My Friend Is the Man

Changing Masculinities, Otherness and Friendship in
*The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love*

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# Table of Contents

**INTRODUCTION**.................................................................................................................................................. 3

*LITERARY MODERNISM, THE GOOD SOLDIER AND WOMEN IN LOVE* ............................................................................. 4

**RESEARCH CONTEXT** ........................................................................................................................................... 5

**THE MAN, THE CITIZEN, THE SOLDIER** .................................................................................................................. 7

*MASCULINITY STUDIES; WHAT MAKES A MAN* ........................................................................................................... 7

*THE RHETORIC SURROUNDING MASCULINITY, CITIZENSHIP AND THE ARMY IN THE VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN PERIODS* .................................................................................................................. 9

**MASCULINITY AND FRIENDSHIP** .......................................................................................................................... 11

*HOMOSOCIAL, HOMOEROTIC OR HOMOSEXUAL?* ......................................................................................................... 11

*A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON FRIENDSHIP* ........................................................................................................... 12

**MASCULINITIES COME, MASCULINITIES GO BUT MALENESS ENDURES** ................................................................. 15

*THE IMPERIALIST; MASCULINITY AS DOMINANCE* ...................................................................................................... 15

*THE CAPITALIST; MASCULINITY AS EXPERTISE AND RATIONALITY* .......................................................................... 17

*THE OTHER(ED) MAN* .................................................................................................................................................... 19

*THE END OF MALENESS?* .............................................................................................................................................. 24

**BETWEEN FRIENDS AND COMRADES** .................................................................................................................... 28

**CONCLUSION** .......................................................................................................................................................... 34

**WORKS CITED** ......................................................................................................................................................... 35
Introduction

The years between 1901 and 1914\(^1\) are said to be a period of crisis in masculinity due to changes to social order, the struggle for emancipation of women and, finally, the Great War (Strychacz 1). The movement literary modernism existed within this social context of great change in gendered power relations and gender has been a key question for criticism on literary modernism since the 1980s. Following in that tradition I will analyse how ideas about manliness and ideals of masculinity impact the male characters John Dowell and Edward Ashburnham in *The Good Soldier* (1915) by Ford Madox Ford, and Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich in *Women in Love* (1920) by D. H Lawrence. I have chosen these texts as two examples of modernist writing and because they portray similar dynamics of nostalgia versus modernity and masculinity contra Other in the depicted friendships. The friendships between the male characters act as a framework to limit the analysis and function as comparative units for comparing masculinities within one text as well as between the texts.

The analysis draws on masculinity studies (developed from feminist theory) as well as on historical context. I will not comment on the authors’ lives and views since the interpretation is based on their fictional characters. The primary method of analysis is comparative close reading in order to investigate the types of masculinities that the authors depict, and how masculinity affects the relationships between the male friends. I have come to the following conclusion: That *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love* portray how hegemonic masculinity in Edwardian Britain changed from masculinity as dominance to include masculinity as expertise as well, and that these masculinities are bolstered in the texts by the comparison to an emasculated male Other. Furthermore, that the taking over of the emasculated opposites from the “real” men is not the end of masculinity in these texts, but that masculine ideals are perpetuated. Lastly, that social codes surrounding masculinity in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras prevent the male characters in *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love* from forming emotionally close friendships.

The essay is divided into two parts with each part divided into two sections. The first part begins with an overview of the term masculinity and is followed by an outline of discourses about masculinity in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. It continues with a discussion on how to define social interactions between men and an account of how the meaning and values of the word friendship have changed through history. The second part is divided into two main categories consisting of, firstly, a discussion on masculinity types in

\(^1\) I will refer to the years 1901-1914 as the Edwardian period in this essay.
The Good Soldier and Women in Love, how they change in the texts and how they relate to each other, and, secondly, an analysis of how social conventions of maleness impact how the characters interact in their friendships.

Literary Modernism, The Good Soldier and Women in Love

It is difficult to define precisely when the cultural movement(s) known as modernism began and ended. To begin with, the movement in itself is difficult to define due to its wide impact on art and artistic expression. Some appoint the beginning of literary modernism to 1910 – based on Virginia Woolf’s famous statement that human character and relations had changed “on or about December 1910” (qtd. in “‘Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown’ by Virginia Woolf”) – while others claim that it started in the 1890s and lasted to 1939 and the outbreak of World War II. Still others claim that modernism never ended. For this essay, I will use the same definition as The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature, that is, c.1901–c.1939 (Kastan).

For the purpose of this essay, I will mainly address literary modernism. Literary Modernism is characterized by the experimental use of form, style and narration, since many modernists were especially apprehensive of language and its innate “slipperiness” (Kastan). During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, influences from scientists such as Marx, Freud and others caused “a growing awareness that we are not our own masters, not able to control the influence of unconscious and extrapersonal (social, political, economic) forces on our ‘personal’ lives and relationships” (Kastan), an anxiety which is reflected in modernist writing. Another major theme is the impact of urbanization, commodification, mass culture, mass consumption and mechanization of the city as well as of the individual. Fragmentation is ever present in modernist texts, either as fragmentation of the text itself or as concerns about the fragmentation of the self, family, the city and of old institutions and truths.

The Good Soldier was published in 1915 and provides a text-book example of an unreliable narrator. American John Dowell narrates fragmented events from the lives of himself, his wife Florence and the English couple Edward and Leonora Ashburnham. The story arches from the 1890s to the 1910s and covers the couples’ interactions, mainly at the spa in Nauheim where Edward and Florence commence their affair. When Florence’s infidelity is at risk of being discovered she takes her life, after which Dowell proclaims that he can marry Nancy, the ward of Leonora and Edward. However, Edward is also in love with the young woman, but out of a sense of honour he keeps his distance which ultimately drives him to...

2 Like De Angelis, Henstra, Foss, Larabee and Hoffman I will use the surname of this character but the first name of Edward.
suicide. The deaths of Florence and Edward leave Dowell alone with Nancy (who has lost her mind) at Bramshaw Manor, which he has bought from Leonora who married another man.

*Women in Love* (1920) follows the lives of two sisters, Gudrun and Ursula Brangwen, as well as their love interests; the friends Gerald Crich and Rupert Birkin. Early on, Birkin declares his belief in an ultimate relationship with a woman, a higher relationship of equilibrium which will save him and allow him to be himself. After many twists and turns Birkin achieves a perfect union when he and Ursula are married. Gerald is described as a former soldier, explorer and as an industrial magnate who manages the colliery that imposes its presence on the whole neighbourhood. He is the love interest of Gudrun, an artist and bohemian, but their relationship becomes a power struggle with their lives at stake. In the end, it is Gerald who loses this fight. After an attempt to strangle Gudrun he stumbles out into the Alps and is found frozen to death the next morning.

**Research Context**

Much of the traditional criticism on *The Good Soldier* is focused on the structure of the text: its epistemology, narration and reliability. More recently, and more relevant to the discussion in this essay, the focus has shifted to include feminist and postcolonial criticism to a greater extent. For instance, in “Abjection and Appropriation: Male Subjectivity in *The Good Soldier*” Chris Foss performs a psychoanalytic analysis of how Edward and Dowell abject femininity in order to maintain their own male subjectivity. Rose De Angelis also applies psychoanalysis to her discussion on love triangles and gender in “Narrative Triangulations: Truth, Identity, and Desire in Ford Madox Ford’s *The Good Soldier*”. However, since psychoanalysis is not drawn on for this essay, neither of these discussions will play a major part for the interpretation. Nevertheless, De Angelis’s analysis of the various triangulations in *The Good Soldier* have been a foundation for my own understanding and interpretation of male relationships in the text. Karen Hoffman and Sarah Henstra respectively discuss the impacts of masculinity and imperialism and how nationality in the novel is performed. Even though postcolonial theory is not taken into account here, the ideas of imperialism were connected with ideals of masculinity at the turn of the century and are therefore interesting for the analysis.

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3 Since Rupert Birkin is most often referred to as Birkin in the novel, and Gerald Crich as Gerald I will from here on follow the same pattern when referring to these characters.
The criticism on *Women in Love* focus on gender to a greater extent than the criticism on *The Good Soldier*. Critics have superimposed the character Birkin’s views on gender onto Lawrence and deemed both Lawrence and Birkin as essentialist masculinists (Strychacz 159; Tilghman 95-96). Carolyn Tilghman claims that Lawrence, despite the polarization of men and women in his work, challenges bourgeois ideas about heterosexuality and marriage in *Women in Love* by opening up for a complementary, homoerotic relationship in addition to heterosexual desire (105). However, Tilghman’s main topic of interest is marriage and the relationship between Gerald and Birkin is mainly discussed as unexpressed homoerotic desire in relation to the heterosexual norm. Since the topic for this essay is masculinity and its effects on friendship, Tilghman’s analysis of the heterosexual norm and its impact on male desire will not apply. The major work of influence for this interpretation of *Women in Love* is Thomas Strychacz’s *Dangerous Masculinities*. Strychacz writes that *Women in Love* forces the reader to question gender from new perspectives instead of providing a one-dimensional essentialist depiction of masculinity. Unlike Tilghman, Strychacz does not take the possible intentions of the author into account to the same extent, but the main foundation for his discussion is the actual text. Furthermore, Strychacz discusses the performativity of gender and he presents feminist interpretations of both Gerald and Birkin.

