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AN ANALYSIS OF JOHN DOS PASSOS' U.S.A.

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CHAPTER I

THE CRITICS

The 42nd Parallel, the first volume of the trilogy, U.S.A., was first published on February 19, 1930. It was followed by 1919 on March 10, 1932, and The Big Money on August 1, 1936. U.S.A., which combines these three novels, was issued on January 27, 1938. There is as yet no full-length critical and biographical study of Dos Passos, although one is now in the process of being edited for publication.[1] His work has, however, attracted the notice of the leading reviewers and is discussed in those treatises dealing with the American novel of the twentieth century. The early discussions of the first two novels of the trilogy are necessarily incomplete, but both The 42nd Parallel and 1919 are discussed in several works which appeared in the early 1930's.

One such study terms The 42nd Parallel a powerful example of a harsh and desperate naturalism, but also notes the attempt "to symbolize the age of speed and of the machine." This study is brief and, on the

[1]Charles W. Bernardin, "The Development of John Dos Passos" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of English, University of Wisconsin). This dissertation has been made unavailable by the joint request of Mr. Bernardin and Mr. Dos Passos.

whole, unfavorable, finding the subject matter and the technique unoriginal.[1] The next of the early studies is that of Calverton, who, on the contrary, is full of praise for Dos Passos. Calverton, as the chronicler of left-wing literary movements, finds that Dos Passos had moved steadily toward the left in the development of his writing. Commenting on the first two books of the trilogy, Calverton says:

> Convinced that American society cannot continue in its present capitalistic form, Dos Passos believes that the only way out is through a social revolution which will emancipate the workers from their present state of subjection to the industrialists.[2]

As he is in his comments on other current authors, Calverton is largely concerned with the possible effects on readers of the Dos Passos novels and with the fact that he, more than most "left-wing" writers, has attracted a wide audience. He comments that Dos Passos has a "fresh impulse" and "progressive vision." Dos Passos is vaguely compared with Michael Gold and Charles Yale Harrison; the effect of the entire account is that of welcoming Dos Passos to the left-wing fold.

A much more complete and balanced account of the first two novels of the trilogy is that of Beach in The Twentieth Century Novel, which appeared in 1932, the same year as the two studies previously mentioned. Beach finds that the novels, The 42nd Parallel and 1919, are in "some ways quite distinct in method."[3] This comment, which appears at the be-

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[1]Ludwig Lewisohn, Expression in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), pp. 517-18.

[2]Vernon F. Calverton, The Liberation of American Literature (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 462.

[3]Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth-Century Novel (New York: The Century Co., 1932), p. 501.

ginning of his study, is never elaborated so that it is difficult to understand just what he has in mind. Most observers have found the three novels closely related in method and in theme. Mr. Beach notes the many characters involved in the narrative and comments in detail on the various devices employed by the novels. He calls the Camera Eye sections "cubist compositions" and finds in them evidence of the influence of James Joyce. This too, however, is not elaborated. The Biographies, according to Beach, permit the author, "by his particular ' slant' on each one of these head-liners, to suggest the tone of his personal commentary on the civilization they represent."[1] The Newsreels are in the book for two purposes: first, that of indicating the progress of time, and second, that of suggesting the "mentality which produces and is fostered by the newspaper, that epitome of our civilization."[2] Unfortunately, this critic does not develop the second point, although it seems to be an important hint for the understanding of the Newsreels. The present study will indicate more specifically that the function of the Newsreels is to characterize the "collective" personality of the time. Mr. Beach concludes that the reasons for Dos Passos' peculiar method may be found in the new concern of the novelist--the concern for the entire social organism. He finds that on the grounds of both subject matter and craftsmanship, Dos Passos is one of the most important novelists now writing in English.[3]

Two additional studies, because they appeared before the publi-

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[1] Ibid., p. 508.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. 511.

cation of the entire trilogy, also deal only with the first two novels. The first, by Harry Hartwick, refers to Dos Passos as an anarchist: "Dos Passos would remove law entirely, and trust to the inherent 'goodness' of man's nature to restrain him from wrongdoing and selfishness."[1] Mr. Hartwick describes the various devices of the novels, finding that the Newsreels lend a "sense of multiplicity" to the volumes. He refers to the Camera Eye sections as being from Dos Passos' own "stream-of-consciousness" and says that they are evidence of "suppressed estheticism." The 42nd Parallel and 1919 are found to be a "pair of enlarged tabloid papers"; they are termed expressionistic, dadaist, and futuristic. Dos Passos' manner of writing is called the flicker technique. The other study, by Harlan Hatcher, carefully points out that while Dos Passos would be the last to object that the implication of his novel is Marxist, these things are not directly stated in the novel. Mr. Hatcher creates a picture of a theoretical Marxist who is too much of an artist to use the novel as a means of direct pleading or as a means of caricature. Dos Passos thus escapes the limitations of a novelist like Upton Sinclair.[2] Here also Dos Passos' method is referred to as "motion picture technique."

The first study to deal with the entire trilogy is that of C. John McCole, entitled Lucifer at Large. This book contains a hesitating recognition of the contrast "between the lives led by the 'Big Money' people and the lives led by the poor." But it also finds that the para-

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[1]Harry Hartwick, The Foreground of American Fiction (New York: American Book Co., 1934), p. 290.

[2]Harlan Hatcher, Creating the Modern American Novel (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1935), pp. 134-35.

sitic life is presented so attractively as to offset the effectiveness of the contrast.[1] The Newsreels and the Biographies are considered to be for the purposes of providing the time setting and atmosphere of the novels, but the Camera Eye sections are dismissed with the remark that they are "highly subjective and extremely echometric." The social implications of the novel are like the techniques: too new, too unaged for this critic. They are, generally speaking, deterministic and defeatist. Since the characters are going to be defeated in any event, the tragedies of Mr. Dos Passos' heroes are scarcely tragedies at all. Mr. McCole is aware that Dos Passos is criticizing the industrial and economic faults in our society, and he feels that the solution suggested by the trilogy is that of anarchism. Finally, this critic reminds the reader that novels like those of Margaret Mitchell, Zona Gale, and Edna Ferber contain no signs of pessimism, defeatism, and despair, and suggests that we must "look to our 'regionalists' for that real temper which alone can counteract the literary distemper of our times."[2]

The next study of the trilogy makes much of the contrast between the fictional characters of the Narratives and the living people of the Biographies. The first are so buried in sensuality and defeat that they are overshadowed by the real-life people, who, for all their faults, are more articulate and purposeful. The Narratives and the Biographies are compared to a picture and its frame. While the frame points out a U.S.A. far from perfect, it does present a more healthful atmosphere in which

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[1]C. John McCole, Lucifer at Large (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1937), p. 188.

[2]Ibid., p. 200.

the characters "breathe ozone instead of carbon dioxide."[1] Dos Passos' style is found to be undistinctive, dull, and full of self-conscious mannerisms; yet "Dos Passos' command of good prose is beyond debate." This critic finds that Dos Passos has no social program, that he is "disturbed by the entire machine age." He is divided between his sensitivity as an artist and the forces which compel him to be the pseudo-scientist with a deterministic attitude. He is significant because he has written historical documents, but he cannot be more than a reporter of the times until he gains some clearer convictions.[2]

A much more comprehensive account appears in Alfred Kazin's On Native Grounds. Kazin is the first critic who does not find a simple label for Dos Passos' social attitude. Nor does he make the usual genteel objections to the sensualism of the novel while protesting his broad-mindedness. Instead, he has examined U.S.A. not only with the entire tradition of the American novel in view, but with critical insight and a comprehension of a social point of view which is neither doctrinaire Marxism nor defeatism. Kazin sees Dos Passos, and particularly U.S.A., as a transitional work between post-war defeatism and "the crisis novel of the depression period."[3] He sees evidence of a "sensitive democratic conscience" working against all the degradations that the operations of society may subject man to. He emphasizes the social polarity

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[1]Percy H. Boynton, America in Contemporary Fiction (New York: University of Chicago Press, 1940), pp. 195-98.

[2]Ibid., p. 203.

[3]Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1942), p. 341.

between the owners and the dispossessed in U.S.A., and finds here the real subject matter of the book. The novel does not end in victory nor in the projection of an ideal solution for the social problems presented. It indicates in part that awareness which Edmund Wilson attributed to Marx that "the bondage of social relationships is an impediment to individual self-realization."[1] The novel, according to Mr. Kazin, is a novel of defeat from the story of Fenian McCreary, the first character in the book, to Vag, who concludes it; the owners are defeated by themselves, and become the dispossessed of the spirit, while the dispossessed are defeated by the raw forces of capitalistic society. The victory, if it can be called that, is "the mind's silent victory that integrity can acknowledge to itself."[2] This silent victory is distinguished from the "grace under pressure" which is the victory of the early Hemingway hero against the nihilism of the post-war world. Kazin terms the technique of U.S.A. brilliant and original, but finds the real brilliance of structure not in the special features like the Newsreel, the Camera Eye, or the Biographies, which quickly become the most mechanical part of the novel, but rather in the rhythms of the Narratives themselves. Each Narrative is recorded in the characteristic speech of its central figure and contains the sounds, sights, smells, and the very "feel" of his milieu. The real strength of the novel lies in the way Dos Passos has characterized a machine age with the mechanical beat of all the lives which compose it. Mr. Kazin concludes that:

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[1]Edmund Wilson, To the Finland Station (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1953), p. 112.

[2]Kazin, op. cit., p. 353.

> Dos Passos is the first of the new naturalists, and U.S.A. is the dominant social novel of the thirties; but it is not merely a vanished social period that it commemorates: it is an individualism, a protestantism, a power of personal disassociation, [sic] that seem almost to speak from another world.[1]

A second study, published in 1942 by Maxwell Geismar, discovers in U.S.A. the record of the dissolution of a social order, and a call for a social revolution. There are hints that the novel stems from a point of view toward history which lies outside the structure of the novel itself; in short, the suggestion of this account, while never explicit, is that Dos Passos became a Marxist, wrote U.S.A., then became disillusioned and wrote later works critical of Marxism.[2] This process, to a certain degree, is the progress of American intellectualism in the thirties and may be applied in part to Dos Passos. The bald statement of it, however, is the direct-line variety of thinking that omits the distinctions of good intellectual history. The qualifications which make it intellectual history rather than label-making are not the less necessary because they are difficult. Geismar seems to vacillate between the position described above--that Dos Passos has undergone these changes and so reflects them in his writing--and the position that Dos Passos is the historian of these changes in American intellectual thought. The changes involved might be described as: the disillusionment with finance capitalism and the hope of Marxism expressed in U.S.A., followed by the disillusionment with Marxism in the saga of Glen Spotswood in The Adventures of a Young Man. Later, when Geismar approaches a discussion of the author, he

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[1]Ibid., p. 359.

[2]Maxwell Geismar, Writers in Crisis (Boston, Mass.: Houghton-Mifflin, 1942), pp. 120-135.

places the stress on the "positive and moral bent in Dos Passos."[1] Geismar finds each novel of the trilogy better than its predecessor. He refers to the special devices as the framework of the panoramic novel, "which attempts to evaluate the sociological climate of a culture."[2]

A more recent study of the trilogy by W. M. Frohock adds little to the picture already presented by the preceding critics. He admittedly omits consideration of Dos Passos as historian and interpreter of our society, but does refer to his "radical liberalism." He says that the subject of U.S.A. is the years--the passing of time.[3] A great deal is made of the possible French influences on Dos Passos, particularly of Zola and Flaubert. The juxtaposition of the Biographies of important historical figures with the Narratives of nonentities is part of the irony of the novel. He also praises the Narratives and says that they are written as though they were indirect discourse. They give the impression that the character is depicted through his own words. In this regard, Mr. Frohock seems directly indebted to Kazin's more lengthy study. According to Mr. Frohock, U.S.A. is just the opposite of motion-picture technique because the one thing that it lacks is action. He is alone among the critics in finding that U.S.A. owes nothing to the techniques of the motion picture and is, in fact, just the opposite of film technique. This point is emphasized because the present study deals in detail with Mr. Dos Passos' admitted use of motion picture ideas in U.S.A.

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[1] Ibid., p. 138.

[2] Ibid., p. 140.

[3] W. M. Frohock, The Novel of Violence in America (Dallas, Tex.: Southern Methodist University Press, 1950), p. 21.

The Literature of the American People, edited by A. H. Quinn, and The Literary History of the United States, edited by Spiller, Thorp, et al, both devote one page to U.S.A. and neither adds anything of significance to the material already discussed. Two studies of the twentieth century novel, however, appeared in 1951, and commented at length on Dos Passos' trilogy. The first, edited by Gardiner, is subtitled "A Christian Appraisal."[1] In the essay on Dos Passos, there are detailed comparisons of the techniques of Dos Passos with those of Flaubert, Stendhal, Dickens, and Walt Whitman. Like these writers, Dos Passos is concerned with panoramic effects and is impressed by the "artistic possibilities of discontinuity."[2] The theme of Dos Passos is found where "the demand of the individual for some kind of intelligibility in a merely bureaucratic order is met by savage group-reprisal."[3] One mind, however, develops into political maturity in opposition to the group or collective mind; that is the mind represented by the Camera Eye. McLuhan makes the distinction between art as vicarious experience in which there is a behavioristic merging of the reader in the lives of the characters and art which encourages detached intellectual observation. Dos Passos belongs to the latter category. Because the former tendency is encouraged by the mass audience trained on commercial fiction in magazines and newspapers, he is considered high-brow, although in reality he asks no more

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[1]Herbert M. McLuhan, "Technique vs. Sensibility," Fifty Years of the American Novel, ed. Harold C. Gardiner, S.J. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 151-164.

[2]Ibid., p. 159.

[3]Ibid., p. 152.

attention from a reader than does a detective story. The difficulty arises because of a difference in kind rather than a difference in degree of attention demanded of the reader. The patterns of action of both the fictional and historical figures in U.S.A. are said to be "behavioristic" since there is a collective incapacity for self-criticism, and an inevitability about the decisions of the characters. The social philosophy of Dos Passos is identified as Jeffersonian.

> In wandering from the Jeffersonian ideal of a farmer-craftsman economy in the direction of Hamiltonian centralism, power and bigness, Dos Passos sees the main plight of his world.[1]

The second study in this period is that of Frederick J. Hoffman, The Modern Novel in America. Here Dos Passos' chief concern is found to be in "the defeat of individualism in the modern world." The Camera Eye consciousness provides a commentary on the otherwise detached viewpoint toward the automaton quality of the rest of the action. Hoffman finds no attempt in the trilogy to point up easy solutions or to indicate doctrinal strategies. The novel is a documentation of the materialistic obsession of modern America.[2]

The reviews which appeared after the publication of the various novels in Dos Passos' trilogy do not generally add much to the picture of the novel presented by the more extended studies discussed above. The exception is a review of The Big Money by Malcolm Cowley, in which Cowley discusses the notion of the "collective" novel. The ideas relating to the collective novel will be discussed in detail in Chapter VIII of this

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[1] Ibid., p. 164.

[2] Frederick J. Hoffman, The Modern Novel in America (Chicago, Ill.: Henry Regnery, 1951), pp. 138-141.

paper, and will, therefore, be omitted from consideration with the other criticism of Dos Passos' novel. A number of scholarly articles appearing in the journals have also been omitted. They are considered where applicable in the following chapters. Most of them deal with the entire work of Dos Passos or with special problems in the development of his technique and do not comprise a part of the critical reception of U.S.A.

The final study to be considered here is that of Blanche Gelfant in her book, The American City Novel. Mrs. Gelfant sees in U.S.A. "the same burning vision of modern decadence" which is contained in Manhattan Transfer[1] She discusses each of the devices in detail. The Camera Eye is for the purpose of presenting the personal views and emotions of the novelist. They are the expression of his "social and moral conscience." The Biographies, according to Mrs. Gelfant, are of the important historic figures of the times. They are on different sides of the conflict expressed in the Camera Eye; that is, the conflict between the old ideals upon which America was built, and the injustice which is destroying them. For her, the Newsreels are the least successful part of the trilogy. They provide a real counterpart to the activities of the characters. Because the actions described in the Newsreels are even more sordid and selfish than those of the fictional characters, they provide an additional credence to the fiction. They are esthetically unsatisfactory because they do not rise above the limitations inherent in newspaper scanning. Mrs. Gelfant finds the depiction of the characters to be a brilliant utilization of actual speech patterns which in itself creates the char-

[1]Blanche Gelfant, The American City Novel (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), p. 166.

acters. She concludes:

> Dos Passos has created his characters, then, with a multiple consciousness; he is conscious of them as individual human beings, mainly worthy of our irony and disdain; he is conscious of them as being the social and historic times; he is conscious of them, also, as the part and the whole of the social tragedy of twentieth-century America.[1]

The critical reception of Dos Passos' trilogy has been varied in approach and in its findings of the worth of his novel. The early critics were disturbed by the newness of his techniques and the degree of naturalism in the novel. Some critics attempted to account for the book by placing Dos Passos politically, and their findings ranged from anarchist to Marxist. Many of the critics found similarities between Dos Passos and a number of other writers including James Joyce, Balzac, Flaubert, Wassermann, Romains, Dickens, Stendhal, E. E. Cummings, and Whitman. Such comparisons serve to characterize individual techniques and attitudes in the novel, but incidental similarities are not enough to describe the total impact of the trilogy. Kazin and Gelfant began the task of relating the parts of U.S.A. to some central structure. By this means, the novel can be discussed as a work of literature, by which is meant not social commentary, either implicit or explicit, but the formal embodiment of perception. It will be the attempt of this study to define the structure of the novel along the lines suggested by them.

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[1] Ibid., p. 174.

CHAPTER II

THE CAST

The development of Dos Passos' writing from Three Soldiers through Manhattan Transfer shows a trend away from the central hero toward a multiplicity of characters. In Manhattan Transfer, it is clear that it is not the struggle of a hero undergoing certain trials that is at stake but a period of time and a state of society which are made manifest by the struggles and defeats of all the characters. In U.S.A., a larger group of characters is presented in greater detail, but the purpose and the technique are similar. U.S.A. is the culmination of this development in Dos Passos' work; his subsequent novels contain a central character and are closer to the traditional method of the novel. It seems necessary after noting this development to ask why U.S.A. has no hero and what effect is created in the work by the presentation of a number of figures. This question is more fully discussed in the chapter on the collective novel. This chapter is a discussion of the characters of U.S.A. and an attempt to relate their presentation to the total structure of the book.

There have been critical complaints that U.S.A. does not help us to understand the American cultural situation because the lives of the characters are not literal examples of American life. It is true that

they do not represent a statistical average, but their lives are fictional representations of typical aspects of our century. Paul Goodman, discussing the concept of imitation, says:

> But it is just because important parts of the combination have been taken from life and concernful parts of life, famous dooms, the foibles of society, strong feelings on common and extraordinary occasions, it is just because the works are imitations that the poet can prima facie neglect the extrinsic reference of accuracy and concentrate on making a self-contained whole; and so, after him, the critic. In its conditions of sensuousness, isolation, and identification the poem carries on a free experiment. The humane [sic] relevance of the experiment is guaranteed by the origin of the parts, but the success and importance of the experiment reside in the new qualities of the actual experiencing, its clarity, grace, neatness, magnitude, surprise, inevitability, insight; and these qualities, I have tried to suggest, may be adequately analysed in the structure of the work itself.[1]

Following the line of development suggested by Mr. Goodman, this chapter will not try to compare Dos Passos' characters to actual Americans, but it will try to establish that this novel is an attempt to encompass the typical aspects of our century. It will take for granted that "important parts of the combination have been taken from life," and try to see how the treatment of characters contributes to "making a self-contained whole."

The very fact that there is no central hero in U.S.A. suggests a relationship of these characters to this novel different from that of the heroes of more conventional fiction. Mrs. Gelfant, speaking of the characters of Manhattan Transfer, says that they give the feeling of not being fictional people, but states of mind.

> The disorganized characters of Manhattan Transfer are created in terms of a startling vision of human disintegration--of man rushing

[1]Paul Goodman, The Structure of Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 8.

> frenetically after false or elusive ideals, confounded by his inabilities and inner emptiness, lost in a search for an identity, self-divided and confused. And as this vision grows sharper it reveals that these are not really men at all but jigging marionettes engaged in a perpetual motion that brings them actually or spiritually nowhere.[1]

A similar comment could be made about the characters of U.S.A., but it is not necessary to find that these are not fictional people at all. They are fictional people and it is precisely by being so and by living in a fictional world that they illustrate the vision of human disintegration that is a major theme of the novel. Comparison is possible with the many characters presented in Eliot's "The Fire Sermon," where each incident is presented in order to illustrate the theme. Each is an example of a situation. The typical novel "tests" the values of the hero by adverse circumstances; Dos Passos tests the society by showing examples of its working parts. In this sense, the "hero" of U.S.A. may be said to be the cultural situation in which each of the characters finds himself. This is a different thing from saying that the United States in the first thirty years of the twentieth century is the "hero."

The conventional novel is concerned with the development of character in its hero and the careful delineation of his motivations. The result is an identification or at least empathy on the part of the reader toward the hero. In such work the downfall or triumph of the hero is the result of his personal evaluation of and response to the conditions of his existence. It is just this personal evaluation and response that Dos Passos wished to avoid in order to emphasize the conditions of life itself rather than the situation of any one individual. For this purpose it was

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[1]Gelfant, op. cit., p. 162.

necessary to present the narrative characters of his novel in a different fashion. Therefore, Dos Passos presents his characters largely by their actions and by the thoughts which are closely concerned with the actions. It is similar to film technique in that each facet of character must be indicated by action and each feeling must be illustrated by an appropriate gesture. Actually, Dos Passos is not so severly constrained in this respect as the motion picture director since he can indicate some of the thoughts of his characters. Since, however, these thoughts concern only the immediate situation and do not involve introspection about ultimate significance, some limitation remains.

The advantages of the method are that there is less feeling of author intrusion and there is a greater impression of verisimilitude. Vince McHugh says of the characters:

> We talk about them almost as if they were a part of our own lives. We remember his people as if they were people we had known. This in itself is indicative. There is an immediate aliveness in his work, quite beyond the topical, that touches the aliveness in us; and the triumph here lies in the fact that this is precisely what he sets out to do.[1]

The quality that Mr. McHugh finds in Dos Passos' characters is a result of the technique by which Dos Passos presents them. Each character tells his own story in a manner suggesting indirect discourse. There is no outside comment, nor any "editorializing" by the author; the character is presented in his own words and impressions, giving the reader those aspects of his life which seem most important to him. We get each story in broken form--like meeting an acquaintance at intervals and finding out what has happened to him in the interim.

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[1]Vince McHugh, "Dos Passos and the Thirty Thousand Souls," Writers of Our Years, ed. A.M.I. Fiskin (Denver, Col.: University of Denver Press, 1950), p. 82.

The disadvantage of the method is that it presents the complexity of the character only by implication. It thus leads to the complaint that Dos Passos' characters are shallow. This complaint is of no more help than to say of those of Henry James that they are deep. The metaphor, however, can be illustrative of the difference between the two ways of depicting character. James is not so much concerned with the actions of his characters--that is, their day by day actions are not used to indicate subtle manifestations of character. Such manifestations are indicated by the states of mind which precede and follow action. Dos Passos shows us the other side of the coin; his characters represent states of mind by the kinds of actions in which they are continually involved. The actions which he describes are in themselves manifestations of the intellectual-emotional complex which makes up each individual character. The characters are presented by their own words and thought processes, but largely by those which direct the immediate thought and action. We see not the deep, underlying feelings of unrest and dissatisfaction, but the immediate feeling or reaction which is the result of such unrest and dissatisfaction. It is as though we are casual acquaintances and see and hear only what the character is doing and saying at the moment. Actually, however, since we have seen the development of each person through several crises, we are gradually made aware of the unverbalized, deeper conflicts of the individual. It is as though we are continually dealing with people so psychologically constricted that they cannot reveal, except through their actions, the difficulties by which they are haunted. Thus it is through interpolation by the reader, as he sees each figure meet succeeding events, that the full character is

revealed.

It must be noted, however, that one important aspect of Dos Passos' meaning is that the civilization he is depicting produces limited, if not "shallow" character. For this reason, the moral refinements and nuances of feeling common to the Jamesian character are not found in those of Dos Passos. While Dos Passos' characters do not approach the depth of James' they are yet more complicated persons than the two-dimensional figures of melodrama suggested by the term "shallow."

