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## **Naturalism in Ford Maddox Ford's the Good Soldier**

**Graduation Research Paper**

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I, ..... hereby declare that this is my work, and I have properly cited all the references used in preparing this graduation research paper.

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## Abstract

Naturalism as a philosophical concept originally dates all the way back to the ancient Greek philosophers, till in 19<sup>th</sup> century it slowly becomes more concisely formulated as an upshot of Darwin's discovery of the theory of evolution. By which the field of science was stripped of its idealistic, supernatural, metaphysical and absolute notion of being. Later on, the basic tenet of this theory started to circumscribe other fields of study like philosophy, economy, politics, sociology, anthropology as well as literature. However, Naturalism as a literary theory was first introduced by the French author Emile Zola in his famous essay named *The Experimental Novel* in (1880). He generated a scientific observation with an objective representation of life through literary works. It projects an environmental and a hereditary impact onto the character's lives and actions. Thus, this research project endeavors to analyze the most fundamental principles of Naturalism in the Novel *The good soldier* by Ford Maddox Ford (1915). The study commences, in the first section by illuminating the Historical and literary background of the study of Naturalism. Then within the same section a brief illustration of Naturalism's basic components, namely, determinism, objectivism, and pessimism is being presented. The last section of the paper, section two, is where the fundamental constituents of naturalism are going to be analyzed, interpreted and illustrated in the text of the novel *The Good Soldier*. Hence, the examination prepared, will shed light on basic elements of the theory of Naturalism by providing and demonstrating reflective excerpts from the given text.

**Keywords: The Good Soldier, Naturalism**

# **Section One: Introduction**

## **1.1 A Historical and a literary background of the study of Naturalism**

Naturalism in philosophy originally stemmed from ancient Greek philosophers, where it was typically used to denote the operations of nature independent of any supernatural forces or rather it was used as a practical method to live in accordance with one's nature. Among the Greek thinker Thales (c.624–c.546 BC) has been called the first naturalist, because he argued that the entire universe was composed of a physical substance, water. Thales's significance resides in the essential question he raises about what is the fundamental one substance behind the appearance of reality. (Pratt, 1939, pp.19-20). And it is precisely this question together with his discontent with mythical theories surrounding this topic that aligns him with the philosophy of Naturalism. This is to say, his chief concern is with reason and empirical investigation. Later on other Greek thinkers like Democritus (c.460–c.370 BC), Lucretius (99–55 BC), and others followed Thales's path, theorizing a world composed of tiny particles and atoms. Once again, given the common element among these theories, and the reason why they can be called naturalistic, is due to their exclusion of the gods or other supernatural and divine forces in their conceptual understanding of the universe. Now in keeping with this outlook, the overarching definition of Naturalism has hitherto been generated as: Naturalism implies the rejection of the super-natural, and thus the renunciation of the metaphysical claims of religions, which postulate the existence of an abstract, beyond the world of appearance being who nonetheless intervenes in human affairs. (Giere, 2017, pp. 213-222.)

During the enlightenment era, the French Philosopher Rene Descartes, embarked upon a quest for attaining absolute certainty of knowledge by employing skepticism as much as possible so that one could search for certain foundations from which to secure a firm and undeniable basis for philosophical thought. In other words, finding a building block on which more infallible ideas can be built. On this account, he started out by employing his renowned Method of Doubt. It involved repudiating any piece of knowledge as flat out to be false if it can be subjected to minutest

possibility of doubt: “But because I wished at that time to concentrate on the pursuit of truth, I came to think that I should do the exact opposite and reject as completely false everything in which I could detect least doubt, in order to see anything thereafter remained in my belief that was completely indubitable”. (Descartes, 2006, p. 28).

This had a very positive and optimistic ramification upon the world and human ability in regards to scientific discovery, especially since it was propagated on the assumption that the whole world is a machine, and each constituent of this mechanical operations can ultimately be discovered and explained by exerting, as Descartes would call it, the right scientific methods in his famous work *Meditation on First Philosophy*, (Descartes, 1641, pp. X-11-60-147). This idea took the scientific era by storm in almost all fields of scientific discovery, till it lastly culminated with the Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*. In this work, the first full-fledged Naturalistic analysis of the world was being posited. Darwin presented a theory of the essence of how human beings, animals and plants gradually through a long period of time, develop certain means of survival by which it is necessary for them to ward off other beings that are there to fight over the space and resources of the other. One of the main proponents of the Theory of Evolution is Heredity. He maintained that all living beings are in a constant flux of change at every level of their composite, and that their present form, is the result of a long period of modification and adaptations, at which living beings through hereditary mechanisms, pass their useful traits onto their descendants for the sake of survival. The quote “*Survival of the fittest*” is what really captures the concept of heredity, which means that not the strongest but the ones who adapt themselves the most to the environment can win the awards of survival. Or as he elsewhere states: “the Nature does not grant an indefinite period; if any one species does not become modified and improved in a corresponding degree with its competitors, it will be exterminated.” (Darwin, 1956, p. 31).