Although there are several articles and books which discuss the subject of masculinity and homosocial desire in both *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love*, I have not found any that specifically address friendship as well as masculinity. More often than not, the discussion turns to suppressed homoerotic or homosexual desires as the primary model of explanation. Neither could I find any comparison between the works, even though the similarity between the two settings of male characters was one of the first things that struck me when I read the novels for the first time.

Another important factor for the analysis of masculinity and friendship in *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love* is the historical context of the works, which I have defined as the Edwardian era. Therefore, most of the secondary sources on British history referred to in this text cover the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, even though some go back to the Renaissance and Middle Ages. These sources focus on masculinity or friendship from a historical point of view and do not refer directly to the two literary works which are the main

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4 Even though both works were published after the Edwardian era both take place in a pre-WWI period, since in *Women in Love* the Great War is never mentioned and the characters use German and travel to central Europe with ease. *The Good Soldier* provides the years c.1890-1914 for the events portrayed in it.
focus of this essay. Even so, they provide crucial background information for the interpretation of *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love* in their historical context.

The Man, the Citizen, the Soldier

Masculinity Studies; What Makes a Man

In order to discuss masculinity in *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love* I will start with the term masculinity and focus on this “unmarked” category (Reeser 8). Todd W. Reeser writes that gender is often thought of as a binary opposition where one gender (man) is unmarked, or unnoticed, and the other (woman) is marked (8). In fact, women in Western culture “are considered to have a gender, while men are more often considered genderless” (9) and thereby normal. (For example, gender studies is often perceived as women’s studies.) Masculinity, then, is often presumed to be stable and natural by mass culture (Connell 45). However, there is very little that is natural when it comes to masculinity and male identity. For instance, Freud and psychoanalysis showed that gender and sexuality are constructed and not a naturally ordained consequence of biological sex (Connell 9). Not even the male body can be seen as a stable source and propagator of masculinity (Reeser 92). But if masculinity is not a natural cause determined by biological sex, what is it?

In fact, Reeser suggests, masculinity could be seen as an ideology. Like an ideology, masculinity has no sole propagator and no traceable single origin (20). He writes that: “ideologies are often assumed to be created and propagated through various social forms, especially through images, myths, discourses, and practices. By virtue of their constant and unavoidable repetition throughout culture, these tools of ideology are eventually made to seem natural” (21). That which Reeser calls the ideology of masculinity forms the external codes of what men are or, at least, should strive to be (26-27). Like masculinity, an ideology is a set of codes which operate both on a social level and on an individual level, and it is through repetition that the ideology of gendered performance is upheld and normalized. Reeser bases his arguments partly on Judith Butler’s theory: that gender is, in itself, created and maintained through repetitive performance which is given meaning by already existing norms (Butler 191). The individual acts out, signifies, its gender within a framework of already existing gendered symbols. This behaviour is seen to stem from an internal source but is superimposed, and through repetition it is made to seem natural (186). These gendered acts are perpetuated by the “tools of ideology,” that is, in “images, myths, discourses, and practices” (Reeser 21), which contribute to the framework of gender structures.
The framework and external codes of gendered behaviour can often be in conflict with the individual’s internal, subjective experience of his own gender: “The tension between the objective and the subjective can be articulated as a crisis of masculinity, a way of thinking in broad, cultural terms about a split between men’s subjective experience and larger ideologies that pervade culture” (27). The term crisis of masculinity appears occasionally in literature on gender studies and denotes periods when male identity is remodelled on a large scale. For instance, Thomas Strychacz writes that there was a crisis of masculinity during the Edwardian era, which entailed a fear that masculinity would decline into the “New (Wo)man” (1). Strychacz’s presupposition of a crisis during the early decades of the twentieth century was a starting point for me as well at the beginning of this project. However, R. W. Connell claims that since masculinity is not a system, but a configuration operating within a system, it cannot be in crisis. Gender order and power relations, on the other hand, can be (84). Therefore, I will not follow the presupposition that masculinity was in crisis during the early twentieth century here in this essay, but that social structures concerning gender and social power were.

The seminal work of masculinity studies is still Connell’s *Masculinities* (1995) in which Connell summarizes modern masculinity as “gendered individual character, defined in opposition to femininity and institutionalized in state and economy” (189). To begin with, this definition “presupposes a belief in individual difference and personal agency … built on the conception of individuality that developed in early-modern Europe” (68). That is, the belief that the individual identifies himself as a man, that his self is formed through this identification and that it affects his actions. Secondly, modern masculinity only exists in opposition to femininity and only in cultures where men and women are seen as bearers of distinctly opposed character traits (68). It is through this relational opposition with an Other that masculinity defines itself, which means that the modern definition of ‘man’ is ‘not woman’ (Reeser 37). Lastly, Connell’s summary refers to how masculinity and patriarchal hierarchy are socially and historically intertwined: “definitions of masculinity are deeply enmeshed in the history of institutions and of economic structures. Masculinity is not just an idea in the head, or a personal identity. It is also extended in the world, merged in organized social relations” (29). Connell’s statement neatly puts its finger on how masculinity and patriarchy seep through society on a macro level as well as on a micro level. For instance, masculinity was a cornerstone when the organized social relations that are the modern nation states of Europe were formed, most of which were based on a hereditary system which demanded heterosexuality of the individual in order to secure the heritage from father to son (most often, at least).
Masculinity, then, works on several levels and in this essay I will apply the term as follows: (1) As a set of cultural structures and codes which the individual adapts to and performs, and not as a natural cause ordained by biological sex; (2) As an aspect of forming and expressing individuality and personality; (3) As a relational condition in constant dialogue with its Others and (4) as an intrinsic feature of Western economic and social institutions and organizations. All of these aspects operate as a contextual backdrop of social expectations and affect the individual actions of the literary characters in *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love*.

The Rhetoric Surrounding Masculinity, Citizenship and the Army in the Victorian and Edwardian Periods

Since both Edward in *The Good Soldier* and Gerald in *Women in Love* are referred to as soldiers, I will provide an overview of the British army in the Victorian and Edwardian era. During the nineteenth century, the army was one of the national institutions that grew, became more organized and was decisively associated with masculinity. British officers were often drawn from the aristocracy and venerated while the ordinary soldiers, the Tommy, were drawn from the lower classes and “despised outcasts” (Rose 139). In 1859, Volunteer forces were authorized in Britain and soon the Volunteers – working and middle class men who paid for their own military training and often had other careers – were held in much higher esteem than the regular soldiers (140). The differences between officers, Volunteers and regular soldiers reflected views on masculinity, class structures and entitlement to political citizenship in Victorian and Edwardian Britain.

The question of citizenship in Britain during the period 1834-1918 particularly enlightens how masculinity was a precondition for political inclusion. The citizen in the modern state was expected to fulfil the duty of defending himself, his family and, in extension, the nation and uphold its sovereignty (Rose 134). This focus on independence is a common denominator for ideas about the nation and of masculinity, both strive for self-rule (Reeser 181). A prerequisite for citizenship, then, was independence. Even so, most men did not gain autonomy through military service\(^5\) but through their economic means: “landed property was believed to enable individuals to exercise their political judgment independently” (Rose 134) and in 1834 “Property stood in for, and was the measure of, independence or trustworthiness” in Britain (135). This excluded some middle class and most

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\(^5\) Quite the opposite since ordinary soldiers did not gain the vote until 1918 (Rose 146).
working class men from political inclusion⁶. However, by 1867 the vote was given to “urban rate-paying male householder[s]” of a certain income who had lived at the same residence for at least one year (136), and by the 1880s it was widely accepted that male adult householders could vote (137). Sean Brady claims that being the head of a household became essential to the ideals of masculinity from the 1860s, or, in other words, in order to be “considered fully masculine [men] had to be married” (120). Marriage, then, was for many men a means to achieve independence and access to political citizenship.

