral identity is willfully abandoned. Instead characters are depicted as epistemological processes in flux - as transitory loci of shifting, incompatible and incompletely known desires, fears, events, external forces and systems over which the individual consciousness has little control and scarcely more knowledge, but which it attempts to give temporary, self-consciously improvisational order." (Russell, 1985:253.)

Dowell does not have an integral identity and his knowledge about himself, just as the reader's knowledge about Dowell is limited and indeterminate. The reader battles epistemologically to understand Dowell as little information is available about him as a character and his actions and behaviour remain unexplainable and incomprehensible. After completing The Good Soldier the reader wonders how Dowell could have been so blind and naïve about the events that were taking place before his eyes. The reader also cannot understand Dowell's unbelievable lack of desire and passion, yet his unwavering determination to marry two of the most beautiful women in the text.

The effect of highlighting the centrelessness of character in The Good Soldier is to foreground the fictional and created nature of the world of the text. Commenting on Postmodern character, Docherty states: "At every stage in the representation of character, the finality of the character, a determinate identity for the character, is deferred as the proliferation of information about the character leads into irrationality or incoherence and self-contradiction. There is never a final point at which the character can be reduced to the status of an epistemologically accessible essential quality and list of qualities and 'properties'. What is at stake in this is the entire notion of 'representation.'" (Docherty, 1991: 183.)

Docherty states that the Postmodern fictionist's use of character problematizes the notion of representation. In novels where the character is not believable due to his lack of identity, his indeterminacy and incoherence, the view of the text as a reflection on reality is shattered. In The Good Soldier Dowell's inconsistency, multiplicity and lack of centre problematize his

role as a reflection on reality and as a representation of a real-world person. His idiosyncratic traits prevent the reader from accepting Dowell as a representative of his or her world and foreground his place as a textual and fictional construct. The reader cannot understand Dowell or his actions and traits and as such cannot accept him as a real-world representative in the world of the text.

Commenting on the problem of representation that arises when characters are not reflections on the real-world, Docherty states that “the fictionality of the text and its characters is called into question and there arises a confusion about the relative ontological status of characters, on the one hand, and readers and authors, on the other. It is this confusion that we see most frequently entertained in postmodern narrative” (Docherty, 1991:175). This problem is foregrounded in The Good Soldier through the use of character as a narratological device. By foregrounding Dowell’s fictionality through his lack of centre, attention is drawn to Dowell and the text as fictional constructs. In this way the reader is reminded of his position in the real world and of the position of the text as a fictional construct.

This section has aimed to discuss character as a narratological device in The Good Soldier. It has been discovered that the text foregrounds its fictionality through the character John Dowell. Dowell’s traits of inconsistency and gratuitousness as well as his lack of depth, motive and available knowledge about himself all foreground his lack of centre or core identity. Dowell’s centrelessness and lack of stable self foreground his role as a textual construct and narratological device. By foregrounding the created and fictional nature of character, The Good Soldier prevents the text from being accepted as a representation of the real world and rather reminds the reader that the text is a fictional and textual construct. Throughout the course of this discussion, reference was made to Postmodern thoughts on character and where applicable connections between The Good Soldier and Postmodernism were established.

Recognizing the similarities between the Postmodern use of character as a narratological device and the traits of character in The Good Soldier and the shared effect this has on the believability and reliability of the text, challenges the notion of literary periodization. The correspondence between The Good Soldier and Postmodernism’s foregrounding of fictionality demonstrates that this practice is not confined to Postmodernist fiction, but that a

Modernist text like The Good Soldier bears traces of this characteristic many years before the chronological commencement of the movement.

Gräbe states that Brink's postmodern reading of Diderot's *Jacques* is "a comment on the notion of 'postmodernism', which, according to the author, 'should not be linked too exclusively with historicity, as that would obscure important parallels between this form and its early predecessors'" (Gräbe, 1988:361-362). Gräbe's comment is evidence of a realization that a strictly chronological view of literary texts prevents readings and elaborations that are rich in meaning and original in interpretation. A study such as Brink's acknowledges the congruencies between Postmodern texts and texts published centuries before the commencement of Postmodernism as a movement.

Dowell's lack of centre, inconsistencies, lack of motivation, ambiguity and indeterminacy have been highlighted in this section and expounded on for the purposes of the argument. At this point it is necessary to acknowledge that Dowell is not like the indefinable and amorphous characters in V. (who or what is V?) or the selfless word-beings in Snow White. Despite his lack of centre and the suspicion he invokes in the reader, Dowell has vestiges of humanity and it is inaccurate to interpret him as a radical Postmodern character. This section has simply aimed to highlight the possible Postmodern slant of his characterization and has identified the congruencies this demonstrates with various Postmodern comments on character and characterization.

