Wampum in Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*: A Native American and Modernist Artifact of Place

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Of all the items John Dowell could choose as a keepsake to take with him to Europe in Ford Madox Ford's novel *The Good Soldier* (1915), surely one of the oddest would be his wampum beads. Nevertheless, critics have left unexamined the significance of Dowell's wampum, the Native American record of a land grant for a family farm in what is now Philadelphia. Dowell refers to this item at the outset of his narrative, claiming, "I carry about with me, indeed—as if it were the only thing that invisibly anchored me to any spot upon the globe—the title deeds of my farm, which once covered several blocks between Chestnut and Walnut Streets. These title deeds are of wampum, the grant of an Indian chief to the first Dowell, who left Farnham in Surrey in company with William Penn" (7). One might simply dismiss this reference as Ford's addition of a bit of historical color, something (along with a family link to Penn) to make Dowell's Quaker origins more authentic. Upon closer examination, however, several puzzles present themselves. In this account, the wampum is an unreadable document, describing a place that no longer exists, created by Native Americans for purposes (land transfer, money) historically alien to them. On the other hand, wampum, situated at the intersection of multiple planes of cultural transaction, circulation value, technological progress, and mnemonic inscription, is a material object whose link to physical place made it a remarkably apt instrument with which Ford could exemplify Dowell's perceptions of the observable world. How wampum was known in early twentieth-century Britain, how it came to play this role for Ford, and what this artifact of place means in terms of interpreting *The Good Soldier* are the focus of what follows here.

In order to understand Dowell's peculiar sense of place as a modernist cultural production, it is necessary to construct a preliminary genealogy of this Native American artifact. "Wampum," from "wampumpeag" and associated words, is Algonquian for small white, purple, or black discoidal or cylindrical beads, approximately 6.7mm long and 4.7mm in diameter, made from marine shells found in the coastal waters of New England. Such

beads may have been in use as early as 2500 BC, later sewn together into strands or garments and circulated principally among the Narragansett, Algonquian, and Iroquois. (Scozzari 59-60; Ceci 49). In English, wampum signifies "string of (white) beads," and the term has been extended to the garments into which such strings of beads were assembled.[1]

The first European settlers in America thought of wampum as money, misunderstanding the Natives' evident prizing of the beadwork and imposing alien values of currency on a cultural system based on gift exchange rather than commodity transfer (Snyderman 470-71). Such prominent colonial texts as Roger Williams's *A Key Into the Language of America* (London, 1643) and William Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation* (Boston, 1856) document the colonists' lack of awareness of wampum's many other cultural roles. Strings and belts of wampum were indeed used as legal tender in the American colonies in the seventeenth century and still circulated as such in some areas until the Revolutionary War (Scozzari 64-65; Snyderman 471). As Lois Scozzari has noted, however, Native Americans did not use wampum simply as currency in the narrow way Europeans thought of it. The beads also served as "ornamentations, tribute, ransom for captives, compensation for crimes, presents between friends, prizes for victory in games or sport, fines, incentives to maintain peace or to wage war, payments for services of shamanism, marriage proposals, and, possibly, bribes and rewards for murder[,] [for] burials, and as the insignia of sachems [i.e. Algonquian chiefs]" (60). While Timothy J. Smith has identified forty different native uses for wampum, George S. Snyderman has outlined four main categories of use: as money or a medium of exchange, a symbolic announcement of war or peace, a certificate of trustworthiness, and a mnemonic text (Smith 227-28; Snyderman 469). This last use is the most significant for our purposes, for (as Snyderman indicates) wampum played a crucial textual role in a culture rich in modes of oral communication but without any form of alphabetic writing. As a mnemonic device, wampum permitted the recording of specific events or messages, about both places and events, through pictorial or geometric arrangements of the colored shells (477, 484, 487). Not only did this text encode a particular message, but its presentation embodied a kind of performative speech act, in that the wampum served as a materialized pledge of authenticity or trustworthiness (Scozzari 61).

While non-Natives' lack of understanding of wampum's complexities changed little from colonial times to the late nineteenth century, by the time Ford was composing *The Good Soldier*, public knowledge of wampum's history and functions was expanding significantly. A number of popular documents attest to this trajectory. For example, an 1819 British encyclopedia, which describes wampum as "a sort of shells [. . .] used as money," provided no more indication of wampum's many non-monetary uses than

Roger Williams had in his seventeenth-century description of wampum as exclusively the "Coyne" of the Indians.[2] The same thinking prevails in the 1902 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, which notes how it was "worn for ornaments in strings and belts" but stressed its use as currency. The 1910 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, in contrast, acknowledges a much broader range of functions for which Natives used wampum. While the entry on wampum begins by calling it "the shell-money of the North American Indians," the explanation also includes its exchange rate and the history of its adoption and discontinuation as legal tender in the colonies. This entry, referencing five anthropological sources appearing in the 1880s, reflects a growing awareness of wampum's multiplicity of uses: as adornments, as "symbols of authority or power," and—discussed at the greatest length—as mnemonic textual records open to reading by using specific interpretive techniques.[3]