However, according to Sonya O. Rose, the view on masculinity in popular discourse changed from the late 1860s and became “less domestic and more imperial, less civic and more martial, and less concerned with sentiment and more concerned with virility” (141). By 1884, in part as a response to the question of female citizenship, the “issues of brute force and military service took the place of property, independence, and respectability in the public culture of masculinity and citizenship” (145). Along with imperial successes the image of the “soldier-hero” was popularized by magazines and “became the exemplar of masculine virtue” as new values were assigned to the army in late Victorian society (141). The statements of Rose and Brady could be perceived as contradictory, but it is probable that both the domestic ideal and the military ideal were part of hegemonic masculinity. The domestic ideal indicated political inclusion and social stability for urban middle and working class men while the military ideal was propagated in larger political and cultural discourses and practices in order to validate imperialism and patriarchy. Within this school of thought, the military can be seen as a metonym for the nation (Reeser 173) and, by extension, the “nation is coded as masculine” since it “is considered to be composed of male bodies or of physical elements coded as masculine” (174). The soldier-hero, thus, was an indicator of the nation’s force and virility as well as a social ideal. The state of the male body became a metonym for the state of the nation. This was reflected not just in the army but in other institutions such as schools and sports as well (Rose 142).

As stated above, masculinity and what is seen as manly changes over time and present views on men differ from those represented in the Edwardian context of The Good Soldier and Women in Love. In this essay I will take into consideration that both books take place in a context where force and virility as well as being a householder are key elements of hegemonic masculinity; that the soldier is an important figure in both texts and is very much affected by imperialist glorification; that the body of the soldier is seen as a symbol for the state of the

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⁶ Not to mention women, poor people and so on.
nation, and that his physical force entitles him to power and validates domination on a larger scale.

Masculinity and Friendship

Homosocial, Homoerotic or Homosexual?

The sexualities, and especially the possible homosexuality, of Dowell, Edward, Birkin and Gerald have been debated by De Angelis, Foss, Tilghman and others. Since judging an actual historical person’s sexuality after modern, polarized conceptions of heterosexuality and homosexuality can be precarious enough – and possibly even misguided (Dixon “Comrades and Lovers” 08:51-09:10; Clark 36) – I will not attempt any such labelling of these four characters. I will, however, address the terms homosexual, homoerotic and homosocial since the question of homosexuality seems to be inextricably linked to the subject of friendship between men. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes this relationship in Between Men, where she writes that the word homosocial “is a neologism, obviously formed by analogy with ‘homosexual,’ and just as obviously meant to be distinguished from ‘homosexual’” (1). Furthermore, she points out that “the diacritical opposition between the ‘homosocial’ and the ‘homosexual’ seems to be much less thorough and dichotomous for women, in our society, than for men” (2). This is confirmed by Oxford Dictionaries Online, which defines homosocial as “Relating to social interaction between members of the same sex, typically men” (“Homosocial” Oxford Dictionaries Online), and by Merriam-Webster Online, which defines it as “of, relating to, or involving social relationships between persons of the same sex and especially between men” (“Homosocial” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). The term homosocial, then, still refers primarily to interactions between men. This indicates that there is still a greater need to label and explain friendship between men than friendship between women.

As stated above, one of the defining features of masculinity is its relational status to femininity. However, the homosexual man is also regarded as an Other. As masculinity and femininity are often perceived to be opposites so is heterosexuality and homosexuality often seen as polarized. However, Sedgwick continues by defining homosocial and homosexual relations between men as a continuum with no clear boundaries, as relationships between women are seen (1-2). Homosexual acts, then, does not automatically entail homosexuality and homosocial behaviour does not automatically entail heterosexuality or homosexuality. The homoerotic spans over the whole spectrum of homosocial-homosexual desire and is not
necessarily an indicator of sexual preference. This is the definition, with homosocial and homosexual behaviour and desires seen as gradients on the same scale, which I will employ in this essay. This also allows me to analyse male-male relationships without superimposing present views on sexuality onto these modernist texts.

One expression of homosocial desire which can span from platonic to sexual desire is the love triangle. Most often the triangle consists of two men who desire the same woman (Sedgwick 23), where “the bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved … [often] the choice of the beloved is determined in the first place, not by the qualities of the beloved, but by the beloved’s already being the choice of the person who has been chosen as a rival” (21). The admiration for the rival, thus, is projected onto the love object. In a homophobic culture this is one way to express admiration and a wish to emulate another man without falling under the suspicion of being homosexual (Reeser 57). I will mainly refer to the love triangle as a constellation of two men and a woman, where the men compete for the affection of the woman. The relationship between the men in the triangle can range from asexual homosocial desire to feelings of sexual attraction.

A Historical Perspective on Friendship

Another term in need of definition is the word friendship. However, it is rather difficult to define. Although we may have a clear idea about who is our friend or not, the term is not as straightforward as one might think: “Friendship, we found, came in many guises, and the word ‘friendship’ was used to define a multiplicity of relationships” (Knights and Whitehouse). Friendship is not just defined as one individual’s affection for another. In Five Hundred Years of Friendship, Thomas Dixon divides friendship into three categories: kinship, utility and affection (“A Marriage of Minds” 02:05-02:15). Today the word friend most often denotes the last category but historically its use has been more fluid and a friend could just as well have been a parent, a business partner, a classmate or a spouse – as opposed to today when people are colleagues and friends. Of course, these different relationships would carry different emotional values. In the words of Mark Vernon: “it is obvious that friendship stretches from a love you could scarcely do without to an affection that you’d barely miss if it ended.” The word friendship, thus, is an umbrella term which can denote everything from a soulmate to a distant acquaintance, and the definition is wider in early twentieth-century texts than it is today.
The kind of relationship that is defined as ideal friendship has changed through the ages. In Europe during the Renaissance, “Humanism had a clear if fragile ideology of friendship as the centre of a man’s life” (MacFaul 6 emphasis added). In the Humanist tradition, higher, refined and virtuous friendships were thought of as masculine. It also presupposed that the two friends were friends out of their own individual choice (Dixon “A Marriage of Minds” 01:57-02:00). By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the view on friendship was rather different:

It certainly is part of what I see as a broader redefinition of friendship in the nineteenth century so that a relationship which was once seen as exclusive to men and only possible for men is coming to be seen as something which is not only possible for women but in which women have greater gifts and greater capacity than men, (Barbara Caine in Dixon “Comrades and Lovers” 03:34-03:51)

With the division of emotion and rationality, women became more associated with feelings and therefore they were thought to have greater gifts and capacity than men in the formation of close friendships. Intimate friendship, then, became regarded as something feminine. By the early twentieth century, German sexologist Otto Weininger even made a connection between male-male friendships and so called inversion7: “A person who retains from early onwards a marked tendency to ‘friendship’ with a person of his own sex must have a strong taint of the other sex in him” (qtd. in Rousseau 23). Especially the word *taint* indicates a derogatory view on femininity in men. In other words, intimate friendships between men were regarded by some as a sign of emasculation in the Edwardian era. Furthermore, the 1885 act, which criminalized homosexuality8 between men and expelled homoerotic displays from hegemonic masculinity, caused male-male intimacy to be regarded with apprehension (Connell 196).

Even though intimate individual friendship between men was seen with suspicion, male bonding in larger, impersonal institutions was encouraged. In “Modernism, Male Intimacy, and the Great War” Sarah Cole writes that:

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7 A so called passive sodomite, to use a historical term.
8 Before 1885 it was only the act of sodomy that was illegal (Brady 126).
The rhetoric surrounding masculinity – in relation to athleticism, house and school loyalty, patriotic and imperial sentiment – inevitably relied upon intense group identification, and this matrix of attitudes about manliness and loyalty to impersonal institutions found its logical culmination in the theater of war. (475-76).

Sentiment and loyalty, thus, were reserved for the group, and the individual and individual friendship always yielded for the, usually homosocial, group (which could be a school, a sports team or the nation) in the societal discourse about masculinity. During World War I, the British government even used the ideal of friendship in order to encourage men to enlist (Dixon “A Battalion of Pals” 03:10-03:16). The emphasis on friendship was “meant to sustain the soldier, to provide the possibility for heroic action ... Yet the crucial fact of the war was that it destroyed friendship” (Cole 470). This camaraderie, which was based on group solidarity and self-sacrifice, is connected to the hero-soldier ideal that permeated discourse about citizenship in Britain prior to 1914 (475). This official rhetoric of friendship was difficult to combine with actual individual experiences of friendship during the war. Therefore, Cole makes a distinction between friendship and camaraderie where the former is defined as “individualized relations of amity or love between men” and the latter as “a corporate or group commitment” (470). I will use the term camaraderie in the same way as Cole, to denote impersonal group loyalty. However, since the word friendship is so difficult to define I will use a wider definition, as a relationship of choice made between two individuals. In order to denote affectionate friendships of “amity or love” (470), I will use words like close or intimate before the word friendship.