The study has thus far considered text, narrator and character as narratological devices which are used to foreground the created nature of a text and the following section aims to discuss chronological sequencing as another narratological device which foregrounds the fictional nature of The Good Soldier.

4.5 CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCING IN THE GOOD SOLDIER

This section aims to discuss the problematic chronology in The Good Soldier. Many dates are provided throughout the text, which enable a time frame to be established, but in pursuing these dates it becomes evident that there are discrepancies in this time frame. This section aims to discuss chronological sequencing in The Good Soldier as a narratological device that is used to foreground the fictional and created nature of the text. Postmodern comments on

plot and time-schemes will also be considered for any congruencies between Postmodern thought and the employment of chronology as a narratological device in The Good Soldier.

Various commentators have recognized the problematic chronology in The Good Soldier and have offered many various explanations of it. McCarthy states that Dowell's time frame is a response to his chaotic and unordered world. He states: "Falling back on the cause and effect world of chronology, and in particular on the recurrent date of 4 August, Dowell attempts unsuccessfully to impose order on his life, to restore the customary event to its rightful place and return to a world in which all is predictable, comfortable, comprehensible - one in which stories make sense, trains run on schedule, and no one ever misses a connection." (McCarthy, 1997:146-147.) McCarthy accounts for two problems in the chronology of the text by stating that Dowell *imagines* the events that implicate these problematic dates. As a result, McCarthy states that Dowell imagined that Jimmy met Edward in 1903 and that Dowell also imagined that Bragshaw told him that he saw Jimmy leave Florence's room on 4 August 1900 (McCarthy, 1997:142). In this way McCarthy eliminates the contradiction surrounding these events and makes the time-scheme in the novel acceptable to the reader.

Adams states that the discrepancies in the time-scheme of The Good Soldier are intentional, as the novel was translated into French and the author would have corrected any mistakes through his close reading (Adams, 1991:153). Adams therefore states that as these discrepancies remain in the text they are purposeful. In his conclusion he states: "The three most potent currents driving events in the novel- Ashburnham's quest for redemption, Florence's single-minded pursuit of Branshaw Teleraph, and Leonora's desperate need for financial stability, a faithful and manageable husband and Catholic children - simply do not clarify themselves sufficiently if one writes off the discrepancies as mistakes." (Adams, 1991:163.) Adams therefore accounts for the problems with the time-scheme and makes them fit into the narrative.

Poole asks: "Why has the narrator, Dowell, spent such a lot of ingenuity and technical expertise in establishing, at different points of his narrative, a pair of time schemes which are in fact not compossible? What could be his motive for setting up, in a novel totally committed to accurate time schemes, a 'parallel causality' which equals in daring the inventions of the seventeenth-century theologians?" (Poole, 1990:405.) Poole's response is that Dowell and Leonora plotted the murder of Florence, Edward and Maisie and that his narrative attempts to

cover up these homicides, but not well enough. Poole states that the discrepancies in the plot line of The Good Soldier are “a possible camouflage effort on Dowell’s part to cover over a murder” (Poole, 1990:410), and not only one murder, but three, as Poole argues.

Skinner states that The Good Soldier is “a kind of narratological *cas limite*” which “is a striking example of how far narrative technique may go without self-exposure” (Skinner, 1989:289). This discussion aims to consider how The Good Soldier’s use of chronological sequencing as a narratological technique does not in fact stop at the point of self-exposure, but reveals Dowell’s narrative to be a fictional construct. In response to Poole’s (1990:405) above question, this study contends that Dowell’s obvious and seemingly intentional discrepancies within the time-scheme foreground his narrative as created and fictional.

McHale states that Postmodern novels foreground their created and fictional nature through various devices, such as characters in search of an author (McHale, 1987:121), transworld identities (McHale, 1987:85) and *mise-en-abyme* (McHale, 1987:124). McHale labels Postmodern fiction’s emphasis on its fictionality as the ontological dominant (McHale, 1987:10), which is concerned with foregrounding the text as a world separate from the world of the reader. According to McHale foregrounding ontology was not a dominant practice in Modernist fiction (McHale, 1987:10) and it is perhaps for this reason that the form of The Good Soldier is said to have “irked his [Ford’s] contemporaries” as Nigro states (1989:381). This section aims to consider how, in McHale’s terms, The Good Soldier foregrounds its ontology through the idiosyncratic time-schemes in the text.