A number of events may account for this marked expansion of knowledge about wampum and its textual attributes. First, studies of wampum documenting its manifold uses had begun to be published in dramatically increasing numbers in the latter half of the nineteenth century. One listing of works on shell objects identifies over fifty titles published in English between 1705 and 1906, two thirds of which appeared after 1848 (Hodge 909). Second, three wampum belts valued as textual records of an important historical event were in England at this time. These belts were thought to document the 1682 Treaty of Shackamaxon between William Penn and Chief Tamanend of the Lenni Lenape—a Native American tribe also known as the Delaware, part of the Algonquian nation and originally located in the mid-Atlantic region of America. While tradition held that this wampum was involved in the Lenni Lenape tribe's cession of land to Penn, scholars are to this day uncertain of the belts' precise role in that event, exactly how they passed into Penn's hands, or whether indeed it can be stated with certainty that these particular belts were the primary record of that treaty. Nothing written survives to corroborate these details. Nevertheless, references to the belts in subsequent historical accounts invariably perpetuated their traditional association with the 1682 treaty and land cession.

The belts, which became Penn family heirlooms, were kept in Pennsylvania Castle on the island of Portland, England. In 1857 William Penn's great-grandson presented one such belt to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (see Figure 1). Penn's last surviving heir died within a few decades, and in 1887, Pennsylvania Castle was sold along with its historical contents, including two other wampum belts linked to the Treaty of Shackamaxon (see Figures 2 and 3).[4] Although the later sale of the last two belts at an auction by Christie's of London in 1916 apparently surprised at least some American historians, who knew only of the belt in Figure 1, public knowledge of the existence and significance of the first of the three belts had already been established on both sides of the Atlantic ("Museum

Here" 8). Furthermore, this collection of belts is doubly important for our consideration of *The Good Soldier*, because not only were they in England during the novel's composition, but they also record a land transfer not unlike that described by Dowell.

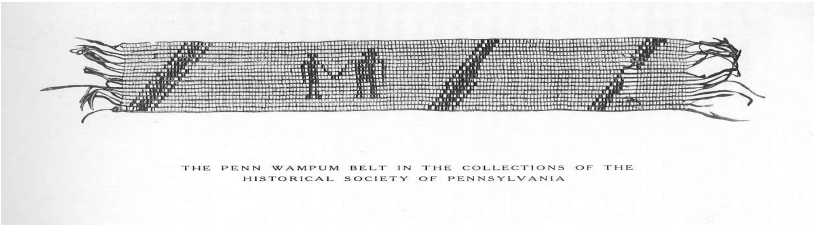

Figure 1: Penn Treaty Belt (First of Three). Reproduced from Frank G. Speck, "The Penn Wampum Belts," *Leaflets of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation* 4 (22 Mar. 1925) plate III.

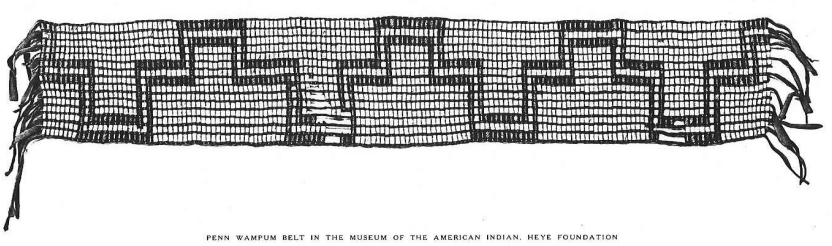

Figure 2: Penn Treaty Belt (Second of Three). Reproduced from Frank G. Speck, "The Penn Wampum Belts" plate I.

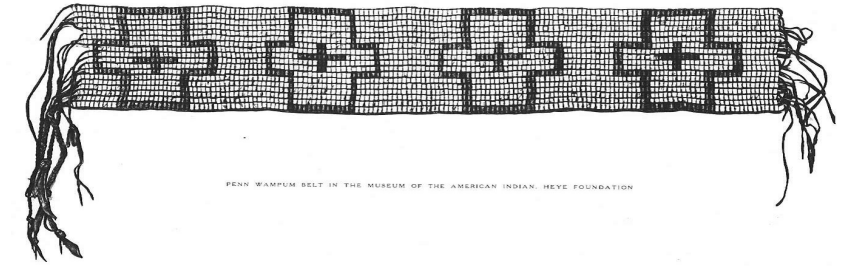

Figure 3: Penn Treaty Belt (Third of Three). Reproduced from Frank G. Speck, "The Penn Wampum Belts" plate II.

Potentially supplementing the presence of the Penn belts in England as a source of public information about wampum, an account of the first belt appeared in the fictionalized narrative of *The Wampum Belt, or "The Fairest Page of History": A Tale of William Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (1896), by the American author Hezekiah Butterworth (1839-1905). Butterworth was a prolific author, having written scores of travel narratives, hymns, poems, and historical and biographical works for juvenile and popular audiences. Butterworth's *The Wampum Belt* appeared soon after he had published *In Old New England: The Romance of a Colonial Fireside* (1895) and a series of sixteen travel books. Shortly before the sale of Pennsylvania Castle, those travel volumes had been recommended for Christmas gifts in the London *Times*, whose reviewer pointed out Butterworth's popularity by noting that his books had "had a great circulation in the United States" ("Christmas Books" 8).