A modern reader must take into consideration that the Edwardian view on friendship is different from modern preconceptions. The Edwardian view on male friendships was conflicted as it on the one hand condemned friendships into the realm of the feminine and to inversion, but on a nationwide scale encouraged ideals of loyalty and camaraderie between men. Especially within homosocial institutions such as sports, school and the army camaraderie was promoted as a virtue of national importance. These conflicting views between individual affection and group commitment, as well as the perceived danger of being regarded as sexually deviant or effeminate, are necessary to consider when analysing male friendship in The Good Soldier and Women in Love.
Masculinities Come, Masculinities Go but Maleness Endures

The Imperialist; Masculinity as Dominance

In *The Good Soldier*, Edward represents masculinity as dominance\(^9\) in his public roles as landlord and soldier. In one of the first descriptions of Edward in *The Good Soldier* Dowell presents him like this: “Edward Ashburnham was the cleanest looking sort of chap; — an excellent magistrate, a first rate soldier, one of the best landlords, so they said, in Hampshire, England. To the poor and to hopeless drunkards, as I myself have witnessed, he was like a painstaking guardian” (Ford 14). These traits are repeated later on, although in a new combination of words, where Dowell asks the reader: “Have I conveyed to you the splendid fellow that he was — the fine soldier, the excellent landlord, the extraordinarily kind, careful and industrious magistrate, the upright, honest, fair-dealing, fair-thinking, public character?” (69). The key qualities that Dowell describes are those of different public roles, since of the positive words in these quotes — *excellent, first rate, best, fine, extraordinarily kind, careful, industrious, cleanest, splendid* — only *cleanest* and *splendid* refer to Edward’s person. The rest describe him in his public roles as landlord, magistrate and soldier and it is in these roles that Edward excels in Dowell’s eyes. Both quotes follow the same pattern where Dowell initially presents a character trait which describes Edward as an individual. The first statement is then immediately followed by an affirmation of the first statement where the personal qualities are validated through descriptions of Edward’s public character. Thus Dowell equates Edward’s private character with the public roles he possesses. In fact, Dowell is incapable or unwilling to distinguish between Edward’s public character and his private life (Henstra 181). To Dowell, Edward *is* his public roles and therefore Edward represents these professions in *The Good Soldier*, even when he fails to live up to the ideals connected to them.

Especially Edward’s position as landlord is crucial to the ideals of masculinity in *The Good Soldier*. With the position comes responsibilities for not one household but many, in the form of dependants and tenants. One major aspect of Victorian and Edwardian ideal masculinity was the ability to provide for the household (Brady 120). However, it is possible that the role model for the landlord in *The Good Soldier* is older than that. Mark Larabee suggests that the country house topos in seventeenth-century English literature stands as a model of conduct for the right behaviour of the good landlord in *The Good Soldier* (84), and that the genre would have been familiar to many of Ford’s contemporary readers (80). Within

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\(^9\) The terms *masculinity as dominance* and *masculinity as expertise* are from R. W. Connell’s *Masculinities* (190; 193).
this topos “the virtue of the landlord forms the symbolic foundation of the house” (81) where the conduct and character of the landlord affects the house and those he is responsible for. Edward have many similarities to the landlords in the genre since he too is engaging “in promoting the prosperity of his lands and the well-being of his community” (83), and Larabee claims that this is the standard to which Edward tries to live up to but fails (83-84). Edward’s lack of virtue stands in stark contrast to the standard of the estate landlord, which, as Dowell observes, causes a conflict: “with Edward’s passions and his shame for them went the violent conviction of the duties of his station” (Ford 47). The first part of the sentence sets an emotional tone with the words passions and shame which affect the word violent to take on emotive associations. This implies that Edward’s arduous work as landlord is a way to relieve his feelings of guilt and is an attempt to live up to the stereotype of the good landlord. Even though Edward fails to live up to this standard (because of his many extramarital affairs and inability to manage the economy of Bramshaw) he is still emphatically connected with his public role through Dowell’s equation of his public and private characters, and through his own attempts to live up to the ideal.

As a landowner and officer, Edward Ashburnham belongs to the landed gentry, which was closely involved with the state as well as the army during the eighteenth century (Connell 190). Hence they were connected to the state systems of institutionalized violence. The masculinity ideals of the landed gentry were also closely connected to violence and masculinity as dominance was the hegemonic male ideal in the North Atlantic cultures in the eighteenth century (190). During the nineteenth century the power of the gentry declined, but nevertheless codes of the gentry remained within the army (192). The soldier and the army stood for autonomy and independence of the state, the strength to defend its borders and to expand them (Rose 134). Furthermore, both the man and the nation are seen to strive for power and independence (Reeser 181). As a soldier, then, Edward is closely associated with violent domination on a nationwide scale, such as warfare and imperialism. As Karen Hoffman has noted, there is a distinct connection between patriarchy and imperialism in The Good Soldier (36). This is clear in the first meeting between the Ashburnhams and the Dowells, which is the starting point for the affair between Edward and Florence as well:

And, there he [Edward] was, standing by the table … the expression was that of pride, of satisfaction, of the possessor. I saw him once afterwards, for a moment, gaze upon the sunny fields of Bramshaw and say: ‘All this is my
land!’ … I looked round over my shoulder and saw, tall, smiling brilliantly and buoyant—Leonora. And, little and fair, and as radiant as the track of sunlight along the sea—my wife. (Ford 27)

Here, Dowell recollects that the gaze of Edward is the same when he looks at his land as when he looks at his wife and new love interest. The equation between owning land and women is further emphasized by the word *possessor* to describe Edward’s expression. Hoffman’s interpretation of the same passage is that both women and land can be conquered by the masculine gaze in *The Good Soldier* (36), an interpretation which I concur with. This simile between possession of land and relationships with women contains both the ideal of the male householder, who is responsible for his wife and property, and the imperial ideal of the hero-soldier who protects and expands the borders of the nation.

As landlord, Edward represents the landed gentry as well as a bygone ideal of a virtuous landlord with control over his house and his tenants. As a soldier and officer, Edward is connected to state systems of domination and imperialism. This link to dominance is accentuated when the seduction of women is likened to possession of land, and as a seducer of women Edward is thereby connected to imperial expansion. Therefore, Edward represents masculinity as dominance in *The Good Soldier*.

**The Capitalist; Masculinity as Expertise and Rationality**

In *Women in Love*, Gerald represents both masculinity as dominance and masculinity as expertise and rationality. In addition to the hegemonic masculinity of the landed gentry and the ideals of violent dominance, Connell writes about a transition during the beginning of the twentieth century where masculinity as expertise and rationality gained ascendance as a salient type of hegemonic masculinity (193). Gradually, the landed gentry was replaced by businessmen and bureaucrats (196), and expert technical and scientific knowledge became increasingly important on the labour market (193). Chapter 17 of *Women in Love* (“The Industrial Magnate”) depicts a progression between these two types of masculinity through the transition from the older ideal of the good landlord of the estate, to the rational industrial capitalist, represented by the generational shift from old Mr. Crich to Gerald.

If Edward Ashburnham is a “painstaking guardian” (Ford 14) to the drunk and the poor, Mr. Crich, Gerald’s father, sees himself as “the father, the Patriarch” of his workers and he wants “his industry to be run on love. Oh, he wanted love to be the directing power even of the mines” (Lawrence 202). The strong emphasis on emotion indicates an ethical and moral
stance towards those who are dependent on him. Even though love is not the motivating force for Edward he is still compelled by strong feelings of duty to fulfil his responsibilities as landlord. The words father, patriarch and guardian entail a familial, and thereby personal, responsibility for each individual in their care, which correlates with the masculine ideal of the male householder discussed by Brady (120). Both Edward and Mr. Crich, therefore, represent this older masculine ideal of the good landlord who has a personal responsibility for the wellbeing of his dependents. Gerald, on the other hand, compares the running of the colliery with “being part of a machine. He himself happened to be a controlling, central part, the masses of men were the parts variously controlled” (Lawrence 204). The comparison with the machine is devoid of emotional words and both Gerald and his workers are likened to cogs in the machinery of industry. The image of humans as automated fragments of a huge machinery is common within modernism. This simile to a machine comes after another train of thought where Gerald thinks that “[e]verything in the world has its function, and is good or not good in so far as it fulfils this function more or less completely” (201). This focus on value as dependent on ability to fulfil a function acts like a background to the comparison of people to parts of a machine. It further removes the workers’ values as individuals to their ability to function as labourers. This emphasizes that Gerald is more concerned with the smooth running of the machine than personally invested in his workers’ wellbeing. With a mind that is “curious and cold” (199) Gerald sets himself to the task of winning over the matter in the ground. For him the profit is just a way of keeping score (201). The combination of the words curious and cold further emphasizes Gerald’s lack of emotional motivators, and focus is instead placed on his mind and ability to rationalize. So, while Edward and Mr. Crich are motivated by their feelings of duty against their dependants and of their station, Gerald is driven by his own gain with little thought of moral responsibilities against the work force. As industrial magnate, Gerald is depicted as calculating and cold, clearly prioritizing productivity over duties or familiarity. Through his industrial success, Gerald possesses the productive means, and thereby he holds economic and social power in a capitalist economy. All of these aspects connect Gerald to masculinity as expertise and rationality. The comparison to Mr. Crich emphasizes the progression from one generation of thought to another as well as from one type of masculinity to another.