The Good Soldier is scattered with dates and references to time. Dowell seems preoccupied with time and endeavours to keep the reader enlightened regarding the chronology of events, the characters’ ages and even the exact date on which certain events take place. For example, he provides the reader with information concerning Edward’s various visits to their flat in Paris. He states: “I find, on looking at my diaries, that on the 4th of September, 1904, Edward accompanied Florence and myself to Paris, where we put him up till the twenty-first of that month. He made another short visit to us in December of that year... In 1905 he was in Paris three times... In 1906 we spent the best part of six weeks together at Mentone, and Edward stayed with us in Paris on his way back to London.” (Ford, 1988: 93.) The accuracy of these dates is secured by the mention of Dowell’s diaries, which the reader considers a believable source of chronology.

Dowell is obsessed with dates and provides sometimes seemingly irrelevant information on dates and time-spans. Dowell narrates that Edward's liaison with Dolciquita was in 1895 (Ford, 1988:57), nine years before the start of Edward's affair with Florence. A week after Maisie's death Leonora realizes that Edward and Florence are lovers (Ford, 1988:174), and a week after Edward's funeral Dowell learns that his wife had been Edward's mistress (Ford, 1988:100). Dowell goes to fetch Nancy after she has been in India for a year and he begins writing his last chapter eighteen months after the close of his previous chapter (Ford, 1988:210). Edward is twenty-seven at time of Kilsyte case (Ford, 1988: 145) and Dowell is forty-five when he considers asking the twenty-two year old Nancy to marry him (Ford, 1988:115).

It is evident that the mention of dates and ages is intentional and it invites the reader to make connections between years, events and ages. This invitation however, results in the reader discovering incongruities between these supposedly accurate and correct dates. An investigation into the time frames and dates within the text reveals that the text's notion of time is not compatible with that of the reader's world.

The first indication that the novel's notion of time is not congruent to the reader's concerns the use of the 4 August as a pivotal date in the novel. Florence was born on 4 August 1874; starts her trip around the world on 4 August 1899 and starts her affair with Jimmy on 4 August 1900. She marries Dowell on 4 August 1901 (Ford, 1988:75); meets Edward on 4 August 1904 and commits suicide on 4 August 1913. The 4 August is also the day Maisie dies (Ford, 1988:75) and the Dowells and Ashburnhams take their trip to M- and Leonora realizes that an affair between Florence and Edward is imminent (Ford, 1988:47).

The sheer prevalence of this day, the 4 August, draws attention to it and even the most unobservant reader recognizes this date through its mere repetition. For the reader it is highly unlikely that so many pivotal events in the novel could centre round this date and that this could even be considered as merely coincidental. Dowell narrates these events without any change in tone and casually acknowledges "the curious coincidence of dates" (Ford, 1988:75). The reader, however, does not find this recurrence as easily dismissible and as a result, the first seeds of disbelief are sown.

Commenting on the prevalence of 4 August as well as other incredulous occurrences in The Good Soldier, Poole states: “There are so many unlikelihoods in this narrative that the effect is actually one of quasi-believability. The reader simply cannot believe that he is being told so many incompatible, inconsequential or sheerly unlikely things all at once, so he is forced to suspend disbelief and read on.” (Poole, 1990:416.) It is significant to discuss at what point the reader can no longer suspend disbelief and is forced to acknowledge that “the saddest story” (Ford, 1988:11) is the result of Dowell’s imagination and is not at all a credible reflection on the real world.

Skinner recognizes the 4 August as a “fatidic date” (Skinner, 1989:291) and that this date and “the resulting achronicity seem almost an anticipatory flash of magical realism, undermining the ontology of *The Good Soldier* and again pushing it towards the status of narratological *cas limite*” (Skinner, 1989:291). The Good Soldier presents a credible and imaginable world, as the characters are identifiable and the plot and events are realistic. It is therefore unsettling for the reader to discover incongruities between the world of the text and his own world, specifically regarding the improbable use of 4 August.

Skinner’s comment is significant as it links The Good Soldier to texts such as Marquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude in which unbelievable or irrational events occur in an otherwise authentic world. In the case of The Good Soldier it is time that is alien in the seemingly realist world of the Dowells and Ashburnhams. Skinner does not go so far as to state that The Good Soldier foregrounds its fictionality through its idiosyncratic use of time, but his comment acknowledges that the text’s ontology is questionable and that it bears the first traces of what would later become prevalent within Postmodern fiction. This study aims to elaborate on Skinner’s comment and consider how the ontology of the text is foregrounded through the use of time as a narratological device.

Skinner’s comment that The Good Soldier bears traces of what would later be labeled as magical realism in South American Postmodern fiction, is significant in the light of notions of literary periodization. According to the division of literary movements on the basis of chronology, Postmodernism commences in the 1950’s and is a clearly demarcated literary period. Skinner’s comment demonstrates that the traits of Postmodernism are not confined to the movement, but can reasonably be identified in texts preceding Postmodernism as a literary movement.