Hitherto, Naturalism has been discussed in the field of science. However in literature, Naturalism was first introduced by the French novelist (Emile Zola), who in his famous essay named, *The Experimental Novel*, generated a scientific method to represent reality as objective as possible through literary works. Zola has based this essay on another contemporary essay as a solid foundation for his own, called, *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* (1865) by (Claude Bernard). Bernard wanted to disengage medicine from art and instead, to inaugurate it into science. Him, being one of the descendants of 19<sup>th</sup> century, and thus was under the impact of

Darwin's conceptualization of heredity and environmental causes, distinguished between the conditional causations of inanimate and animate objects, which is that in the former case there is only one condition of causation, which is external. Whereas in the latter case there are two, that is, both internal and external causations. Furthermore, he indicated the evolution of the human mind which consists of three stages, "first, feelings alone, dominated reason, created the truths of faith, that is to say theology. Reason or philosophy becoming afterwards the mistress, brought forth scholasticism. Finally, experiment, that is to say the study of natural phenomena, taught man that the truths of the exterior world were to be found formulated, in the first place, neither in reason nor in feeling" (Zola 1893, p.34). But rather objective truth can be attained only through the combination of these three things, namely, feelings, reason and experiment. By a similar token Zola, follows the footsteps of Bernard by which he attempts to initiate novel into science, as he states, "we have experimental chemistry and medicine; we shall have an experimental physiology, and later on an experimental novel" (Zola, 1839, p.16). He claims that novelists are the analyzers of humans, who make use of the laws of passions and thoughts of humans in order to conduct an experiment upon it by which one can ultimately determine the nearest causes of these things. This pertains to implementing characters, plots and settings that are very realistic and that the dynamical effects or actions which takes place as the plot unfolds, are solely driven and determined by natural forces. Concerning these forces, Emile Zola by following Darwin and Claude Bernard, distinguishes between two types of deterministic impacts, namely, interior and exterior. The former represents hereditary causes, human instincts, emotions and passions, while the latter stands for the environment, religious beliefs, politics, economics and certain institutions which shape and construct each individual's attitudes towards life. Or as the American literary naturalists maintained by adopting Darwinian theories and Zola's experimental novel that: "Humans are therefore not distinct from animals and are apt to revert to primitive behavior, to what Zola calls the human beast. (Tandt, 2005). Accordingly, while Zola takes the study of the mechanisms of the organs "thought and passions" of man by the novelist into consideration, nonetheless he emphasizes the fact that these are not produced in an autonomous and self-caused manner: "Man is not alone; he lives in society, in a social condition; and consequently, for us novelists, this social condition unceasingly modifies the phenomena. Indeed our great study is just there, in the reciprocal effect of society on the individual and the individual in society" (Zola, 1893, p.20). He observes that the experimental novel as a specific form literature is emancipated from much

illusionary and supernatural belief which was characteristic of classics, and more importantly it functions as a reaction against the preceding novelists like the idealists as well as the Romanticists. His fundamental objection to his predecessors is based on the philosophical question arising out human's psychological need for fulfillment in regards to unraveling the underlying causes of all things in the world. Zola, asserts that, contrary to idealistic writers, he dispenses with the so called unattainable, though a very important question (why) something is the case or occurring in a particular manner, and instead, he limits himself only to the question of "how" a particular phenomena takes place. In light of this account he asserts:

Our work is to go from the known to the unknown, to make ourselves masters of nature; while the idealistic novelists deliberately remain in the unknown, through all sorts of religious and philosophical prejudices, under the astounding pretense that the unknown is nobler and more beautiful than the known. Let it be well understood that I'm speaking of the "how" of things and not if the "why." For an experimental savant, the ideal which he is endeavoring to reduce, the indeterminate, is always restricted to the how. (Zola, 1893, pp. 27-38)

At a first glance at this, it may seem to be of less promising than the idealistic approach. However, Zola by the so called known and the unknown he means that this world of phenomena, and the other abstract or the metaphysical realm which he believes is completely incomprehensible and impossible to grasp without recourse to some prejudicial and the incredible claim of possessing a supernatural means of knowledge-acquirement. Now upon this interpretation, the experimental novel is in fact bearing much more legitimate fruits than the preceding idealistic ones, for it lays its hands only on that which can scientifically be demonstrated, and dispensing itself with the pompous claim of attaining the knowledge of the unknown. And it is precisely in keeping with this view, that one could detect and outline the exercising impacts of each character or phenomenon on the subsequent ones and by which at its core, confers upon the whole story a somewhat pessimistic outlook. Given that their lives are ultimately at hands of the indifferent, unsympathetic and apathetic force of nature.