However, masculinity as expertise and rationality did not displace masculinity as dominance but the two continue to coexist, sometimes polarized and sometimes intermingling (Connell 194). This is the case in Women in Love as well. The depiction of Gerald in Women in Love shows him as both a modern man of reason and as an example of the heroic type
Sperens 19

Like Edward, Gerald is defined through the professional titles he possesses. Birkin summarizes Gerald as “a soldier, and an explorer, and a Napoleon of industry” (Lawrence 58). As I have shown already, Gerald’s industrial successes links him to modernity and capitalism but his parts as soldier and explorer plants him, at least publicly, in the imperial stereotype of the glorified soldier-hero (Rose 141). Thus, Gerald is also connected to the institutionalized violence of the army. However, it is in his interactions with female characters that Gerald most clearly exercises dominance. In his encounter with the Pussum in chapter 6 (“Crème de Menthe”) it is shown that “[s]he appealed to Gerald strongly. He felt an awful, enjoyable power over her, an instinctive cherishing very near to cruelty. For she was a victim. He felt that she was in his power, and he was generous” (Lawrence 58-59). The word *victim* indicates some form of abuse and it is a relational opposite to Gerald’s own position. The connection to physical violence becomes clearer a bit later on when Gerald meets with opposition and thinks that “[h]e had not conquered her yet” (61). The decidedly aggressive term *conquered* connotes a military act which indicates that, as in *The Good Soldier*, it is both land and women that can be occupied (Hoffman 36). It also indicates that the Pussum will not keep her autonomy once she has been conquered. Gerald’s affiliation with the army and his domineering behaviour against mainly female characters emphasizes that Gerald represents masculinity as dominance.

As a successful industrial magnate with a cold and curious mind full of cogs and machines, Gerald embodies masculinity as expertise and rationality. As a soldier, he is connected to the imperial ideal of the soldier-hero as a model for masculinity, and thereby to institutionalized violence and dominance. Gerald’s interactions with female characters emphasize his will to physically dominate them and thereby connect him firmly to masculinity as dominance. Therefore, Gerald represents two types of masculinity: as dominance and as expertise and rationality. Gerald embodies the emergence of the new masculine type of the successful capitalist, a progression which is emphasized by the comparison to the prior generation.

The Other(ed) Man

Birkin and Dowell are portrayed as opposites to Gerald and Edward in a process of othering which emphasizes their lacking masculinity in relation to the latter characters. Masculinity is defined through its relation to its Others, that is, what it is not. A key aspect of the portrayed friendships in *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love* are the differences between the two
parties and how these affect the perceived masculinity of the characters. In *The Good Soldier* the differentiation is made by Dowell himself:

> If poor Edward was dangerous because of the chastity of his expressions—and they say that is always the hall-mark of a libertine—what about myself? For I solemnly avow that not only have I never so much as hinted at an impropriety ... Am I no better than a eunuch or is the proper man—the man with the right to existence—a raging stallion forever neighing after his neighbour’s womankind? (Ford 14-15).

In this quote, Dowell establishes a view of masculinity where he places himself at one end of a scale and Edward on the other: a stallion as a symbol of virility to which the eunuch is the complete opposite. Dowell further questions his own existence by granting the right to existence to the man who lusts after his neighbour’s womankind and clearly stating that he, Dowell, is not one of those men since he has never hinted at an impropriety. Furthermore, the reference to a raging stallion associates the so called proper man with the instincts and urges of an animal, thus implying natural behaviour. In this quote the focus is on sexual difference where Edward’s extramarital escapades are normalized as natural behaviour and stand in stark contrast to the chastity of Dowell’s own behaviour.

Dowell explains that early on in his marriage he learnt that he “had better refrain from manifestations of affection” (Ford 65) in order to spare the supposed fragile heart of his wife. Another arrangement which Dowell recalls in Florence’s scheme of deception is that of the locked door to her bedroom, which he was not allowed to enter without her permission (66). Dowell defines his relationship with Florence by calling himself a male nurse:

> I fancy that, if I had shown warmth then, she would have acted the proper wife to me, or would have put me back again. But, because I acted like a Philadelphia gentleman, she made me, I suppose, go through with the part of a male nurse. Perhaps she thought that I should not mind. (Ford 63).

Dowell emphasizes his own passivity with the words *she made me* but then indicates that due to his own lack of warmth he was assigned a profession, which does not entail sexual affection, instead of the role of husband. His disappointment in this is shown in the words *if I*
had, which express a wish, and *perhaps she thought that I should not mind*, which indicate that he actually did mind. Here, Dowell stresses that it was not his own choice to take on the job of a nurse. This is confirmed by a later recollection of his situation at the end of the novel where he is “the attendant, not the husband, of a beautiful girl, who pays no attention to [him]” (157). Once again, Dowell uses a service occupation to describe his relation to Nancy, the beautiful girl in question, which would indicate that his relationships with Florence and Nancy are professional rather than passionate. Thus, Dowell’s sex life is more like the eunuch’s than that of the stallion and he is depicted as a desexualized Other in comparison to Edward.

At the end of the novel Dowell concludes: “I should really like to be a polygamist; with Nancy, and with Leonora, and with Maisie Maidan and possibly even with Florence. I am no doubt like every other man; only, probably because of my American origin I am fainter” (Ford 157). Keeping the image of the raging stallion in mind as a model of masculinity it can be concluded that this is what Dowell refers to with the words *like every other man*. Since this phrase comes directly after Dowell’s claim that he would like to be a polygamist it is also implied that every other man wants to be a polygamist, at least in Dowell’s eyes, which also correlates with the image of the stallion. Dowell’s claim that he wants to be a polygamist with all the female characters who are connected to Edward can be interpreted as an example of a love triangle. The love object is not chosen for her own qualities but because she is desired by or “belongs” to the rival (Sedgwick 21), and so Dowell’s admiration for Edward determines his “female objects of desire” (De Angelis 428). Therefore, Dowell’s wish to be a polygamist can be seen as an attempt to emulate Edward as well as a comparison between the two of them, a comparison which Dowell loses since he is never a serious contender for the sexual or romantic affection of these women, not even Florence’s. However, once again Dowell counters his first claim with the explanation that he is “a strictly respectable person” (Ford 157) and thereby he reigns himself in to follow the moral standard rather than the alleged natural or polygamous standard which is set by the comparison to Edward. Thus, Dowell is othered once again.

However, it is not only in sexual matters that Dowell is othered, but also in his social interactions with Edward: “Well, I fancy he could put up a pretty good deal of talk when there was no man around to make him feel shy. ... You see, I suppose he regarded me not so much as a man. I had to be regarded as a woman or a solicitor” (Ford 26). Edward is too shy to talk to other men but is capable of talking to Dowell. With the phrase *I suppose he regarded me not so much as a man* Dowell draws the conclusion that this verbal intimacy has to do with
his own masculinity, or lack thereof. The pairing woman-solicitor may seem odd due to the differing social status and gender between the two parts. However, women can be seen as problem (dis)solvers in *The Good Soldier*: “there is no man who loves a woman that does not desire to come to her … for the cutting asunder of his difficulties” (82). The last part of the quotation denotes that a woman can dissolve a man’s worries and personal problems. The solicitor is also a problem solver (although a professional) and thus they are connected. Also, the profession of solicitor is a parallel to Dowell’s description of himself as a nurse, another service occupation. Like the title nurse, the title of solicitor implies a professional distance in the situation. Thus, in his verbal interactions with Edward, Dowell is more directly othered as he is portrayed as an almost female Other in comparison to Edward.

The love life of Dowell constantly stands in contrast to the standard of the virile stallion which Dowell perceives that Edward represents. Thus, Dowell is portrayed as a desexualized opposite with no right to existence as a man, and whose behaviour is unnatural compared to the more virile Edward. The lack of passion in Dowell’s relationships is emphasized by the occupational titles which Dowell assigns to himself, all of which entail serviceability. The comparison between the two characters and their diametrically different qualities entails that Dowell is portrayed as an emasculated Other to Edward while the masculinity of Edward is defined and buttressed in comparison to what it is not.