The following examples are further evidence of the existence of an alien time-scheme in an otherwise seemingly realistic and believable novel. The result of this is to foreground the fictionality of The Good Soldier and the existence of a world that is foreign to the reader.

The ensuing examples concern two contradictory, but equally proven time-schemes concerning the year the Dowells and Ashburnhams first encounter each other. Dowell states that he and Florence met Edward and Leonora at Naheim for the first time on the evening of 4 August 1904 in the dinning-room of the Hotel Excelsior (Ford, 1988:28-29). Of the day the Dowells and the Ashburnhams met, Dowell states: "It was a very hot summer, in August, 1904; and Florence had already been taking the baths for a month." (Ford, 1988:26.) He supports this date when he states: "Oh, yes...that conversation took place on the 4th of August, 1913. I remember saying to her that, *on that day, exactly nine years before*, I had made their acquaintance, so that it had seemed quite appropriate..." (Ford, 1988:92, emphasis added). Through these comments Dowell firmly establishes the date of their first meeting on the evening of 4th August 1904.

Dowell, however, equally firmly establishes the year 1903 as the time when Florence already knew Edward. He states: "And, by the time she was sick of Jimmy - which happened in the year 1903 - she had taken on Edward Ashburnham." (Ford, 1988:86.) This statement is made with confidence in its accuracy and the reference to the date is even inserted within the sentence to stand apart and to be recognized as an intentional inclusion and as correct. The result of this clearly purposeful insertion is to foreground its contradiction to the previous example's equally purposeful and seemingly accurate date. The reader at this point begins to suspect the realism of the plot and seeks for evidence to support one date at the exclusion of the other.

It soon becomes evident that neither of these statements can be excluded as incorrect through the information the novel offers. Dowell proceeds to comment on how Edward and Florence removed Jimmy as a threat to their romance when he states: "I never quite knew, either, how she and Edward got rid of Jimmy. I fancy that fat and disreputable raven must have had his six golden front teeth knocked down his throat by Edward one morning whilst I had gone out to buy some flowers in the Rue de la Paix, leaving Florence and the flat in charge of those two." (Ford, 1988:86.) This comment supports the notion that Edward and Florence were already in love in 1903 because Jimmy hangs around for two years after Dowell and

Florence's marriage and since they got married in 1901, Jimmy would have broken ties with them in 1903, implicitly through Edward's influence.

But, consulting his diaries, Dowell states that Edward first came to their flat in Paris during December 1904 (Ford, 1988:93). This is after they had met in Nauheim and the affair between Florence and Edward had started. This piece of information supports the initial time frame in which the Dowells and Ashburnhams meet in August 1904. It is therefore evident that neither time frame option can be discredited, as both are plausible and probable.

Dowell makes a statement that fits both these time-schemes, while at the same time contradicting them. Trying to recall when they took their expedition to M-, Dowell states: "I can't remember whether it was in our first year - the first year of us four at Nauheim, because of course, it would have been the fourth year of Florence and myself - but it must have been in the first or second year." (Ford, 1988:40.) In keeping with the Dowells and Ashburnhams meeting in 1903, it would have been in the second year of their friendship that they went to M- and in keeping with them meeting in 1904, it would have been in their first year of friendship. This statement therefore literally accounts for the two time-schemes by providing the options of first and second year of friendship, both of which are quite plausible. But in either case it is still not the fourth year of their marriage, as they got married in 1901 and in neither 1903 nor 1904 would they have been married for four years, but only in 1905. This example accounts for both of the time frames, while at the same time adding further confusion.

In this case there are two contradictory, but equally proven time-schemes covering the Dowells and Ashburnham's first meeting. Neither time frame is favoured over the other and as a result both exist side by side in the narrative. The reader is left with the unsettling knowledge that two time frames exist to account for one event and that both are incompatible, while at the same time equally undeniable. The result of these parallel time-schemes is to heighten the sense of disbelief caused by the convergence of events on 4 August. The reader is now faced with evidence of two different examples of time-scheme discrepancies and cannot help but conclude that time in the world of The Good Soldier differs from the real world of the reader. The notion of time in Dowell's narrative separates his world from the reader's world as it foregrounds a world that can exist with contradictory chronologies as well as an unbelievable converging of events on the date of 4 August. The reader's disbelief in the

time frame of The Good Soldier is strengthened by the following example of how two incompatible events occur on the same date, the 4th August 1904.