The succeeding events which reveal the characters of the Narratives are often widely separated by narrative time and by placement in the novel. But even this physical fact has its relevance to the fragmented lives which are the major subject of the novel. The lives of the characters are thus literally broken apart. Both in this way and in the events of the lives, they are illustrative of the lack of a clearly defined pattern of living. By this method of presentation, Dos Passos emphasizes that it is the social situation that is his major concern. It is the society which has gone wrong and which no longer provides clear alternatives or satisfactory roles for its individual members. Industrialization has resulted in an emphasis on the material aspects of life. The patterns of community life have been broken, creating an environment in which there is less and less feeling of personal and individual responsibility. In turn, new generations grow up in communities in which the older moral prerogatives have been replaced by one major preoccupation--that of obtaining the greatest possible amount of material goods.

Among the characteristics of the new communities created by the factory system is that of rootlessness, which is illustrated by the lives

of all of the characters of U.S.A. The lack of normal home life, in that one or both parents are either hostile or missing from the environment, leads in turn to irregularity in their own marital relationships. In each, a quality in personal life is missing. The characters are illustrative of Dos Passos' theme that industrialization breaks down the traditional patterns of family life. The close community ties which have provided an ethical order in the past are no longer operative. The breaking of family ties is symbolized by the broken homes in the backgrounds of each of the characters. The lack of community ties is symbolized by the constant moving of the characters from place to place.

The mobility of American society is one of its most frequently named attributes. It is true in regard to geographic location that few Americans remain throughout their lives in the same place in which they were born. It is also true that in a few generations or in a single lifetime, a family may move from a low to a relatively high placement in the socio-economic scale. The fact that Dos Passos' characters move freely in both senses can be explained by simply attributing it to his realistic method. But it is not sufficient to explain the mobility of Dos Passos' characters by terming it "realistic method"; rather, it is necessary to relate this fact to the total experience of reading the book. In fiction everything is fiction. Another way of saying this is to say that the facts presented have relevance only to the fictional structure of the work. Obversely, any material, however contrary to ordinary or actual experience, is not questioned unless it breaks the dramatic illusion. Thus, the witches in Macbeth constitute one of the "facts" of the experience of reading the play. The fact that Shakespeare took liberties

with Holinshed's Chronicles in writing the play exists only outside the play.

The mobility of Dos Passos' characters suggests comparison with numerous fictional odysseys and the goals of these quests. In each there is a breaking of some traditional mold which casts the hero adrift or sets him moving. After suffering tribulation, avoiding or retrieving false paths, and overcoming obstacles, the hero returns, having in some way fulfilled his destiny or demonstrated his own particular value. Parsival succeeds by his purity, Aeneas by his patience, Odysseus by his guile; Julien Sorel cannot avoid his commitment to the village from which he sprang and Huck Finn "lights out" for the open lands of the West. Dos Passos starts his characters off, shows them struggling with their difficulties, but does not include a "return" or consummation of the quest. It is in this aspect that the novel disappoints the expectations of the reader, but it is here also that an essential theme is demonstrated. Lacking any criteria of satisfaction, the characters wander, indulging their appetites. They seem to answer the questions: What would have happened had Aeneas lost his patience or remained with Dido? What would have happened had Odysseus not known how to overcome the charms of Circe or had he not heeded the warnings concerning the Sirens? What would have happened had Dante turned back? The characters of Hemingway operate in a world similar to that of U.S.A. and are equally rootless. However, through the realization of a code which constitutes a criterion of satisfaction for them, Hemingway's heroes exist in a microcosm of their own making and thereby enjoy a measure of success even in defeat. Dos Passos' book is about all the others.

At this point it seems desirable to examine the specific lives of Dos Passos' characters in order to see how they illustrate: first, his emphasis on social conditions; second, his presentation of the character in stimulus-response patterns; and third, his theme of moral chaos.

Most of the characters in U.S.A. come from homes in which one parent is either dead or disabled in some way. The father of J. Ward Moorehouse becomes an invalid. Eleanor Stoddard's mother dies while Eleanor is still young. Charley Anderson's mother is a grass widow. Dick Savage's parents are separated and his father is in the penitentiary. Eveline Hutchins' mother must go to Santa Fe for her health. Daughter's mother dies when she is a baby. The parents of Mary French are divorced while she is a sophomore at Vassar. Margo Dowling's mother dies at Margo's birth; she is deserted by her father and lives with her step-mother and the step-mother's second husband. Of the twelve major characters, only Ben Compton has the expected or "normal" home environment. Ben's father, however, expresses pleasure at Ben's weak, "scholar's" eyes, which will preclude his playing baseball and being like the other boys.

Of the twelve characters, there are six women and six men. In the order of their appearance in the novel, Fenian McCreary is the first character. His life begins with his impoverished Irish family; their place of residence is Middletown, Connecticut. After the death of his mother, he moves to Chicago, works in a print shop, and departs on a book-selling tour with Doc Bingham. Mac calls himself a Socialist; he was named for an Irish revolutionary society, and his career itself demonstrates the appropriateness of the name, "Fenian." After his conversation with Ike concerning Socialism and after the hopeful prospect

of a general strike, Mac's feelings are presented symbolically. A handcar with a section gang is coming down the railroad track:

> He watched it come nearer. A speck of red flag fluttered in the front of the handcar; it grew bigger, ducking into patches of shadow, larger and more distinct each time it came out into a patch of sun.[1]

In these circumstances, the red flag growing larger and more distinct is the flag that Mac will follow until, at the end of the final episode devoted to him, "big red banners stretched from wall to wall."[2] But to Mac, now in Mexico, these banners have become meaningless. He is sorry that he has given up his book store; the youthful aspirations are gone. He still repeats the slogans of revolution, but he does not know which side the soldiers are fighting on. This career is like the others depicted in U.S.A. in that it ends in frustration and defeat--this defeat, the sadder because there is no particular awareness of defeat.

Shifting the scene to Georgetown, near Washington, D.C., Dos Passos picks up the story of Janey Williams. The time period is approximately the same and there are some similarities in background and circumstances. Like Mac, Janey loses one of her parents relatively early in life. Her father becomes an invalid and later dies. As so often happens to a character in U.S.A., Janey Williams is brilliantly realized as a child and then becomes a faded and quiet portrait in the later aspects of her career. The account of the fishing trip taken by Janey and Joe Williams with Alex is a vivid presentation of the psychology of childhood

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[1]John Dos Passos, U.S.A. ("The Modern Library"; New York: Random House, 1937), I, p. 63. All citations of U.S.A. will refer to "The Modern Library" edition and will consist of the title, the volume, and the page number.

[2]U.S.A., I, p. 323.

It is a transitional period for Janey, who is the viewpoint character. It marks the change from childhood to the beginning of growing up. The end of the day is marred by her realization that her period is starting and so the outing ends with disgust and self-loathing. During a sudden rainstorm, the three children huddle under the protection of an overturned canoe. Janey is conscious of the warmth of the boys' bodies and of a sense of security, but with the ending of the storm, she is aware of her cramps and tired. "After that Janey never cried much; things upset her, but she got a cold hard feeling all over instead."[1] After that also, Janey is a little ashamed of her brother, Joe, on their infrequent meetings. She becomes secretary to J. Ward Moorehouse and, like a picture one has long been accustomed to seeing in the same place, becomes a little more faded and a little more obscurely a part of the background as the book progresses to its end.

J. Ward Moorehouse starts life in Wilmington, Delaware, and is named the brightest boy of the family. By his aptitude, he wins a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania. He remains there for two years until his father's injury forces him to drop out. Like Mac, he has been an agent for a book distributing firm. There are similarities also in the characters of Doc Bingham and Colonel Wedgewood, the latter an early employer of Moorehouse. Colonel Wedgewood and Doc Bingham are both large, florid men and each has a propensity for rhetorical expression. Like Mac also, Moorehouse discovers that his girl, Anabelle Strang, is pregnant and marries her. This marriage is equally unsuccessful.

[1] U.S.A., I, p. 144.

J. Ward Moorehouse serves to relate a number of the characters. Janey Williams, Eveline Hutchins, and Dick Savage all work for him; Eleanor Stoddard is first a close personal friend and later his mistress. He meets Mac in Mexico City. While he does not appear in his own right in either 1919 or The Big Money, his close relationship to the other characters makes him a constant figure in the background of those two novels. He seems to function as a link which will connect the lives of a number of the other characters. His public relations firm is representative of the kind of institution which produces nothing, but is devoted to the manipulation of opinion for the mercenary purposes of his clients. All of the big words and fine slogans are corruptions of ideals. God, patriotism, democracy, the rights of working men, the processes of government, are exploited so that the Moorehouse firm and its clients may prosper. The result is a cleavage between the stated ideals of the society and the forces which actually dominate it.

The point may be made by the career of Doc Bingham. In The 42nd Parallel he is a Falstaffian figure engaged in petty chicanery. The opportunities and advantages offered in his newspaper advertisement for young men are mere shams which Mac quickly sees through once they begin their tour. Near the conclusion of The Big Money, Doc Bingham returns, suggesting, with his nostrums, raw vegetables, and physical regimen, a thinly disguised caricature of Bernarr McFadden. Through the efforts of Moorehouse's firm, represented by Dick Savage, he hopes to prevent passage of a pure foods and drugs act which will harm his lucrative business. Moorehouse, Bingham, and later Dick Savage will use the slogans of democracy to justify their actions. Often they are convincing, as they are to

Janey Williams. Their corruption of the ideals, however, reflects their own confusion and adds to the confusion of other men. The result is to increase the unsatisfactory quality of their lives and the lives of others.

The lives of Eleanor Stoddard and Eveline Hutchins are so constantly interrelated that they can be considered together. Both live in Chicago; they meet at the Art Museum, open a decorating shop together, and later go to New York to help with a play one of their Chicago friends is putting on Broadway.[1] The careers of the two girls are beginning to diverge when the war throws them together again. In 1919, both are working for a Red Cross unit headed by J. Ward Moorehouse. Eleanor Stoddard is a cold, calculating person who is not particularly attracted to men. Her long friendship with Moorehouse turns into an affair only under the stress of wartime. At the conclusion of her part of the story, she is engaged to marry an exiled Russian prince. Eveline Hutchins has numerous affairs: with Jose O'Riely, the Mexican painter, with Don Stevens, with Moorehouse, and with Paul Johnson. She becomes pregnant by the latter and marries him. Her subsequent life is a series of dreary affairs, divorce, and finally suicide.

As we see the relationship of these two women, first from one point of view, then from the other, a mirroring process is brought into play. The same event seen through the eyes of both is given added dimension. This process, in addition, permits a physical description of each character which would not be possible if the character were merely pre-

[1] In The 42nd Parallel, this play is identified as a production of The Return of the Native, but in 1919 it is referred to as Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

sented from his own point of view. The technique is that of letting the character present himself through his own words, thoughts, and actions. Where it is necessary to a fuller understanding of the character, additional material such as a physical description can be logically given as a part of the thought processes of another character. This technique provides detachment and objectivity to discourage direct identification by the reader while still making it possible to present the character without the statements or attitudes of an omniscient author. The effect is that of emphasizing the patterns of stimulus-response rather than the patterns of moral choice. Joseph Warren Beach is speaking of the characters of Manhattan Transfer, but his remarks may be applied to those of U.S.A.

> But so rapid is the shift from situation to situation, from character to character, so wide are the intervals between appearance that we cannot quite grasp the thread which binds together the psychic life of the individual. They are individuals...but they are not quite persons; for we are not made to feel that they are self-directing spirits. We are not shown the ideal nucleus round which their emotional life is organized. And so in spite of their vivid reality, they do not have the sentimental importance of characters in fiction. This is no doubt intentional and deliberate on the part of the author.[1]

Mr. Beach's comments and those of the many critics who emphasize the shallowness of characterization in U.S.A. are evidence that these characters are different from those of other contemporary fiction. The difference lies in the fact that they are not protagonists testing certain moral alternatives, but examples of the workings of a complex social organism.

The point is significant in that the world of U.S.A. does not pre-

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[1] Joseph Warren Beach, American Fiction: 1920-1940 (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 37.

sent clear moral alternatives in a manner which would make them recognizable to the characters. It is a part of Dos Passos' vision in this book that choices between ends are often made through commitments which occur long before the ends are visible. Even where they are apparent, they are often confused and compromised by other conflicting ends. Since the novel is deeply concerned with the fragmentation of a culture and the attendant loss of moral values, this mode of characterization which substitutes stimulus-response patterns for moral choices is in keeping with the theme.

If this technique were actually as extreme in U.S.A. as the preceding paragraph suggests, the characters would, indeed, be "shallow." But the sum total of each character is rarely only that suggested by any one of the episodes devoted to him, nor can it be said with justice that Dos Passos' figures are marionettes or automatons. Charley Anderson is a good case in point. It is easy to see him exclusively as he is presented in the final part of The Big Money. Here he is a bragging, drinking, wenching kind of man with somewhat suicidal tendencies. One may forget that he has intelligence enough even in decay to preserve his financial interests. He has been an inventor of some skill as well as the successful manager of a plant. The petty mercenary qualities of his brother, Jim, arouse only his disgust and anger. The concern of his wife's family for binding legal agreements regarding financial matters is also disgusting to him. He is not merely careless in these matters; he is somehow above them. He is aware of having made a wrong choice in his dealing with his partner, Andy Merritt, and this wrong continues to haunt him. At each level of society, he finds the same concern for

financial gain outweighing the values of love and friendship, and he is aware of the same qualities in himself. To suggest that Charley Anderson does not deserve our compassion is to withhold it also from Oedipus and King Lear on the grounds that they were mistaken and therefore deserved whatever happened to them. His character is shallow only in that he is unable to verbalize the nature of the wrongs which are driving him to destroy everything which he has held meaningful, and eventually to destroy himself. At any given point in his narrative, we see only the stimulus and response; but a series of such responses indicates a complexity in the character and a submerged and unverbalized moral struggle.

Perhaps it is a mistake to refer to this aspect of the novel as a moral struggle at all; it is merely meant to indicate that the characters do have a sense of right and wrong. The difficulty is that the sense of right and wrong is not sharply defined but exists as a dim and shadowy background. On the other hand, the exact source of evil or of difficulty is not clear to the characters. The political and social implications of the novel will be discussed in a later chapter. They are made obvious by the careers of the Biographical figures, by the protest evident in the Camera Eye, and by the ironies indicated in the Newsreel. Because Dos Passos wishes to present his characters in such a way as to indicate that they are incapable of moral judgment, no final decision can be made from their reactions as to the cause of the evils which beset the society described. What Dos Passos does give is a fictional account of a large historical movement. It is his presentation of the characters and his theme which makes it necessary for him to reserve direct political and moral comment to the other devices of the novel.

It is this fact also which makes the other devices a necessary part of the total structure of the work. In the Narrative, then, he presents the raw material of historical interpretation.

Erich Auerbach's Mimesis describes the fictional portrayal of historical movements. It seems best to let his remarks stand as he presents them rather than to attempt a paraphrase:

> No matter how many persons may be branded as given to vice or as ridiculous, criticism of vices and excesses poses the problem as one for the individual; consequently, social criticism never leads to a definition of the motive forces within society...A modern Petronius would link a portrait of a profiteer to the inflation after the First World War, let us say, or to some other well-known crisis...For it is precisely in the intellectual and economic conditions of everyday life that those forces are revealed which underlie historical movements; these, whether military, diplomatic, or related to the inner constitution of the state are only the product, the final result of variation in the depths of everyday life.[1]
>
> The ethical and rhetorical approach are incompatible with a conception in which reality is a development of forces. Antique historiography gives us neither social history nor economic history nor cultural history.[2]

Mr. Auerbach says that in order to reflect the unfolding of historical movements,

> it is essential that great numbers of random persons should make their appearance; for it is not possible to bring to life such historical forces in their surging action except by reference to numerous random persons--the term random being here employed to designate people from all classes, occupations, walks of life, people that is, who owe their place in the account exclusively to the fact that the historical movement engulfs them as it were accidentally, so that they are obliged to react to it in one way or another.[3]

Dos Passos' book and the period it describes are still too near our own

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[1] Erich Auerbach, Mimesis (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 33-34.

[2] Ibid., p. 40.

[3] Ibid., p. 44.

time for an accurate description of the historical movement of which it is a part. What is apparent is the chaos of this period and its accompanying frustration.

Mr. Auerbach says that the military, diplomatic, and economic movements of society are the product of variations in the depths of everyday life; therefore, the chaos of everyday life as depicted by the characters of U.S.A. is commensurate with the chaos of diplomatic and political life reflected in the Biographies. If this book were concerned with a well-defined past period of history, then the historical movements involved could be described, but since the present direction of world events is still not clear to us, the book remains as the raw material for some future historical interpretation. The application of Mr. Auerbach's comments is not invalidated because it is not possible to define the historical movements involved. In the world described by U.S.A., the confusion and indirection of the characters is indicative of confusion and indirection at all levels of social endeavor. While this world is not literally the United States, it is a fictional representation of it. It is obviously only a part of the truth. Mr. Auerbach deals with this issue in describing a technique employed in Voltaire's Philosophical Letters:

> It might be called the searchlight device. It consists in over-illuminating one small part of an extensive complex, while everything else which might explain, derive, and possibly counterbalance the thing emphasized is left in the dark; so that apparently the truth is stated, for what is said cannot be denied; and yet everything is falsified, for truth requires the whole truth and the proper interrelation of its elements.[1]

[1] Ibid., p. 404.

The conclusions to be drawn then are that Dos Passos is using a method of portrayal of historical forces similar to that described by Mr. Auerbach, and that he has presented a part, but not all of the truth. The direction of the historical movements involved cannot be sharply defined now any more than they could be when Dos Passos wrote the book.

Because the book is meant to display the corruption and frustration of a world lacking accurate knowledge of itself, it is inappropriate to assign to it some specific historic explanation, either Marxist or "the spirit of seventy-six." The following remarks quoted by Joseph Freeman and attributed to Dos Passos suggest that Dos Passos does not have an easy historical interpretation to apply to the material of U.S.A. The time is 1926.

> As mechanical power grows in America, general ideals tend to restrict themselves more and more to Karl Marx, the first chapter of Genesis, and the hazy scientific mysticism of the Sunday supplements. I don't think there should be any more phrases, badges, opinions, banners, imported from Russia or anywhere else. Ever since Columbus, imported systems have been the curse of this country. Why not develop our own brand.[1]

In addition, the Marxist interpretation of the book seems to have been dealt with once and for all by Edmund Wilson, who says:

> The Communist critical movement in America, which had for its chief spokesman Mr. Hicks, tended to identify their ideal with the work of John Dos Passos. In order to make this possible, it was necessary to invent an imaginary Dos Passos. This ideal Dos Passos was a Communist who wrote stories about the proletariat, at a time when the real Dos Passos was engaged in bringing out a long novel about the effects of the capitalist system on the American middle class and had announced himself--in the New Republic in 1930--politically a 'middle-class liberal.'[2]

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[1]Joseph Freeman, An American Testament (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1936), p. 379.

[2]Edmund Wilson, The Triple Thinkers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 208.

These statements by Dos Passos and others as well as the general confusion in the criticism of U.S.A. regarding the politics of the author stem from an over-emphasis on one or another part of the novel. The author is saying not just one thing about the American situation, but many things. He is indignant at specific social abuses and he is condemnatory of specific leaders who have betrayed the ideals of democracy. This material is appropriate to the Biographies and the Camera Eye where it appears. In the Narrative, however, he is prevented by his method from indicating a specific set of choices which will lead to the success of any individual character. If some of the characters succeed, then those who fail must blame themselves and not the social climate. If Dos Passos had presented the situation in this way, the real impact of his novel would have been lost. Instead, he presents his view of the social climate by showing his characters in confusion and defeat.

The personal lives of the characters in themselves serve to illustrate the theme of frustration in the novel. Mention has already been made of the irregularities in the immediate family backgrounds of the characters; these irregularities pale into insignificance when compared with the lives of the twelve chief characters of U.S.A. Mac is determined to lead the life of a radical agitator, but he finds that his girl, Maisie, is pregnant. He returns to marry her, but this marriage ends when Mac leaves his family to go to Mexico. J. Ward Moorehouse discovers that Anabelle Strang is pregnant and they are married. When he discovers that she is continuing to have affairs, he insists on divorce. In Pittsburgh he marries Gertrude, then moves to New York to start his public relations firm. He and Gertrude become increasingly

hostile and the marriage is only nominally one. At the conclusion of the book she has been committed to an asylum. Charley Anderson discovers that his girl, Emiscah, is pregnant, but not by him. Later, while working in Detroit, he marries Gladys, who later divorces him. Joe Williams marries Della while home on leave, but finds that she is seeing a number of other men during his long absences. He decides that the marriage is dissolved, but does not formalize his decision by legal action. Dick Savage and Daughter have an affair in which she becomes pregnant. When Savage indicates that he will not marry her, she takes an airplane ride with a drunken French officer which results in her death. Her actions are clearly suicidal in intent, even though she is not directly responsible for the event itself. Ben Compton and Mary French have an affair and Mary becomes pregnant. Compton feels that a marriage will interfere with his work, so Mary has an abortion. She has also gone through the same experience with George Barrow. Compton then deserts her.

Eleanor Stoddard has an affair with J. Ward Moorehouse, as does Evcline Hutchins. The latter has numerous affairs and marries Paul Johnson after discovering that she is pregnant. Her later life includes still more affairs and finally suicide. Margo Dowling is first raped by her step-father and then contracts syphilis from her first husband. After several affairs, including one with Charley Anderson, she marries a film director. Only Janey Williams fails to follow the pattern of a love affair, a resulting pregnancy, and an unsuccessful marriage. Once we are no longer concerned to make the events recorded in U.S.A. correspond with actual life in the United States and instead see the events as symbolizing important tendencies in the social situation, it is possible to

discuss these lives in connection with the basic themes of the novel.

The private lives of these characters are reflective of a moral chaos and a lack of direction on the part of the society. What is related is not a matter of individual morality; these characters do not choose to be "bad," nor does it seem a reasonable explanation of the behavior of any organism that it chooses a less desirable alternative where choice is possible. It seems more reasonable to assume that man, or any other organism, will move in the direction of satisfaction and away from the direction of deprivation according to his evaluation. All of the pitfalls which have traditionally been designated as evil are placed before the characters of U.S.A.; each succumbs to temptation and takes the course of immediate satisfaction of his sensuous pleasure. Each in turn creates his own private hell in which he is condemned to dwell. But it is because the social situation does not provide a firm basis in morality that the characters are unable to choose better for themselves. This point will be developed after a momentary glance at religion in U.S.A.

Sometimes what is not said can be as expressive as those things which are said. Religion in U.S.A. is perhaps significant by its absence. Not one of the twenty-six figures treated in the Biographies is related to a religious institution or is outstanding for his piety. Doc Bingham calls himself a Doctor of Divinity, but he is clearly a sham. Two ministers appear in the book: Eveline Hutchins says of her father, "Of course Dad wasn't like an ordinary minister in a white tie, he was a Unitarian and very broad and more like a prominent author or scien-

tist."[1] The other minister is Edwin Thurlow, who appears in one of the sections devoted to Dick Savage. During his adolescent years, Savage is a member of the Episcopal Church, and it is here that he meets its young minister and his wife, Hilda. Dick Savage is seduced by Hilda, who has been denied because of her husband's fear of having a baby. This episode terminates the religious aspirations of Savage. Another mention of a minister's wife occurs in Camera Eye (19), but the parallels between the lives of Dick Savage and the Camera Eye personage will be discussed in detail later. There is invocation of the Deity for rhetorical or blasphemous purposes throughout the book. In addition, there is occasional mention of the major Christian events where clearly a figurative parallel is being drawn; for example, Jerry Burnham's comment during the attempt to save Sacco and Vanzetti, "If it's not going too far back, I'd like to know who it was demanded the execution of our friend Jesus H. Christ?"[2] There are a few instances of religious reference in the Newsreels in which an event related to religious matters is referred to, but in the entire book there are no more than a dozen references and in no case is religion presented as an active force in the society described.

While the fabric of U.S.A. itself is enough to make the claim that Dos Passos finds in the confusion and misdirection of individuals the reasons for confusion and misdirection in the affairs of state, there is corroborating evidence in his book The Ground We Stand On. He says:

> We must never forget that men don't make up much of their own behavior; they behave within limits laid down by their upbringing and

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 110.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 451.