Gerald and Birkin are also portrayed as opposites when it comes to sex. Gerald’s reaction to a crisis is often physical, for example in the form of sex, and he is described to have “found his most satisfactory relief in women. After a debauch with some desperate woman, he went on quite easy and forgetful” (Lawrence 209). As I discussed above, Gerald conquers women to exert power over them and the words *desperate woman* strongly emphasizes her disadvantage against Gerald. The words *relief, easy* and *forgetful*, which describe Gerald’s experience, stand in sharp contrast to the words *debauch* and *desperate*. This underscores the difference in power between Gerald and the woman and their different experiences of the encounter. The sexual experience, thus, is empowering for Gerald as well as a relief. While Gerald seeks confirmation in sex, Birkin acclaims its absence in what he calls his perfect union:

> Always a man must be considered as the broken off fragment of a woman, and the sex was the still aching scar of the laceration. … Rather the sex is that which remains in us of the mixed, the unresolved. And passion is the further separating of this mixture, that which is manly being taken into the being of the
man, that which is womanly passing to the woman, till the two are clear and whole as angels, the admixture of sex in the highest sense surpassed, leaving two single beings constellated together like two stars. (Lawrence 180)

If sex for Gerald is something which confirms his masculinity, for Birkin it is something base and unwanted, as indicated by the words *aching scar, unresolved* and *sex in the highest sense surpassed*. For Birkin, the physical act of sex is to become less masculine since what he calls manly and womanly are mixed in the process. A man who has sex with a woman, according to Birkin’s reasoning, blends his masculinity with her femininity and thus he becomes less masculine. However, the more abstract feeling of passion helps to manifest masculinity and femininity as separate essences. Especially the words *highest, stars* and *angels* emphasize a more ethereal and celestial imagery and that Birkin holds emotions higher than corporeal instincts. Unlike Gerald, who finds relief in sex, Birkin wants to surpass it and replace it with emotional, nonsexual passion. The spiritual Birkin is the polarized Other of the physical Gerald and, as with Edward and Dowell, they are portrayed as sexual opposites.

The differentiation between Gerald as physical and Birkin as spiritual is made very clear in chapter 20 (“Gladiatorial”) in *Women in Love*. Gerald is described with words such as “concrete,” “noticeable,” “proper, rich weight,” “solid” and “strength” while Birkin is described with “presence,” “abstract,” “subtle” and “necromantic” (Lawrence 241). Whereas Gerald is described as decidedly physical with words that imply solid mass, Birkin is an almost ethereal counterpart. Gerald possesses “a frictional kind of strength”, which implies physical motion, where Birkin has a “subtle energy” and “uncanny force” (241), which are more abstract. The differentiation between Gerald and Birkin is in itself a process where masculinity asserts itself through what it is not (Reeser 31-32). This is further emphasized in this passage where Gerald thinks about Birkin:

Gerald really loved Birkin, though he never quite believed in him. Birkin was too unreal;—clever, whimsical, wonderful, but not practical enough. Gerald felt that his own understanding was much sounder and safer. Birkin was delightful, a wonderful spirit, but after all, not to be taken seriously, not quite to be counted as a man among men. (Lawrence 181)
To begin with, the gaze in this quote belongs to Gerald and Birkin is observed, which offers the former the status of subject. Once again, Birkin is associated with the abstract through the words *wonderful spirit, too unreal* and *not practical enough*, and Gerald, by opposition, is connected to the practical, the sounder and safer physical realm. Gerald’s thought ends with “not quite to be counted as a man among men” (181), which definitively categorizes Birkin and his qualities as Other. In a similar passage Gerald describes Birkin as “child-like” (185) which further emphasizes Birkin’s status as ‘not man.’ In this way, the masculinity of Gerald is defined and confirmed through reoccurring comparisons between Gerald and Birkin, where they are portrayed as physical and spiritual opposites as well as sexual opposites.

In both *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love* there are crucial differences in the portrayed friendships. These differences work to establish the masculinity of Edward and Gerald by depicting Dowell and Birkin as emasculated opposites. Dowell and Birkin are represented as desexualized or asexual as a contrast to the sexualities of Edward and Gerald, which are connected to natural instincts and the physical world respectively. Another similarity between the texts is that both Birkin and Dowell are defined as ‘not man’ in comparison to Gerald and Edward. Thus, both *Women in Love* and *The Good Soldier* portray an oppositional pair where one part is emasculated in a process of othering, and the masculinity of the other part is emphasized.

**The End of Maleness?**

Even though the deaths of Edward and Gerald may superficially seem like the symbolic death of the so called real man in a modern world, Dowell and Birkin perpetuate masculine ideals and through them male hegemony endures. Throughout both texts, Edward and Gerald are portrayed as the stronger and manlier character. However, the emasculated Dowell and Birkin are the ones who are alive at the end of each novel. In the passage below, Dowell contemplates the fate of Edward and his own relation to him:

> Mind, I am not preaching anything contrary to accepted morality. … Society must go on, I suppose, and society can only exist if the normal, if the virtuous, and the slightly deceitful flourish, and if the passionate, the headstrong, and the too-truthful are condemned to suicide and to madness. But I guess that I myself, in my fainter way, come into the category of the passionate, of the headstrong, and the too-truthful. For I can’t conceal from myself the fact that I
loved Edward Ashburnham—and that I love him because he was just myself.

... And, you see, I am just as much of a sentimentalist as he was. ... (Ford 167-68)

To begin with, the qualities favoured by society – normal, virtuous, slightly deceitful – are contrasted with the more positive qualities connected to Edward – passionate, headstrong, too-truthful. However, this indicates that these qualities, as well as Edward, are doomed to extinction or isolation in a society which will relentlessly move on. Therefore, Dowell is lamenting both the parting of the friend and the ideals he represented. As a response, Dowell is clearly trying to emulate Edward with the claim that he too is one of the passionate and too-truthful, a truthfulness which a reader of The Good Solder would refute after Dowell’s many twists and turns in his narrative. Even in this quote Dowell provides the reader with double messages when he firstly claims that he does not preach “anything contrary to accepted morality” and follows that statement by praising Edward and, by extension, his extramarital affairs. Dowell’s imitation is escalated by his claim that Edward “was just myself” and thereby Dowell maps himself onto Edward and his actions. In the phrase I am just as much of a sentimentalist, the mapping is reversed since the word sentimentalist has been reserved for Edward during the novel but is claimed by Dowell here. Dowell’s identification with Edward is not limited to the personal qualities of Edward since at the end of the novel he is the owner of Bramshaw Manor. Another aspect which emphasizes the emulation is that Dowell is the attendant of Nancy, the common love interest of both him and Edward (157). Dowell’s interest in Nancy can be seen as a love triangle (De Angelis 428), which is further emphasized by the fact that Dowell associates Nancy with Edward and his qualities. This is shown in the quote above where both Nancy and Edward belong to the category of the passionate, headstrong and too-truthful since they respectively commit suicide and go mad. Thus, the qualities that Dowell admires in Nancy are the same as those of Edward, which indicates that Dowell has projected homosocial desires for his male rival onto the female love object in a love triangle.

For all Dowell’s attempts to take Edward’s place he does not really manage it: “If I had had the courage and virility and possibly also the physique of Edward Ashburnham I should, I fancy, have done much what he did” (Ford 168). Here, Dowell is shown to set up a range of conditions which differentiate himself from Edward and simultaneously excuse his failed emulation and praise the qualities of Edward. Dowell writes: “In my fainter sort of way
I seem to perceive myself following the lines of Edward Ashburnham” (157). The uncertainty in the words fainter sort of way connotes that Dowell is aware that his attempts to imitate Edward are not successful. Moreover, the fact that Dowell is the owner of Bramshaw Manor and has, in a sense, flourished rather puts him in the category of the slightly deceitful, and not among the passionate along with Edward and Nancy. Even though Dowell is the new owner of Bramshaw he remains an American outsider in an English country house, fainter than his predecessor and still a nursemaid, and not lover, to the beautiful girl. Although Dowell is a bleak copy of Edward, he nonetheless perpetuates established gender power relations: as the new (male) landowner of a country house (with a patriarchal line of heritage behind it) and as the new guardian of Nancy. Hoffman writes that Dowell “colonizes” Edward’s position as landlord as well as his identity through the “autobiographical act” of narration (46), a term which is strongly associated with masculinity as dominance. Although the death of Edward may seem like the end of masculinity, the values of masculinity as dominance are perpetuated by Dowell’s attempts to emulate and mimic Edward.

In Women in Love, Gerald is described as a “real” man in contrast to “half men” like Birkin (Lawrence 74). However, the expected fate of the so called real man is rather grim. After Gerald has rejected an offer to swear a blood oath with Birkin, it is as if the latter receives a premonition of what is going to happen to Gerald:

Birkin was looking at Gerald all the time. He seemed now to see, not the physical, animal man, which he usually saw in Gerald, and which usually he liked so much, but the man himself, complete, and as if fated, doomed, limited. This strange sense of fatality in Gerald, as if he were limited to one form of existence, one knowledge, one activity, a sort of fatal halfness, which to himself seemed wholeness … It was the insistence on the limitation which so bored Birkin in Gerald. Gerald could never fly away from himself, in real indifferent gaiety. (Lawrence 186-87)

An important aspect in this quote is that of the gaze since the narration is often focused on Gerald’s impressions and thoughts. Here, however, Birkin is the observer and subject while Gerald is the passive object. Subtly, the power balance has shifted. Birkin’s notion that he sees “the man himself” in Gerald and not the “physical, animal man, which he usually saw”
(186) implies that Birkin sees through a performance of physical maleness. The words *fated*, *doomed*, *limited*, and *fatality* certainly provide an imagery of death and finality associated with Gerald. Furthermore, the phrase *limited to one form of existence, one knowledge, one activity, a sort of fatal halfness, which to himself seemed wholeness* indicates that Birkin perceives Gerald as unable or unwilling to adapt or change. Especially the repetition of the word *one* stresses the limited mode of Gerald’s person, actions and knowledge, and that Birkin regards Gerald as incomplete. The word *gaiety* in the last sentence of the quote emphasizes that it is an emotional lack or limitation which Birkin perceives in Gerald.