The Wampum Belt, or "The Fairest Page of History" was published in England as well as New York, and its stylized narrative belies any characterization of this work as being intended solely for a juvenile audience. In *The Wampum Belt*, Butterworth turns his attention to the best known Penn belt and explains how such an artifact's symbolic importance far exceeded any monetary value. The title page of this book shows an engraving of the wampum belt (that in Figure 1). Butterworth's introduction positions this belt as a textual instrument with the power to overcome time and (significantly, if hyperbolically) worthy of global renown:

> [T]he Belt of Peace remains as perfect to-day as when it was handed in silence by the grand chief of the Delawares, or Lenni-Lenape, to Onas, or Penn, more than two hundred years ago. There is no more interesting relic in America; the traditions of the Indian race are in its beads, and the peace emblem of the purple figures is a lasting lesson. It would be well if a picture of it could be placed on the wall of the schoolroom, or if imitations of it could be made in shells as an historical example. The spirit of the peace of Penn is to fill the legislation of the world. (iv)

By picturing the meeting between Penn and the Lenni Lenape as taking place "in silence" (i.e., making the belt the sole means of communication between the parties), claiming that the parchment treaty document reciprocally given by Penn to the Natives was destroyed during the American Civil War, and especially by characterizing the belt as "the fairest page of history," Butterworth underscores the textuality of wampum and privileges this quality as the most important of its attributes (iii-iv).

In addition to the story of the Penn belts, another means by which

Ford and his contemporaries could have known about wampum is through the career of E. Pauline Johnson (1861-1913). Johnson, a Canadian of Iroquois descent, was a popular poet and an early performance artist, giving poetry recitals in Native clothing throughout Canada from 1892 to 1909 and in London in 1894 and 1906. Johnson was firmly placed in Britain's social, artistic, and publishing scenes as someone whose connections to modern authors helped make the peculiar status of wampum into a significant cultural phenomenon of this era. She furthered the idea of wampum as a textual instrument through several aspects of her literary work and stage career: in the name of her first book and the subject matter of her poetry, in her assumed Native name and costume, and in her performances and press interviews.

Johnson's first published book was a collection of poetry entitled *The White Wampum* (London, 1895), which reinforces the textual role of wampum in a number of ways. In her dedicatory introduction to the book, she explains the work's title: "As wampums to the Redman, so to the Poet are his songs; chiselled alike from that which is the purest of his possessions, woven alike with meaning into belt and book, fraught alike with the corresponding message of peace, the breathing of tradition, the value of more than coin, and the seal of fellowship with all men" (n. pag.). Johnson's initial assertion here of the principal value of wampum as being textual recurs in one of the poems in the volume, entitled "Dawendine." This poem tells the story of two warring tribes and the eponymous character, a woman in love with the chief of the opposing tribe. Dawendine's mother urges her to take her "belt of wampum white"—what Johnson later terms a symbol of peace—to the opposing chief to "sue for peace" (21). In this instance, as in Johnson's introduction to *The White Wampum* and as in the case of the Penn treaty belts, the wampum serves not as payment, but as an inscription of a proposed relationship between two parties.

The White Wampum and its claims of wampum's textuality gathered considerable critical notice, garnering favorable reviews and widespread publicity in England.[5] In this respect, Johnson was capitalizing on a presence she had already established in Anglophone letters. Theodore Watts-Dunton, a prominent literary critic, had previously written an encouraging review of two of Johnson's poems published in William Douw Lighthall's anthology of Canadian poetry, *Songs of the Great Dominion* (London, 1889), praising Johnson, "on account of her descent," as "the most interesting English poetess now living" (412). This review was published in 1889 in the London journal *The Athenæum*—whose modernist contributors later included Katherine Mansfield, T. S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf. Furthermore, *The White Wampum* was published in London by John Lane, who would go on to publish both *Blast 1* (1914), with its early version of part of *The Good Soldier* (as "The Saddest Story"), and the first

edition of Ford's novel.

In 1894, Johnson conducted a highly successful two-month recital tour of London, giving dramatic readings in exotic native dress. Johnson's stage and pen name reflected her interest in wampum. For her performances, as for her publications, she assumed her great-grandfather's tribal name: Tekahionwake, meaning "double wampum." From the start of her touring career, Johnson approved her stage billing as a "Mohawk Princess" of dual cultural citizenship. That she should call herself "double wampum," given her circumstances, seems to imply multiple aspects of being double: her status as a cultural hybrid, for instance, her appeal to audiences on both sides of the Atlantic, and the sense of excess that accompanies her challenge to the boundaries of conventional English literary and theatrical arts. She played up the exotic appeal of her origins and constructed a performance costume from Native materials, making one sleeve out of beaded buckskin and the other of rabbit pelts (see Figure 4). She invariably wore this costume for her entire recital career, but only for the first half of the program. For the second half, she wore a ball gown (Keller 20-21). Publicity bills featured photographs of her in the Native part of her performance costume. Through the use of these garments, Johnson invited her audience to "read" her body and performance—yet again stressing her cultural duality and wampum's textual dimension, by including the pair of wampum belts that can clearly be seen attached to her costume in Figure 4.