> group background. That is why individual men feel so helpless in the face of social changes.[1]

This statement might be applied directly to the characters of U.S.A., who do not themselves make much of their own behavior. Their upbringing and group background is that of the American middle class in the first part of the twentieth century, which has not supplied them with the structure of ideas necessary to make their lives meaningful. In the same book, Dos Passos describes another situation from the American past in which such an idea-structure was available. He is speaking of the early life of Joel Barlow.

> It was a time in Connecticut when a general equality of wealth and education made people's relationships and contacts simple, and gave life in the small neat town, joined up only by the worst of rutted wagon roads, a pleasant tone of frank conviviality. There wasn't much cash around but want was unknown in the wellbuilt farmhouses so cleverly located beside their barns in wellwatered valleys and on the sheltered slopes of rolling stony hills. Since Jonathan Edwards' great defeat enough of the skepticism of the century had seeped into the churches to lighten the load of calvinist theology without disturbing the close community life or the cheerful imperatives of family ethics. Connecticut farmers lived easy. Sermons and Wednesday lectures were taken for granted, but townmeeting and the gazettes and roadside talk and huskingbees and roofingparties were the real training grounds for young people's minds.[2]

There is in our century, too, a skepticism which has "lightened the load of calvinist theology," but in the world of U.S.A. the close community life and cheerful imperatives of family ethics have disappeared. U.S.A. is also a discussion of the "training grounds for young people's minds," a training ground which imbues them with prejudice and hatred, and with the drives for money and power which are described in the book.

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[1] John Dos Passos, The Ground We Stand On (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1941), p. 10.

[2] Ibid., p. 259.

At the conclusion of The Ground We Stand On, Dos Passos gets at "the root of the matter" in describing a personal restraint which he says is needed to maintain a self governing society.

> As the divines of the old days of the Commonwealth would have put it both Hamilton and Brackenridge had 'the root of the matter' in them. Though they were both vain, ambitious, pushing men, each given to moments of irresponsibility, something in their early training had engrained into their behavior the minimum of personal restraint needed to keep the fabric of a selfgoverning society unbroken. Men brought up under Club Law would have behaved differently. It was a commonplace of our fathers' and grandfathers' thought that men of Anglo-Saxon training and tradition knew how to govern themselves better than other men. Even through the shams and hypocrisies of the age of money rule which is now coming to an end it was not entirely an empty boast. Today our lives depend on it. If we can keep the fabric of a selfgoverning republic unbroken at home, we are in no danger from the attacks of the slave states of Europe and Asia; if we can't, everything we as Americans have stood for from the beginning will have been in vain.[1]

It is just this personal restraint that is missing from the characters of U.S.A. and that forms so great a threat to the self governing society. "The shams and hypocrisies of the age of money rule" might serve as a subtitle for U.S.A.

The institutions of religion and education which should be sources for the values of the characters are either ineffectual or purveyors of harmful values. The religious figures have already been described; the one teacher mentioned in the book is Professor Copeland of Harvard of whom little is said, but who appears to be the epitome of detached culture and refinement. The leaders of other institutions are equally unsatisfactory. Senator Planet is introduced, before fortune has put him into the United States Senate, through one of the little index cards kept by J. Ward Moorehouse. It reads:

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[1] Ibid., p. 401.

> Planet, Bowie C...Tennessee Judge, married Elsie Wilson Denver; small copper lead interest. ...Anaconda? unlucky oil speculator... member one-horse lawfirm Planet and Wilson, Springfield, Illinois.[1]

Later he appears as Senator Planet who will use information gleaned as a member of the Senate to advise Charley Anderson as to possible congressional acts which will affect the stock market and the Florida land boom. He will also aid Bingham in preventing passage of a pure food and drugs act which would harm Bingham's nostrum business. G. H. Barrow, the labor leader, is introduced the same way. He is also a corrupt type who is maintaining a position in labor activity for his own gain. He is without real courage and is more interested in making his own living than in rendering real aid to the cause of labor. Charley Anderson and J. Ward Moorehouse are the representatives of big business. Neither produces anything, the one living on stock manipulation, the other on the questionable services provided by a public relations firm.

It is in this way that the characters represent the raw material for historical interpretation. In their lives, "the worse appear the better reasons," and since the worse are dominant, the representatives of their institutions are embodiments of their own confusions and uncertain motivations. What is indicated is an interaction between the characters and the institutions which they partly make and which in turn partly make them. The Narrative does not make clear whether it is the corrupt institutions which in turn produce corrupt individuals or whether the individuals are themselves confused and thereby select as leaders those who represent their own worse aspects. At this stage of the process it is a

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 269.

matter of mutual exchange--a kind of vicious circle as yet unbroken. What is clear in U.S.A. is a vision of a world of moral chaos which has resulted in a corruption of basic institutions and which also provides no basis for a satisfactory life for its inhabitants. As Lionel Trilling has said:

> The midway people of Dos Passos represent this moral-paradoxical aspect of class. They are a great fact in American life. It is they who show the symptoms of cultural change. Their movement from social group to social group--from class to class, if you will--makes for the uncertainty of their moral codes, their confusion, their indecision. ...Dos Passos is primarily concerned with morality, with personal morality. ...But if Dos Passos is a social historian, as he is so frequently said to be, he is that in order to be a more complete moralist. It is of the greatest significance that for him the barometer of social breakdown is not suffering through economic deprivation but always moral degeneration through moral choice.[1]

Much has been said about the stimulus-response gestures in the behavior of the characters and the moral choices which in themselves make up the patterns of their selfhood. It is in this respect also that Dos Passos departs from the traditional mode of the novel. It is not actually a moral choice which determines particular actions of the characters, but morality is involved in the background of the choice. Mr. Trilling explains this matter by reference to an idea of John Dewey.

> The moral assumption on which Dos Passos seems to work was expressed by John Dewey some thirty years ago; there are certain moral situations, Dewey says, where we cannot decide between the ends; we are forced to make our moral choice in terms of our preference for one kind of character or another: "What sort of an agent, of a person shall he be?" This is the question finally at stake in any genuinely moral situation: What shall the agent be? What sort of character shall he assume? On its face, the question is what he shall do, shall he act for this or that end. But the incompatibility of the ends forces the issue back into the questions of the kind of selfhood, of agency, involved in the respective ends. One can imagine that this method of moral decision does not have meaning for

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[1]Lionel Trilling, "The America of John Dos Passos," Partisan Review, IV (April, 1938), 29.

> all times and cultures...But for our age with its intense self-consciousness and its uncertain moral codes, the reference to the quality of personality does have meaning, and the greater the social flux the more frequent will be the interest in qualities of character rather than in the rightness of the end.[1]

In this respect the characters of U.S.A. wish to measure up to some concept of personality. Charley Anderson in talking with his mechanic, Bill Cermak, wishes to be thought of as a mechanic himself; to Margo Dowling he wants to appear as a man of money who remains "regular." He rejects the petty financial finagling of his brother Jim but later sells out his partner and makes use of unethically obtained information to make money on the stock market. What is involved is not a series of moral choices but a concept of personality which makes petty financial juggling unattractive and yet provides a satisfactory picture of the large scale financial operator. In the same way, Janey Williams adopts a respectability which includes a feeling of embarrassment towards her brother Joe because he does not measure up to her standard. Joe Williams feels vaguely that he must not be caught in the traps of conformity; so he escapes by his numerous voyages. Each way provides a means by which the character can satisfy his concept of selfhood, but it does not provide a lasting direction by which to arrange a life. Even Mary French can be included in this roster in spite of her devotion to Communist causes. She is betrayed by her comrades in her personal life and finds in them the same hypocrisy and self-deception that she has rejected in conventional society. She has become so concerned with abstract humanitarianism that she greets the news of her friend, Eleanor Hutchins', death by rush-

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[1] Ibid., p. 30.

ing off to another of her interminable committee meetings. In Barrow and in others, she has fought the concept that individuals do not matter, that each decision for action must be based on the ultimate good of the movement. Finally she succumbs to this concept herself, because it allows her to overlook the aspects of the movement which do not conform to her ideas of its ends. The moral choice has been lost and in its place is the self-portrait of sacrifice for a larger goal--a portrait which permits her to live with her own lack of personal satisfactions.

Given Dos Passos' theme of the fragmentation of our culture and its resulting moral chaos, it is easy to see why it cannot be embodied in the traditional hero of fiction where his personal choices would be at issue. It is necessary to select for this purpose "great numbers of random persons" in order to exemplify the social situation which is really the point. This social situation is one in which basic institutions have been corrupted and the society no longer provides an environment which can direct the rising generation. Lacking a moral center, the characters make choices according to their concepts of a satisfying personal adaptation.

Traditionally the family, the church, the schools have been the major purveyors of the morality and the ideals--in short, the "culture" of a given society. Through the lives of these characters, Dos Passos has indicated that each of these sources of values has been broken down in the United States, the setting of his novel. While one might argue that he has exaggerated the extent of the breakdown if we compare the society described in the novel with an actual United States, there is still a relevance in what he says to the real conditions of twentieth

century life. Dos Passos has emphasized the effect of the broken home life of the characters. While not all homes are "broken" quite as literally as they are in U.S.A., there is real point in the idea that family life is not as firm and secure as it was in previous periods. Dos Passos can emphasize this point by indicating a physical break-up in the families of each of his characters. In this sense they are representative without being literally true. In the same way, the ministers and teachers of Dos Passos' fictional society are representative of the weaknesses of the institutions of religion and education.

The quotations from The Ground We Stand On indicate that Dos Passos approves of the American society of the past. The characters of U.S.A., in the unsatisfactory quality of their lives, indicate that something has happened to destroy those aspects of the older society which held it together. That something is industrialization, with its accompanying emphasis upon materialism. It is like attaching a two-hundred horse-power engine to a finely wrought nineteenth century carriage. In only a very limited sense can this addition be looked upon as an improvement. Industrialization brought about the concentration of wealth and destroyed the independence of village life. Instead of a group of self-employed tradesmen and merchants, there was a factory and later a chain store. Because there was no accompanying change in the institutions designed to perpetuate the moral values, they share the plight of the carriage harnessed to a powerful engine. Dos Passos gives the results in U.S.A. There is irony in the portrayals of his characters, but there is not the bitter condemnation that is implicit in his treatment of some of the Biographical figures. Clearly, Dos Passos is not so much concerned

with blaming the characters of his novel for the chaotic lives which they live as he is concerned with describing the social conditions which produced these lives. These people are, after all, humanity, and Dos Passos has no quarrel with Man, but with men. If mankind has found satisfaction in the past, and Dos Passos indicates in The Ground We Stand On that he has, then mankind can find satisfaction in the future.

The lives of the characters illustrate the major theme of the novel--that industrialization has fragmented our culture and corrupted our moral values. While many of the specific actions of the characters are blameworthy, Dos Passos understands the reasons too well to permit him to condemn merely these individuals. Insofar as they represent humanity, they may also be turned back into more satisfactory modes of behavior. This consideration, however, does not prevent his condemnation of those historical figures who contributed to the moral degeneration of our times, nor does it prevent the bitter indictments in the more subjective view of the Camera Eye sections. For Dos Passos' more explicit statement of the moral and social position which informs the novel, it is necessary to turn to those sections, The Camera Eye, the Biographies, and the Newsreel, where he is dealing with real men and real events.

The Narrative is the major part of the novel, but we can understand the point of view toward the situation it describes only through the other devices. The characters are morally confused in a social situation which does not provide them with clear moral alternatives. Even though they may espouse Socialism or Communism, the confusion of their personal lives reflects confusion of their social points of view. In order to show this confusion, and it is the major purpose of the novel

to do so, they cannot present consistent social points of view in their own right. Dos Passos has let them present themselves, and thereby they indicate their confusion. In the Biographies, Dos Passos becomes the voice of history; in the Newsreel, he is the voice of contemporary events; in The Camera Eye, he is the "conscience of the race" and the "prophet in the wilderness." In these sections he can and does indicate his indignation at specific abuses in the society.

CHAPTER III

CLOSE-UP

The fifty-one Camera Eye sections in U.S.A. are scattered unevenly through the three volumes. The 42nd Parallel contains the first twenty-seven, 1919 has fifteen, and The Big Money includes the final nine. While they are reduced in number as the volumes progress, they increase in length so that proportionately they occupy a similar amount of space in each separate volume. It is clear from both internal and external evidence that these sections comprise autobiographical impressions. Within the Camera Eye the narrator whose stream of consciousness is related is referred to as "Jack"; his father is a Philadelphia lawyer; he makes several trips to Europe; he grows up in the Washington-Philadelphia area. Further, he is a member of a volunteer ambulance corps in Europe during the First World War, and finally becomes a private in the United States Army. At the end of the war, he returns to the United States and lives in New York as a free lance writer. These experiences are all those of Dos Passos.

Many critics have said that these sections are made up from the actual experiences of the author.[1] In a brochure printed by Houghton-

[1]Kazin, op. cit., p. 342.

Mifflin in commemoration of their three volume edition of U.S.A. in 1946, the following statement appears:

> Dos Passos compares the Biographies and "The Camera Eye" passages to a medieval religious masterpiece with statues of saints on the borders and a small self-portrait of the artist in a corner.
>
> "The Camera Eye" passages are impressionistic sketches of Dos Passos' personal experiences. Acting as the small self-portrait in a painting, they are the devices through which the narrative is integrated with the author's stream of consciousness.[1]

These sections, then, are positively identified as highly selective episodes from the life of Dos Passos.

According to the brochure quoted from above, they make up a sketchy autobiography from the author's early childhood, approximately the year 1900, to the night after the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, August 23, 1927. The brochure defines the time span of the Camera Eye by these dates. The last Camera Eye section in the trilogy, however, relates a scene at a strike in the coal fields. It may indicate a time preceding the Sacco-Vanzetti case, but it does follow in the novel itself where all other Camera Eye sections are in chronological order. This incident could apply to the general coal strike which spread over all the coal producing states during the later twenties or more specifically to the Harlan County, Kentucky riots which Dos Passos visited with Theodore Dreiser. The Harlan County riots were in 1931. The date of the final Camera Eye does not change the time period radically, but it does deny that these impressions were intended to end on the night of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. The establishment of the later date is also more in keeping with the time span of the entire novel. The last identifiable historical reference

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[1]"U.S.A.," a brochure printed by the Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1946, p. 10.

occurs in the Biography of Samuel Insull, which relates events up to 1934.[1]

The fact that the Camera Eye sections are "highly selective episodes" and the fact that they appear as a part of a work of fiction indicate that the primary purpose of these sections is not to present the autobiography of the author. Dos Passos has used his own experiences to construct a "narrator." This fictional narrator has a function in the larger structure of the novel which makes the Camera Eye sections more than a "self-portrait" of the author. It is this function which contributes to a better understanding of the trilogy. It must first be noted, however, that not all of the Camera Eye sections can be seen as closely related to the major structure of the novel. In these instances the responses of the author are too personal and private to make their significance available to the reader. Fortunately these lapses are few so that most of the Camera Eye material can be incorporated as a part of the structure of U.S.A.

The position of the narrator of the Camera Eye is like that of the "poet" in Whitman's "Song of Myself," and the poet in Crane's "The Bridge," or like that of Tiresias in Eliot's The Waste Land. Like these figures, the Camera Eye narrator both participates in and broods over the events recorded in the larger narrative. He begins, not so much a critic or a judge, as he is the recording consciousness of these times. But as events unfold, his growing sense of the injustices of the world crystallizes in his protest over the waste and tragedy of World War I,

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[1] U.S.A., III, pp. 530-532.

the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, and the plight of the striking miners. Thus the Camera Eye device can present the social attitudes which inform the book without violating the impact created by presenting the narrative characters as living in a moral chaos. In order to show the function of the Camera Eye, it is necessary to summarize the career of the narrator, then to explain the techniques employed, and finally to illustrate the relationship of the Camera Eye sections to the novel.

The summary of the narrator's career is intended to illustrate what it is that he discovers about American life and his judgment of his discovery. The Camera Eye narrator first appears as a young child. His mother and father are separated; he is seen traveling in Europe and the United States with his mother. During his adolescence, the narrator goes to a private boys' school and, for a time, lives in Washington, D.C. In a city in Holland, he is frightened by some people who throw pebbles. He hears the words "Kruger Bloemfontein Ladysmith" and he and his mother are referred to as "Englanders."[1] In Washington he notices the "slit eyes" of the politicians and a picture of the fallen Caesar at the Corcoran Art Gallery. In a country church in Pennsylvania, he turns a question over and over in his mind: "Who were the Molly Maguires?" It is a question he has asked out of childish curiosity and is then dissatisfied with the answer. In these sections comprising the early life of the boy, his impressions include those which have to do with the social and political issues of the day.

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[1]The time is that of the South-African War. The garrison at Ladysmith was relieved on February 28, 1900; thus the time period is the following spring or early summer.

The recording consciousness has not made any decision about the events, but the impressions are leading to the discoveries that he will later make. An anecdote is related in which the narrator is conscious of an argument concerning the Roosevelt-Parker campaign of 1904. He hears his father's words, "the negroes are lovely people," and the words of his friends, "muckers," "bohunk," and "polak." Other sections are concerned with a fisherman in Maryland, with country people in Virginia, and with a village in New England. As yet these remain anecdotes; the narrator does not indicate an attitude toward the events. They are a part of his training, his experience in the world; later they will provide the background for his antagonism to the hypocrisies of war and to the injustices in the economic struggle.

The attitude of the narrator becomes more explicit as he is seen as a Harvard student. Harvard is an "ether cone" and it is said to be "like the Magdeburg spheres the pressure outside sustained the vacuum within."[1] It is still an attitude, however, and not a social point of view. The Harvard experience provides him no explanation of the Lawrence mill workers' strike nor of the revolution in Russia. But already he is rejecting the conventional modes of behavior implied by knowing the right kind of people at Harvard. This tendency to indicate the sympathies of the narrator increases as the Camera Eye impressions turn to World War I. At first these impressions are commingled with those of the deaths of his

[1] U.S.A., I, p. 303. The reference is to an experiment performed in Magdeburg, Germany, in 1654. Two large hemispheres were case of iron, placed together, and sealed with a leather gasket. The air was pumped out and teams of eight horses harnessed to each hemisphere could not then pull them apart.

father and mother. The reaction to the war is still a personal one, but the narrator is growing up and his anger at the stupidities of the war is obvious in the following sections.

Camera Eye (29) and (30) make clear the reactions of the narrator to the war. He rejects the proud slogans and patriotic phrases. His idealistic view of democracy is shattered by the exploding shells and the acrid odor of burning towns. In Paris, immediately after the war, he is reminded of the social conflicts around him. He is aware of placards indicating labor unrest in Paris: "slogans scrawled in chalk on the urinals L'UNION DES TRAVAILLEURS FERA LA PAIX DU MONDE."[1] The word "travailleurs," which was previously found as "laborers travailleurs greasers"[2] in the mind of the young child, is now associated with the peace of the world. Impressions have resulted in attitudes; now these attitudes are forming into a political point of view.

In the final Camera Eye in 1919, the narrator loses his separate identity and becomes a composite person. In this way he indicates his relationship to the "poet" in "Song of Myself," and the other "voices" mentioned earlier in this chapter. He is both a participant and a recording consciousness. The situation described is that of a group of soldiers awaiting reassignment. They are piling scrap iron into flatcars, then moving it back alongside the track. The group consists of "four hunkies a couple of wops a bohunk dagoes guineas two little dark guys with blue chins." They represent the soldiers of all the nations who

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 343.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 25.

fought the war. Like the material they are handling, they too are "spare parts no outfit wanted to use," and at the end of the episode, "scrap."[1] The irony of this section is obvious. It is also obvious that the narrator is rejecting the ideals for which the war was presumably fought and along with them the whole idea that war can ever be glorious for the ordinary men who have to fight it.

At his next appearance, the narrator is trying on a career in social agitation. He has become an agitator with a soapbox in Union Square, but already is indicating a distrust of slogans and ready-made solutions. The dominant modes both of those who seek only to make money and of those who agitate for social reform seem unlikely to restore "our storybook democracy." In Camera Eye (47) he is surrounded by all the sights and sounds of New York City. Sirens, horns, whistles, bells all represent a call to some kind of action, but he is not yet ready. A series of impressions from the New York streets follows the harbor sounds and ends in Chinatown with "the crash of alien gongs." The narrator is "an unidentified stranger / destination unknown."[2]

Camera Eye (49), (50), and (51) comprise a group which ends the use of this device in the novel. The first two are directly concerned with Sacco and Vanzetti and the final one describes a miners' strike in the coal fields. The Sacco-Vanzetti case occurred in Massachusetts near the Plymouth landing place of the original pilgrims. The narrator is reminded of all the immigrants who have come to settle the new country

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 454.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 197.

and to avoid oppression. These two immigrants have, instead, found oppression. The ideas, like the words which had founded the American democracy, are now ruined and "worn slimy in the mouths of lawyers districtattorneys collegepresidents judges."[1] In this episode the narrator is awaiting the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti and in the following one the time is just after the execution. The dead men lie in a little undertaking parlor and the city is quiet. It is here that the narrator draws the distinction between the haters of oppression and the oppressors in the line, "all right we are two nations."[2] The execution of Sacco and Vanzetti[3] crystallizes his suspicion of Harvard, his rejection of the war, his disgust with the hypocrisy, into a glowing hatred of those he holds responsible for the corruption of our institutions.

The narrator is immediately aware of the defeat of the group which had hoped to secure the release of Sacco and Vanzetti. He is also

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 437.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 462.

[3] On April 15, 1920, in South Braintree, Massachusetts, two men were killed during a pay roll robbery. On May 5, Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested. In the trial presided over by Judge Webster Thayer, the two men were found guilty of murder on July 14, 1920. Motions for a new trial and various stays prevented sentencing until April 9, 1927. They were executed in the electric chair the following August 23. Because of the agitation and widespread publicity of the trial, the undoubted hostility of the jury toward the two known anarchist immigrants, and public protest at the actual procedures of the trial, Governor Fuller of Massachusetts appointed President Lowell of Harvard, President Stratton of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a judge of probate to consider the possibility of a new trial. This commission decided that justice had been done although it found the trial judge guilty of a "grave breach of official decorum." It is to these later events that Dos Passos refers when he includes judges, college presidents, and district attorneys in his condemnation. His evaluation of the Sacco-Vanzetti case is in accord with the accounts of the conventional historians.

aware of the implications of that defeat for American democracy. The case has served to direct the wandering of the narrator and to give him his purpose. The lines are drawn for a new battle for power, not for the submission of a lost cause. He remembers the words of Vanzetti's last speech before the court: "...Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man as we now do by accident."[1] For the group gathered in Boston, the prophecy of Vanzetti is already coming true in their new devotion for the "old words." The narrator too feels that Sacco and Vanzetti have fulfilled their destiny. He says, "now their work is over."

The final Camera Eye records the impressions of the narrator during a strike in the coal mines. The law, personified by a "big man with eyes angry in a big pumpkinface" backed by the power of machine guns, attorneys, judges, and all the hierarchy of power, is now the symbol of injustice. The same injustice killed Sacco and Vanzetti and is now dominant. The Camera Eye sections end and the larger novel moves directly to discuss "the manipulator of the holdingcompany,"[2] the final echelon in the hierarchy of power.

Before trying to evaluate the effect of all the Camera Eye sections and placing them in their proper perspective in U.S.A., it is necessary to see how Dos Passos has constructed them. Because the author has elected to put his material in dramatic, that is, fictional, form, he is more concerned with the emotional impact of his findings than he

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 463.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 525.

is with straight argumentation about the social and economic ills of the United States during this period. The form that he has used, then, provides an important clue to the way that the Camera Eye sections are intended to be interpreted by the reader. Dos Passos' control of reader response can be maintained by the way in which he presents his material through the eyes of his narrator.

The Camera Eye sections are "poetic" in their structure and constitute the most highly subjective part of the novel. They are without punctuation throughout; the divisions of idea are made by unusual spacing, by paragraphing, and by the use of italics. By these means the introspective quality of the interior monologue is suggested. These devices produce the effect of random musing, of a mind attempting to be at rest though constantly disturbed by reflections which must be assimilated. They give the effect not of hard, straight thinking on a problem, but of uneasy contrasts and impressions which cannot be erased from the mind. The Camera Eye sections are presented as though they were an only partly verbalized reverie. It is difficult to decide the level of verbalization intended since all of the material must be presented in words.