## **1.2 A brief analysis of naturalism's basic components:**

### **1.2.1. Objectivism:**

Objectivism in literary naturalism relies on detailed and precise observation of external reality, including physical environments, social conditions, and human behavior. Authors attempt to present accurate and objective descriptions of the world based on empirical evidence and observation. It involves maintaining a detached or impersonal perspective towards the subject matter. They strive to present events and characters objectively, without imposing their own moral judgments, beliefs, or biases onto the narrative (Zola, 1839). It can also be influenced by scientific theories and methods, particularly those of biology, psychology, and sociology. They may infuse scientific principles and terminology into their works to provide a more objective analysis of human behavior and society. This is to say that their primary concern is objective facts about society, and to depict them as factually as possible. That is why, even if there seems to be a social agenda taking place within the text, such as concerning politics, economics, religions and so on, it rather proves the social upheaval of the actual real world which it endeavors to replicate rather than the assumption that the naturalist writer purposefully trying to render the text as a vehicle of propaganda and change. A notable example of objectivism in naturalistic literature is Zola's novel *Germinal* (1885) which explores the lives of coal miners in France and the harsh working conditions they endure. His detailed descriptions of the mining industry and the lives of the miners reflect his objectivist approach, presenting the realities of their existence without romanticizing or moralizing.

### **1.2.2. Determinism:**

Within the definition of Naturalism, that is to say, everything that truly exists in the universe is subject to the laws of physics. Hence accordingly, every effect is traceable to the nearest cause. (Zola, 1893). It corresponds to the idea that everything which we can observe, has ultimately a precedent cause for its coming about. Or in other words, Determinism is the claim that the natural laws and the way in which things are at a particular period of time determines the way things will be in the future. (Loewer, 2008, p.p 327-330.). It nullifies the notion of free-will that each individual is independent and a free agent, which it implies, that anything the individual does, is solely originating from the individual itself. Here the individual alone is the center or the cause of all his/her actions and passions. However, Determinism rejects this notion and instead asserts that life of each person is fundamentally and to a great extent predetermined by both external and internal incentives (Harris, 2012). And that's what renders the characters of a Naturalistic literary work to be helpless and be possessive of no real power at the face of their fate.

### **1.2.3. Pessimism:**

In an ordinary sense, Pessimism is an attitude, or perhaps a trait, wherein a person overemphasizes the adversities or misfortunes of life. Pessimists expect things to turn out badly and approach the world with much precaution: "It is the view that the bad prevails the good relative to values and states of affairs in which one is personally invested" (Prescott, 2012). Accordingly, upon this presupposition, it forms theories and understandings about the world, views which are deeply aligned with the Naturalistic approach towards the realm of ontologically. Pessimists believe that human beings are inherently flawed and that society is fundamentally flawed as well. They see life as a constant struggle against adversity, with little hope for meaningful improvement or progress. Hence, when this philosophical stance has been brought up to literature, it functions as one of the outstanding facets of Naturalism which it can be noticed even at the very surface of

a naturalistic novel. For instances, often times the setting is constituted in way in which it exposes us to sordid and filthy atmosphere, imbued with disease, and poverty. The characters of a naturalist novel is exposed to a very sordid environment, face insurmountable obstacles and experience disillusionment and despair. It reflects a bleak or a cynical view of human existence and society and it further provides a substantial proof of the tragic outcome resulting from the deterministic operation on life as it has been explained before. It arises from the recognition of the harsh realities of life, including suffering, injustice, and the struggle for survival. This perspective is expressed in literature, and very clearly in Zola's *Germinal* (1885). In that novel, Zola portrays the miners' struggle for survival in the face of poverty, exploitation, and oppression. The working-class characters in are depicted as victims of the ruthless capitalist system, which prioritizes profit over human welfare. They endure long hours of grueling labor in perilous and unhealthy conditions, with little hope for improvement or escape from their plight.