During this tour, Johnson was introduced to the cream of the London social and literary sets, meeting Oscar Wilde and other authors, for example, and holding private recitals. One observer notes, "Her recitals, which she gave on invitation at the houses of several leaders of society, like Lady Helen Ferguson (daughter of the Marquess of Dufferin), Lady Blake, the Marchioness of Ripon, and Mr. Hamilton Aïdé, were enthusiastically received by audiences in the first rank in every line of celebrity" (Hale 8). Johnson met Wilde, William Watson, and other authors at John Lane's residence; she attended a "musical evening" hosted by Sir Frederick Leighton (then President of the Royal Academy), and a dinner at which she was seated between Lord Ripon (Britain's Colonial Secretary) and the deputy speaker of the House of Commons. Arthur, Duke of Connaught (third son of Queen Victoria, later Governor General of Canada) attended one of her recitals and spoke with her afterwards. She carried letters of introduction to British notables and became what biographer Betty Keller describes as "the toast of the London season," invited by royalty to more private recitals than she could grant (32-33, 37).

Figure 4: E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake) with Wampum Belts. Reproduced from Horatio Hale, "Miss E. Pauline Johnson," *The Critic* 25 (4 Jan. 1896) 7. *University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, UW25903z.*

Throughout her experiences in London, Johnson emphasized the significance of wampum as one of the key elements of Native American culture. At one point, she conducted an interview with a representative of the London serial *The Sketch* in her wampum-decorated London studio. The interviewer asked her what wampum is, and she replied, "Cleverly-woven bands of beads—the history, literature, seal, and coinage of the Iroquois. You have the biggest in your British Museum, and I mean to go and see it. But the art of carving the bead from the shell is lost, and so is the art of reading the wampum. It died with my grandfather, Chief John Smoke Johnson" (P. A. H. 358). By listing some of wampum's functions, Johnson continued to stress its textual role and the special ability to read it. While this art was on the verge of extinction by the early twentieth century, an 1871 photograph shows six Iroquois chiefs—including Johnson's father and grandfather—reading wampum (Strong-Boag and Gerson, following page 148). Furthermore, and most significantly, Ford may very well have seen the belt Johnson described in her interview, for at this time he customarily wrote in the reading room of the British Museum (Saunders 43).

In 1906 a second London recital tour further expanded Johnson's popularity, the British public's awareness of wampum, and the possibilities for Ford to have known of Johnson and the artifact that was central to her

work. On this tour, Johnson gave a "dramatic and moving" performance at Steinway Hall, according to a review in the *Times*, wearing native dress and delivering her recitations to large and enthusiastic acclaim. More than a dozen newspapers and journals reviewed the performance, all favorably, and the editor of the *Daily Express* commissioned her to write a series of articles for that newspaper. The last and most famous of these articles, "A Pagan in St. Paul's," appeared on August 3, 1906. Johnson's literary connections enlarged; Watts-Dunton, who was also a friend and mentor of Algernon Swinburne, met her after the performance and later introduced her to Swinburne (Keller 94-99; "Steinway-Hall" 10).

Long after her 1906 London tour, Johnson and her wampum remained in the public eye. In 1912, *The White Wampum* was republished as part of a larger collection entitled *Flint and Feather*. Watts-Dunton wrote an admiring introduction to this volume, which started distribution at the end of the year (Keller 137). Johnson's death from breast cancer on March 7, 1913 occasioned a series of retrospectives, again bringing her accomplishments before the public in the months before Ford began *The Good Soldier*.[6] A *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer of *Flint and Feather* (November 27, 1913) writes of Johnson that her "poems have been warmly acclaimed both here and in Canada" and that she "was welcomed in London as an accomplished reciter" ("Flint and Feather" 575). An obituary in the *Times Literary Supplement* published the following month offers a more mixed account of her accomplishments, but the point is the same: Johnson and her wampum had definitely been noticed ("A Mohawk Poetess" 590). This obituary appeared on December 4, 1913, or just two weeks before Ford "sat down to write [his] book" on December 17, if we take at face value his claim in the dedicatory letter that appeared in the novel (xix).

Given Johnson's career and publications, the presence in England of the Penn treaty belts, the display of a wampum belt at the British Museum, and the appearance of information about wampum in scholarly journals and such popular works as encyclopedias and Butterworth's *The Wampum Belt*, we can surmise that both Ford and his readership would have had some idea of wampum's textual characteristics and historical background. Thus, in *The Good Soldier* when Ford likens Leonora's and Nancy Rufford's treatment of Ashburnham to that of "a couple of Sioux who had got hold of an Apache and had him well tied to a stake," he confirms the assumption of an underlying British familiarity with Native American history (260). This set of circumstances leads us in turn to consider what it means for our understanding of this novel that Dowell claims to keep his wampum title deeds with him. While his claim need not be read literally, what does this valuation tell us about him?

To begin with, it tells us that John Dowell uses his wampum to build topographical knowledge in ways that differ from his wife's use of

Baedekers. With the "sole help" of these popular tourist guidebooks, the narrator tells us, Florence Dowell could "find her way [. . .] as easily about any old monument" as around the numbered and gridded streets of an American city (41-42). In the most prominent example of her methods, she consults a Baedeker and other historical materials to organize a group excursion to the castle of Marburg, through which Martin Luther had once passed and where, in the novel, a draft of Luther's Protest was preserved.[7] As Max Saunders has pointed out, "Some of Ford's triumph comes from the writer's fascination with the power of the written word: with the way a scrap of paper can rewrite human history" (411). Both the exhibition of the written Protest and Florence's staged visit include performative and textual dimensions akin to those components of wampum's Native use. Still, it is notably the Baedeker that is foregrounded in this scene, as Florence's study of the guidebooks for this trip helps her initiate her affair with Edward Ashburnham—an affair that begins with her explaining to Ashburnham what she learned from guidebooks about the room and its contents.