Birkin’s perception of an emotional limitation in Gerald implies that he sees a flaw in the masculine ideal of rationality as well. This description of Gerald’s limitation – the perceived wholeness – and the emphasis on an emotional lack stands in stark contrast to descriptions of Birkin: “‘Look,’ said the Contessa, in Italian. ‘He is not a man, he is a chameleon, a creature of change’” (84) and in another passage it is his “quick-changing warmth” and “quick interchange of feelings” that are highlighted (53), in yet another passage he is indirectly referred to as a “sensitive man” (264). Unlike Gerald, Birkin is characterized by his ability to change and his feelings are emphasized. As the sensitive, clever, changing man, Birkin corresponds to another male stereotype: the melancholic man, who is associated with sensitivity, creativity and intellect (Radden 40). This stereotype is reflected in Sandra Whipple Spanier’s characterization of Birkin as an outsider, “pale and poetic, coolly observing human activity from the sidelines” (59). This status as an outsider, along with Birkin’s rejection of “the social codes that constitute Gerald’s status as a ‘big man’” are seen as factors which make “him a serious candidate for the new man” (Strychacz 187). As a melancholic stereotype and outsider who rejects the codes of rationality and capitalism, Birkin gains intellectual as well as spiritual status and can attribute new values to, for example, emotions. From his position, Birkin is able to negotiate and act out his masculinity on other terms than Gerald.

Another aspect which is seen to qualify Birkin as the new man is that he “speaks most successfully” for his perfect union, which will restore the relationship between men and women (Strychacz 187), and Birkin is indeed an emphatic advocate of essentialist views on gender: “Why should we consider ourselves, men and women, as broken fragments of one whole? It is not true. We are not broken fragments of one whole. Rather we are the singling away into purity and clear being, of things that were mixed” (Lawrence 180). Here, Birkin first evokes an image of two parts of a whole, who only receive meaning together, but immediately revokes it. Instead, he claims, men and women were mixed, a word which
Sperens 28

connotes a blend of components which carry meaning on their own. The use of the words *purity* and *clear* denote a positive value in this separation of the sexes and the word *being* denotes the core entity or essence of a person. According to Birkin, men and women need to “single away” from each other in order to achieve pure manhood and womanhood. This correlates with Weininger’s use of the word *taint* as a pejorative description of perceived femininity in men (qtd. in Rousseau 23). In this way, the portrayal of Birkin “leads back via a different route to the hegemony of the ‘pure man’” (Strychacz 187). The rationality and physical dominance of Gerald are simply exchanged with Birkin’s spirituality, quick-changing moods and essentialist views on gender. The regime of the hero-capitalist is replaced by that of the melancholic philosopher.

Although Gerald corresponds to the ideals about the soldier-hero and is a successful industrial magnate, it is the sensitive, quick-changing Birkin who survives. Even if it seems as though Gerald’s death is an elegy over lost manhood and the taking over of half-men such as Birkin, it is not. From his position as outsider, Birkin can critique and renegotiate the ideals of rationality which govern Gerald, and thus be interpreted as the new man. Furthermore, as an essentialist who promotes essential maleness and femaleness, Birkin perpetuates ideals of a true core of masculinity.

The progression of masculinities in *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love* does not end with the deaths of Edward and Gerald. In fact, Dowell and Birkin perpetuate masculine ideals and uphold male hegemony: Dowell through his emulation of Edward and thereby the ideals which Edward represents; Birkin through his essentialist views on gender and through his opposition to Gerald, which positions him as an outsider who can redefine his own masculinity. Birkin’s emphasis on emotions corresponds to some extent with the depiction of Edward as an emotional sentimentalist and, in a sense, we have come full circle. In these texts, masculinity shifts and changes. Nevertheless, the same qualities which can be deemed emasculate in one era can be re-evaluated as masculine in another, while others are idealized in memory. Male hegemony, therefore, changes but endures in *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love*.

**Between Friends and Comrades**

In *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love* social codes surrounding masculinity in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century prevent the male characters from forming emotionally intimate friendships and from expressing emotional affection. The late Victorian and Edwardian view on masculinity and friendship between men affect how the characters in
the two texts relate to each other and how they regard their friendship. At several points throughout The Good Soldier Dowell refers to an occasion when Edward confined in him. For example:

   Anyhow, it burst out of him on that horrible night. And then, next morning, he took me over to the Assizes and I saw how, in a perfectly calm and business-like way, he set to work to secure a verdict of not guilty for a poor girl, … He spent two hundred pounds on her defence... Well, that was Edward Ashburnham. (Ford 26)

The phrase *Anyhow, it burst out of him on that horrible night* indicates that both Edward and Dowell’s participation in the situation was somewhat involuntary. The word *burst* connotes something internal which wells out uncontrollably, and stresses Dowell’s perception that Edward was not in control of himself that night. The word *horrible* further emphasizes Dowell’s negative experience of the conversation. The actual scene, however, is not narrated until the very last few pages of the novel:

   He lay there for a long time, looking along the line of his knees at the fluttering fire, and then suddenly, in a perfectly calm voice, and without lifting his eyes, he said: ‘I am so desperately in love with Nancy Rufford that I am dying of it.’ Poor devil—he hadn’t meant to speak of it. But I guess he just had to speak to somebody and I appeared to be like a woman or a solicitor. He talked all night. (Ford 165)

Here, Dowell’s impression that Edward’s outburst is involuntary is emphasized by the words *he hadn’t meant* and *he just had to speak with somebody*. However, this sense of involuntariness is contrasted with *he talked all night*, and Edward’s perfectly calm voice, which implies control. Edward’s actual behaviour thus stands in contrast to Dowell’s depictions of an uncontrollable outburst. In the first quote, the account of Edward’s private life is immediately contrasted with a description of Edward in his public function as landlord. However, Dowell lessens the discrepancy between public and private with the words “Well, that was Edward Ashburnham” (26), which tie the two accounts together. Dowell, according
to Henstra, is unable or unwilling to make a distinction between Edward’s private life and his public life, and functions as a critique of a society which “equat[es] public function with inner life” (181). This certainly seems to be the case since Dowell claims that Edward is “a splendid fellow—along at least the lines of his public functions. … For there are not any other lines that count” (Ford 71). Here, Dowell enforces his view that Edward is a good chap because he is a good soldier by stressing that the public functions are the only ones that count. Thereby Dowell equates Edward’s public functions with the personal quality splendid in order to describe Edward as a person. However, there is a trace of doubt, implied by the words at least, that there might be other lines than the public ones. Dowell’s conviction that Edward is a splendid fellow because of his functions as landlord and soldier is definitely tested on the night of the “outburst,” when Edward reveals his private emotions to Dowell – Edward’s immoral desire for his ward Nancy (165).

Even so, Dowell’s equation of Edward’s private life and his public functions connects Edward with Cole’s definition of camaraderie (470). As landlord and, especially, as soldier Edward belongs to national structures of loyalty and represents these corporate affiliations. In addition, Reeser claims that nationalism can be seen as another form of “triangular relation” where the common body of desire is the nation (174), especially in societies where only men are allowed to vote. This correlates to De Angelis’s definition of the love triangle where “an individual, force or object” can constitute the object of desire for the two rivals (425). With this looser definition of the love triangle, camaraderie can be interpreted as another type of triangle where the common object of desire is the group or a cause. Both men can thereby escape the suspicion of being seen as effeminate or indecent. This kind of impersonal loyalty was encouraged in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras (Cole 475) while emotional intimacy between men was seen with suspicion (Connell 196). This would also contribute to Dowell’s experience of Edward’s revelation of his inner life as horrible. Moreover, since intimate friendships as well as feelings were regarded as fields in which women were seen to have greater capacity than men (Dixon “Comrades and Lovers” 03:34-03:51), the emotional intimacy between Edward and Dowell is perilously unmanly. Dowell solves the situation by (once again) comparing himself to a woman or a solicitor, which implies a professional distance or that the conversation is not between two men. Thus, Dowell avoids the awkward situation of two men in a conversation about intimate matters.