According to the initial time-schemes, the Dowells and Ashburnhams meet on the *evening* of 4 August 1904 when they share a dinner table at the Hotel Excelsior. This has been accepted as an established fact (despite the incongruity between 1903 and 1904). It therefore further challenges the reader's suspension of disbelief to learn that the two couples had already been to M- on the *afternoon* of 4 August 1904 and that Maisie Maidan is found deceased when they return that evening. Dowell emphatically states that "the death of Mrs Maidan occurred on the 4th of August, 1904" (Ford, 1988:75) and that he had known Maisie for *one month* before "she died, quite quietly - of heart trouble" (Ford, 1988:52).

These two time-lines are therefore not "compossible" for the reader as Poole (1990:404) states and a dual situation exists in which the Dowells and Ashburnhams meet for the first time on the evening of 4 August 1904, with Maisie very much alive and accompanying Edward to the Casino (Ford, 1988:65). Simultaneously, on 4 August 1904 they have already met and go to M- that afternoon and when they return Maisie, whom Dowell and Florence had known for one month, is found dead. In this time frame Maisie is not even alive on the evening Edward takes her to the casino, after just making acquaintanceship with the Dowells.

McHale regards superimposition as a strategy for constructing a zone (McHale, 1987:46), or a fictional space in Postmodern fiction. According to McHale the superimposition of space involves two familiar spaces being placed one on top of the other, "creating through their tense and paradoxical coexistence a third space identifiable with neither of the original two - a zone" (McHale, 1987:46). In the context of time, a similar superimposition occurs within The Good Soldier. The existence of two time-schemes concerning 4 August 1904 are in a way superimposed, creating a third time-scheme in which both events occur on the same day, without contradiction. This again demonstrates a 'both/and' situation in the text, which Waugh (1992:20) connects to Postmodernism, rather than a more Modernist 'either/or' state.

In the world of the reader it is only possible for the Dowells and Ashburnhams to have met in *either* 1903 *or* 1904, and for Maisie to be *either* alive *or* deceased on 4 August 1904. By combining dates and events to create a both/and situation, the text foregrounds its lack of centre. In reality oppositions exist poles apart with one being privileged at the expense of the

other. The stronger opposition forms a centre and allows for a certain measure of certainty and stability. When neither opposition is favoured no centre is possible since neither is in the stronger or more advantageous position. This is discomfoting to the reader who seeks for a centre based on this either/or dichotomy. The time-scheme in The Good Soldier therefore lacks a centre and foregrounds its distinction from the reality of the reader. Bertens states that poststructuralists acknowledge “the absence of a centre in all narratives” (Bertens, 1986:33) and it is evident that this acknowledgement separates the text from the world of the reader.

Postmodern fiction demonstrates an awareness of time that contradicts the reality of the reader. Ackroyd’s work, in particular, demonstrates an alternative notion of time. In English Music Timothy, a modern day character, attends a music lesson from a Mr Byrd on 15 April 1608 (Ackroyd, 1993: 205), which lasted for several days according to the dating of the event, but according to Timothy “only a moment had passed” (Ackroyd, 1993:223) till he was back in his world again. In this case there is an impossible convergence between two characters, centuries apart, as well as the contradiction between the duration of their visitation.

In Chatterton the lives of Thomas Chatterton in the 1600’s and of Charles Wychwood in the 1980’s seem to merge, especially in their death, with Charles (Ackroyd, 1993:169) on his deathbed even assuming the exact position of the deceased Chatterton in the painting by Henry Wallis (Ackroyd, 1993:135). Baker states that in the novel “two characters from different centuries are connected, and exist and experience the same things simultaneously. They even intrude into each other’s lives” (Baker, 1996: 307).

Baker proceeds to mention Borges’s The Other as another story which foregrounds time and states that in the story “Borges is sitting on a bench facing the Charles River in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1969 when he has the impression of having lived that moment before (p. 3). A young man sits down next to him; he is also called Borges, but is sitting on a bench a few steps from the Rhone in Geneva in 1918 (p. 4). During their conversation it becomes clear that they are a younger and an older version of the same person, linked by the bench which exists ‘in two times and in two places’ (p. 10).” (Baker, 1996:309.)

From these examples it is evident that Postmodern fiction demonstrates an interest in time and explores time in a way that contradicts and challenges the reader’s understanding and experience of time. This in turn foregrounds the world of the text as a world in which time

functions differently to the world of the reader and in which the notion of time is alien to that of the reader. As a result the reader experiences discomfort through engaging with this unrealistic world and is reminded that this is a fictional world, created through the mind of an imaginative author.