Dowell relates how Ashburnham "was quite evidently enjoying being educated by Florence," who was "clearing up one of the dark places of the earth, leaving the world a little lighter than she had found it" (43-44). By having his narrator ironically use this formula, characteristic of the Victorian march of positivist geographical knowledge, Ford points out a crucial difference between Florence and John Dowell, based on their preferred figurations of physical landscapes. Florence, who employs what she learns from a Baedeker to initiate the next of her adulterous affairs, is hardly leaving the world a lighter place. Meanwhile, for her wampum-carrying husband the world is inherently unknowable. As John Dowell declares near the beginning of his story, "there is nothing to guide us. And if everything is so nebulous about a matter so elementary as the morals of sex, what is there to guide us in the more subtle morality of all other personal contacts, associations, and activities? [. . .] It is all a darkness" (14). Despite Florence having studied her Baedeker, its factual details have led her astray, or she has misunderstood her reading; Dowell lets us know in passing that Luther probably did not sleep in what she describes as "Luther's bedroom" (47). Later in the novel, Dowell reduces Florence to the status of facts with insubstantial emotional traction. There, he claims that "Florence was a personality of paper [. . .] she represented a real human being with a heart, with feelings, with sympathies, and with emotions only as a bank note represents a certain quantity of gold. [. . .] I thought suddenly that she wasn't real; she was just a mass of talk out of guidebooks" (133-34). While this passage does characterize Florence's personality as one based on performance, Dowell concludes on a dismissive note by linking Florence and guidebooks. Furthermore, by implicitly detaching guidebooks from reality, Dowell extends his skepticism in both directions. Not only does he

make Baedekers seem inadequate as representations of the world, but he also reflects his claim that the world (as disfigured by devastating human experiences) resists any such representative attempts.

This account would also seem to discredit Baedekers through guilt by association, as Florence conflates factual and moral failures in her use of the guidebooks. One might argue, though, that these judgments unjustly position Dowell as more insightful than Florence in his approach to acquiring knowledge. After all, Dowell is surprisingly obtuse in his inability (or perhaps unwillingness) to notice the indications of Florence's adultery. In any event, her reading of Baedekers has already received some critical attention—for instance, from James Buzard, who notes in *The Beaten Track* (1993) that "her mastery as a tour guide oddly parallels her efficient manipulation of the other characters in the novel" (287). Nevertheless, a brief summary here of the epistemological foundation of Baedekers will help explain how the contrasting nature of wampum allows Ford to use the latter effectively in his portrayal of Dowell's character.

Baedekers operate on a supposed one-to-one correspondence between the object under study and the language used to describe it. This relationship features the limited perspective of a single authorial voice, the assumption of complete transparency of descriptive language, and the supposition that the referent is unchanged and equally accessible over time. Baedekers are written in an eternal present, for the benefit of readers whose relation to the past is thought of as unmediated by any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge. Such a way of thinking about place and events becomes associated with Florence as a result of her study of Baedekers, despite her manipulation or misreading of facts. Meanwhile, we find that Dowell's valorization of wampum accords with his conclusion that a single-perspective point of view, one-to-one correspondences of word and referent, and notions of unchanged and equally accessible objects of study are inadequate for understanding the tangled web of events in his life.

One can seemingly never get beyond "the shallows" of an English heart (5), Dowell says in a remark perhaps intended by Ford to indicate the limitations of Dowell's perspective as an American observer of British sensibilities, but which more profoundly speaks of the modernist belief in the impenetrability of events. Dowell accepts with resignation the inability ever to get to the heart of places and people, and he makes do with handling the impenetrable fragments of the perceived world. As readers of the novel know, Dowell attempts to deploy a system of multiple perspectives, assumptions of uncertainty, and relational knowledge as he tries to comprehend the story he relates, turning a kaleidoscope of narrative shards in order to discern meaning through the juxtaposition of events considered in retrospect. Each episode eludes definitive interpretation until a pattern eventually emerges from the entire array. The circumstances of Florence's death

serve as one example, with several months ensuing before Dowell comprehends the reason for her distressed appearance when she saw her husband and Bagshawe together in the hotel lounge at Nauheim. Long afterward, when Leonora Ashburnham casually remarks, "it was stupid of Florence to commit suicide," suddenly the fragments of the story fall into place, or, in Dowell's words, "I pieced it together afterwards" (117, 121). Dowell realizes that Florence feared he would learn of her affair with Jimmy through Bagshawe—hence her shock and suicide. The introduction of a single new item of information radically alters previously held beliefs, reconfiguring individual impressions into a wholly new understanding of reality.

In Dowell's understanding of place, he likewise grapples with the superficiality of individual bits of knowledge, at least in his own perceiving consciousness. He differs fundamentally from Florence in this regard. "I guess Florence got all she wanted out of one look at a place," Dowell explains. "She had the seeing eye. I haven't, unfortunately, so that the world is full of places to which I want to return." However, he cannot remember these places except as fragmented images of locations that could be anywhere: "towns with the blinding white sun upon them; stone pines against the blue of the sky; corners of gables, all carved and painted [. . .] grey and pink palazzi and walled towns" (16). He wonders if the baths at Nauheim were of "reddish stone [. . .] or were they white half-timber chalets? Upon my word I have forgotten, I who was there so often. That will give you the measure of how much I was in the landscape," he exclaims, realizing the limits to his perceptions of place (24).