The scene where Edward conveys his emotions to Dowell is not an example of friendship as mutual individual affection. Rather, it emphasizes how conflicted Dowell is about the situation since the emotional intimacy between Edward and himself challenges the
contemporary ideals of camaraderie as an accepted mode of friendship between men. Thus, conventions about male behaviour and an ideal of male friendship as impersonal, group loyalty prevent Dowell and Edward from forming an emotionally close relationship.

The effects of these masculine ideals are even clearer in *Women in Love*, which is seen in the first extensive description of the friendship between Birkin and Gerald:

There was a pause of strange enmity between the two men that was very near to love. It was always the same between them; always their talk brought them into a deadly nearness of contact, a strange, perilous intimacy which was either hate or love, or both. They parted with apparent unconcern, as if their going apart were a trivial occurrence. And they really kept it to the level of trivial occurrence. Yet the heart of each burned from the other. They burned with each other, inwardly. This they would never admit. They intended to keep their relationship a casual free-and-easy friendship, they were not going to be so unmanly and unnatural as to allow any heartburning between them. They had not the faintest belief in deep relationship between men and men, and their disbelief prevented any development of their powerful but suppressed friendliness.

(Lawrence 32)

In this quote, the contrast between strong emotional words and words like *casual, trivial* and *free-and-easy*, creates a tension between internal homosocial desire and external societal expectations to act masculine. The first part of this quote is accentuated by seemingly dichotomous words like *love*, *hate*, *deadly nearness* and *perilous intimacy*, all of which connote strong emotions. The words *deadly* and *perilous* strongly emphasize the threatening situation that the intimacy entails to the characters at this stage of the novel. This emotionally charged passage is followed by the apparent unconcern of their parting. The word *apparent* in combination with *as if their going apart* indicates how this triviality is an act, a performance from the two characters. The words *this they would never admit* further emphasize that the unconcern is feigned in order to conceal the strong emotions between them. This correlates with the Edwardian notion of intimate friendships as feminine, and in the quote above, as in *The Good Soldier*, emotional intimacy between men is affected by Edwardian views that male
friendship is too closely connected to the feminine or homosexual Other. This is further emphasized by the words *unmanly* and *unnatural* to depict Gerald and Birkin’s conception of the feelings they have for each other. The last sentence of the quote even states directly that this disbelief in intimate friendship between men is what hinders Gerald and Birkin from developing their relationship. Thus, Lawrence clearly depicts how codes of masculinity inhibit the characters’ ability to express and develop their friendship.

A significant prerequisite for the friendship between Gerald and Birkin is that they keep it free-and-easy, and a key aspect of hegemonic masculinity in the Victorian and Edwardian period was independence. For instance, the presupposition of an economically independent or physically dominant citizen was intrinsic to discourses on political enfranchisement, military power and economic power (Rose 135 and 145; Brady 120). In Birkin and Gerald’s relationship, freedom is achieved through the appearance of triviality and polarized with the heartburning between them. To admit strong feelings, thus, is to give up independence. However, as I discussed above, Birkin is referred to as a sensitive character and associated with feelings in *Women in Love*, which becomes clearer later in the text when he discovers that he wants an additional perfect union with a man and not just with a woman:

‘You know how the old German knights used to swear a *Blutbruderschaft*, … we ought to swear to love each other, you and I, implicitly, and perfectly, finally, without any possibility of going back on it.’ He looked at Gerald with clear, happy eyes of discovery. … His [Gerald’s] face shone with a certain luminous pleasure. He was pleased. But he kept his reserve. He held himself back … ‘We’ll leave it till I understand it better,’ he said, in a voice of excuse. (Lawrence 186).

It is clear that Birkin no longer finds a “deep relationship between men and men” to be unmanly and unnatural, as he did at the beginning of *Women in Love* (32), since what he suggests is definitely an example of personal love and affection between himself and Gerald. This is stressed by Birkin’s emphatic use of *you and I* in order to underscore what he means with the pronoun *we*. In fact, the relationship which Birkin suggests correlates with Cole’s definition of friendship as “individualized relations of amity or love” (470), and, as such, it is an evident request for an intimate relationship. As a twenty-first-century reader it is all too easy to apply modern, polarised conceptions of sexuality and read Birkin’s exclamation as a
marriage proposal or declaration of homosexual love – due to the words *swear to love each other* followed by *implicitly, perfectly and finally*, which have strong connotations to ideas about marriage where the two parties swear to love each other for the rest of their lives. However, that would not be an accurate interpretation of the text in its Edwardian context since the term homosexuality was seen differently then (Dixon “Comrades and Lovers” 09:27-09:38). Also, the reference to the German knights carries associations to asexual bonds of loyalty and love between men. It correlates with the medieval tradition of brothers in arms, or “wedded” brothers (Bray 91) and a time when marriage was not the only voluntary relationship sealed by an oath or ritual (93-94). However, a common denominator for these kinships between knights is a feudal, Christian context whereas Birkin’s oath lacks a cause to gather round or a lord to pledge allegiance to. Therefore, it is an example of intimate friendship rather than camaraderie. Gerald’s response to Birkin’s request is contradictory. The words *pleasure* and *pleased* clearly indicate that Gerald appreciates the idea on some level but, even so, he chooses to remain unbound by an emotional pledge to another. When Birkin is rebuffed he tones down the aspects of emotional intimacy: “‘You must tell me what you think, later. You know what I mean? Not sloppy emotionalism. An impersonal union that leaves one free’” (Lawrence 186). Firstly, the pejorative *sloppy emotionalism* stands in contrast to the word *love*, which Birkin used earlier, and downplays the importance of emotion. Secondly, Birkin’s allusion to an impersonal union emphasizes camaraderie and impersonal group loyalty over personal affection. The impersonality in this union also stands in contrast to the specificity of the earlier *you and I*. Thirdly, Birkin emphasizes the word *free* as a positive consequence of the union. As I wrote above, the appearance of triviality and a free-and-easy relationship were prerequisites for friendship to both characters at the beginning of the novel, and here Birkin’s use of the word *free* refers back to these conditions. All in all, when Birkin’s request to form a close relationship with Gerald is rejected he returns to references to more accepted modes of male friendships, based on freedom and impersonal loyalty.

Victorian and Edwardian ideals of masculinity impose themselves on the friendships in *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love*. Both texts depict how emotional closeness is interpreted as threatening to one or both of the characters in the relationship since emotional intimacy between men is seen as unmanly. Another similarity is that in both novels an impersonal, more distanced mode of friendship between the male characters is favoured. This correlates both to the definition of masculinity as freedom as well as to the concept of camaraderie as an accepted mode of friendship between men in the Edwardian era. Even
when Birkin is portrayed to reach out in an attempt to form an intimate friendship he refers back to impersonal commitments to mitigate his earlier emphasis on emotions. In these ways, external codes of masculine behaviour prevent and inhibit the characters in *Women in Love* and *The Good Soldier* from forming and expressing emotional intimacy.

**Conclusion**

In this text, I have argued that *The Good Soldier* and *Women in Love* portray how hegemonic masculinity in Edwardian Britain changed from masculinity as dominance to include masculinity as expertise as well, and that these masculinities are bolstered in the texts by the comparison to an emasculated male Other. To begin with, I have discussed how Edward Ashburnham represents ideals about masculinity connected to masculinity as dominance through his public roles as landlord and soldier. As landlord, Edward represents aristocratic social structures and ideals ranging back to the seventeenth century, and as a soldier he is affiliated with national systems of domination in the form of imperialism. I have also shown how Gerald represents both older ideals of dominance and newer ideals of expertise and rationality. Unlike the generation before him, Gerald does not value his workers as individuals but rationalizes them, and himself, into cogs in a machinery, which derive value after how well they fulfil their function. Gerald is also connected to the soldier-hero ideal which links him to state systems of domination. Additionally, I have discussed how the masculinities of Edward and Gerald are buttressed through the comparisons to Dowell and Birkin as relational Others. In both texts, Dowell and Birkin are categorized as ‘not man’ in comparison to the manlier Edward and Gerald, and Edward and Gerald are sexualized while Dowell and Birkin are not. The differentiation between the characters is thus a process of othering where Dowell and Birkin are compared to Gerald and Edward in order to define and bolster the latter’s masculine identity. Furthermore, I have shown that even though the deaths of Edward and Gerald may seem like the symbolic end of masculinity, and the taking over of effeminate Others, they are not. Both Dowell and Birkin perpetuate masculine ideals, either by emulation of the older ideals or by redefining the terms of masculinity. Lastly, I have discussed how Victorian and Edwardian conceptions of masculinity and male friendship impact and inhibit the relationships between the characters in the texts. In both texts, the more impersonal form of commitment to a group, camaraderie, is portrayed as favoured over affectionate friendships between individuals. Victorian and Edwardian notions of emotional intimacy as emasculating and inhibiting to the man’s freedom prevent the characters from forming and expressing
affectionate friendships, with the exception of Birkin who still returns to references to impersonal friendships and freedom when he is rejected by Gerald.

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