The stream of consciousness of the narrator includes his own impressions through the different periods of his life. It is also made up of vignettes of American life which are part of his stream of consciousness because they are stories which he has heard. In order to understand the development of the narrator, the reader needs to remember material scattered over the three volumes of U.S.A. The narrative occurs in frag-

[1] U.S.A., III, p. 525.

mentary form, mixed with the other elements in the novel, in order to indicate the narrator's participation in the world of events described in the other sections of the novel. In the Narrative, Dos Passos' presentation does not permit him to reveal an attitude toward the social situation which has created the confused lives of his narrative characters. However, the very method of the Camera Eye with its effect of random musing creates a social criticism by the irony of its contrasts and by the narrator's reaction to specific abuses.

One of the techniques of the Camera Eye is that of juxtaposing seemingly unrelated words. It is useful in indicating impressions of social and political problems which are recognized by the reader, but which are only sounds the youthful narrator records. They serve also as time and place references as in the "Kruger Bloemfontein Ladysmith" example previously quoted. The opening lines of Camera Eye (1) suggest comparison with the opening lines of Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, since both indicate the consciousness of a very young child. Dos Passos lets the child's impressions form themselves into an incident which can be described in ordinary discourse. The child is conscious of hostile voices and pebbles ringing against the cobblestones. He hears the word "Englanders" and later the word "Americans." The reader realizes that the two Americans are traveling in Holland during the South-African War; they experience hostility because they are mistaken for English nationals. The hostility is removed after they have identified themselves as Americans. In the final paragraph the words "pretty," "beau," "schon," and "prittie" appear. The child is assimilating words and meanings in all the languages. The overheard French and German phrases are incorporated

in the same manner as the words indicating the struggle for South-African independence. The child is distracted from his fear by the pretty post-cards, his private world is again peaceful; the sudden involvement in a larger problem has terminated and he goes back to the impressions of his senses which began the episode. Through Dos Passos' technique, the narrator's consciousness is described and revealed, the time and place indicated, and a political issue introduced.

The same technique of presenting seemingly random impressions can be seen in Camera Eye (2). This time the place is Washington, D.C., indicated by mention of the Seventh Street Station. A new character is introduced, apparently the boy's father, identified by the capitalized "He." By the capital, Dos Passos indicates to the reader the importance of this figure to the boy, and he has a later use for this means of identifying the father. The child is carrying a model of Dewey's flagship, the "Olympia." The battle of Manila Bay occurred in 1898, establishing this date as the terminus a quo of the episode. In Camera Eye (3), the narrator is riding a train. That he is in France is established by French phrases. The train passes factories where people work all night. "Workingmen and peop'e like that laborers travailleurs greasers."[1] Again the words are strung together like synonyms in a dictionary and gathered on the recording film of the child's consciousness.

Dos Passos expands the technique of association of images in Camera Eye (30). Here the narrator's mind is presented again in a series of associations, but he is now aware of the irony of the carefully built

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 25.

country house, the carefully planted garden, and the carefully planned war. The technique has been modified in that the narrator, as well as the reader, is conscious of the ironies of his contrasts. In Camera Eye (39) and (40) he associates the slogan, L'UNION DES TRAVAILLEURS FERA LA PAIX DU MONDE, a torn handbill on which the words L'UNION DES TRAVAILLEURS are still visible, the same handbill in a "clean stone gutter," the barricades and fighting in the streets, and two elderly men who continue a game of chess in a cafe.[1] Dos Passos selects these associations to indicate the narrator's awareness of the obvious irony. Thus the "growth" of the narrator's political awareness is presented by a logical fictional method.

Another variation of the method can be seen in Camera Eye (7). The scene is Connecticut; the narrator is skating on a pond near "the silver company's mills." Once again among the other impressions, the child's mind collects "muckers," "bohunks," and "polak." In this instance, however, the Camera Eye is clearly a memory being recorded by an adult rather than an attempt to characterize the child's impressions by his own awareness of them. The illusion of immediacy is broken by the statements, "I couldn't learn to skate and kept falling down" and "look out for muckers everybody said."[2] Here the consistent use of the past tense and the general notation of the remark rather than its presentation as purely a part of the consciousness of the narrator place the events in the memory. The irony of "we clean young American Rover boys handy

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 402.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 81.

with tools Deerslayers" is another indication that this is not the interior monologue of the boy, but the adult remembering these things. Dos Passos thus directs the reader to the discoveries that the narrator makes.

Not only does the narrator look back on his life as a kind of montage, but the reader knows that it is because of Dos Passos' montage technique that he is able to see the narrator as he does. The persons who appear in the narrator's consciousness are characterized by their own dialect. Often the narrator momentarily disappears in the rapid shifting from his account of the persons he remembers to their actual dialect: "Miss Emily took a drop herself now and then but she always put a good face on things lookin' over the picket fence astandin' by the crape-myrtle bush visitin' with the people passin' along the road."[1] The narrator identifies himself closely with the person being characterized, even to using her dialect, until his stream becomes synonymous with that of the described person.

Camera Eye (22) can be used to illustrate another technique employed in the presentation of the narrator's consciousness. This Camera Eye is meant to announce the beginning of World War I. It is a montage composed of radio announcements of war events mingled with descriptive passages of the everyday life of a small fishing village. The relationship between Dos Passos' techniques and those of the motion picture will be discussed in detail in a separate chapter; here it will suffice to note the "picture" quality of this writing. The passage in question needs to

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 261.

be seen in its entirety.

> yes it was war
> Will we go in? will Britain go in?
> *Obligations according to the treaty of ...handed ambassador his passports* every morning they put out the cod on the flakes spreading them even in the faint glow of the sun through the fog
> a steamer blowing in the distance the lap of the waves against piles along the seaweedy ricks scream of gulls clatter of boardinghouse dishes
> *War declared expedit...*[1]

This passage makes sense only to a sensibility trained by the motion picture. It is not "inward" in the sense usually meant by the term "interior monologue." The mind of the narrator does not associate anything; it merely records a series of audio and visual images. The section quoted above might easily be from a sound motion picture and intended to indicate how the news of the war came to a fishing village. The italicized sections indicate the voice of a radio announcer interrupting the ordinary affairs of the day. The announcements give a special significance to the mundane details; they in turn emphasize the dramatic turn of events. Here the sound track of the film provides the contrasting data for the new dimension created by the montage.

In their totality the Camera Eye sections are concerned with a number of themes and particularly with the narrator's social and political consciousness. A parallel for the entire device may be found in the structure of a single one. The first Camera Eye in *1919* has four separate parts, related in that each has to do with death. In the first part the narrator remembers the death of his mother. The second records his memory of the death of his father. The next part gives an account of a

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[1] *U.S.A.*, I, p. 266.

steerage passenger for America who is dead of flu on arrival. The last consists of the consciousness of an A.W.O.L. soldier whose impressions include those of death on the battlefield. The same consciousness is indicated in all four parts, but at widely disparate times. Again reference needs to be made to motion picture technique in order to make clear the relationship of these parts.

The name "Camera Eye" used by Dos Passos suggests the term invented by the Russian film director Dziga Vertov for a new device of the motion picture camera. The idea is similar to the one intended by the expression "candid camera" from still photography in that it refers to the isolation of realistic detail from everyday activity. Vertov proposed to get his effects by photographing actual events without the awareness of the participants. By putting his film sequences together he hoped to get more accurate depiction of emotion or meaning. Vertov called this technique Cinema Eye or Cine Eye. While the Cine Eye purports to be the least subjective of artistic activities in that nothing is contrived or invented, it is, in reality, highly subjective in that the selection of incident to be photographed reveals the central hero, who is the person taking the pictures.[1]

Two parallels may be drawn from the motion picture techniques of the Cine Eye. The narrator of Camera Eye (28) has selected four "stories" or, in motion picture jargon, "shots." By putting them together, he reveals the inner consciousness responding to the varied aspects of death. This technique seen, in small, in a single Camera Eye can illustrate the

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[1]Bela Balazs, Theory of the Film (New York: Roy Publishers, 1953), p. 164.

technique of the entire device. In the same manner that this Camera Eye reveals the narrator's response to death, Dos Passos uses all of the loosely related sketches of the Camera Eye sections to reveal the narrator.

Along with the techniques of association which have been described above and the sometimes obvious ironies of juxtaposition, there are often allusions, echoes of lines of poetry, and other suggestions to direct the interpretation of the individual Camera Eye sections. Their construction makes profitable the kind of analysis usually reserved for poetry. Camera Eye (28) has already been described and its general outlines given. In the interest of general economy, it can be used as an illustration.

Camera Eye (28) contains a paraphrase from T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land. The lines in question are from Part V, "What the Thunder Said":

> He who was living is now dead
> We who were living are now dying
> With a little patience.[1]

Dos Passos' paraphrase which echoes these lines appears at the end of the second part of the section:

> ...but we
> who had heard Copey's beautiful reading voice...
> were now dead at the cableoffice.[2]

The imagery preceding the lines from The Waste Land suggests the crucifixion and the agony of Christ. In Christian thought the passion of

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[1] T. S. Eliot, The Complete Poems and Plays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950), p. 47.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 11.

Christ is followed by the resurrection, but in Eliot's poem and in Dos Passos' Camera Eye it is a hope rather than a promise. In the description of his mother's funeral, the Camera Eye narrator ends with the statement, "...the roadsides steamed with spring. April enough to shock the world," suggesting another relationship with Eliot's poem. By the two deaths of the narrator's father and mother, Dos Passos suggests comparison with the death of Christ in several ways. First, there is the paraphrase of Eliot's lines which immediately follow references to the crucifixion. Next, Dos Passos uses the capitalized "He" to refer to his narrator's father--the lines read, "when the cable came that He was dead..." The convention of capitalizing pronouns referring to the Deity indicates to the reader the significance of this person to the narrator. The final line of this Camera Eye ("tomorrow I hoped would be the first day of the first month of the first year") makes the use of Christian imagery more explicit. In The Waste Land, all the gods are dead, not in the sense that their sacrifice releases the healing waters of redemption, but in the sense that they are no longer operative myths in the society. Dos Passos uses similar imagery to indicate the end of a world for his narrator.

Besides the specific references noted above, the whole passage in Dos Passos suggests further comparison with The Waste Land, which perhaps had more to do with the structure than is indicated by what might be a casual paraphrase. The discontinuity of event, the rapid shifting of scene, the juxtaposition of disgusting images with those of beauty, the multi-lingual flow--all these are characteristics of both pieces. In "The Fire Sermon" Eliot presents his theme of meaningless sexual

activity through a succession of short episodes united by the common theme. The prostitutes, Mrs. Porter and her daughter, are followed by the suggestion of a homosexual debauch, then comes the typist and her young man carbuncular, followed by other illustrations of the sterile burning of lust. Dos Passos uses a similar scheme to show his theme of death. Just as Tiresias narrates and comments on the varied activities of Eliot's poem, so the Camera Eye personage both experiences and comments on the realization that a world has ended.

Many of the Camera Eye sections lend themselves to the same kind of interpretation and analysis. They do not, however, add anything of significance to a discussion of the techniques of their construction. While there are individual differences among the Camera Eye sections, they are still enough alike to indicate that they can be treated as one aspect of the novel. Rather than in any one specific technique, they are alike in the subjective quality of their presentation. From that presentation, it is clear that the Camera Eye is intended to provide for a more personal and "poetic" response to the total material of the book than is possible in the other devices.

The Camera Eye sections constitute a short novel, the material of which is revealed on the "film" of the narrator's consciousness. Removed from the context of the larger novel, they trace the growing awareness of the child and the impingement on his senses of a number of the issues of the time--largely the social and political issues by which the ideals of democracy are corrupted. As the consciousness of the narrator is revealed, the sense impressions are gradually incorporated into ideas and attitudes.

The climax of this small novel comes in the definition of moral struggle after the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, and this is followed by the concluding statement of the last Camera Eye, "we have only words against." POWER SUPERPOWER, the heading of the Biography of Samuel Insull, immediately follows, thus pulling the Camera Eye consciousness into the larger structure.

The narrator of the Camera Eye is Dos Passos the poet of these times, not Dos Passos in his role as private citizen and author. In this sense the relationship of his personal life to the events recorded is only of secondary importance. This "poet" tells the stories which make up the Narrative of the novel; he also indicates his own participation in the first thirty years of the twentieth century and his reactions to them. He is convinced that the institutions of education and religion are corrupt. His real education comes in the experiences of the war and with the labor unrest of this period. It is here that he is convinced that something basic is wrong with the society which is not being emphasized in the institutions which should provide correctives to evil. The war has resulted in more problems than it has solved; the soldiers who fought it are dismissed as "scrap." In the Sacco-Vanzetti events, the courts are indicated as corrupt and as tools of the money power. There is injustice in the treatment of the striking workers. We know these things in reading the novel partly because the voice of the Camera Eye narrator directs us to them, and we know them also because the ironies of the Newsreels and the portraits of historical figures in the Biographies point to the same conclusions. The Camera Eye is a personal view, but it points to the same difficulties which are obvious in the other sections. Dos

Passos' technique of presentation provides a logical fictional method for including the consciousness of the Camera Eye narrator in his novel. Through that technique, the reader is led along the paths the narrator follows until he, too, makes the same discoveries that the narrator makes. The reader is not presented with a narrator-poet who already knows what is wrong with the society he is describing; the reader, instead, is presented with the process by which the poet obtained his attitudes. He is, in this way, already prepared for the condemnation of the Sacco-Vanzetti proceedings and for the sympathy expressed toward other injustices. Just as the narrator is, the reader is embroiled in the society and then has his sympathies directed to the same conclusions.

The Camera Eye narrator is the "conscience of the race" and the "prophet in the wilderness." The narrative characters are helpless in the face of their difficulties. The "poet" gives expression both to their difficulties and to their submerged sense of the wrongs in the society. It is this function which makes the Camera Eye an integral part of the structure of U.S.A. as well as an important addition to its total effect and impact.

In all of U.S.A. we understand the author's attitude of hostility toward World War I, his hatred of demagoguery and of the misuse of money power, and his awareness that the principles of democracy are violated in the nations which profess democracy. By standing in the midst of these things as the voice of the Camera Eye, he can be the poet of democracy and point out "the shams and hypocrisies of the age of money rule." By the position provided by the Camera Eye, he can express the unverbalized awareness of the whole people of the character of their lives. This is

one of the functions of the poet, and it is a function which the narrative characters cannot perform precisely because they are not poets. The Camera Eye can and does express the difficulties of the situation; it does not express a simple optimism for a better future, but it does make possible a basis for hope. Criticism, satire, and irony are not in themselves programs for social reform, but in their condemnation of existing hypocrisy, their pointing out of evil, and their implied demand for some kind of change, they form the motivating power for reform. They are the traditional devices of the poet who concerns himself with the problems of society. Because the Camera Eye employs these devices, it functions as the voice of the poet of this period. The careers of the Narrative characters illustrate their rootlessness and the unsatisfactory quality of their lives; the Camera Eye narrator is their poet.

CHAPTER IV

DOCUMENTARY

In the course of his correspondence with F. Scott Fitzgerald, Dos Passos objects to The Crack-up as an unsatisfactory book. His reasons for doing so were no adverse commentary on Fitzgerald's skill as a writer, but rather on his choice of subject matter. Dos Passos specifically rejects introspection and deep psychological analysis; his feeling is that only the writer who deals with the larger issues is really significant. In One Man's Initiation--1917 and, to a lesser degree, in Three Soldiers, Dos Passos had worked with the novel of introspection and individual analysis. In Manhattan Transfer, he moved away from this emphasis and began to deal with a larger social scene. Manhattan Transfer is an attempt to deal with character in a social context even to the extent of placing it below the social context in importance. In the novels following U.S.A., Dos Passos is still dealing with the central political and social issues of the day at the expense of character analysis, but he has gone back to a more traditional form in that the later novels do contain single protagonists. U.S.A. stands just between these two divisions in his work. It is also his extreme attempt to catch the exact flavor of contemporary history and reproduce it in fictional form. It is in this sense that, as he himself says, "the novelist is the archi-

tect of history."

In order to indicate the larger social and political issues of the society he is describing and, at the same time, to preserve the naturalistic method of presenting his Narrative, Dos Passos was forced to extend the resources of the novel. The Biographies of U.S.A., by which he could present famous persons of the time without dragging them clumsily into the narrative, was one of the means employed to solve the problem. The subjects of the Biographies include financiers, journalists, politicians, radicals, an architect, and entertainers. Among American presidents of the period 1900-1925, Roosevelt and Wilson appear as subjects, both in the second volume, 1919. In the Narrative of U.S.A., Dos Passos is constrained from presenting a direct and consistent response toward the social ills which have created the confused lives of his characters. In the Camera Eye, through the "discovery" of his narrator, he can be more explicit in his social criticism. The narrator can generalize in a way that the characters cannot if they are to maintain their consistency as morally, as well as politically and socially, confused individuals. To an even greater extent, it is possible for Dos Passos to indicate the direction of his commentary on society in the Biographies of U.S.A. The selection of subjects for the Biographies and the selection of details from the lives of these historical persons can be used to indicate the specific attitudes which inform the book. In addition, the method of presentation can, in itself, provide important clues for the understanding of these attitudes.

Dos Passos has himself indicated, in a general way, the purpose of the Biographies in his novel. According to the U.S.A. brochure already

mentioned,

> Dos Passos compares the Biographies and "The Camera Eye" passages to a medieval religious masterpiece with statues of saints on the borders and a small self-portrait of the artist in a corner.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The Biographies are the figures of influential Americans, contemporary to the narrative, canonized by their fame. They are enlarged portraits which provide a framework of truth to the story.[1]

One man's "truth," however, may not be another man's. In many instances the Dos Passos Biographies do not agree with the findings of more conventional historians.[2] It should be added that in many instances they do agree with historical fact; where they agree, the interpretation and selection of historical fact and the tone of the presentation have important bearings on how these figures appear in the U.S.A. portraits. The social commentary of the book, then, must be taken from the "presentation" of these figures rather than depend upon their significance in history. Just as it was in the discussion of the Camera Eye, it is necessary here to discuss the attitudes portrayed in the Biographies and to discover at least a part of those attitudes in Dos Passos' techniques of presentation. Finally, it is necessary to see how these Biographies contribute to the larger structure of U.S.A.

The theme of the novel, if it can be stated for a novel as large as U.S.A. in one sentence, is the disintegration of American culture under the impact of industrialism. In the Narrative, Dos Passos has concentrated on the results of that disintegration in his depiction of the

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[1]"U.S.A.," a brochure printed by the Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1946, p. 10.

[2]See Appendix where each of Dos Passos' portraits is compared with the historical account of the Biographical figure.

confused lives of his characters. In the Biographies, specific historical persons and their actions can be pointed out as contributing factors to a continuing process of degeneration. It is also apparent that some persons made of their lives a counter measure against the corrupting process. Several of the figures presented do not have direct political or economic significance, however. They are, like the others, "canonized by their fame," but they must be seen as contributory to a total representation of the scene rather than as participants in the major political struggle.

To avoid confusing what actually appears in U.S.A. with the activities, attitudes, and political commitments of the author outside the book, it is again convenient to posit a "narrator" of the Biographies and to restrict comment to his expressed attitudes rather than those of the real life John Dos Passos. The obviously close relationship of Dos Passos' attitudes and those expressed by the book need not be an issue here. The narrator of the Biographies is much more simply dealt with than that of the Camera Eye. The attitudes expressed agree with and confirm those expressed in the Camera Eye, but there is no indication of a "development" of these attitudes which corresponds to the growing awareness and maturation of the narrator. There is, however, a noticeable change of emphasis as the Biographies continue through the volumes of U.S.A.

In The 42nd Parallel and 1919, the emphasis of the Biographies is on the political and economic struggle. It is to this struggle that Alfred Kazin refers when he finds that the figures in the Biographies are representative of the "two nations" of the haves and have-nots of Ameri-

can society.[1] The first two volumes of the trilogy contain condemnations of the leading financiers and expressions of sympathy for those who represent "left wing" political ideas. Condemnation of Andrew Carnegie, John Pierpont Morgan, and Minor C. Keith as well as praise for Eugene Debs, Robert La Follette, and Charles Steinmetz need not, however, stem from a specifically Communist political orientation. The change of emphasis in The Big Money in a direction away from the depiction of labor martyrs and political radicals further removes the possibility of seeing in the Biographical figures simply the two sides of the Marxist struggle for economic power.

In The 42nd Parallel, Eugene Debs is presented in a favorable light. His labor and political activities are described as the activities of a man who had the welfare of the workers rather than his own political advancement at heart. President Wilson is condemned for not granting executive clemency and thus releasing Debs from Atlanta Penitentiary. The attitudes of ordinary people toward Debs are indicated by the words:

> And the people of Terre Haute and the people in Indiana
> and the people of the Middle West were fond of him and afraid
> of him and thought of him as an old kindly uncle who loved
> them, and wanted to be with him and to have him give them candy,
> but they were afraid of him as if he had contracted a social
> disease, syphilis or leprosy, and thought it was too bad,
> but on account of the flag
> and prosperity
> and making the world safe for democracy,
> they were afraid to be with him.[2]

[1] Cf. Kazin, op. cit., p. 351, and Gelfant, op. cit., pp. 169-70.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 28.

Debs is said to favor the organization of all workers into the "workers co-operative commonwealth."[1] His kindness and consideration and the integrity of his aims form an ironic contrast with the attitudes held toward him by the very people he was trying to help. These people are obviously related to the "typical" persons of the Narratives who also are confused and mistaken in their choice of leaders.

Again in the Biography of Luther Burbank there is more indication of the narrator's contempt for those who called Burbank an atheist because he used Darwin's principles of natural selection than there is indication of a desire to present a sketch of Burbank's life. Just as Debs is "kindly," so Burbank is a "sunny old man" and "one of the grand old men."[2] Like Debs, he is betrayed, in the narrator's view, by the very people he wished most to help. Bill Haywood is a more extreme radical than Debs, but he too is presented as trying to alleviate the inequities of the economic situation. He was trying to get for the miners, "an eighthour day, better living, a share of the wealth they hacked out of the hills."[3] Haywood is defeated by an unidentified "they" who

> went over with the A.E.F. to save the Morgan loans, to save Wilsonian Democracy, they stood at Napoleon's tomb and dreamed empire. ...All over the country at American legion posts and businessmen's luncheons it was worth money to make the eagle scream.
>
> they lynched the pacifists and the pro-Germans and the wobblies and the reds and the bolsheviks.[4]

In this way, the Biographies provide a constant commentary on the society

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 27.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 83.

[3] U.S.A., I, p. 94.

[4] U.S.A., I, p. 95.

by showing how it treats some of its leading figures.

The Biography of William Jennings Bryan reiterates the point of view expressed in the first three Biographies. Bryan is a "bigmouthed" exhorter and evangelist whose voice "charmed" the plain people. He wishes to set back the clocks by "making a big joke/ of Darwinism and the unbelieving outlook of city folks, scientists, foreigners with beards and monkey morals."[1] A few days after his death an electric horse is delivered like the one the President exercised on in the White House.[2] The narrator thus emphasizes the provincialism of Bryan's views and his overriding ambition to be President.

The narrator finds the financier, Minor C. Keith, a man who could "smell money" and who was responsible for what he calls the "history of American empire in the Caribbean, and the Panama Canal and the future Nicaragua Canal and the marines and the battleships and the bayonets."[3] Andrew Carnegie is a man who "always saved his pay" and who had confidence in "railroads," "iron," "oil," "steel" instead of in men. It is said of him that

> whenever he made a billion dollars he endowed an institution to promote universal peace
> always
> except in time of war.[4]

The narrator continues to define his attitudes and interpretation of society through his viewpoint on the careers of the great.

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 172.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 173.

[3] U.S.A., I, p. 244.

[4] U.S.A., I, p. 265.

Another facet of the narrator's viewpoint can be seen in his treatment of two "wizards" in The 42nd Parallel. The narrator's attitude can be seen in the comments concerning Thomas Edison, "the electrical wizard." In the first part of the Biography, Edison's "tinkering" and experimentation are noted. It is only later that the attitude of the narrator shows through in comments like "Edison was never a man to worry about philosophical concepts" and "he made things work. He wasn't a mathematician."[1] His essentially anti-social attitudes are reflected in the concluding lines of the portrait:

> he never worried about mathematics or the social system or generalized philosophical concepts;
> in collaboration with Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone who never worried about mathematics or the social system or generalized philosophical concepts.[2]

The other wizard, Charles Steinmetz, is in direct contrast with Edison in the eyes of the narrator. He is a real scientist, unlike the empirical Edison. He is also a more complete human being in his concern for society.