## **Section Two: analysis**

### **2.1. The environmental and hereditary determinism as a leading factor in determining characters actions:**

The novel "*The Good Soldier*" delves deeply into the concept of both hereditary and environmental determinism, examining the complex relationships among its characters and their lack of self-agency in regards to shaping their own destinies. Instead of being in control of their lives, the characters are depicted as being bound by predetermined circumstances beyond their control. They, from an evolutionary standpoint, are driven by instinctive desires and emotions inherited from the long trajectory of causal processes of evolution which is also supplemented by their current circumstances as well as their childhood upbringing. Consequently, these characters with a concoction air of melancholy and lunacy, succumb to the malicious instincts

ingrained in their souls, which are slowly consumed by it, resulting in tragic ends. For example, Edward Ashburnham's crave for sex and obsession with finding the perfect women despite of already having a wife named, Leonora, and without any reservation whatsoever commits many adulterous relationships, is like a feather being thrown into a whirlwind, who seems to have no control of over his surroundings nor upon himself:

*But just to think of that poor wretch..... I, who have surely the right, beg you to think of that poor wretch. It is possible that such a luckless devil should be so tormented by blind and inscrutable destiny? There's no priest that has the right to tell me that I must not ask pity for him, from you, silent listener, beyond the hearth, from the world, or from the God who created in him those desires, those madnesses..."(GS, 35)*

The above excerpt is uttered by the narrator, named John Dowell, while reflecting on an incident in which Edward hugged and kissed an unfamiliar girl on a train by the name of Kilsyte, after noticing that the girl was crying. This of course, resulted in him being charged and end up in court to pay the due amount of retribution. This is just one of the many examples where Edward lost control over himself and yielded to his instinctual drives. This explains Edward's blind instincts at the sight of a tender woman whose state seems to call for emotional support. But considering his social position, it is important not to conflate him with some psychopath whose mere concern is to satiate his own egoistical sexual desires and fantasies, and being completely indifferent to others people's well-being and more importantly, towards his own wife. Because he is, first of all, a soldier, a magistrate, and a landlord, who is in his right mind very much concerned with his public image, and who has a stern believe in conventional values due to his careful upbringing by his mother. Here Dowell further reflects on this incident:

*I have said that the Kilsyte case eased the immediate tension for him and Leonora. It let him see that she was capable of loyalty to him; it gave her chance and to show that in kissing the girl, he wasn't trying to do more than administer fatherly comfort to a weeping child. And indeed his own world—including the magistrates—took that view of the case. He had not had the least idea that he was capable of being unfaithful to Leonora. But, in the midst of that tumult—he says that it came suddenly into his head whilst he was in the witness box—in the midst of those august ceremonies of the law there came suddenly into his*

*mind the recollection of the softness of the girl's body as he had pressed her to him. And, from that moment, that girl appeared desirable to him and Leonora completely unattractive. (GS, 112-113).*

But nevertheless, as just being pointed out above, these values which he holds so dear to his heart, are easily thrown out of the window when every time he is placed in a situation where a slight drop of love is a possibility. For just as (Binford, 2005) upon examining the American Literary Naturalism states that Naturalist writers came to the conclusion that: "in the course of deterministic forces out of the control of the individual, humans are often primitive, brutish, animalistic". Edward's hamartia however, as is being demonstrated many times in the novel *The Good Soldier*, is his sentimentality and his lack of emotional intelligence (GS, 109-114-173-183). Also another hereditary deterministic factor about him, is him possessing a weak, ill heart, which he might also had inherited from his ancestors. Though not explicitly mentioned.

The narrator by elaborating on the Kilsyte case points out that the incident on the train happened shortly after Edward's finding his wife cold and unsympathetic (GS, 55), for reasons such as the utter lack of sexual engagement between the two, owing to their strict upbringing. The wife by Catholicism and the husband by his orthodox mother, together with, as it is evident that Edward's abnormal instinctual, that is to say, his internal causal forces which makes him susceptible to yield to any possible romantic affairs that he finds fit; but in addition to these, it is simultaneously true from an environmental (external factors) standpoint for the fact he and her wife had no sexual contact with each other, nay, they hadn't even have any clue how babies were made:

*It will give you some idea of the extraordinary naivete of Edward Ashburnham that, at the time of his marriage and for perhaps a couple years after, he did not really know how children were produced. Neither did Leonora. He was truly grieved at his wife's want of sentiment—at her refusal to receive that amount of public homage from him. She appeared to him to be wanting in imagination—to be cold and hard. He had the very greatest admiration. He admired her for her truthfulness, or her cleanness of mind, and the clean-run-ness of her limbs, for her efficiency, for the fairness of her skin, for the gold of her hair, for her religion, for her sense of duty. It was a satisfaction to take her about him with him. But she had not for him a touch of magnetism. I suppose, really, he did not love her because she was never mournful; what really made him good in life was to comfort somebody who would be darkly and mysteriously mournful. That he had never had to do or Leonora. (GS, 105-102-101)*