All the inconsistencies and contradictions in the time-scheme of The Good Soldier, if considered accurate, distort the reader's practice of suspending disbelief and of accepting the world of the text as a portrayal of reality. If these contradictions are deemed to be mistakes on the part of the narrator, then they can be overlooked and their effect ignored. For the purposes of this discussion it is therefore necessary to demonstrate that these time discrepancies are not mistakes on the part of the narrator, but are accurate inclusions⁹.

From the text it is evident that Dowell is obsessed with time, he is "punctilious" (Poole, 1990:401) and "never so happy as when he is establishing, to his own satisfaction, the exact day or year of the event he is concerned to 'place'" (Poole, 1990:401). Dowell highlights his own punctuality and attention to time in the following examples. He states: "I have been exceedingly impatient at missing trains. The Belgian State Railway has a trick of letting the French trains miss their connections at Brussels. That has always infuriated me." (Ford, 1988:48.) Dowell keeps a diary, a literal record of dates covering his past and he can say accurately that he has known the Ashburnhams for "nine years and six months, less four days" (Ford, 1988:14). Dowell counts his footsteps and with preciseness can state: "I know the exact distances. From the Hotel Regina you took one hundred and eighty-seven paces, then, turning sharp, left-handed, four hundred and twenty took you straight down to the fountain." (Ford, 1988:27.) Dowell knows that Edward was thirty-three when they met and Leonora was thirty-one, while Florence was thirty and Dowell was thirty-six (Ford, 1988:12) and deems it necessary to add that at the time of writing his story Florence would be thirty-nine, Edward forty-two, Leonora forty and himself forty-five (Ford, 1988:12).

Through the narrative it is highlighted and emphasized that Dowell is obsessed with time and that he is accurate in his recording of dates. It is therefore highly improbable that Dowell is

⁹ This study departs with the intention of overlooking the author and his role in the novel. For this reason the time-scheme in The Good Soldier is explained and accounted for and not simply dismissed as evidence of Ford as an unobservant and careless author.

erroneous in his recording of 4 August 1904 as the date on which so many contradictory events occurred. Many of the most important events in the novel are said to have occurred on this date and it is therefore impossible that Dowell, so tuned in to time, could be mistaken about when he met his beloved Edward and when they found poor sweet Maisie dead. It is therefore evident that Dowell's dating must be considered as correct. This results in an awareness and acknowledgement that the time-scheme in the novel differs from that of the reader. The world of Dowell's narrative is one in which multiple events can occur on one day, the 4th of August; two dates (1903 and 1904) can exist for one event (meeting between Dowells and Ashburnhams) and one date (4 August 1904) can exist for two events (meeting of Maisie and death of Maisie after a months acquaintance).

Acknowledging the incongruities between the text's time-scheme and the real world, prevents the reader from concluding his engagement with The Good Soldier with any certainty and comfort about the stability and coherency of things in the world. The following comment by Covino indicates that within Postmodernism it is acknowledged that the world is uncertain and incoherent and as a result much Postmodern fiction does not hold out a false hope of comfort and understanding. Covino states: "The epistemological crisis of this century - the failure of objectivity, Cartesian rationality, and detachment to account for our complicated perception of a world in flux where matters are never settled- has called into question writing that tries to maintain unity, coherence, and certainty, writing that Edward Said has called preservative rather than investigative." (Covino, 1986:217-218.) The Good Soldier prevents the preservation of notions of unity and certainty in the real world through the reader's experience of the fictional world as uncertain and incoherent.

This section has aimed to discuss the use of time as a narratological technique in The Good Soldier. It was discovered that the use of chronological sequencing in the novel foregrounds the fictional and created nature of the text. This is achieved through the inclusion of time frames that contradict the reader's knowledge of time. This involves all the major events of the novel occurring on the same date (4 August); two time lines existing for the most important event in the novel (the meeting of Dowell, Florence, Edward and Leonora) and the convergence of two events on one date, 4th August 1904.

In a text strewn with dates and narrated by the time-conscious Dowell, these chronological deviations cannot be considered the result of a mere lapse of concentration on the part of the

narrator, but as an accurate portrayal of his world. The reader is not able to accept the world of the Dowells and Ashburnham's as a continuation or reflection of his or her own due to the problematic time schemes and incredible coincidences concerning dates.

It has been established that Postmodern fiction shares an interest in time and its presentation, and engages time-schemes to disrupt the reality of the text. The effect of this is to awaken the reader's suspicion that the text he or she is reading is not a representation of reality, but a fictional construct.