> mathematics to Steinmetz was muscular strength and long walks over the hills and the kiss of a girl in love and big evenings spent swilling beer with your friends;
> on his broken back he felt the topheavy weight of society the way workingmen felt it on their straight backs, the way poor students felt it, was a member of a Socialist club, editor of a paper called The People's Voice.[3]

Edison is a man who makes money out of his inventions, but Steinmetz was

[1] U.S.A., I, p. 300.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 301.

[3] U.S.A., I, p. 325.

"a piece of apparatus belonging to General Electric."[1] The condemnation of the large company by the narrator is clear in his indication that General Electric "humored" Steinmetz in his Socialistic views and his other "eccentricities." The narrator says of the company:

> and they let him be a Socialist and believe that human society could be improved the way you can improve a dynamo, and they let him be pro-German and write a letter offering his services to Lenin because mathematicians are so impractical who make up formulas by which you can build powerplants, factories, subway systems, light, heat, air, sunshine, but not human relations that affect the stockholders' money and the directors' salaries.[2]

The large company respects the ability of Steinmetz to make electrical things work, but it is contemptuous of his opinions toward politics and society. The narrator directs his irony at the assumption of stock holders and directors that their opinions are superior to those of Steinmetz.

The final Biography in The 42nd Parallel is that of Robert La Follette. La Follette is presented as the politician of integrity who breaks the Republican machine in Wisconsin, who attempts to curb the power of the railroads, and who tries to stop the headlong race into the World War. La Follette gains the respect (and the votes) of the people of Wisconsin, but the pressures against his ideas in the United States Senate result finally in his defeat. For his efforts, the "press pumped hatred into its readers against La Follette, the traitor."[3] The hysteria and false patriotism of the war period are used to discredit La Follette,

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 327.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 328.

[3] U.S.A., I, p. 368.

who becomes in the last line of the Biography, "a willful man expressing no opinion but his own."[1] This ironic use of President Wilson's remark concerning the six Senators who tried to block passage of the Armed Ship Bill indicates the attitude which the portrait is designed to convey.

The commentary of the narrator on men and events is continued in the Biographies of 1919. The narrator has modified his emphasis from that of The 42nd Parallel. In the earlier volume, he is largely concerned to point out the weaknesses of the American democracy. He finds them in the emphasis on "making things work" and the accompanying lack of social responsibility in the attitude of Edison and that of the General Electric Company toward Steinmetz. He points to the discrediting of Burbank for his use of Darwin's theories, thus indicating the provincialism of American culture. The politicians, Bryan and La Follette, are contrasted to indicate the rise of the demagogue and the failure of the good politician. In 1919, he has found, for the moment, a solution to these problems in the "new workers republic in Russia."

The lives of three journalists, Reed, Bourne, and Hibben, as presented in their Biographies, illustrate the Marxist period of the narrator. Jack Reed is presented as having rejected the cultural refinement represented by Harvard and the "best clubs." In his journalistic career, Reed learns about the strikers in the textile mills, the revolutionaries in Mexico, and finally the "first workers republic" in the U.S.S.R. Randolph Bourne is a writer who opposed World War I and who died "planning an essay on the foundations of future radicalism in America."[2] Paxton

[1] U.S.A., I, p. 369.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 105.

Hibben, the third journalist, is shown in his development from the Progressivism of Roosevelt, through the New Freedom of Wilson, to the Communism of Lenin.

> In Moscow there was order,
> in Moscow there was work,
> in Moscow there was hope;
> ...Hibben believed in the new world.[1]

There is praise in the Biographies of these men for their ideals and an antagonism to those who opposed them.

Two American presidents are the subjects of Biographies in 1919, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Roosevelt is pictured as priggish and righteous. His imperialism and his taste for derring-do are ridiculed in the Biography. Wilson is equally unsatisfactory and for some of the same reasons. He, too, is presented as the product of a righteous and Godly background. He is condemned for leading America into the capitalist war to protect the Morgan loans. He is pictured as a man who had too much "faith in words."[2] He is blamed for the loss of the ideals for which the war is fought. Once again the narrator is reminded that he would not sign a decree of executive clemency for Debs. Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Woodrow Wilson become "three old men shuffling the pack, dealing out the cards."[3]

The one financier who appears in 1919 is John Pierpont Morgan. In the narrator's view, he is a man who can make money out of "war and

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 183.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 249.

[3] U.S.A., II, p. 248.

panics on the stock exchange, bankruptcies, warloans,"[1] and he is seen as "the most powerful private citizen in the world."[2] The Biography indicates that Morgan had great influence on the conduct of international affairs through the power of his bank. He is pictured as controlling many of the decisions of the Peace Conference after the war by the power of the almost two billion dollars which had been borrowed from him.

In contrast to this figure of the great financier are the Biographies of two labor martyrs, Joe Hill and Wesley Everest. The narrator is clearly sympathetic in his treatment of these two men and condemnatory of the events which led to their execution.[3] He has already indicated his distaste for "red baiting" and for the ideals which he ascribes to those who oppose political radicalism on nationalistic and patriotic grounds. Hill is a man who had "read Marx and the I.W.W. Preamble and dreamed about forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old."[4] Wesley Everest, in the eyes of the narrator, is the victim of bigotry and intolerance. The occasion was an I.W.W. meeting in Union Hall in Centralia, Washington. Members of a "Citizens Protective League" raided the hall. After the fight that followed, Everest and other members of the I.W.W. were arrested. During the night Everest was removed from jail and lynched.

The last Biography in 1919 presents the burial of the Unknown

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 337.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 339.

[3] For an account of the justice of these executions, see Appendix.

[4] U.S.A., II, p. 422.

Soldier as the supreme act of war stupidity--the final indignity to the human spirit. It removes attention from the political themes in the other Biographies and directs it toward the narrator's antagonism for the war. He gives a bitterly ironic account of the selection and burial of the Unknown Soldier. In a novel already hard-boiled over the useless slaughter of war and over the sentimentality of conventional responses to it, this section is still shockingly bitter. It remains as one of the most violently anti-war pieces of all literature. Woodrow Wilson, whom the narrator has blamed elsewhere for American participation in the war as well as for the loss of the ideals for which it was presumably fought, appears in the last line in a final gesture of futile commemoration: "Woodrow Wilson brought a bouquet of poppies."[1] The purpose of this account is to strip away the glory and heroism of war and to present it instead as a mockery of human dignity. The motives for honoring the war dead are themselves turned into mawkish sentimentality.

In The Big Money, the narrator turns away from a specifically economic interpretation of the society. The figures represented in the Biographies can no longer be said simply to represent the "two nations" of the exploited and the exploiters, although the division is still present. It is true that the same struggle can be seen in the depicted careers of Frederick Winslow Taylor, Henry Ford, William R. Hearst, and Samuel Insull, but the emphasis of the narrator has changed. He is still condemnatory of the great financiers, but there is no praise for Marxism in the Biographies of the final volume. Instead, the over-all impression

[1] U.S.A., II, p. 473.

of these Biographies is that of a plea for individualism and personal freedom. There is praise for the creative genius of men like the Wright brothers and Frank Lloyd Wright. A new element in the Biographies can be seen in the portraits of Isadora Duncan and Rudolph Valentino. They are presented as false idols--persons of no real significance who are momentarily given the adulation generally reserved for "heroes." Clearly the Biographies are continuing to characterize the popular mind through the responses of the society of the figures which it chooses to make famous.

The narrator directs his irony at Taylor and Ford by pointing to their disgust with "the finer things" and by indicating that Ford and Taylor, like Edison, were fond of tinkering. Taylor is compared with the New England "niggerdriver," and his extreme emphasis on production is seen almost as a neurotic compulsion. He is presented as the "inventor of efficiency" and as having "died with his watch in his hand."[1] If Taylor is the inventor of efficiency, Henry Ford is its leading exponent. The portrait of Ford shows him as a crackerbarrel philosopher with a knack for mechanical devices and a shrewdness in managing his money. His strict notions of social conformity which he applied to the workers who were to receive the benefits of the five dollar day is presented as an example of his bigotry and narrow-mindedness.

In contrast to these figures, the narrator presents a favorable portrait of Thorstein Veblen. Veblen is admired not only for his economic and social ideas but for his independence of spirit and his lack of con-

[1] U.S.A., III, p. 25.

formity to conventional domestic and other arrangements. In this Biography there is a description of Veblen's writing which might well stand as a description of the Biographies of U.S.A. Veblen is said to have

> established a new diagram of a society dominated by monopoly capital,
> etched in irony
> the sabotage of production by business
> the sabotage of life by blind need for money profits,
> pointed out the alternatives; a warlike society strangled by the bureaucracies of the monopolies forced by the law of diminishing returns to grind down more and more the common man for profits,
> or a new matter-of-fact commonsense society dominated by the needs of the men and women who did the work and the incredibly vast possibilities for peace and plenty offered by the progress of technology.[1]

The same admiration for the independent spirit of man can be seen in the portrait of Frank Lloyd Wright. It presents another view of the "commonsense" society mentioned in the Veblen Biography. The narrator calls attention to Wright's dream of Broadacres City, a new concept of modern building which makes obsolete both the city and the rural area, and the "Usonian city," Wright's new name for the United States, taken from the words "union" and "use." The Wright Biography is also one of the few to end on a note of hope.

> only in freedom can we build the Usonian city.
> His plans are coming to life. His blueprints, as once Walt Whitman's words, stir the young men.[2]

Both Isadora Duncan and Rudolph Valentino are presented as examples of the popular taste of the period. Isadora Duncan is admired for her independence and her nonconformity, but the admiration is quickly lost in the ironic account of her inability to manage her own affairs. Her appeal

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[1] U.S.A., III, pp. 101-102.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 433.

is that of pseudo culture--art with a capital "A" and things Greek. Like that of Duncan, the portrait of Valentino contains an implied criticism of the American society which gave so much attention to figures who are ultimately insignificant. The extravagant attention given to movie stars is too common a phenomenon in American life to need dwelling on here. The narrator accurately portrays this aspect of our culture with appropriate irony.

The career of William Randolph Hearst is dealt with by the narrator in a manner which can be predicted from the social point of view already indicated. Hearst is a part of the corrupting process because he has no integrity in operating his newspapers, but is more concerned to use techniques which will sell more papers. His political ambitions and manueverings are indicated. At the end of the portrait he is seen as "a spent Caesar grown old with spending never man enough to cross the Rubicon."[1]

The final Biography in the trilogy is that of Samuel Insull. The narrator gives an account of Insull's career and it is apparent to the reader that Insull is the perfect symbol of the misuse of the technological advances, the false money values of the financiers, and the general acceptance of these stupidities by the society. Insull came to power because Edison appointed him president of the Chicago Edison Company. When his paper empire crashed, some twenty years later, it brought down hundreds of lesser men. In the account of the subsequent trial on charges of embezzlement, the narrator can point up the supreme irony; that is,

[1] U.S.A., III, p. 477.

that Insull, after admitting to an accounting error of ten million dollars, was acquitted and then granted a $21,000 per year pension for life. Thousands of investors who had lost their life savings "sat crying over the home editions at the thought of how Mr. Insull had suffered."[1]

The progress of the narrator's thought can be seen in his depiction of these historical figures. He is alarmed at the abuse of money power and the concentration of wealth. Like many other American "liberals," he moves through a period of attraction to the Communist experiment in Russia. He does not reject Marxism in the later Biographies but his emphasis on Wright's "Usonian city" and Veblen's "commonsense society" cannot be overlooked in a final appraisal of the total impact of the Biographies. Because such an appraisal depends in part on Dos Passos' manner of presentation, it is necessary to examine the techniques employed by Dos Passos to indicate the attitudes and responses of the Biographical "narrator."

The phrase "etched in irony" from the Veblen Biography and previously quoted in this chapter might well serve as a sub-title for a section dealing with the methods of Dos Passos in writing the Biographies. They employ the devices now familiar to the reader of U.S.A.--slogans associated with the figure under discussion, words from his speeches or writing, and emblems associated with the figure. Another device is the use of a repeated phrase to emphasize a point or direct reader response to an interpretation of the events. An example has already been cited from the La Follette Biography. Dos Passos lifts a phrase from President

[1] U.S.A., III, p. 532.

Wilson's comment on the Senators who opposed his Armed Ship Bill. They are referred to as "a little group of willful men." At the end of the Biography, La Follette is "a willful man expressing no opinion but his own." What Wilson meant as a reproach has been ironically turned to indicate La Follette's integrity. By emphasizing some facts and omitting others, by juxtaposition of words and phrases, by contrasts with other data, Dos Passos constructs a portrait mainly characterized by irony.

His irony is sometimes directed toward the figure under discussion where the portrait is an unfavorable one. At other times, the irony is directed toward the opponents of the portrayed figures or toward the reaction of society to the figure. The portrait of Bryan is illustrative of the irony directed toward the portrayed figure. The section is entitled, "The boy orator of the platte," and these words appear in the paragraphs that follow: "boy orator," "lips," "silver voice," "bigmouthed," "exhorter," "his voice...charmed...rang...was sweet ...melted men's innards...," "silver tongue," "The silver tongue chanted on out of the big mouth, chanting," "in Florida he'd spoken every day," "he had to speak."[1] The account emphasizes the eloquence of Bryan, and the fact that this was "big talk" to the small town merchants and the farmers who heard him. On the other hand, Luther Burbank is presented in a favorable light. The irony in this Biography is against the religious fundamentalism of those who opposed Burbank's belief in Darwinian principles.

He was one of the grand old men until the churches
and the congregations

[1] U.S.A., I, pp. 169-172 passim.

got wind that he was in infidel and believed in
Darwin.
Luther Burbank had never a thought of evil
. . . . . .
he wouldn't give up Darwin and Natural Selection
and they stung him and he died
puzzled.[1]

A phrase or slogan is often employed as a leit motif for the Biography. Thus Keith is characterized as a man who could "smell money" and who "died with an uneasy look under the eyes." The portrait of Carnegie is entitled, "Prince of peace," but the irony intended here is made obvious by the end of the Biography. Carnegie is said to have given millions for the founding of peace organizations, "except in time of war."[2] In the Roosevelt Biography, his explorations in South America are referred to by the phrase, "the River of Doubt." The same phrase occurs later as a subtle suggestion that Roosevelt no longer understands the world in which he finds himself; the line, "it wasn't the bully amateur's world any more,"[3] is preceded and followed by a reference to "the River of Doubt."

The use of allusion to characterize an attitude or feeling is another device by which the Biographies gain a part of their effect. In the life of Jack Reed, Dos Passos says, "Villon seeking a lodging for the night in the Italian tenements on Sullivan Street, Bleecker, Carmine."[4] "Villon" characterizes the attitude of Reed, while the place and street

[1] U.S.A., I, p. 83.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 265.

[3] U.S.A., II, p. 148.

[4] U.S.A., II, p. 13.

names characterize the area associated with bohemian New York life. They loosely locate Greenwich Village, which in downtown New York is more a frame of mind than an exact geographic area. In the same Biography, Lincoln Steffens is referred to as "Diogenes Steffens with Marx for a lantern."[1] Again in the Reed Biography a more extended use of allusion is found. Smolny Institute, where the Bolsheviki conducted the organization of the new government, is compared with a great steel mill in a passage which represents Reed's imaginative impressions and characterizes the events which were taking place in Russia.

> The windows of Smolny glow whitehot like a bessemer,
> no sleep in Smolny,
> Smolny the giant rollingmill running twentyfour hours a day
> rolling out men nations hopes millenniums impulses fears,
> raw material
> for the foundations
> of a new society.[2]

A similar use of allusion can be seen in the Biography of Hibben. Dos Passos shows Hibben's progress from the feeling that he wanted a life of "travel and romance a la Byron and de Musset," through his growing social awareness and interest in progressive causes, to his enthusiasm for the new Soviet regime. This progress is indicated by references to musical compositions, "the Marseillaise of 1905, Onward Christian Soldiers of 1912 sung at the Chicago Colosseum during the convention of Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party ...the tremendous roar of the Marxian Internationale."[3] By the allusions, Hibben is seen as an adventurous and

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 14.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 17.

[3] U.S.A., II, p. 183.

romantic youth, then as an enthusiast for radicalism.

The Biographies are also characterized by quotations and paraphrases of the speeches and writings of the depicted figure. They may include newspaper stories, a quotation from Who's Who, or a portion of a Congressional resolution. In each instance, the quotation fills in a part of the necessary detail, but it may also serve as an ironic contrast with the other details. The Ford Biography, for example, begins with a quotation from a Detroit newspaper. It is from a feature story which announces the beginning of the age of the automobile. Later in the Biography a phrase from the story, "the new noise of the automobile," is used as an ironic contrast with Ford's activity in restoring Greenfield Village, an example of his antiquarian interests in his old age.

The Biographies end with the acquittal of Samuel Insull and the accompanying irony of the enormous sympathy generated for his sufferings by the press. He is left enjoying his pension. The other financiers are beyond punishment or accounting for their deeds; the liberals are defeated. Henry Ford is surrounded by armed guards with his dream of the past exemplified by Greenfield Village. Hearst, a "spent Caesar," is Lord of San Simeon, his one hundred thousand acre California home. Veblen, Duncan, and Valentino have died within the time period of the novel; only Frank Lloyd Wright remains with his dream of the city and society for the future.

The final selection in U.S.A. is not properly a Biography, but it may be seen as a commentary on the struggles portrayed in the Biographies and in the entire novel. It is entitled "Vag," and its hero is a hungry young man standing on a continental highway hitch-hiking. He watches a

plane go overhead on its way from Newark to Los Angeles and, in his imagination, he sees it crossing the country with its wealthy passengers. He indicates the continuation of the struggle already described in the novel. The Biographies have helped to describe the society in which he lives. He is, in a way, a representative of the future of that society. Overhead the fortunate speed on their way to a good dinner in Los Angeles and, as they do, he waits for the first lift in the direction of the fulfillment promised by the advertisements and books he has read. The previous struggle has been over this man and his future. The Veblens, La Follettes, and Wrights would have provided him with a civilized state; the Morgans, Carnegies, and Insulls have left him a jungle. So he "waits with swimming head, needs knot the belly, idle hands numb, beside the speeding traffic."[1]

The narrator of the Biographies has indicated his point of view toward the society and the events which lead up to this figure, Vag, and his position and prospects in the world. The large capitalists like Carnegie, Morgan, and Hearst are presented as a threat to the democratic institutions of America. The narrator sympathizes largely with those who have attempted to reform the economic structure to the greater advantage of the lower economic groups. He is opposed to the sentimentality and false heroics connected with war. He is cynical toward fundamentalism, toward fads, and toward popular interpretations of art. He has a good deal of the debunking spirit common to the American 1929's. In short, he may be identified as Dos Passos or he may be seen in a larger view as

[1] U.S.A., III, p. 561.

the intellectual spirit of this period. That spirit can be seen working over the obvious contradictions in the society and pointing out the inadequacy of existing institutions. The Biographies represent more than the economic and political struggle; indeed, they may be said to be symbolic of American ambitions, motivations, hopes, dreams and fears.

The Biographies provide, as Dos Passos says, "a framework of truth for the story." These figures and their fame are representative of the confusions of the general society depicted by the Narrative. Their success or defeat are results of the current mentality of the time. The contradictions of the society are represented by the various figures which the society chooses to find significant. They are yet another way of emphasizing that it is the social climate rather than any individual character that makes up the subject matter of U.S.A.

CHAPTER V

MONTAGE

It is evident both from the technique and from Dos Passos himself that the Newsreels in U.S.A. owe their conception and method to the experiments with film, carried on mainly in the Soviet Union in the early twenties. Dos Passos, in an unpublished letter to the present writer, said that the technique owed a good deal to his reading of the ideas of Sergei Eisenstein on film montage. According to the same letter, Dos Passos began collecting items from newspapers of the period while preparing to write Manhattan Transfer. In that book the newspaper story and headline are worked logically into the framework of the narrative:

> His eyes fell on the headline on a Journal that lay on the floor by the coal-scuttle where he had dropped it to run for the hack to take Susie to the hospital.
>
> MORTON SIGNS THE GREATER NEW YORK BILL
>
> Completes the Act Making New York World's Second Metropolis[1]

In another instance the newspaper reader is in a barber's chair:

> ADMITS KILLING CRIPPLED MOTHER...
>
> "D'yous mind if I set here a minute an read that paper?" he hears his voice drawling in his pounding ears.
> "Go right ahead."

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[1]John Dos Passos, Manhattan Transfer (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1925), p. 12.

PARKER'S FRIENDS PROTECT...

The black print squirms before his eyes. Russians...

MOB STONES...(Special Dispatch to the Herald) Trenton, N.J.
Nathan Sibbetts, fourteen years old, broke down today after two weeks of steady denial of guilt and confessed to the police that he was responsible for the death of his aged and crippled mother, Hannah Sibbetts, after a quarrel in their home at Jacob's Creek, six miles above this city. Tonight he was committed to await the action of the Grand Jury.

RELIEVE PORT ARTHUR IN FACE OF ENEMY

...Mrs. Rix loses Husband's Ashes.

On Tuesday May 24 at about half past eight o'clock I came home after sleeping on the steam roller all night, he said, and went upstairs to sleep some more. I had only gotten to sleep when my mother came upstairs and told me to get up and if I didn't get up she would throw me downstairs. My mother grabbed hold of me to throw me downstairs. I threw her first and she fell to the bottom. I went downstairs and found that her head was twisted to one side. I then saw that she was dead and then I straightened her neck and covered her up with the cover from my bed.

Bud folds the paper carefully, lays it on the chair and leaves the barbershop.[1]

Here is the prototype for the Newsreels which appear in U.S.A., but in this instance brought directly into the course of the story. There is here the same shifting from one lead to another as the newspaper reader scans the page until he finds a story of interest. In this case, Bud is interested in the murder because he is himself a murderer. In the quoted passage the other items are of no importance to Bud and he passes over them quickly. As an incidental part of the newspaper reading, the reader is oriented in the time period. The fact that Bud has read the story of the murder helps prepare the reader for the later revelation that Bud is a murderer. The same direct connection with the narrative is main-

[1] Ibid., p. 17.

tained in introducing scraps of songs, slogans, and advertising signs:

> A tune was grinding crazily through his head:
>
> I'm so tired of vi-olets
> Take them all away.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> There were fewer houses; on the sides of barns peeling letters spelled out LYDIA PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND, BUDWEISER, RED HEN, BARKING DOG.[1]

Throughout Manhattan Transfer the characters in the story have "crazy tunes" running through their heads, read slogans on restaurant menus, or scan newspaper headlines. The device shows the stimuli working on the character and helps indicate the temperament, interests, and personality of the individual involved. It also characterizes the life of the city as well as relates the events of the time to the narrative.

At the beginning of the chapter "Nine Days' Wonder," Dos Passos moves closer to the technique employed in U.S.A. Here the newspaper captions are combined with impressions used to indicate the end of the day in New York City:

> The sun's moved to Jersey, the sun's behind Hoboken.
>
> Covers are clicking on typewriters, rolltop desks are closing: elevators go up empty, come down jammed. It's ebbtide in the downtown district, flood in Flatbush, Woodlawn, Dyckman Street, Sheepshead Bay, New Lots Avenue, Canarsie.
>
> Pink sheets, green sheets, gray sheets, FULL MARKET REPORTS, FINALS ON HAVRE DE GRACE. Print squirms among the shopworn office-worn sagging faces, sore fingertips, aching insteps, strongarm men cram into subway expresses. SENATORS 8, GIANTS 2. DIVA RECOVERS PEARLS, $800,000 ROBBERY.
>
> It's ebbtide on Wall Street, floodtide in the Bronx.
>
> The sun's gone down in Jersey.[2]

Here the impressions of New York during the evening rush hour logically

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[1] Ibid., p. 169.

[2] Ibid.

includes headlines from the newspapers--headlines which the commuters see over their neighbor's shoulder or hear shouted from the newsstands. While the section itself is separate from the narrative portion of the novel, the headlines are still logically related to the scene presented. From this point it is only a short step to the Newsreels in U.S.A. where the entire content is made up of scraps of headlines, songs, and advertising matter. Taking the step, however, created a new device, similar in method, but sharply contrasting in effect. Dos Passos' practice in Manhattan Transfer of using the newspaper to create the atmosphere, motivate action, and also to indicate conclusions to parts of his story (as in the arrest of "Dutch") has changed to a device which he uses not only to indicate the happenings in the twentieth century world but, by the juxtaposition of events, to indicate also the quality of the culture and the ironies of its contradictions.