It is no surprise that regardless of Edward's tender nature, one cannot fail to detect the degree of aggravation that has been fallen upon him on the side of his adultery, by the inescapable lack of fulfillment in his romantic and sexual life. This, without a doubt had further exacerbated his hunger and proneness towards women, and he carried this inclination to a length that bordered upon madness. Now ironically, just as after the first incident on the train, his wife Leonora sends him to Monte Carlo to relax and to be spared from this turmoil of emotional distress; however while in Monte Carlo, Edward runs up debts gambling and hires a courtesan as a companion by the name of La Dolciquita, who seduces and takes a large amount of money from him. Which it further contributed to the couple's financial ruin. Thus the narrator recalls:

*In anyone less sentimental than Edward that would not have mattered. With Edward it was fatal. For, such was his honorable nature that for him to enjoy a women's favours made him feel that she had a bond on him for life. That was the way it worked out in practice. Psychologically it meant that he could not have a mistress without falling violently in love with her. La Dolciquita liked this reversion, and he passed the night in her bed. When the palpitating creature was at asleep in his arms he discovered that he was madly, was passionately, was overwhelmingly in love with her. It was a passion that had arisen like fire in dry corn. He could think of nothing else; he could live for nothing else. (GS, 114-115)*

This proceeding incidents after the first one as being quoted above, provides the most emphatic assertion of the themes of Naturalism, Determinism and a transparent interplay of cognitive dissonance, where Edward's actions run counter to his beliefs and his self-consciousness by trying to live up as a Victorian gentleman. It is a clash between deep primitive, naturalistic forces and the social, rational conventions, and which upon a little scrutiny, it becomes obvious that the latter is failing miserably to direct and tame the former ones. For it is essential to bear in mind that this novel was written around the very beginning of twentieth century, and it is regarded by many to be the transitional prototype between Victorianism and Modernism. Thereby, Edward functions as the typical ideal of the Victorian gentleman. But with the inevitable ending of the Victorian epoch, he has been clothed with a modern twist which has

made him, despite appearances, not perfect and not to be applauded as the embodiment of that society, but rather a character who falls short of Victorianism and is thoroughly flawed. (Brown, D., Plastow, J., 2006, p. 207).

Hitherto, what have been specifically illustrated were the naturalistic internal forces of determinism. Now let's shed light on the external and environmental factors that have been critically depicted by Leonora. She, unlike her husband, is shaped and influenced by her deep rooted belief in Catholicism and by the domain from which she was brought up, namely, a convent. Throughout her life, she had spiritual counselors from the Catholic Church as her programme in life, by virtue of which she had built an extraordinary tolerance for her husband's adulterous relationships. The narrator delineates that Leonora had learned from these spiritual advisers things such as that: "the lot of women was patience and patience and again patience." And "she was even taught that such excesses in men is natural, excusable—as if they had been children" (GS, 134). It is evident that on account of her religious beliefs, she had made it incumbent upon herself to get her husband back, in an ameliorating condition both financially and morally. That is why after the fact that her husband suffers a financial crisis due to his generosity and his severe sentimentality in his love affairs, so she on his behalf takes all the financial affairs and the accounts of his estates into her own hand alongside with, though strangely enough, voluntarily employing mistresses for her husband. She, despite her stern character, by being under the influence of the church, thought that the greatest glory a catholic women, in an unfaithful world, is to win and maintain the fidelity of her husband to herself by any means necessary. Likewise, John Dowell states:

*But Leonora's English Catholic conscience, her rigid principles, her coldness, even her very patience, were, I cannot help thinking, all wrong in this special case. She quite seriously and naively imagined that the Church of Rome disproves of divorce; she quite seriously and naively believed that her church could be such a monstrous and imbecile institution as to expect her to take on the impossible job of making Edward Ashburnham a faithful husband. Leonora wanted to keep him for—what shall I say—for the good of her church, as it were, to show that catholic women do not lose their men. (GS, 42-70)*