The result of demonstrating that the time frame in The Good Soldier foregrounds its fictive and textual nature, and that this usage of narratological technique is evident in Postmodern fiction, is to foreground the traces of Postmodernism in a Modernist text. This discovery challenges the accepted division of literary periods on the basis of chronology, as according to literary periodization, a text published in 1915 is not in the same movement as a text published in 1970, and as a result, does not share the same characteristics or traits.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has aimed to discuss the use of narratological devices in The Good Soldier, specifically regarding text, narrator, character and chronology. In Postmodern fiction these devices are used to foreground the fictional and created nature of the text and this chapter aimed to compare The Good Soldier's narratological strategies to those of texts within Postmodernism in order to discover any similarities in narratological usage.

In Section 4.2 it was ascertained that the fictionality of The Good Soldier is foregrounded through its pervasive interconnectedness with other fictional texts. References and illusions to the characters, events and plots of other texts results in the textual and fictional nature of The Good Soldier being highlighted, as the reader who has read these texts will be reminded of the fictional nature of the text he is currently reading through its implication with these other texts. The poststructuralist notion of intertextuality was found to be appropriate in discussing the interconnectedness of The Good Soldier with other texts.

Section 4.3 discussed the use of narrator as narratological device and recognized that the narrator's self-consciousness as well as his inventiveness result in the fictional and created

nature of the world of the text being foregrounded. It was discerned that Postmodern fiction shares a similar use of narrator as narratological device with the same effect of foregrounding textuality and fictionality.

The discussion of character as narratological device (Section 4.4) was especially fruitful regarding Dowell's lack of centre in The Good Soldier. It was determined that Dowell's ambiguity and centrelessness is characteristic of Postmodern characters who are elusive and unreal. The result of such characterization is to foreground the fictional nature of the text and the unreality of the world of the characters.

Section 4.5 discussed the idiosyncratic time frame in The Good Soldier and established that the convergence of dates and discrepancies in time-schemes foregrounds the fictional nature of the text and the alien nature of the world of the Dowells and Ashburnham's. Postmodern fiction foregrounds experiments with time, which also question the reality of the fictional world.

It is therefore evident that Chapter 4 has discussed the narratological devices in The Good Soldier and the congruencies the text demonstrates with the Postmodern use of these strategies. From this discussion it is possible to conclude that The Good Soldier demonstrates certain similarities with Postmodern fiction regarding the use of narratological devices, such as narrator, character, text and chronological sequencing.

The effect of demonstrating Postmodern strategies of narrative in The Good Soldier is to foreground the discovery that Postmodernism is not a watertight compartment. To highlight traces of Postmodernism in a Modernist text is to challenge the division of literary texts on the basis of sequential time. According to literary periodization, a Modernist text should not have a dynamic interaction with a Postmodern text that would only be published as much as seventy years later. Foregrounding Postmodernism in The Good Soldier presents an alternative interpretation of this widely accepted Modernist text and acknowledges the relationship between the texts of different literary periods.

CHAPTER 5- CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to scrutinize The Good Soldier for traces of a Postmodern epistemology and a Postmodern use of narratological devices. The motivation for the study was borne from a realization that certain elements in The Good Soldier may bear congruencies with certain traits in Postmodern fiction. This realization, gained after a reading of the text, has been pursued in this study in order to determine the truth of such a contention. The study has taken the stance of an inquiry into this issue and has not attempted to force a Postmodern reading onto the text, or attempted to argue unflinchingly for the truth of the thesis statement. Where necessary the provisions in the argument have been acknowledged. This study therefore has not aimed to argue that The Good Soldier is a Postmodern text, but has sought to explore the possibility that The Good Soldier may bear traces of what could plausibly be identified as elements of Postmodernism.

Chapter 2 aimed to provide an introduction to the concepts of epistemology and narratological devices before engaging in a discussion of The Good Soldier. This orientation enabled the text to be approached with an understanding of both Modern and Postmodern epistemology as well as an introduction to the difference between a Modern and Postmodern employment of narratological devices.

Section 2.2 revealed that the Modernist period incorporated certain Enlightenment approaches to epistemology and believed that man was capable of partial, if not total knowledge of himself and the world. Postmodern theories on knowledge however, acknowledged the indeterminacy of man's knowledge and no longer nurtured the comforting illusion that man was capable of knowing and understanding the world. These views were demonstrated in the literature of the time with Modern fiction still attempting to make sense of the hidden recesses of man's psyche, while Postmodern fiction embraced the indeterminacy of the world and the inability of man to know and even to represent reality in fiction.

Section 2.3 elucidated the issue of narratology and the employment of narratological devices in Modern and Postmodern fiction. Where Modern fiction utilized the devices of narrative in order to portray the inner workings of the individual's mind, Postmodern fiction employed narratological devices to foreground the fictionality and textuality of the text. In this way the devices of character and narrative, in particular, were used in both Modern and Postmodern

fiction to achieve their distinctive effects. This elucidation enabled the discussion of narratological devices in The Good Soldier to be approached, understanding the differences between these movements' use of narratological devices.