To try to recapture the exact process by which Dos Passos arrived at the point of constructing through words a device comparable to motion picture montage is, of course, futile, but it may well have been very like the process by which the original device was discovered, or at any rate like the account given of the discovery by Sergei Eisenstein. Defending the use of montage against former enthusiasts who had come to be detractors, Eisenstein says:

> While playing with pieces of film, they discovered a certain property in the toy which kept them astonished for a number of years. This property consisted in the fact that two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition.[1]

[1]Sergei Eisenstein, The Film Sense, translated and edited by Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1942), p. 4.

He goes on to indicate that the human practice of relating objects logically that are placed side by side stems from a strong proclivity based on the way we tend to organize our impressions. He denies that montage is mainly useful only in "special effects" or in "montage sequences," but on the contrary, insists that the theme, the material, the plot, the action, are all carried along by montage. The effect or result of montage is always something more than, and different from, the representations put together to achieve it. It is not the chance effect caused by relating random "shots," but the careful selection of precisely the right representations to achieve the effect aimed at. He illustrates the point by comparing the geometric representation of the time of day by the angle made by the two hands on the face of a clock with the image of time summoned up by all the associations connected with a particular hour. The artist, then, either in film or in writing, does not merely say that it is five o'clock, but arranges all the associations connected with five o'clock in order to create the montage or image of it. In the section quoted from Manhattan Transfer, Dos Passos is interested in creating the image of five o'clock in New York City. Thus he selects precisely those representations which will allow the reader to recreate the experience of an office worker leaving for home via the subway. The reader now has associations for five o'clock similar to those of the New York resident.

In U.S.A., Dos Passos applied the technique on a much wider scale. In the trilogy he is not concerned with minor effects like five o'clock in New York City, but with the twentieth century and how it appeared in its first thirty years to those who lived in it. The reader's memory of how it feels to be a part of large city life aids in understand-

ing the pressures and sense of futility which occupy the characters of Manhattan Transfer; so the Newsreels in U.S.A. make the activities and attitudes of its characters more understandable as the reader adds these "images" to his own experience. The complexity of the image presented and the problem of its "typicalness" in some statistical way will be dealt with later; here it is intended only to indicate the purpose and method of the device.

The author of montage is rightly concerned with illustrating his theme or in furthering his plot structure rather than in presenting any "typical" image. The confusion regarding the function of the Newsreels arises from the fact that they are made up of real newspaper captions describing actual historical events. The suggestion that they are intended to provide the actual atmosphere of the time immediately removes the work from the realm of fiction to that of social history, causing some critics to compare it with works like Lloyd Morris' Not So Long Ago or Mark Sullivan's Our Times. It seems more fruitful to look upon this device as an extension of the techniques of naturalism which, as I understand them, are not intended to represent actuality, but to heighten the dramatic illusion of actuality. Accepting this line of reason, the analysis of the Newsreels which tries to decide whether they truly represent the happenings of the first thirty years of the twentieth century is beside the point. It is to the point, however, to examine the events recorded in the Newsreels, to determine the image created by them, and to discover how they illustrate the theme of the novel

Thus far the effects of montage dealt with have been extremely simple ones, but it can readily be seen that the same principles might

be involved in creating more complex effects. In the section previously referred to from Manhattan Transfer, it is obvious that Dos Passos has not created the image of a typical five o'clock in New York for all of the millions of people involved. Had his theme required it, he could have presented a quiet group uptown enjoying the cocktail hour or a retired railroad man watering a patch of lawn in Flushing. These representations would be equally "real," but representative of a different theme or plot. In the same manner, the juxtaposition of other events may result in the expression of complicated tonal effects and in an interpretation beyond the obvious sensory impressions.

Before turning to one of the Newsreels for detailed examination, it is perhaps helpful to see what Eisenstein felt to be the importance of the method he was describing:

> What is most noteworthy in such a method? First and foremost, its dynamism. This rests primarily in the fact that the desired image is not fixed or ready-made, but arises--is born. The image planned by author, director and actor is concretized by them in separate representational elements, and is assembled--again and finally--in the spectator's perception. This is actually the final aim of every artist's creative endeavor.[1]

If we assume that Dos Passos, in the Newsreels, has a creative purpose beyond that of placing his characters in a time setting, then that purpose should reveal itself in his selection of material which makes up the Newsreels themselves. This aspect of U.S.A. has been often overlooked or simply ignored, but at least two critics devote special attention to it. George F. Whicher speaks of them as:

> ...occasional "Newsreel" sections made up of headlines, advertising slogans, scraps of popular song, and current sayings, all jumbled

[1] Ibid., p. 31.

> together like montage in the movies...All this by way of creating atmosphere in rather solid chunks.[1]

Mr. Whicher's statement limits montage to the "special effects"--which Eisenstein refers to and rejects--and also overlooks the special qualities of montage which have been described above. In addition, the statement limits the purpose of the Newsreels to that of creating atmosphere; the latter is a more serious limitation of this view in that it does not consider the possibility that the theme of the novel may be revealed by this mode of writing. The fact that Dos Passos is here selecting actual newspaper stories does not rule out the possibility of creative selection of the stories to be presented. It is the contention of this study that this selection is not random nor is it merely "jumbled together"; the fact that it may, indeed, be like "montage in the movies" does not in itself condemn it to the rather trivial function that Mr. Whicher is apparently willing to assign it.

Joseph Warren Beach comes much closer to an understanding of the Newsreels when he suggests that through them

> ...there is a growing sense that private and public must be related in the order of things; that the capture of Mafeking or the execution of Ferrer must have its bearing, however remote, on the career of Mac; ...Still more, there is a growing sense that the private life is of a piece with the culture complex in which it is embedded, that the spirit of the citizen is deeply colored by the world in which he lives....Discerning readers will become aware that the choice and arrangement of topics and their very confusion are not planless--a means by which Dos Passos gives shape and direction to his work.[2]

To see exactly what Mr. Beach refers to, it is necessary to examine the

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[1] The Literature of the American People (A. H. Quinn, editor) (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951), p. 881.

[2] Beach, American Fiction: 1920-1940, pp. 58-59.

Newsreels in detail. For this purpose, I have selected Newsreel LXVI:

HOLMES DENIES STAY

A better world's in birth
Tiny Wasps Imported from Korea in Battle to Death with Asiatic Beetle

BOY CARRIED MILE DOWN SEWER: SHOT OUT ALIVE
CHICAGO BARS MEETINGS

For justice thunders condemnation
Washington Keeps Eye on Radicals
Arise rejected of the earth
Paris Brussels Moscow Geneva Add Their Voices
It is the final conflict
Let each stand in his place
Geologist Lost in Cave Six Days
The International Party

SACCO AND VANZETTI MUST DIE

Shall be the human race.

> Much I thought of you when I was lying in the death house--the singing, the kind tender voices of the children from the playground where there was all the life and the joy of liberty--just one step from the wall that contains the buried agony of three buried souls. It would remind me so often of you and of your sister and I wish I could see you every moment, but I feel better that you will not come to the death house so that you could not see the horrible picture of three living in agony waiting to be electrocuted.[1]

All of the stories referred to here may be found in the New York Times from August 10 to August 25, 1927 (Sacco and Vanzetti were executed on August 23) including the letter written by Sacco to his son, Dante. The only other material included is the quotation from the International. I have not found the exact captions which Dos Passos describes as having been taken from the newspapers of Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C. All the newspapers published during the time period from the cities mentioned are not readily available nor does it seem much to the purpose to

[1] U.S.A., III, p. 461.

examine the original caption.

At first glance, the newspaper headlines, the scraps of song, and finally Sacco's letter may seem completely confusing and to be intended to reflect chaos, with trivia and events of importance jumbled together in a cataclysm of death and destruction, and this is, in fact, an element of the construction. A comparison with the actual news stories indicates that Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes denied a stay of execution which was the last hope of Sacco and Vanzetti. In response there were riots and demonstrations throughout the world, indicated in the Newsreel "Paris Brussels Moscow Geneva Add Their Voices." A reading of all the news stories involved adds nothing to the material presented in the Newsreel which depends upon the reader's general knowledge of the circumstances and not upon a concrete remembrance of exact detail. The intercalated stories in turn have nothing essential added to them by a comprehensive account of particulars. The Newsreel is a self-contained entity and all the information necessary to an understanding of it has been included in the version which appears in U.S.A.

In addition to the initial response to the Newsreel is the realization that the lines from the International serve as an ironic commentary on the events recorded. It may also seem to indicate a call to physical action as in the lines following the list of cities quoted above. The lines in question are these: "It is the final conflict / Let each stand in his place." The concluding lines comprised of Sacco's letter, which also appeared in the New York Times, may seem in this reading to be a final irony in that the letter portrays the convicted murderer, Sacco, as a gentle and considerate man. It may even be interpreted as a

pathetic plea for sympathy for the condemned men. Like the first reading suggested above, this one, too, comprises a part of the total structure; this one specifically Marxist if the lines from the International are assumed to be used to signify the "right" thinking group which would make saints of the men rather than crucify them. Both interpretations, however, fail to explain in any very satisfactory way the presence of the other stories which are included. For both, these stories must be given only a minor significance--perhaps indicating that "life goes on" even while larger events are in progress. Such a view would indicate that the stories included--the Asiatic Beetle, the boy who fell into the sewer, and the geologist lost in the cave--violate the spirit of montage in that they detract from the single complex presumed in the interpretation. These interpretations can be rejected, or rather understood as part of the total complex, only if an explanation can be found which does include all the data given with the least amount of extrapolation.

For an explanation of the kind of writing here intended by Dos Passos, I am relying on the notion of "figural interpretation" advanced by Erich Auerbach.

> Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfills the first. The two poles of a figure are separated in time, but both, being real events or persons, are within temporality. They are both contained in the flowing stream which is historical life, and only the comprehension, the intellectus spiritualis, of their interdependence is a spiritual act.[1]

Auerbach illustrates his meaning by the suggestion that in such interpretation, the "sacrifice" of Isaac prefigures that of Christ. It is not

[1] Auerbach, op. cit., p. 73.

necessary that both events be presented together, but merely that both are in existence so that the reading of one takes place within the framework provided by both. The illustration itself is to the point here, for the "sacrifice" of Sacco and Vanzetti exists within the framework of the previous sacrifice of Christ. The first (the crucifixion) "signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second" (the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti) "involves or fulfills the first."

The first line of the Newsreel (HOLMES DENIES STAY) parallels the decision that Christ is to be sacrificed; the second line, taken from the International (A better world's in birth) is both an ironic commentary and the promise of redemption involved in the crucifixion. The "tiny wasps" mentioned in the third line provide the suggestion of a counterforce--here imported to combat an insect pest, but parallel to the force of Christianity against the forces of evil in the world. The other two news stories mentioned which are unrelated to the Sacco-Vanzetti case both concern themselves with the theme of resurrection. Both the boy in the sewer and the geologist in the cave illustrate or parallel Christ in the tomb. Those supporting Sacco and Vanzetti are persecuted like the early Christians (in the line "CHICAGO BARS MEETINGS") and another line from the International provides the explanation: "For justice thunders condemnation." This justice is human justice which crucifies the Christ-like figures. The line from the International obviously means something else, but the ambiguity of the wording makes this variant reading possible. It is, therefore, available to the reader as a part of the total effect of the lines regardless of whether Dos Passos is using this interpretation with intentional ironic effect or not. In the final part

of the Newsreel, a letter from Sacco to his son, Sacco thinks of the children he has known just as Christ on being led away is thinking of the lamentations of a large group. According to Luke, Jesus says: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children."[1] Sacco mentions also the three men who are waiting in the deathhouse for execution.

This interpretation does not claim that Dos Passos means the "crucifixion" in the Newsreel. In a sense, the Newsreel interprets the reader in that it depends upon his previous knowledge of the Passion of Christ, which prefigures the events relating to Sacco and Vanzetti. Again, it is not necessary that the events related by Dos Passos provide exact parallels to the story of the crucifixion. It is enough that they form, with the reader's knowledge of the crucifixion, an image, in the sense in which Eisenstein uses the word, of the total significance of the deaths of Sacco and Vanzetti.

Auerbach, making a point about the use of realistic materials, says that the classical doctrine of the separation of styles made it possible to use realistic detail, imitation of actual speech, and scenes from low life only for the purposes of comedy. He also contrasts this use with the custom in the Bible where much of the writing concerns itself with realistic detail and low life, but where such material is treated in a completely serious way. Auerbach says:

> For the great and sublime events in the Homeric poems take place far more exclusively and unmistakably among the members of a ruling class; and these are far more untouched in their heroic elevation than are the Old Testament figures, who can fall much lower in

[1] Luke 23:28.

> dignity (consider, for example, Adam, Noah, David, Job); and finally, domestic realism, the representation of daily life, remains in Homer in the peaceful realm of the idyllic, whereas, from the very first, in the Old Testament stories, the sublime, tragic, and problematic take shape precisely in the domestic and commonplace: scenes such as those between Cain and Abel, between Noah and his sons, between Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, between Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau, and so on, are inconceivable in the Homeric style. The latter must have palpable and clearly expressible reasons for their conflicts and enmities, and these work themselves out in free battles; whereas, with the former, the perpetually smouldering jealousy and the connection between the domestic and the spiritual, between the paternal blessing and the divine blessing, lead to daily life being permeated with the stuff of conflict, often with poison. The sublime and the everyday are not only actually unseparated but basically inseparable.[1]

If I understand Mr. Auerbach, he means that it is possible for the Biblical writers to use everyday detail because the very stuff of everyday life is permeated with the profound meanings of the Christian concept of life. In the same way, Dos Passos can take the actual captions from a newspaper and create from them an image which includes the prefiguring image of Christ on the cross. Dos Passos need not be specifically applying Christian doctrine to this event any more than the narrator of the story of Isaac and Abraham may be applying it; Dos Passos' schema is a parallel for the concept of life which he calls upon here for an interpretation of the Sacco-Vanzetti event. The concept of life implied by Dos Passos need not be investigated as a consistent entity for my purposes here; it includes a concept of justice which condemns those who would execute Sacco and Vanzetti just as the Christian ethos condemns the persecutors of Christ. The parallel might even be extended to include the "better world in birth" promised by the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti with its counterpart in the hope of redemption promised by the crucifixion

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[1]Auerbach, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

of Christ.

One further consideration needs to be made of the technique of the Newsreels--the narrator, or point of view implied by their presentation. The question of the "narrators" indicated in works of fiction is too involved to be considered in detail here, but it is a tenet of modern criticism that often the presence and personality of the narrator provides an additional dimension to the total meaning presented. It is also one of the tenets of naturalism that the author should remove himself as far as possible from "interpreting" the events which he places before the reader's eyes. In the Newsreels, the activity of the author and any possible narrator is limited to the selection and arrangement of the material to be presented. If the situation of the Newsreels be imagined as one in which a reader scans the newspaper, selecting almost randomly from the captions which come to his attention, then settling down to read in more detail those which appear to be of interest, then it has its "base" in reality. It was shown above that the interests of a character may be involved in his selection of newspaper stories. This seems to be the point in many of the news stories (in this case sometimes fictitious ones) which the characters of Manhattan Transfer read. Often also the characters in Manhattan Transfer are aware of "crazy scraps of song" 'n their heads which serve to indicate the banality and tawdriness of their environment or which may serve to indicate a triviality in the character so depicted. In the organization of the Newsreels in U.S.A., the captions and bits of songs indicate the interests and character of a narrator, who in this case is unnamed and disembodied, but nonetheless existent. This narrator does not maturate as does the narrator of the

Camera Eye sections, but from beginning to end scans his newspaper with a relentless eye for the ironies and contradictions of contemporary events.

If the question of the relationship of this narrator to that of the Camera Eye be raised, it must be settled by deciding that if the Newsreel narrator is one person, his interests and interpretation of events are like those of the mature Camera Eye narrator. It is more likely, however, that the point of view represented by the Newsreels is like that represented in the real Newsreel of the motion picture--that is, the "voice" of contemporary events. This voice, however, is not presenting facets of the current scene merely for their sensational or "newsworthy" quality, but rather presenting those aspects of contemporary life which will serve to exemplify the themes of the novel. However we look upon the narrator or the point of view expressed by the Newsreels, it is evident that the quotations have been carefully selected to carry forward the themes of the novel. Newsreel I begins with the line of a song, "It was that emancipated race," and continues with a bit of pageantry connected with a White House reception held by President McKinley on January 1, 1900. It contains descriptions of the welcoming of the new century with small excursions into the advance of science and into the various struggles for political power then current. The Newsreel ends with a quotation from a speech by Senator Albert J. Beveridge:

> The twentieth century will be American. American thought will dominate it. American progress will give it color and direction. American deeds will make it illustrious.
>
> Civilization will never lose its hold on Shanghai. Civilization will never again be closed to the methods of modern man. The regeneration of the world, physical as well as moral, has begun, and

revolutions never move backwards.[1]

While the speech quoted above is in the rhetorical mode of a politician and for that reason suspect in its sincerity, it is a comment on the novel to follow. This is the story of the twentieth century. The concept of a new world made possible by science and invention, with American ingenuity to lead it, promises regeneration through the efforts of "that emancipated race." In this respect, the Newsreel reflects a common theme in American life from the hopes and aspirations of the Revolution to the rebuilding of Europe following World War II--that of remaking the world in the image of America. The consciousness that America has a special mission in the world, a "way of life" which offers the greatest possibilities for satisfaction for the greatest number of people, is a commonplace in our folklore, in our literature, in our blatant assurance, and in our almost pathetic incomprehension of the fondness of other peoples for their own patterns of existence. Newsreel I announces the rise of the American star, the beginning of the "American" century; "BRITISH BEATEN AT MAFEKING" followed by "CLAIMS ISLAND FOR ALL TIMES" indicates the changing of the guard. The first refers to the South African War, the second to the American conquest of the Philippines. The pattern today is still the same. The Newsreel includes the responses to two toasts: one of them, "Hail Columbia!" is followed by the statement that

> By the advantages of abundant and cheap coal and iron, of an enormous overproduction of food products and of invention and economy in production, we are now leading by the nose the original and the greatest

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 5.

of the colonizing nations.[1]

The second has already been quoted above as a response to the toast, "The Twentieth Century." A major theme of the novel is indicated by the two toasts and their responses. America, the hope of the world, is to have her opportunity. There is even the possibility of a coat of arms for the new "lord":

> One of the lithographs of the leading lady represented her in less than Atlantic City bathing costume, sitting on a red-hot stove; in one hand she held a brimming glass of wine, in the other ribbons drawn over a pair of rampant lobsters.[2]

The tone of the Newsreels generally is a none too subtle irony created by the juxtaposition of incongruities. Newsreel XXII contains the headlines, "DEBS IS GIVEN 30 YEARS IN PRISON," which is followed by a stanza from a song beginning "There's a long long trail awinding / Into the land of my dreams." This is followed by a quotation from a speech which, by the ideals expressed and the mode of address, is obviously of a hortatory and inspirational nature. It reads:

> future generations will rise up and call those men blessed who have the courage of their convictions, a proper appreciation of the value of human life as contrasted with material gain, and who, imbued with the spirit of brotherhood will lay hold of the great opportunity.[3]

It is immediately followed by another headline, "BONDS BUY BULLETS BUY BONDS." The sentencing of Debs is hereby contrasted with the stated ideals of the address; the banal words of the song make the fate of Debs more poignantly realized. The ideals of the speech are again called into

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 4.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 4.

[3] U.S.A., II, p. 100.

question by the conclusion, "Buy Bonds," which is in direct contrast to the sentiments of brotherhood in the speech. Debs' fate, stated starkly in the newspaper headline, emphasizes the dishonesty of the fine words of the address.

Newsreel XLV illustrates the montage principle by a series of representations which create the image of the goals set by American life and the standards by which they are achieved. It reads:

'Twarn't for powder and for storebought hair
De man I love would not gone nowhere

If one should seek a simple explanation of his career it would doubtless be found in that extraordinary decision to forsake the ease of a clerkship for the wearying labor of a section hand. The youth who so early in life had so much of judgment and willpower could not fail to rise above the general run of men. He became the intimate of bankers.

St. Louis woman wid her diamon' rings
Pulls dat man aroun' by her apron strings

Tired of walking, riding a bicycle or riding in streetcars, he is likely to buy a Ford.

DAYLIGHT HOLDUP SCATTERS CROWD

Just as soon as his wife discovers that every Ford is like every other Ford and that nearly everyone has one, she is likely to influence him to step into the next social group, in which the Dodge is the most conspicuous example.

DESPERATE REVOLVER BATTLE FOLLOWS

The next step comes when daughter comes back from college and the family moves into a new home. Father wants economy. Mother craves opportunity for her children daughter desires social prestige and so wants travel, speed, get-up-and-go.

MAN SLAIN NEAR HOTEL MAJESTIC BY THREE FOOTPADS

I hate to see de evenin sun go down
Hate to see de evenin sun go down
Cause my baby he done lef' dis town

Such exploits may indicate a dangerous degree of bravado but they

> display the qualities that made a boy of high school age the acknowledged leader of a gang that has been a thorn in the side of the State of[1]

In this Newsreel the words from The St. Louis Blues describing the man who is enticed by "powder and storebought hair" indicates the "tone" of what is to follow. His values form a kind of commentary on the values and aspirations which motivate others in the society. The early lives of two men are described with the qualities which have made them successful in their different ways; the irony of the situation is that the qualities admired in the young man who will become "the intimate of bankers" are very like the qualities of the young man who is a "thorn in the side of the State." Both are ambitious, have initiative, daring, and imagination. The step by step account of the abstract family moving from social scale to social scale (from bicycle, to Ford, to Dodge) suggests by analogy that the other interrupted account will continue the career of a single person. The fact that it does not pulls the reader's attention to the realization that these different young men have similar aspirations and the same lack of spiritual values to guide them. Except for the accidents of timing and placement in the society which makes one a respected citizen and the other a footpad, they describe the same sort of person. The "background music" of the interspersed song forms a parallel to the situation. Thus this section is not a "Newsreel" at all in the motion picture sense, but a piece of montage which might form a prelude to a film play which contrasted two such careers. The Newsreels in this sense form a parallel to the narrative sections of The Big Money, of which they are a part.

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[1] U.S.A., III, pp. 18-19.

Sometimes the Newsreel is even more closely related to the narrative section which follows it. Newsreel LIX is a kind of paean to Detroit, couched in the language of the Chamber of Commerce brochure or of an advertisement--perhaps for factory sites. It suggests the "booster" spirit of a certain element in almost any American city.[1] It is immediately followed by the arrival of Charley Anderson in Detroit in the narrative. Here again the Newsreel is a prelude to the narrative it precedes. The Newsreel ends with the statement, "DETROIT THE CITY WHERE LIFE IS WORTH LIVING," and the experience of Charley Anderson will serve as an ironic contrast to the blatant assurance of the city's boosters. In another instance a Newsreel serves to introduce one of the Biographies. Newsreel LIV is concluded with the following:

> SHEIK SINKING
>
> Rudolph Valentino, noted screen star, collapsed suddenly yesterday in his apartment at the Hotel Ambassador. Several hours later he underwent[2]

It is followed by the Biography of Rudolph Valentino, itself followed by another Newsreel in which Valentino is again mentioned. Newsreel LI is a highly unified piece expressive of the new position of women in business. It includes part of a song, "The sunshine drifted from our alley / Ever since the day / Sally went away," then a series of advertisements offering jobs for women, and lists of such jobs, "canvassers...caretakers ...cashiers...chambermaids...," and ends with the words from the song "St. James Infirmary," "Let her go let her go God bless her / Wherever

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[1] U.S.A., III, pp. 285-287.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 189.

she may be."[1] This Newsreel precedes the introduction to "Mary French," one of the girls who will take a different position in the society than that previously accorded to women. The musical analogy suggests that this section is a kind of prelude to the material which will follow.