It is unimaginable to think that a women would deliberately embark upon a mission where she has to employ such a means by which supposedly, she can preserve her husband's fidelity to

herself and get his love back, which in truth it was the cause of the main issue in the first place, unless this woman is heavily and excruciatingly under the impact of a certain environmental coercion, which has also turned this exterior force to be infused with her natural and subconscious instincts in order to make it psychologically convenient for her to do so. "She had been drilled—in her tradition, inner upbringing—to keep her mouth shut." (GS, 128). "She had the vague, passionate idea that, when Edward had exhausted a number of other types of women he must turn to her". (p.130) In other words, her surroundings and the orthodox beliefs have been so influential upon her and simultaneously instilled such force in her to a degree that there is a constant battle between her natural mate-guarding instincts and her rationale religious tenets. But contrary to Edward, the exterior impacts are winning over her internal ones. In this regard, (Freud, 1961, P. 11) suggests that every society employs a certain cultural prohibition for its maintenance by means of physical and ideological coercion, and with a due course of development this will be internalized and integrated with human psyche. Hence, owing to Leonora's level of internalization of coercion by religious institutions, she serves as an epitome of the deterministic element of Naturalism. The following excerpts will demonstrate this binary deterministic analysis, given the fact that she voluntarily acquires mistresses for her husband, and yet in the meantime, she's deeply jealous and anxious about it:

*She saw life as a perpetual sex-battle between husbands who desire to be unfaithful to their wives, and wives who desire to recapture their husbands in the end. That was her sad and modest view of matrimony. Man for her, was a sort of brute who must have his divagations, his moments and excess, his nights out, his, let us say, rutting seasons. She had read few novels, so that the idea of a pure and constant love succeeding the sound of wedding bells had never been very much presented to her. She went, numbed and terrified, to the point Mother Superior of her childhood's convent with the tale of Edward's infidelities with the Spanish dancer, and all the old nun, who appeared to her to be infinitely wise, mystic and reverend, had done had been to shake her head and to say:*

*"Men are like that. By the blessing of God it will all come right in the end".*

*All that period she in an agony of jealousy and fear that Edward might really become promiscuous in his habits. (GS, 133-134-129-130).*



## 2.2. The Pessimistic aspects reflected in the characters outcome of their actions:

Upon observing, in the preceding section, the lack of agency in the character's lives, it is only tenable to anticipate of individual decline and a tragic outcome from these wretched, unmanageable and chaotic trajectories onto which they are leading. Three characters end up dead. Two of which by committing suicide, one by a heart attack and another character goes mad.

Starting with one of Edward's mistresses, Maisie Maiden, who just like Edward suffers from a weak heart condition, becomes acquainted with the Ashburnham couple in India after they had visited there to rehabilitate their financial disintegration. Maisie, though is already married to a man by the name of Bunny, decides to travel with them to a health Spa named Nauheim, without knowing that Leonora covered her financial expenses. There, one day Leonora bumps into Maisie while coming out of Edward's room. She, upon witnessing this, bursts into a sudden inexplicable rage out of jealousy and thus slaps Mrs Maisie, which soon after causes her a heart attack. The reason why Leonora brought her back with them to the health spa and financially aided her, was because she naively believed that by recruiting women for Edward as his mistresses he will then soon be annoyed with them and eventually crawl back to his wife:

*She thought that if he could smile again through her agency he might return, through gratitude and satisfied love—to her. At that time she thought that Edward was a person of fleeting passions. And she could understand Edward's passion for Maisie, since Maisie was one of those women to whom other women will allow magnetism. Leonora indeed, imagined that she could manage this affair all right. She had no thought of Maisie's being led into adultery; she imagined that if she could take Maisie and Edward to Nauheim, Edward would see enough of her to get tired of her pretty little chatterings, and if the pretty little motions of her hands and feet. And Leonora imagined that when poor Maisie was cured of her heart and Edward had seen enough of her, he would return to her. (GS, 130)*

Another misfortune is the fact that Edward was not even in the room when Maisie came out: "You understand there was no Edward there. It was then, for the only time of her career,

that Leonora really compromised herself. She exclaimed.... “How frightful!....” Poor little Maisie” (GS, 37).

From a pessimistic lens, her death capsulates character’s sordid fate under the pressures of environment and circumstance, and the focus on forces (both inner and out) beyond the control of theirs. For Maisie’s weak heart as the byproduct of hereditary and biological causation leading her to a place where her weak condition was brought to its culminating degree by being put in such embarrassing and distressing situation, and which was also tragically the result of nothing but pure misunderstanding and wrong timing, is what embodies pessimistic standpoint that the ills and misfortunes of life always prevail it’s conveniences and it’s pleasures.