The aim of Chapter 3 was to scrutinize The Good Soldier for evidence of what could plausibly be considered traces of a Postmodern epistemology. This chapter ascertained that John Dowell acknowledged (Section 3.2.1) and accepted (Section 3.2.2) the limits and indeterminacy of knowledge and actually demonstrated a total disregard of the issue (Section 3.2.3). For each of these three stages, comments and statements by Postmodern writers were discovered which demonstrated a similar acknowledgement, acceptance and disregard of epistemological issues.

Chapter 3 went on to establish congruencies between The Good Soldier and Postmodern thought in the areas of surfaces (Section 3.3.1), simulation (Section 3.3.2), perception (Section 3.3.3), epiphany (Section 3.3.4), history (Section 3.3.5), language (Section 3.3.6) and re-enchantment (Section 3.3.7). It was recognized that in each of these areas, to varying degrees, The Good Soldier could be discussed in the context of Postmodern thought and ideas. It is possible to conclude a summary of Chapter 3 by stating that The Good Soldier bears traces of a Postmodern epistemology in its narrator's comments on man's ability to know and through the various epistemological issues which are identifiable in the text.

Chapter 4 engaged in a discussion of the use of narratological devices in The Good Soldier and a comparison of the text with the use of the devices of narrative in Postmodern fiction. The issue of intertextuality (Section 4.2) was discussed and it was discovered that all the intertextual references in The Good Soldier remind the reader that he or she is reading a fictional text. This same effect is achieved in Postmodern fiction by the pervasive and intentional use of intertextuality to foreground fictionality.

The effect of foregrounding the fictionality of The Good Soldier was also achieved through the use of a self-conscious (Section 4.3.1) and inventive (Section 4.3.2) narrator, as well as centreless characters (Section 4.4) and a conflicting and impossible time-scheme (Section 4.5). For all these devices and their usage in The Good Soldier a similar use of devices was identified in Postmodern fiction. It was ascertained that the use of narratological devices in The Good Soldier was paralleled in Postmodern fiction with the devices of character, narrator

and time-scheme being used to foreground the created and fictional nature of the text. From the discussion on the congruencies between the use of narratological devices in The Good Soldier and within Postmodern fiction it is possible to conclude that The Good Soldier incorporates Postmodern devices of narrative, especially in the effect these devices have of foregrounding the fictional and the created nature of the text.

In light of the above findings it is possible to conclude that The Good Soldier bears traces of Postmodern theories of knowledge and Postmodern narratological devices. This conclusion therefore supports and confirms the thesis statement of the study, which stated that The Good Soldier incorporates elements of a Postmodern epistemology and Postmodern narratological devices.

The study has aimed to provide a balanced inquiry into the presence of Postmodern elements of epistemology and narratological devices in The Good Soldier. The study therefore does not aim to conclude that The Good Soldier is a Postmodern text, but simply that traces of Postmodernism are evident in a text that was published in 1915.

Identifying traces of Postmodernism in The Good Soldier questions the notion of literary periodization in which texts published before the late 1950's are regarded as Modernist and as consisting of different fictional characteristics than texts published in the 1970's and 1980's. Acknowledging that the characteristics of Postmodern fiction are not exclusive to the movement and can occur in a text published sixty years before the climax of Postmodernism, challenges the regimented nature of literary periodization.

It is perhaps relevant to acknowledge that the study has engaged in and incorporated a large portion of theory. The reason for this is that it is necessary for a study, which aims to investigate an issue that has not been researched before, to have adequate theoretical support. This provides a comprehensive supporting structure to the study. This study would not be possible without consulting a wide variety of sources and providing enough evidence for the worth of the argument. It is especially relevant in a study that researches an accepted Modernist novel for elements of Postmodernism to support the argument and findings with adequate and appropriate sources and references, as the study departs from accepted notions and opinions on The Good Soldier and presents a novel and unconventional interpretation of an established Modernist text.

Through the course of the study and through a scrutiny of The Good Soldier the opportunity for further study has been made apparent. One area that is seductively appealing is the issue of feminism in The Good Soldier. Not only are the characters strikingly accommodating in a discussion of the binary oppositions between male and female (Dowell's seeming sexual ambivalence), but also the narrative itself can be discussed as feminist in its digressions, circular ending and lack of centre. A feminist reading of The Good Soldier and a discovery of feminism in the text serve to continue a discussion of Postmodernism in The Good Soldier, as feminism is part of a Postmodern approach to literature and is a point of departure in literary theory. From a preliminary investigation this would seem to provide for a fruitful and interesting study.

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