It has been the purpose of this chapter to discuss the functioning of the Newsreels in U.S.A. and to determine their relationship to the larger structure. The commonly accepted idea that they provide "atmosphere" or relate the events of the narrative to the actual events of the time is incomplete for two reasons. First, the Newsreels are not necessary for this function; there is adequate time reference in the narratives, in the Biographies, and even in the Camera Eye sections to give the novel a basis in the actual events of the twentieth century. The fictional characters work in early automobile factories, participate in Mexican revolutions, and take part in the events concerned with World War I and the post-war years. The same references in the Newsreels are not necessary to establish the time period. Second, the Newsreels themselves often lack specific time references and are subject to "figural" interpretations, as has been shown in the earlier parts of this chapter. The real function of the Newsreels seems much more complex than is suggested by the notion that they merely provide the realistic setting for the novel. By analogy with montage in the motion picture, by the kind of figural interpretation to which some of them may be subjected, and by musical analogy of the theme setting function of a prelude, it has been shown that the Newsreels are a kind of chorus--made up of the voices of the newspaper, the radio,

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[1] U.S.A., III, pp. 105-106.

popular song, the advertising man--in short, all the multitudinous voices of modern life. These voices come out of the situation of modern life; their jumble and apparent incoherence (in actuality) is a result of our lack of perspective. When they are used, as Dos Passos uses them, to form a montage, their precise meanings can be interpreted. Moving closer to the illusion of actuality, Greek drama related its choruses to the actual scene being presented; they were elders, or citizens of the place. Dos Passos' voices are those of the contemporary scene, directing the reader's attention to the meanings and themes contained in the narrative events. The Newsreels do not speak to us directly as does the Greek chorus, but indirectly, employing the techniques of discontinuity, of ironic juxtaposition, of bare, flat statement--all of which are part of the resources of modern fictional method. Their selection from newspapers, popular songs, and advertising slogans marks the point of departure from similar techniques used by other modern poets and novelists.

CHAPTER VI

CROSS CUTTING

> In an effort to take in as much as possible of the broad field of the lives of these times, three separate sequences have been threaded in and out among the stories. Of these, The Camera Eye aims to indicate the position of the observer and Newsreel to give an inkling of the common mind of the epoch. Portraits of a number of real people are interlarded in the pauses in the narrative because their lives seem to embody so well the quality of the soil in which Americans of these generations grew.

The above quotation is taken from the introductory note to the first Modern Library edition of The 42nd Parallel, and was written by Dos Passos. It can serve as an introduction to a study of the interrelation of the devices because it indicates the position of the devices in relation to the narrative sections. It also makes clear that they are contributory to the main work, which is the narrative material. The statement suggests more than it says; it does not indicate the intricate relationships between the devices and the narrative proper, nor the precise way in which an understanding of "the common mind of the epoch" and "the quality of the soil in which Americans of this generation grew" contribute to a complete appreciation of the novel. In this chapter, I hope to demonstrate how these devices interrelate and how they contribute to making U.S.A. a more unified whole than it may appear at first.

It is the business of fiction to embody theme and idea in signi-

ficant action, and therefore it is necessary first to see the structure of this novel through its major characters and the actions in which they participate. Dos Passos has indicated his concern for the environment of his characters and drawn in general outline the background of each. For his theme, he needed to indicate the early life and surroundings of the characters--the soil in which they grew. In each case, he presents the tangled lives of the immediate families of the characters. Each seems to be a variation of the themes presented in the life of the central observer who dominates the Camera Eye. He, like the fictional characters, is shown in childhood surrounded by impressions of social struggle which he does not comprehend, but which dimly penetrate his consciousness. The Camera Eye personage is thus related to the narrative characters. He will finally develop into a kind of conscience in his realization of the injustice to Sacco and Vanzetti, but the characters will move futilely toward their ends. In each character the impact of the industrial society proves too much for individuality and the individual dream; each loses identity and becomes a part of a faceless mass.

Each character is seen in his early life with an idea, however vaguely formulated, of making his individual way in the world. Some prepare for social struggle; others hope to compete in the existing society; each will struggle for some acceptable ideal of himself. In the end, however, all have been defeated either by death, by loss of identity and purpose, or by proving untrue to the original ideal and adopting the prevailing modes of survival. The four-family house and the smell of whale oil soap in the early life of Mac both are direct results of the industrial life of the community. As a result of a strike, the family is placed on

precarious financial footing and then is lost. The transfer to Chicago leads Mac into another social struggle. His Uncle Tim loses his print shop because he will not concede to the demands that he stop printing Socialistic handbills. Later in San Francisco, Mac breaks with Maisie and casts his lot with the I.W.W., but Maisie's demands prove too strong and he returns to her. Once again Mac will break with society and try to recapture his ideal for himself by his flight to Mexico. His final loss of purpose is indicated in Mexico where he is unable to determine which side the soldiers are fighting on. Mac has made his decision over and over to cast his lot with the struggle for social justice, but he cannot maintain his purpose. In his final appearance in the novel, he is trying to restore his existence with a common law wife and his book store.

The other characters illustrate similar defeats. Janey Williams is sharply drawn in the scenes relating to her childhood, but as she bows to the demands of conformity, she fades more and more into the background. Her brother, Joe, has been killed in a barroom brawl, yet she wears an emblem signifying the death of a relative in military service. When she is questioned about it, she says, "my brother was in the navy."[1] She does not add that he deserted or that he met his end in a way not related to the national defense. Even here her desire for the outward trappings of "respectability" outweighs whatever honesty is appropriate to such a situation. Her idea of "respectability" is a "nice clean job ashore" for her brother Joe, and it is bound up with the clean shirts and polite manners of George Barrow and J. Ward Moorehouse. She becomes the "inevitable

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 317.

Miss Williams," as she is described by another character late in the book. The same loss of identity can be seen in the career of J. Ward Moorehouse; at the beginning he is the brightest boy in the family and the one singled out as having great promise. He, too, in the end becomes a background figure--almost an object of pity as his associates take over his functions. Eleanor Stoddard has been presented as cold and calculating from the start, but there are some springs of hope for a better life, and for some honor and dignity in achieving it. Her movement is also in the direction of social acceptability, not in itself a dishonorable goal if pursued by the proper means. She is a persistent figure throughout the book, although she appears only through the eyes of the other characters in the last two volumes. Her story is concluded by a projected marriage with a Russian prince, a marriage which will enhance her opportunities for success in her decorating business. All of these characters participate in the dreams of a better life which are identified with the United States and with the twentieth century; all lose identity and their original purposes before the close of the novel.

Four of the characters of U.S.A. die within the time scheme of the novel. They are Eveline Hutchins, Charley Anderson, Daughter, and Joe Williams. The death of Eveline Hutchins is directly a suicide; the others are modifications of a suicidal impulse. Charley Anderson embarks on a way of life destructive and obliterative of his original designs. His escape-drinking and his random sexual activity lead finally to the automobile accident which is responsible for his death. In Freudian terms, he seems possessed of a death wish which has already resulted in an airplane crash and which has ruined his personal and financial pros-

pects. Daughter has been abandoned by Dick Savage after he learns that she is pregnant. In a hopeless mood she dares a drunken French officer to take her on an airplane ride which results in her death. From the beginning, Joe Williams has been unable and unwilling to make the compromises necessary to live in the society in which he finds himself. He finds navy life too restrictive and deserts in order to ship as a merchant seaman. In this role he travels under forged papers. He seems to take to the sea with the same attitude as Melville's Ishmael; it is a substitute for suicide. The frequent torpedoing of the ships on which he sails, his opportunity to become an officer, his marriage with Della all prove inadequate to keep him ashore. He is last seen losing consciousness after having been slammed over the head with a bottle in a barroom fight. He is last mentioned when his sister, Janey, is shown wearing the little gold star in a brooch. These, too, have felt the promise of life, but cannot cope with its contradictions. Their way out is escape, and for them it must be the total escape of death.

The loss of identity of which I am speaking can be most sharply seen in the career of Dick Savage. Of all the characters of U.S.A., he is the one who most nearly approaches the status of a central hero. The parallels between his early life and that of the Camera Eye observer have already been noted. His response to the Harvard situation and to the war seem to be those of one who was striving to make some order out of the existing chaos. He is alive to the contradictions which make life unsatisfactory. He might be thought to be the one most likely to avoid selling out in order to achieve material success at the sacrifice of self respect. His abandonment of Daughter marks the great decision which will make him

a monument instead of a man in Browning's terms. In his final appearance, he has adopted a too solemn tone as he moves into Moorehouse's shoes. He too will need money in order to be successful; he too will remind his secretary of a social engagement which will carry him along the same paths that Moorehouse has taken. His final act is to make the social engagement mentioned with Miss Myra Bingham. She is one of the strapping daughters of old Doc Bingham who is being sought after for a large contract. Dick Savage, who is almost indistinguishable from the narrator of the Camera Eye sections at the beginning, has become another J. Ward Moorehouse.

Another illustration of the loss of identity on the part of the characters is contained in the concluding phases of the careers of Mary French and Ben Compton. Both are unlike the others in that their social purpose seems to outweigh personal considerations. At the conclusion of The Big Money, George Barrow says, "Mary, Mary...just the same headstrong warmhearted girl." Her answer is: "Rubbish, I haven't any feelings at all any more." The ends for which she works are no longer in view; her committee meetings are merely anodynes for the unsatisfactory life she has carved out for herself. Ben Compton meets a similar fate. Our last view of him is with his face buried in his hands. He has called Mary to arrange a meeting, but has trouble getting her to recognize him; he is even forced to spell out his name over the telephone. After serving his prison sentence, Ben has been expelled from the Communist Party on the grounds of being an oppositionist. In their interview, Mary accuses him of being a stool pigeon as well. The account continues:

> Ben Compton's face broke in pieces suddenly the way a child's

> face does when it is just going to bawl. He sat there staring at her, senselessly scraping the spoon round and round in the empty coffeemug.[1]

The movement of that spoon is like that of Eliot's Prufrock, a symbol of futility. It is true that both Mary French and Ben Compton are oppositionists, but they are the oppositionists of the industrial system and they, too, go down in defeat.

One character remains, Margo Dowling. She has finally achieved her limited goals of success. She, too, however, has made the marriage of convenience. In spite of her success as a silent screen star she, too, becomes a part of the mass. She is identified as springing from a noble Spanish family in Cuba and thus loses her original identity. She is also through as a film star; her voice is harsh and grating and with the advent of sound pictures, her film career is ended. All of the paths have led to the same end which is best summed up by Eveline Hutchins' cocktail party. Those characters who do not attend are there in spirit. The party is a last empty gesture in the life of Eveline Hutchins, who will commit suicide after it is over. Each character faces the challenge of the world in his own way, and each is defeated in that he cannot build a satisfactory life for himself.

Thus the characters and their lives are related, both in their crossings and in the common theme their lives seem to demonstrate. The multiple characters move attention from individual choice to the social situation itself; it is the unsatisfactoriness of the total situation which has brought about the personal disintegration which characterizes

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 541.

each individual. In the defeat of a single figure, his career might illustrate a bad decision on his part or a personal misfortune. The unsatisfactoriness of the lives of all Dos Passos' characters illuminates the idea that the situation provides no satisfactory way of life. I hope to show later how Dos Passos has arrived at this theme.

This study has taken each of the devices of Dos Passos' trilogy for separate analysis in an attempt to show how they were constructed; it remains to show their relationships to the narrative sections of the novel and to indicate how they carry out the theme described above. Part of the evidence will be repetitious in that it will deal with material already presented in the individual chapters devoted to each of the devices. This seems inevitable and necessary in order to indicate the nature of the relationships and to demonstrate the way in which Dos Passos has advanced his theme by the devices. Some of the relationships are widely separated in the novel, but this fact in itself does not deny an essential structure to the work.

In the Newsreel which starts the novel, there are many references to historical events which took place at the beginning of the century. In addition, there are responses to two toasts: one of them, "Hail Columbia!" and the other, "The Twentieth Century." These two toasts set the stage for the kind of story which the combination of America and the new century will make possible. Senator Albert J. Beveridge is quoted as having said:

> The twentieth century will be American. American thought will dominate it. American progress will give it color and direction. American deeds will make it illustrious.
>
> Civilization will never lose its hold on Shanghai. Civilization will never depart from Hongkong. The gates of Peking will never again

> be closed to the methods of modern man. The regeneration of the world, physical as well as moral, has begun, and revolutions never move backwards.[1]

Here is the nature of the dream which people like Mac, Charley Anderson, and Mary French have been unable to articulate, but which in their early lives forms a part of the goals for which they strive. The Camera Eye which follows indicates the same time period by repeating the references to the South African War which appear in Newsreel I. Here, however, there is a more personal response to the hostility engendered by the war. In the next Camera Eye section, the observer is made aware of a different social problem--that of racial equality. In these early pages, Mac is thrown up against a difficult situation in which he, too, is made aware of social problems.

The Newsreels prepare the reader for events which will follow; some of them contain accounts of figures who will later be treated in more detail as the subjects of Biographies. Carnegie is mentioned in Newsreel II with the caption, "Carnegie talks of his epitaph." Later Valentino, Debs, Henry Ford, and others take their places as subjects for headlines. Dos Passos has indicated that these "portraits of real people" are designed to indicate "the quality of the soil in which Americans of these generations grew." In The 42nd Parallel, this soil is embodied in the careers of Eugene Debs, Luther Burbank, Bill Haywood, William Jennings Bryan, Minor C. Keith, Andrew Carnegie, Thomas A. Edison, Charles Steinmetz, and Robert La Follette. Of these, three--Luther Burbank, Edison, and Steinmetz--are representative of the enormous promise

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 5.

of the industrial revolution. They are the wizards who will make possible the better material world in which the characters wish to live. Four others--Debs, Haywood, Bryan, and La Follette--in their varied ways wish for political reform which will make it possible for the common man to share in the new productive capacity. Two others--Keith and Carnegie--are lingering representatives of the old order. Both are surrounded by images of death. Carnegie speaks of his epitaph and Keith is shown with an uneasy look under his eyes. There are counter themes in the Newsreels and in the careers of the characters to suggest that all is not well. In the first place, the irony created by the juxtapositions of events in the Newsreels is in itself suggestive of a counter theme to all this hope and expectation. Newsreel III contains, among others, these headlines: "It takes nerve to live in this world," "Marquis of Queensberry dead," and "Madrid police clash with five thousand workmen."[1] The first statement is attributed to a victim of a lynch mob; the next, with the Marquis of Queensberry rules for boxing in mind, seems to comment ironically on the others.

By two examples it may be seen that the Newsreels comment both directly and indirectly on the events which are of interest and significance to the characters. The early Newsreels contain references to the disturbances in Russia, and the revolution of 1904. They are followed by conversations between Mac and Ike concerning the possibilities of social revolt. Ike says:

> 'Maybe in Russia it'll start; that's the most backward country where the people are oppressed worst...There was a Russian feller

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 54.

> workin' down to the sawmill, an educated feller who's fled from Siberia...I used to talk to him a lot...That's what he thought. He said the social revolution would start in Russia an' spread all over the world.[1]

The Newsreels indicate the impressions of their world which the characters are receiving; part of the difficulty can be seen in the confusions indicated in Newsreel VI. The headlines, "Harriman shown as rail colossus," "Noted swindler run to earth," and "Teddy wields big stick" are indicative of one kind of attitude toward the increasing centralization of money power. A later headline, however, indicates a conflicting point of view. It reads: "Praise monopoly as boon to all."[2] Apparently the characters receive both impressions, and do not have a well-developed political philosophy which would enable them to make intelligent choices. The first example shows the relationship between the news story and the conversation of the characters. The second I have called an "indirect" comment because it characterizes the impressions available rather than appearing as of direct interest to any single character in the narrative.

The devices are often closely related to the narratives; for example, the Biography of Bill Haywood comes between Mac's first arrival in Goldfield, Nevada and the beginning of his I.W.W. activities there. The Biography supplies the historical data which characterizes or explains the I.W.W. movement; thereafter, Mac's impressions need not be interrupted by explanatory detail. While Mac is in Goldfield, he hears Big Bill Haywood speak to the miner's union. After the Biography, Haywood can be introduced into the narrative without any break in the impressions

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[1] U.S.A., I, pp. 61-62.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 80.

of Mac. Mac's experiences with the I.W.W. are followed by a description of the execution of Professor Ferrer in Barcelona for his revolutionary activities. This account in Newsreel VIII relates the industrial unrest in the United States to a worldwide movement. It is followed by Camera Eye (11), which takes place in a Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania. The observer has posed a question to Mr. Pennypacker,[1] a deacon of the church. Who were the Molly Maguires, he asks, but finds no satisfactory answer. The chain of events recorded in the Newsreels, the Camera Eye, and the Biography of Bill Haywood, which surround the narrative of Mac, both explain, extend, and comment on the revolutionary movement in which he is involved. His later narrative includes mention of the civil wars in Mexico, and Newsreel X, which follows, contains the caption, "Madero's troops defeat rebels in battle at Parral."

Newsreel XII contains references to Roosevelt, Bryan, and Wilson while describing the political conventions of 1912. The following Biography is that of William Jennings Bryan. The Biography carries the life of Bryan into the twenties when he was acting as a real estate auctioneer in Coral Gables, Florida. Later in The Big Money, Margo Dowling will see him in this role and a cynical companion will remark that he might have been a great auctioneer if he had not got messed up in politics. The remark is hard-boiled and perhaps gratuitous, but it has been prepared for in the earlier part of the trilogy. Camera Eye (16), following the Biography of Bryan, is an account of a boat trip in which the narrator's

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[1]There was an actual Governor of Pennsylvania named Pennypacker during the period 1901-1907, which is approximately that of this section, although he is not so identified in the novel.

father talks of politicians and the need for legal reforms.

Sometimes the Newsreels are used to relate the time scheme of the novel. In his narrative, Mac is seen fleeing Mexico City before the invading revolutionary troops. Later narratives go back in time to pick up the early lives of Janey Williams, J. Ward Moorehouse, and Eleanor Stoddard. Immediately before the introduction of Eleanor Stoddard, Newsreel XIII contains references to the Mexican revolution including the statement, "Six hundred Americans flee capital."[1] In this way, the overlapping time periods are indicated. The caption itself is made more meaningful by the fact that the reader has already experienced these events through the eyes of Mac. It also prepares the reader for the mention of cubism, futurism and modern art in the Eleanor Stoddard section by the caption, "Bedlam in art." Newsreel XIV contains a reference to Isadora Duncan although she will not be the subject of a Biography until volume three. Newsreel XV begins the preparation for war by a series of captions indicating the strained situation in Europe. This is followed by the ironic "Prince of Peace" Biography of Andrew Carnegie, and by a Camera Eye which is made up of war impressions.

As the Newsreels and the Camera Eye increasingly emphasize the news of war, the characters of the accompanying narrative sections are moving closer to actual participation. Now, also, the lives of the characters begin to merge. Moorehouse starts a public relations firm in New York City, and Janey Williams becomes his secretary. Eveline Hutchins and Eleanor Stoddard move to New York in order to help with a play, but

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 208.

when the play fails they turn again to operating an interior decorating shop. Moorehouse employs them to decorate his home and his office. Moorehouse and Janey Williams also take a business trip to Mexico where they meet Mac. Charley Anderson, Ben Compton, and Joe Williams come together momentarily in a New York bar. Except for Mac, all of the characters will be drawn into the war and it will dominate their lives for a time. Since it is appropriate to the time, the Ford peace ship is mentioned in the narrative. Janey Williams feels that it is a silly idea. It is mentioned again in the Biography of Henry Ford in The Big Money. The section devoted to Charley Anderson contains mention of La Follette and Debs, both of whom are subjects of Biographies in The 42nd Parallel. The cross references of this sort enforce the setting of the novel as well as indicate the relationships between the parts.

At the end of The 42nd Parallel, the narratives end with the characters departing on various war missions. Camera Eye (26) tells about a mass meeting at Madison Square Garden addressed by Max Eastman in which Morgan and the capitalistic war are denounced. The Newsreels are full of war news including the announcement of United States entry. In Camera Eye (27) the narrator is seen embarking on the voyage to the war zone. It is followed by the last Biography of the volume, that of Robert La Follette, which ends with his futile attempt to block the Armed Ship Bill and maintain the neutrality of the United States. All of the devices in the last part of this volume closely parallel the action in the narratives as well as provide the broader frame of reference in which this action takes place. The characters have been pulled into a struggle which they do not comprehend, and it provides for them a momentary respite from the

problems which they are unable to solve. The diverse characters and themes have been united at the end of The 42nd Parallel in a common involvement in the war.

It has already been indicated that Dos Passos has some interest in the notion that the confusions and chaos of public life are but a reflection of the confusions and chaos of the private lives of the people. So confused have these private lives become that the war is almost a relief. Eleanor may pursue Moorehouse and things French with a clear conscience and the additional feeling that her activities are somehow involved in the salvation of civilization. Moorehouse eases the threat of divorce and financial ruin by his "patriotic" act of volunteering his services to the United States Government. Janey Williams will accompany Moorehouse and share his feelings of performing a patriotic service. The aimless drifting of Charley Anderson will for a time be given direction and purpose. The drifting of the nations into the war which will produce more problems than it will solve seems a parallel to the personal lives of Dos Passos' characters. He suggests that the sense of relief is perhaps shared by the nations which now have definite ends in view in which all energies and purposes can be turned. For the duration, the old problems with all their annoying ramifications, doubts, and troublesome complications can be shelved.

The second volume of the trilogy, 1919, is the book of the war. The characters of The 42nd Parallel and the ones who are introduced in this volume are all drawn irresistibly into the struggle. The Biographies, with the exception of that of Theodore Roosevelt, are of those men who were concerned with the war and the new movements which came out of the

war. Jack Reed, Randolph Bourne, and Paxton Hibben are writers who opposed the war and tried to get the issues straightened out in the welter of patriotism and war confusion. Woodrow Wilson and John Pierpont Morgan are directly concerned, Morgan symbolizing the financial interests which made the war and Wilson the political interests which helped circumvent the principles for which it was fought. Joe Hill and Wesley Everest were martyrs to the "red scare" which followed the war. It is possible that the inclusion of Roosevelt emphasizes the imperialist designs which were in part responsible for the war. The Biographies end with that of the Unknown Soldier, a final commentary on the indignity to the human spirit which is bound up in the war.

The Camera Eye and the Newsreels are also bound up in the war. The Newsreels contrast the war news with random happenings at home. The news of the Russian revolution and the predictions that New York City will become the financial center of the world after the war set the stage for the conflicts which will follow in The Big Money. While this is the book of war, there are no scenes of battle, no indications of the fears and heroism of war. The roar of guns and the cadences of marching feet are there only by implication--in the self-conscious revelations of the Camera Eye narrator and in the impersonal headlines of the Newsreels. This is the non-heroic aspect of war, the war of the embusque. The characters who participate in this war do not arouse our admiration or our pity; whenever it is possible that they may show themselves in a favorable light, they are removed from our vision. The Newsreels and the Camera Eye provide the information about the war and emphasize its anonymous aspects. It is a force as inexplicable to these characters as the other

forces which they have struggled with at home.

The Biography of Woodrow Wilson in 1919 seems central to the entire volume. Mention of Wilson is frequent in the narrative sections. While Dick Savage is in Italy, the conductor of a street car identifies him as an American and says "something about the Presidente Veelson."[1] At the opera in Paris, Eveline Hutchins, J. Ward Moorehouse, and Janey Williams see the President in a nearby box.[2] Later, Moorehouse attributes Wilson's lack of success at the peace conference to his failure to recognize the importance of publicity.[3] Dick Savage is conscious of the droning voice of G. H. Barrow telling about President Wilson's peace plans.[4] Later in Rome, Savage is present when the President speaks and he compares him to "one of those old Roman politicians on a tomb on the Via Appia."[5] One of the friends of Ben Compton demonstrated on the White House lawn a few days before the declaration of war.[6] The last line in the book, concluding the Biography of the Unknown Soldier, is: "Woodrow Wilson brought a bouquet of poppies." The figure of the President is firmly established as a part of the consciousness of the characters. It also appears frequently in the Newsreels.