Baedekers are an appropriate resource for Florence and her "seeing eye," insofar as the books are presumed to transmit accurately the essential knowledge about a place through a medium of assumedly transparent language. In contrast, wampum is a physical object that conveys something unintelligible about a place. Furthermore, it is precisely in this quality that part of the value of wampum lies for Dowell. Because the wampum cannot be read like a guidebook or any other alphabetic text, it permits its owner a fantasy connection to place, even—paradoxically—compensating for the impenetrability of the events in Dowell's life through its own resistance to conventional reading. When he claims, in his words, that he keeps the wampum "as if it were the only thing that invisibly anchored me to any spot upon the globe" (7), he sustains that connection not in spite of the facts that the wampum is a deed of title with no legible writing on it and that the farm no longer exists, but exactly *because* of those facts.

Furthermore, it is with some irony that Dowell considers the wampum as an anchor to the world, given that he has already assumed Edward Ashburnham's property and Florence's fortune, substantial anchors in themselves. To this irony we should also add our knowledge, and no doubt Ford's, that Dowell can use the artifact in this way only because its creators

have vanished as an eventual result of the treaty the wampum records. In other words, Dowell's rootedness is dependent on an item that enabled the uprooting of an entire culture. Yet such distancing, however ironic, serves a necessary purpose. If Dowell had some way to read the wampum title deed, the object would underline the farm's disappearance by detailing the characteristics of the property or the nature of the transaction between the Natives and his ancestor. Instead, because the wampum records lost history in a symbolic language, it is endowed with an evocative interiority that allows Dowell to invest a personal meaning in this artifact. He can thereby satisfy his desire to get beyond "the shallows" of meaning—a desire thwarted in other parts of his life.

Ultimately, the manner in which Dowell ends his wanderings around the tourist destinations of Europe can be explained as the instance of fantasy and connections to place finally coinciding. The paragraph describing the wampum ends by making clear that Dowell is writing from the Ashburnham estate of Branshaw Teleragh (which he has purchased). This country house is in the vicinity of Florence's ancestral home, and Dowell has just related how "the first Dowell" left England with William Penn and, like him, obtained land from the Indians (7). The physical existence of the wampum thus telescopes all these historical facts for Dowell, reifying the concept of rootedness and counterposing the epistemological instabilities surrounding his relations with the rest of the characters in the novel.

Such problems of knowledge, of course, join many instabilities distinguishing this novel: the fragmentation of the novel's chronology, for instance, and especially Dowell's unreliability as a narrator. His complexity, even duplicity, includes the possibility that he is not the passive, ill informed spectator of events, but rather a character who has played a role in bringing about Florence's death after she receives her inheritance, and has then tried to confuse the evidence.[8] In this context, wampum serves as an ideal complement to the unstable complexities of the novel. Not only is wampum now an opaque text, but it also circulated in a complex array of uses in Native culture, as described above. Even as a form of performative speech act, wampum lends itself neatly to a narrative that, on one level, consists entirely of just such a speech act: Dowell's.

One tantalizing indication of the care with which Ford may have chosen wampum for these purposes lies in the difference between the wording of references to wampum in the 1915 published text of *The Good Soldier* and in the earlier version of part of the novel in *Blast I*. Earlier, in "The Saddest Story," Ford writes "These title deeds are upon wampum" (87); the novel as published reads, "These title deeds are of wampum" (7). The difference—"upon" wampum becomes "of" wampum—may at first seem minor. That the meaning should be written *on* the object does reflect a conventional idea of textuality, according to which the writing surface serves

as a featureless space for the inscription of the significant signs. In Ford's revised version, a distinction appears between textuality, subsequently aligned with Baedekers, and materiality, with its attendant multiplicity of uses and meanings in Native culture—a property of wampum that the revision brings out. In the second version, the meaning seemingly inheres within the wampum, as part of its intermediary materiality, rather than existing, say, on the surface of a Baedeker's otherwise blank pages.

This difference shows how useful Johnson's description of wampum would have been for Ford's narrative purposes, had he in fact somehow known of her 1894 declaration that the art of reading wampum had been lost. As late as 1925, there were still Native Americans who could claim to be able to read the symbols on wampum. That year, as Frank G. Speck relates in his history of the Penn wampum belts, photographs of the three Penn belts were taken to the council of the Six Nations of the Iroquois, near Brantford, Ontario. Two chiefs read the belts, and in the words of one of the chiefs, the angling parallel lines in the belt shown above in Figure 2 expresses "the freedom of the Indian" (10). By giving the belt to the colonial settlers, the Lenni Lenape established their right of transit across the land in that "[t]he dark lines of the pattern represent the paths of the Indians to and fro, which were to be pursued in freedom by them after its cession," Speck relates (11). The white background, in this context, signifies the parchment used by Europeans for legal instruments. The chiefs were unable to arrive at a definitive interpretation of the belt in Figure 3, although the four cruciform enclosures may represent the territories transferred in the cession. As for the belt in Figure 1, the figures depict a Native and a colonial settler, and the clasped hands signify friendship. Hitherto, non-Natives had thought that the two dark beads projecting from the larger figure's head indicate a European's hat. The two chiefs disagreed, however, saying that the projection represents a feather and the larger figure is the Native American—larger because in a position of relative strength, and offering "hospitality and protection" to the colonial settler. The "oblique bars" are "'stamps' or 'seals' of validity," or perhaps a reference to the land being exchanged; Speck notes that the bars differ in their configuration and borders (13).