Another prominent example of this aspect is Edward’s last love, directed at a very young girl, named, Nancy Rufford, which, on account of whom, he takes his own life and she loses her mind over it after she hears about the news of this incident. Nancy was 21, and had lived with the Ashburnham couple ever since she had been of the age of thirteen, when her real parents had been separated owing to their abusive relationship. Considering Edward’s previous affairs, perhaps no Edward’s love affair has ever been less plausible to be successfully achieved than this one, due to many factors as the Narrator remarks: “There was the complication caused by the fact that Edward and Leonora never spoke to each other except when other people were present. Then, as I have said, their demeanours were quite perfect. There was the complication caused by the girl’s entire innocence; there was the further complication that both Edward and Leonora really regarded the girl as their daughter”. (GS, 89). When the narrator declares Nancy’s innocence to be one of the complications is due to her troubled, binary psyche. for John Dowell describes her as being overwhelmingly under the impact of her childhood environment, where she had to suffer a tremendous amount of abuse and trauma and having to live under the harsh and disciplinary condition on account of the catholic church that had caused her to develop a dualistic persona. One of which is just a naïve child, and the other resembles a grown women:

*At one moment she would be talking of the lives of the saints and at the next she would be tumbling all over the lawn with the St Bernard puppy. She could ride the hounds like a Maenad and she could sit for hours perfectly still, steeping handkerchief after handkerchief in vinegar when Leonora had one of her headaches.*

*She was, in short, a miracle of patience who could be almost miraculously impatient. It was, no doubt, the convent training that effected that. I dare say that the miserable nature of her childhood, coming before the mixture of saturnalia and discipline that was her convent life, added something to her queernesses. Her father was a was a violent madman of a fellow, and the first thing that Nancy could remember was seeing her father strike her mother with his clenched fist so that her mother fell over sideways from the breakfast-table and lay motionless. (GS, 89-90-91)*

Due to her abusive and chaotic household during childhood, she sought refuge in the hands of Edward and Leonora, and that's why she thought of them as her own parent or as she would call them uncle and aunt, till of course, she found that Edward was actually in love with her. This is when the successive themes of Naturalism and Pessimism will inevitably come to fruition. For first of all, Edward, despite his parental sentiment towards the girl, he, uncontrollably and with no redeeming quality of reservation, is counteracted by his craving for romantic love. He at the last moments of that relationship becomes completely helpless in his sentimentality and his never-ceasing need for wining women's love and moral support, till he even physically gets worse and worse. While conversing with John Dowell he says: "I am so desperately in love with Nancy Rufford that I am dying of it. (GS, 180) then he continues:

*Doctor Von Hauptman," he said, "has ordered me to go to bed immediately after dinner. My heart's much worse." He continued to look at Leonora for a long time with a sort of heavy contempt. And Leonora understood that with his speech, he was giving her the excuse that she needed for separating him from the girl, and with his eyes he was reproaching her for that thinking he would try to corrupt Nancy. (GS, 95)*

For, once again, given that Edward had always regarded her as his own daughter, but then, as he began to grow more feelings for her, he could not endure the reality that Nancy as actually being his wife. Nor did Nancy thought of that way in any real sense other than as her dad or uncle. His primal and crude desires are as always, in conflict with his social and conventional values, because he didn't want to divorce his wife for another woman, he was not of a vulgar personality, but was instead, extremely weak at maintaining his moral and social approval image. However, shockingly enough, this is the only time where Edward instead of succumbing to his sexual appetites, he finally refuses to have sex with Nancy, and that the only thing he demands of her is to reassure him that she actually loved him no matter what, more. In other words, he was destitute of some platonic and spiritual love. Here as she one night offers herself to him because

Leonora has pleaded her to go to save Edward's life by offering herself to him sexually: "you must save Edward's life; you must save his life. All that he needs is a little period of satisfaction from you. Then he will tire of you as he has of the others." (GS, 174). And at the same time Nancy is inflicted by the same binary clash of both exterior and interior. The former is her being urged by Leonora to sleep with Edward despite the fact that it is a major taboo in her moral framework, while the latter, is her looking up to Edward as if they were biologically related, after living under their surveillance for quite a long time. Despite all of this, she, much earlier had a phone call from her biological mother demanding her to go back her, whom, currently is living on the streets. For what is can be more distressing and bewildering than being a young girl who have experienced cruelty and abuse as a child, growing up in a nunnery, then being asked by the woman who is more than a mother to her, to offer herself sexually to the man whom she thought of as her dad, and lastly after doing that she must go back to India to her biological mom. Eventually, she yields to Leonora's beseeching because she becomes overwhelmed with her natural sense of duty towards her. John Dowell remarks:

*I have told you that the girl came one night to his room. And that was the real hell for him. That was the picture that never left his imagination—the girl, in dim light, rising up at the foot of his bed. And she looked at him with her straight eyes of an unflinching cruelty and she said: "I'm ready to belong to you—to save your life. He answered: "I don't want it; I don't want it; I don't want it". And he says that he didn't want it; that he would have hated himself; that as it was unthinkable thing, not from the physical desire but because of a mental certitude he was certain that if she had once to him she would remain his love for ever. In which Nancy replied with: i can nerve love you now I know what kinda man you are. I will belong to you to save your life. But I can never love you. (GS, 174)*

And it is this last line which drives Edward soon afterwards to kill himself. He was so overcome by the need of women's affection, that upon meeting the dreadful realization of not being loved back by the woman he loved, he preferred not living at all: "To Leonora's eternal question he answered that all he desired in life was that—that he could pick himself together again and go on with his daily occupation if—the girl, being five thousand miles away, would continue to live him. He wanted nothing more, he prayed his God for nothing more". (GS, 173)

This collapse and ruin of an individual, both physically and mentally, due to their innate instinctual passions and their adherence to societal conventions, serve as a disastrous and a hopeless reflection of the themes of naturalism and pessimism in literature. In the realm of literary naturalism, the characters above are evidently the products of their environment, heredity, and social circumstances, with little or perhaps no agency whatsoever to change their fate. Edward, who always succumbed to his primal instincts and Nancy being kneeled down to her societal pressures as well as her feelings being in constant conflict with her overachieving, religious enthusiast, self-awareness mind, both of whom as a result, find themselves trapped in a cycle of self-destructive behavior, unable to break free from the deterministic forces that govern their lives. For Edward engaging in adulterous life as well as Nancy agreeing to do the same thing with him, goes against their very fundamental beliefs and what is to be sacred in their tradition. The Narrator likewise explains: "it was the conventional line; it was in tune with the tradition of Edward's house. I daresay it worked out to the greatest good of the body politic. Conventions and traditions, I suppose, work blindly but surely for the preservation of the normal type; for the extinction of the proud, resolute and unusual individuals. Edward was the normal man, but there was too much of the sentimentalist about him; and society does not need too many sentimentalists. Nancy was a splendid creature, but she had about her a touch of madness."(p'. 171). Thus, it was this very portrayal, the bleak and deterministic worldview of naturalist literature, resulting from innate instincts and societal coercions serves as a powerful testament to the pervasive theme of pessimism, and shedding light on the existential angst and futility that define the human experience. The following excerpt sums up the theme of this last section by indicating that none of the characters really got what wanted:

*Not one of us has got what he really wanted. Leonora wanted Edward, and she got Rodney bayham, a pleasant enough sort of sheep. Florence wanted branshaw, and it was I who have bought it from Leonora. I didn't really want it: what I wanted mostly was to cease being a nurse-attendant. Well, I am a nurse attendant. Edward wanted Nancy Rufford, and I have got her. Only she is mad. It is a queer and fantastic world. Why can't people have what they want? The things were all there to content everybody; yet everybody has the wrong thing. (GS, 171).*

## Conclusion

To conclude, *The Good Soldier*, is a novel where the tenets of Naturalism are being exerted through character presentation by putting emphasis on the predominant deterministic effects of heredity and environment, thereby character's lives are rendered impotent at the brutal exercises of nature. Some of whom were more under the impact of interior causation, such as Edward who was always prone to yield to his passions, desires, and his sexual instincts, resulting in several unsuccessful love affairs till lastly committed suicide. While some others, on the contrary, like Leonora or Nancy, were exponentially susceptible to the yoke of social conventions, and more specifically to the church institution. Their upbringing under these religious milieus had ingrained in them a somewhat distorted dualistic, psychological condition. Consequently, their predetermined dispositions alongside their current social context, inevitably led them to negative and pessimistic outcomes. Leonora by slapping Maisie who was already suffering from heart illness caused her to die. Edward committed suicide after finding himself unable to secure women's moral and romantic affection for his insatiable psychological thirst. Lastly, Nancy's young, sensitive and delicate persona was torn apart at the hands of social vicious pressure. Thus, as it is apparent, that none of these characters had any self-agency in a strict sense of the word. They embody the very basic definition of the three interrelated notions of Naturalism, Determinism and Pessimism. And by virtue of which *The Good Soldier* functions as one of the chief inaugurators of modern literature.

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