"As might be expected," Speck concludes, conceding in general the difficulty of reading the belts despite a conscious effort among the Six Nations Natives to preserve their interpretive techniques, "these details are not susceptible of interpretation at this day, when the purpose for which the belt was made rests so long obscured by the lapse of time" (13). While Speck's work appeared well after *The Good Soldier*, his account of the belts' meaning is nevertheless of interest for us, both to demonstrate how the belts could have been read and how Natives might have conceived of the land transaction. Most importantly, while the chiefs in Canada in 1925 were uncertain about parts of their readings, in 1894 Johnson was claiming in

England that the ability to read wampum belts had already died out—thereby securing their unintelligibility in public understanding.

I do not want to suggest that the presence of this artifact in the novel poses a clear opposition between a positivist, rational model of topographical representation (Baedekers, put to erroneous and immoral use) and a superior version based on a valorization of obscurity or ambiguity (wampum, enabling a fantasy connection to place). On the contrary, readers who keep in mind the multiple uses of wampum, one of which is a potentially dominant textual use, along with the performative nature of both Johnson's and Florence Dowell's carefully crafted personae, will see how the positions of the two Dowells are inextricably linked. What does such a reading of the novel imply in terms of larger theoretical analyses of modernism? Ford exploits wampum's unsettled position as simultaneously text, artifact, message, metaphor, and currency—characteristics that make it, in John Dowell's hands, an unlikely but providentially resonant emblem of the contours of knowledge. As wampum in *The Good Soldier* acquires significance through its radical decontextualization and literal illegibility, it becomes, in the words of Bill Brown, a modernist "thing."[9]

For Brown, thingness results from the "misuse value" accreted to an object in the moment of its recontextualization and the misuser's consequent awareness of the object's physical qualities ("Secret Life" 2-3). Brown explains the process of an object's acquisition of new qualities of palpability and presence through the example of a misused tool. "Forced to use a knife as a screwdriver," he writes, "you achieve a new recognition of its thinness, its hardness, the shape and size of the handle" (*Sense* 78). Dowell would be similarly cognizant of the wampum's physical qualities, for it would have been a noticeable burden to carry. Because Dowell is unable to read the wampum as text, and he therefore implicitly values its heft as a physical object, the wampum shares with Brown's screwdriver the principal condition of thingness, which is the physicality of material presence.

Brown offers a slightly different example of thingness in "The Secret Life of Things," his evaluation of materiality in Virginia Woolf's short story "Solid Objects" (1920). The central character of Woolf's story, John, finds a rounded piece of glass on a beach; fascinated by it, he begins to search for and collect other, similarly shaped items (shards of china, lumps of iron). Like John Dowell, John in Woolf's story values the glass in part because of its connection to an obscure history. However, Brown positions things as an *a priori* construct, arguing that materials lose their original thingness once we put them to "legitimate" uses, and that it is only in the materials' reobjectification through misuse that they become "debanalized" and objects of "wonder." In "Solid Objects," then, John thus derails the process that creates objects in an economy of resource transformation and commodity production. "Free from their incorporation into the familiar object world,"

Brown writes of John's items, "they seem to assume lives of their own as John grants them a kind of agency" ("Secret Life" 7). Otherwise, things normally become objects; according to this schema, the things of glass and thread that make up wampum would become an ensemble of objects (for the settlers) as the wampum acquires use value in the Native-European transactional economy.

Brown's explanation has its limits, however, with regard to *The Good Soldier*. The reading of the novel offered here invites a reopening of Brown's material theories for consideration and qualification. The wampum, unlike the screwdriver, exhibits its physicality through a mechanism of misuse that ultimately is not misuse at all. First, wampum in both history and Ford's fiction does not undergo use in the physical sense we accord to such tools as screwdrivers or knives; therefore, Dowell's implied awareness of wampum's physical properties has nothing to do with any physical misapplication of the artifact. Second, while wampum had been forced into a series of different roles throughout history—ceremonial, monetary, memorial, and evidentiary—Dowell's use of it returns it to the use for which the Penn belts were originally made: to record a land transfer.

A potentially helpful alternative to Brown's definition of thingness in this regard appears in Martin Heidegger's essay "The Thing" (1950). Heidegger cites a jug as an example and argues that thingness depends on the jug's quality as a vessel. Specifically, he focuses on the jug's emptiness, explaining that the potter calls the jug into existence in order to shape the void that will do the containing within. Therefore, Heidegger concludes, "The vessel's thingness does not lie at all in the material of which it consists, but in the void that holds" (169). Similarly, at the time of Dowell's handling of the wampum, it had also become an empty container, in the sense that its original meanings (Native American ceremonial ones) and the meanings imposed upon it by Europeans had been evacuated through the passage of time.

When it comes to wampum, however, the value of Heidegger's definition of thingness lies less in its exposition of internal space than in the awareness of external space that forms the context within which Heidegger offers his definition. Heidegger begins and ends his essay by thinking through the relationship between the thing and the space of the world. The essay opens with the claims, "[a]ll distances in time and space are shrinking" due to the advances in transportation and communication technology, and "[y]et the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness" because nearness does not coincide with the collapse of distance. "Nearness [. . .] cannot be encountered directly" and therefore demands the mediation of tangible presence. Hence, he first turns to the jug as an example of what permits the apprehension of nearness: "Near to us are what we usually call things." By the end of the essay, Heidegger has concluded that the function

of the thing (the containing jug as the thing) is, through the "outpouring" of libation, to enfold earth, sky, mortals, and divinities. While the abolition of distances may not bring about nearness, then, in discovering "the nature of the jug as a thing [. . .] we also catch sight of the nature of nearness." Furthermore, "the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals" exemplified by the thing's "thinging" is also what "we call the world," which "presences by worlding." "Thinging is the nearing of world," he writes, and "[a]s we preserve the thing *qua* thing we inhabit nearness," concluding that the work that things do involves accomplishing nearness in the space of a world in which the collapse of distance through technology is only apparent.[10]

The link between thing and space thus gives Heidegger's definition of thingness a more refined application for this interpretation of the novel than that which Brown's definition affords, for wampum as a Heideggerian thing gives Dowell the consolations of nearness otherwise denied by the illusory advances of technology. For instance, because of Florence's supposed heart condition, doctors prohibit steamship voyages for her and Dowell, thus enforcing both Dowell's absence from his native country and the routine of continental spa visits enabling Florence's adulterous affairs. As for the railroad, traveling on it reduces "the whole world" for Dowell to "spots of colour in an immense canvas," evacuating the tangible reality of the world's nearby physical presence and leaving behind only visual impressions (17). The wampum, however, creates the nearness that industrial-age travel cannot provide. While Dowell's peripatetic vacationing paradoxically means that, in his words, "the world is full of places to which I want to return" (16), on the other hand he can bring along the "thing" of wampum to "anchor" himself to the world (7). The wampum brings Philadelphia near, even—or especially—the farm that no longer exists.

Rooting the thing in its place in the wampum's manifestation becomes possible for Dowell through the mystery of the wampum's provenance and the inscrutability (to him, at least) of the exact message contained in the pattern of its beads. These ambiguities are part and parcel of the realities underlying both the evasive quality of the contents of Heidegger's jug ("even what the jug contains was bound to escape us," he writes) and "the inexplicable and unfathomable character of the world's worlding" (171, 180). When Dowell ruefully observes of his grasp of human events, "Six months ago I had never been to England, and, certainly, I had never sounded the depths of an English heart," and then "It is all a darkness," he speaks out of a manifold need for nearness to the physical world and to knowledge—a need which such things as the jug and the wampum can serve to fill (Ford 5, 14).

In the ultimate accounting, though, the farm, the deed, and the family history mean nothing to Dowell. While the wampum historically united

the world with material exchange, he treasures the wampum particularly for its impenetrable textual surface. His peculiar treatment of an unusual physical object appears just momentarily yet underpins the topographical methodology of the whole novel. This relationship provides the key for our understanding of Dowell's sense of place, a framework that he applies to the entire visible world. This framework, focused on the status of the material object, challenges the positivist assumptions on which Baedekers are founded and illustrates modernism's tensions between interior and exterior, surface and depth. Because of the multivalence of wampum and the way it both invites and resists interpretation, this artifact serves not only as a thing with manifold connections to history and the material world, but also as an appropriate complement to the modernist form of the novel. In the dual nature of this service, wampum provides us a more complex implicit commentary on materiality than we might find in the work of some of Ford's contemporary authors. Insofar as form matches function in wampum, its valuable obscurity neatly suits Dowell's method of dealing with a world that is "all a darkness." Through Dowell, who emerges from the novel as a deeply flawed character yet nevertheless perhaps deserving of our empathy, Ford proposes a statement about the limits of knowledge and invites us to reassess the world through the epistemological system Dowell fashions for himself. At the heart of this system lies a Native American object whose seemingly unlikely presence in this modernist novel of manners and morals proves not so anachronistic after all.

Notes

1. See "Wampum," "Wampumpeag," in *The Oxford English Dictionary*.
2. See "Wampum," *The Cyclopædia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature* and Williams (150).
3. Compare "Wampum," *New American Supplement to the Latest Edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica* to "Wampum," *Encyclopedia Britannica*.
4. See "Penn, Granville (1761-1844)," "Penn, John (1760-1834)" and Speck (9).
5. See Strong-Boag and Gerson (138, 148-50, 267-68) and Keller (97).
6. See Keller (137), "Flint and Feather" (575), and "A Mohawk Poetess" (590).
7. See Saunders 314, 339, 410-12; Mizener 202-03 for details of Ford's visits to Marburg.
8. See especially Poole (118-19) and the other essays on this novel in Hampson and Saunders.
9. Even as I owe the genesis of this formulation to Bill Brown, I read against the grain of Brown's account of "thingness" because of wampum's particular properties as a descriptor of physical place.
10. See Heidegger (165, 166, 173, 177, 179, 181).

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