Just as the beginning of the war in The 42nd Parallel momentarily brought together the characters, the emphasis of the Newsreels, and the consciousness of the Camera Eye narrator, so the Armistice serves the same purpose in 1919. The action of the entire trilogy is involved in enormous

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 196.
[2] U.S.A., II, p. 301.
[3] U.S.A., II, p. 312.
[4] U.S.A., II, p. 373.
[5] U.S.A., II, p. 375.
[6] U.S.A., II, p. 441.

rhythms which from time to time bring to focus on a single event all the diverse fragments which make up the period and the time. The first mention of the Armistice is in the narrative of Joe Williams. In the celebration which follows, Joe Williams is hit with a bottle and, as we later learn, killed. Newsreel XXIX which immediately follows is concerned entirely with the responses of various persons and groups to the news of the Armistice. Camera Eye (36), coming after the Newsreel, contains a picture of a ship returning to the United States. Two soldiers emptying garbage pails receive the news with skepticism. The Biography of Woodrow Wilson immediately follows and is in turn followed by a Newsreel which contains stories of the President's journey to France. Eveline Hutchins' narrative also contains a description of the celebration following the announcement of the Armistice. These repetitions make the events a part of the reader's mentality. As Miss Magny says:

> Like Joyce, Dos Passos secretly prepares the consciousness of the reader for his story; he underlines elements of consciousness in his characters, which might otherwise pass unnoticed, by going back to them in the Newsreel; in short he makes sure that, however complex the general design, none of its themes will be lost from view, and to this end he uses the same method employed in Finnegan's Wake: by repeating twenty times over, in different forms, the truths he wishes to communicate to the reader, truths usually quite simple in themselves, which only in their plurality, their interrelations may be hard to understand.[1]

There is a similar sequence in the "return" theme which opens the final volume of the trilogy, The Big Money. The first scene is set aboard the liner which is bringing Charley Anderson and Eveline Hutchins home to America. Newsreel XLIV, which comes after Anderson's narrative, contains

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[1]Claude Edmonde Magny, "Introduction to the Reading of Dos Passos," Art and Action (New York: Twice a Year Press, 1948), p. 234.

notice that "Colonel House Arrives From Europe," the words of a song, "I'm coming U.S.A.," and the fact that "Charles M. Schwab, who has returned from Europe, was a luncheon guest at the White House."[1] Camera Eye (43), the first in the volume, finds the narrator landing in New York harbor. Already, however, new themes are pushing out the aftermath of war. The Newsreels tell of social unrest, of new business combinations. Newsreel XLVI contains news of a new era of expansion with prosperity for all assured. The first two Biographies, those of Frederick Winslow Taylor and Henry Ford, characterize the attitudes and techniques which will dominate the business world of the twenties.

In The Big Money, the relationships between the narratives and the other sections are much more pointed than they are in the first two volumes. After the "return" mentioned above, Newsreel XLVII contains a series of advertisements for employment. Camera Eye (44) immediately following is on the same theme and it is followed by the narrative of Charley Anderson, who is seeking some kind of place for himself in the economic scheme of things. His brother wishes him to come into the Ford agency which he has just opened. This in turn leads to the Biography of Henry Ford. The Newsreel preceding the Biography of Rudolph Valentino ends with this caption and story:

> SHEIK SINKING
>
> Rudolph Valentino, noted screen star, collapsed suddenly yesterday in his apartment at the Hotel Ambassador. Several hours later he underwent[2]

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[1] U.S.A., III, pp. 10-11.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 189.

Following the Biography, Newsreel LV contains another headline concerning Valentino. The ironic paean to Detroit contained in Newsreel LIX has been mentioned in another connection. It is immediately followed by the arrival of Charley Anderson in that city. The Newsreel begins: "The stranger first coming to Detroit, if he be interested in the busy economic side of modern life, will find a marvelous industrial beehive."[1] The Newsreels interspersed with the narratives of Margo Dowling follow her career to Florida, her involvement in the real estate boom, and her departure for Hollywood with captions concerned with these places and events. After she has been selected to play a large part in a picture, her director is instructing her romantic partner in acting a particular scene:

> 'They all feel they are you, you are loving her for them, the millions who want love and beauty and excitement, but forget them, loosen up, my dear fellow, forget that I'm here and the camera's here, you are alone except for your two beating hearts, you and the most beautiful girl in the world, the nation's newest sweetheart....All right...hold it....Camera.'[2]

This is immediately followed by the words from Newsreel LXIII:

> but a few minutes later this false land disappeared as quickly and as mysteriously as it had come and I found before me the long stretch of the silent sea with not a single sign of life in sight.[3]

In individual cases, the technique here described makes for a constant ironic commentary on the lives of the characters and indicates the larger pattern into which these lives fit. It also provides the "realistic" or factual basis which relates the novel to the time and place and

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 285.

[2] U.S.A., III, pp. 425-426.

[3] U.S.A., III, p. 426.

provides a "local habitation" for the activities of the characters. In the broader sweep of the novel it provides a flowing movement in which the lives of the characters and national events move inexorably toward some unknown destiny. From time to time some figure emerges momentarily from the mass and leaves his mark upon the age. These are the figures described in the Biographies. Their names are bandied by the fictional characters; their actions appear in the newspapers. They have been singled out by a concurrence of events to give a more personal touch to the onward flow of history.

I have tried to demonstrate that the Camera Eye personage has experiences which are parallel to those of the narrative characters. While the characters cannot build satisfactory lives for themselves, the Camera Eye narrator at least can preserve the idea of a better social situation. It is in this sense that he acts as a representative of the conscience of the group. The Newsreels are often intimately concerned with the very events which draw the narrative characters into their various roles. They comprise a kind of chorus which both generalizes the experience of the time and is an ironic commentary on it. This can be true because the newspapers describe a battle in broad terms with a different emphasis than would be experienced by a soldier in the battle. There is often also in the newspapers a falsifying of experience which Dos Passos draws upon for his irony. In newspaper parlance, for example, all young ladies are described as "attractive," community activities and social events, regardless of how boring they may have been to the participants, are always described as "gala." It is this aspect of the daily newspaper which Dos Passos uses to create the often ironic tone of the Newsreels.

The Biographies are of those historical figures who catch the imagination of the time. Their names appear in the Newsreels and they are often referred to by the narrative characters. All of the devices are thus interrelated and contribute toward the "vision" which makes up the novel, U.S.A. It remains to show that the form which Dos Passos is using and the implied theme of his novel are so related that U.S.A. can be seen as an organic whole in spite of the minor deficiencies of some parts. Before this aim can be achieved, it will be necessary to see the relationship of Dos Passos' writing to contemporary techniques of fiction and his participation in the development of a new genre, the collective novel.

CHAPTER VII

SPECIAL EFFECTS

U.S.A., like many other fictional works, is characterized by a tone or flavor peculiarly its own which results from the style and the techniques of its construction. While it is true that in these matters precise definition is often impossible, it is possible to describe many of the mannerisms and devices by which a novel derives its characteristic "feeling." In U.S.A. it is possible to identify literary antecedents for the style in many individual instances. It is possible, too, to describe a development of certain techniques in Dos Passos' writing from the early One Man's Initiation--1917 to U.S.A. The tone of a fictional work has an important bearing on the manner in which the theme is understood by the reader even to the point where the tonal and thematic elements are so closely related as to be inseparable. This chapter will discuss the manner in which Dos Passos participates in the changes which were taking place in the general modes of fiction. It will also try to characterize the peculiar flavor of U.S.A. and to show how it is achieved. Finally, it will indicate the interrelationship of technique, tone, and theme.

Many of Dos Passos' techniques have already been discussed in the chapters devoted to the devices of U.S.A., but further discussion can illustrate the fact that, whatever the uniqueness of Dos Passos' combi-

nation, individual characteristics can be found in the works of other writers of the same period. In a review of The Enormous Room, appearing in 1922, Dos Passos says, "Here at last is an opportunity to taste without overmuch prejudice a form, an individual's focus on existence." Later in the same review he says:

> Along with Sandburg and Sherwood Anderson, E. E. Cummings takes the rhythms of our American speech as the material of his prose and of his verse. It is writing created in the ear and lips and jotted down. For accuracy in noting the halting cadences of talk and making music of it, I don't know anything that comes up to these two passages.[1]

Dos Passos goes on to quote a selection from Cummings' poetry and one from The Enormous Room. Again he says in the same review that:

> The Enormous Room seems to me to be the book that has nearest approached the mood of reckless adventure in which men will reach the white heat of imagination needed to fuse the soggy, disjointed complexity of the industrial life about us into seething fluid of creation.
>
> This sort of thing knocks literature into a cocked hat. It has the raucous directness of a song-and-dance act in cheap vaudeville, the willingness to go the limit in expression and emotion of a Negro dancing. And in this mode, nearer the conventions of speech than those of books, in a style infinitely swift and crisply flexible, an individual not ashamed of his loves and hates, great or trivial, has expressed a bit of the underside of History with indelible vividness.[2]

These lines, though written in 1922, suggest that Dos Passos had already selected his theme for U.S.A. and was gathering the materials and techniques with which to write it.

Before he could do so, it was necessary for him to develop a whole new set of techniques to give vivid expression to his concept of the novel.

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[1]John Dos Passos, "Off the Shoals: The Enormous Room by E. E. Cummings," The Shock of Recognition, ed. Edmund Wilson (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1943), p. 1249.

[2]Ibid., pp. 1249-1250.

Dos Passos' statement, "an individual's focus on existence" couched in the "rhythms of our American speech," seems to characterize what he himself had in mind in writing much of U.S.A. In the short section entitled "U.S.A." which Dos Passos affixed to the first edition of his trilogy, he says:

> Only the ears busy to catch the speech are not alone; the ears are caught tight, linked tight by the tendrils of phrased words, the turn of a joke, the sing-song fade of a story, the gruff fall of a sentence; linking tendrils of speech twine through city blocks, spread over pavements, grow out along broad parked avenues, speed with the trucks leaving on their long night runs over roaring highways, whisper down sandy byroads past wornout farms, joining up cities and fillingstations, roundhouses, steamboats, planes groping along airways; words call out on mountain pastures, drift slow down rivers widening to the sea and the hushed beaches.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> U.S.A. is the world's greatest rivervalley ringed with mountains and hills, U.S.A. is a set of bigmouthed officials with too many bankaccounts. U.S.A. is the letters at the end of an address when you are away from home. But mostly U.S.A. is the speech of the people.[1]

It is difficult to know exactly what Dos Passos means by "the speech of the people." Obviously speech varies according to locality, the degree of education achieved by the speaker, and the situation in which the speaker finds himself. Sometimes Americans are identified as such abroad by characteristic regionalisms-"you-all," for example, characterizes the Southern American wherever English is spoken. Aside from the tonal qualities, which do not appear on the printed page, there are other differences which are recognizably American. Lionel Trilling, in his introduction to the Rinehart edition of Huckleberry Finn, says that,

> The prose of Huckleberry Finn established for written prose the virtues of American colloquial speech. This has nothing to do with pronunciation or grammar. It has something to do with ease and freedom

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[1] U.S.A., vi-vii.

> in the use of language. Most of all it has to do with the structure of the sentence, which is simple, direct, and fluent, maintaining the rhythm of the word-groups of speech and the intonations of the speaking voice.[1]

Dos Passos, too, knows the rhythms of American speech and its differences of dialect. At times he uses a story-telling voice somehow peculiarly American. The flavor is easy to recognize but difficult to describe:

> Steinmetz was a famous magician and he talked to Edison tapping with the Morse code on Edison's knee
> because Edison was so very deaf
> and he went out West
> to make speeches that nobody understood
> and he talked to Bryan about God on a railroad train
> and all the reporters stood round while he and Einstein met face to face
> but they couldn't catch what they said
> and Steinmetz was the most valuable piece of apparatus General Electric had
> until he wore out and died.[2]

A more colloquial story teller is heard in Camera Eye (21):

> then down to Lynch's Pint where old Bowie Franklin was (he warn't much account neither looked like a bantam rooster Bowie Franklin did with his long scrawny neck an' his ruptured walk couldn't do much work and he didn't have money to spend on liquor so he just fed his gray fowls that warn't much account and looked just like Bowie did and hung around the wharf and sometimes when the boat was in or there were some fishermen in the crick on account of it blowin' so hard down the bay somebody'd slip him a drink o' whiskey an' he'd be a whole day asleepin' it off.)[3]

In both of these passages, although perhaps more obviously in the first one, the flavor of American speech is detected in what Dos Passos has called "the halting cadences of talk."

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[1] Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1949), xvi.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 328.

[3] U.S.A., I, p. 261.

The attempt to catch the actual flavor of the speaking voice is a part of a larger attempt to achieve the "directness" which Dos Passos praises in his review of The Enormous Room. The same motivation can be seen in the Imagists' demand for "direct treatment of the thing" and their rejection of the traditional rhetoric of literature. It can be seen in the work of Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, and a host of followers and imitators. The following passage is illustrative.

> At last the convoy passed and the dust settled again on the rutted road.
>
> "Oh, the poor children!" said the old woman. "They know they are going to death."
>
> They tried to hide their agitation. The schoolmaster poured out more wine.
>
> "Yes," said Martin, "there are fine orchards on the hills round here."
>
> "You should be here when the plums are ripe," said the schoolmaster.
>
> A tall bearded man, covered with dust to the eyelashes, in the uniform of a commandant, stepped into the garden.
>
> "My dear friends!" He shook hands with the schoolmaster and the old woman and saluted the two Americans. "I could not pass without stopping a moment. We are going up to an attack. We have the honor to take the lead."
>
> "You will have a glass of wine, won't you?"
>
> "With great pleasure."
>
> "Julie, fetch a bottle, you know which. ...How is the morale?"
>
> "Perfect."
>
> "I thought they looked a little discontented."
>
> "No,...It's always like that. ...They were yelling at some gendarmes. If they strung up a couple it would serve them right, dirty beasts."
>
> "You soldiers are all one against the gendarmes."
>
> "Yes. We fight the enemy but we hate the gendarmes." The commandant rubbed his hands, drank his wine and laughed.
>
> "Hah! There's the next convoy. I must go."
>
> "Good luck."
>
> The commandant shrugged his shoulders, clicked his heels together at the garden gate, saluted, smiling, and was gone.
>
> Again the village street was full of the grinding roar and throb of camions, full of a frenzy of wheels and drunken shouting.
>
> "Give us a drink, you."
>
> "We're with the train de luxe, we are."
>
> "Down with the war!"

> And the old grey woman wrung her hands and said:
> "Oh, the poor children, they know they are going to death."[1]

Almost any reasonably literate audience might identify the preceding passage as one which owed a great deal to the famous Hemingway style; yet the book in which this passage appears was published three years before Hemingway's first book, Three Stories & Ten Poems, was issued. And it was not until the publication of In Our Time: Stories in 1924 that the Hemingway style could be said to have arrived. A comment of this sort is not to suggest direct influence or that Hemingway copied from Dos Passos, but it does indicate that the two writers have common antecedents and perhaps some common effects in mind. In the quoted passage, the elements which make it comparable to Hemingway are the stimulus-response patterns of thought--the almost random, or random seeming, remarks--the objectivity of the account, and a portentous quality which suggests more than is stated. Like Hemingway, Dos Passos has avoided use of synonyms for the verb "to say"; he uses the simple declarative sentence, and presents the events in the order in which they occur without excessive comment. The antecedents for the prose style here at stake have been identified as Mark Twain in Huckleberry Finn, Stephen Crane, Sherwood Anderson, and the Gertrude Stein of Three Lives.[2] Hemingway has denied some of these "antecedents" and so perhaps would Dos Passos if he were given the opportunity; but after all the haggling over the precise manner in which the style was developed, one thing is clear; that both Dos Passos

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[1] John Dos Passos, One Man's Initiation--1917 (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1920), pp. 29-30.

[2] Phillip Young, Ernest Hemingway (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1925), pp. 160-165.

and Hemingway wrote in a time when the atmosphere favored a clear, objective prose with an almost terse simplicity.

With the general characteristics of the period in mind, the reader can also see the growth of special techniques in Dos Passos' writing from One Man's Initiation--1917 to U.S.A. One Man's Initiation--1917 and Three Soldiers are more conventional in form than Manhattan Transfer and U.S.A. in that they contain a good deal of direct narration which cannot be attributed directly to the consciousness of the characters. The latter novels separate what is happening directly to the characters--a report of their consciousness and immediate behavior--and what is actually a commentary by the author which provides a background and an interpretation of the action. They devote more attention to a strict account of what is directly influencing the characters themselves. In Manhattan Transfer the background (the author's commentary) is separate from accounts which describe the actions of the characters. They are detached, impressionistic sketches designed to catch the flavor and tempo of the circumstances in which the characters move. In U.S.A., these elements are detached from the narrative itself and given over to special sections. This device allows Dos Passos, in the narratives, to report more closely the actual words of his characters while still providing the necessary background which will give the setting to the novel as well as detach its major tones from the points of view of the characters.

The beginnings of this style can be traced back through Dos Passos' earlier works. Chapter I of One Man's Initiation--1917 shows in crude form the kind of thing that Dos Passos is aiming at and it employs the technique which he was later to develop more fully in U.S.A. The open-

ing of the chapter contains impressions of a wharf and a departing ship. Chapter II indicates that the ship has arrived in France. The voyage itself is presented in a series of disconnected scenes without transitional remarks between them. The conversation of the characters and the songs they sing indicate the situation and something of their feeling toward it. There are descriptive paragraphs very much in the traditional novel form. In Manhattan Transfer, a similar description, that of a ferryslip, is printed in italics and indented sharply to separate it from the narrative which will follow. It is more like the elaborate stage directions provided by George Bernard Shaw than a descriptive passage in a novel and it is perhaps employed for similar reasons: to make the narrative material more dramatic and to present the characters largely by their own characteristic attitudes and speech.

This development of technique can perhaps be illustrated by a comparison between Dos Passos and Joyce. Comparisons of Manhattan Transfer and Ulysses have been made, but they are never specific. It is true that both novels bring to life the activities of their respective cities, and that in many ways these cities come to dominate the actions of the characters. Manhattan Transfer, however, is more directly comparable to "The Wandering Rocks" episode in Ulysses than it is to the whole book. In this episode, Joyce picks up the momentary activity of a number of characters at the same point in time. The figures are introduced and dropped for new ones without transitional remarks until the whole resembles the documentary technique of the film. The first part of Manhattan Transfer is written in the same way; first the generalized picture of teeming humanity at the ferryslip, then more particularly the individual-

ized activities of a number of persons at the same point in time. In the italicized passages which precede each section of Manhattan Transfer, with their impressionistic technique and their detachment from the strictly narrative material, we see an embryo Camera Eye. This Camera Eye personality, as later developed by Dos Passos, broods over all the material of U.S.A. much as the tortured sensibility of Stephen Dedalus broods over that of Ulysses.

Joyce and Dos Passos are nowhere more alike than in the technique of mixing author narration with the more direct stream of consciousness of the character. Much of Ulysses is written in this manner; the character is introduced and his activities described in what might be termed the customary novelistic manner. Then, without syntactical transition, the point of view shifts from "without" to that of direct presentation of the character's thought processes. The following passage introducing Mr. Bloom illustrates this point:

> Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencod's roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine.
>
> Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly, righting her breakfast things on the humpy tray. Gelid light and air were in the kitchen but out of doors gently summer morning everywhere. Made him feel a bit peckish.
>
> The coals were reddening.
>
> Another slice of bread and butter: three, four: right. She didn't like her plate full. Right. He turned from the tray, lifted the kettle off the hob and set it sideways on the fire. It sat there, dull and squat, its spout stuck out. Cup of tea soon. Good mouth dry. The cat walked stiffly round a leg of the table with tail on high.[1]

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[1]James Joyce, Ulysses ("The Modern Library": New York: Random House, 1934), p. 55.

There is no consistent point of view in the passage; the account varies from omniscient author to the character's stream of consciousness. Dos Passos is more consistent in that he maintains the idiom of his characters, but there is the same rapid shifting of point of view. Both authors make use of associations in the minds of their characters, but those of Dos Passos are more readily available to the reader; in Joyce, a random association may not be explained until far later in his book. Both Dos Passos and Joyce also permit their characters to lapse into the characteristic idiom of any person of whom they are reminded. While Stephen is walking on the beach he debates the question of going to see his aunt and uncle.

> His pace slackened. Here. Am I going to Aunt Sara's or not? My consubstantial father's voice. Did you see anything of your artist brother Stephen lately? No? Sure he's not down in Strasbury terrace with his aunt Sally? Couldn't he fly a bit higher than that, eh? And and and and tell us Stephen, how is uncle Si? O weeping God, the things I married into. De boys up in de hayloft. The drunken little costdrawer and his brother, the cornet player. Highly respectable gondoliers. And skeweyed Walter sirring his father, no less. Sir. Yes, sir. No, sir. Jesus wept: and no wonder, by Christ.[1]

In this passage, Joyce presents Stephen imitating his father's voice; then in turn Stephen presents his father imitating the voice of his Uncle Si. Dos Passos is never this involved, but he does permit one character to lapse into the idiom of a figure called to mind.

Insofar as both Joyce and Dos Passos employ the technique of direct presentation of the responses of the character, they may be said to avoid author intrusion into the events of the story. In order to include necessary material which cannot be properly presented as a part of

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[1] Ibid., p. 39.

his characters' responses, Dos Passos has developed an additional technique. It has been noted in an earlier chapter that the characters of Manhattan Transfer give a good deal of time and attention to their newspapers, which serve to indicate their interests as well as to motivate action. When a character turns his attention to the newspaper, dramatically there is a pause which can be overcome only clumsily by having him read sections of it aloud or by indicating in a silent monologue what he sees there. In U.S.A., this material is separated from the narrative. In U.S.A. also, the function of the Newsreels is both an extension of the use of the newspapers in Manhattan Transfer and an addition to the original device. In both novels, the news items serve to give the background of the time and to characterize the kinds of impressions which impinge on the consciousness of the characters. Their juxtaposition of diverse items, of violence and tragedy, of the pathetic and the ridiculous without explanation or pattern, serves as a nightmarish setting for the inexplicable lives which are depicted.

This technique may be illustrated also in embryo form in Three Soldiers. The passage in question reads:

> Fuselli's mind had suddenly become very active. The notes of the bugle and of the band playing "The Star Spangled Banner" sifted into his consciousness through a dream of what it would be like over there. He was in a place like the Exposition ground, full of old men and women in peasant costume, like in the song, "When It's Apple Blossom Time in Normandy." Men in spiked helmuts who looked like firemen kept charging through, like the Ku-Klux Klan in the movies, jumping from their horses and setting fire to buildings with strange outlandish gestures, spitting babies on their long swords. Those were the Huns. Then there were flags blowing very hard in the wind, and the sound of a band. The Yanks were coming. Everything was lost in a scene from a movie in which khaki-clad regiments marched fast, fast across the scene. The memory of the shouting that always accompanied it drowned out the picture. "The guns must make a racket, though,"

he added as an after-thought.[1]

In this reverie Fuselli's consciousness constructs a series of images with accompanying sound effects to characterize the sensations which he is feeling. It is a means of communication if he chooses to explain it to someone else; it is also a means of picturing and understanding the situation in his own terms for himself. Fuselli's mind is composed of the information which he has received from the newspapers and motion pictures. Europe to him is "old men and women in peasant costume," and its tone is set by the song, "When It's Apple Blossom Time in Normandy." The movie scene in which the members of the Ku Klux Klan jump from their horses and set fire to buildings is undoubtedly from D. W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation. Fuselli prepares himself for the experience of war by relating it to what he already knows. At the same time he indicates to the reader a good deal of his own personality. As this device serves Fuselli (and the reader) so does the more involved group of devices of U.S.A. serve Dos Passos in his attempt to portray the mentality of his characters. The multiform impressions of the Newsreels, the headlines, the songs with which they are interspersed, construct a kind of collective personality, or rather a common series of experiences, to indicate at least a part of the mentality of the time.

Again, in Three Soldiers Dos Passos indicates the reverie of John Andrews:

> He kept feeling the rhythm of the Queen of Sheba slipping from the shoulders of her gaudily caparisoned elephant, advancing towards him through the torchlight, putting her hand, fantastic with rings and

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[1]John Dos Passos, Three Soldiers ("The Modern Library"; New York: Random House, 1932), pp. 34-35.

> long gilded fingernails, upon his shoulders so that ripples of delight, at all the voluptuous images of his desire, went through his whole body, making it shiver like a flame with yearning for unimaginable things. It all muddled into fantastic gibberish--into sounds of horns and trombones and double basses blown off key while a piccolo shrilled the first bars of "The Star Spangled Banner."[1]

The images of the Queen of Sheba have already been accounted for since Andrews has been reading Flaubert's The Temptation of St. Anthony. They comprise Andrews' attempt to find visual images for the auditory images which he means to put into the symphony he is writing. The statement, "It all muddled into fantastic gibberish" is a lapse from the direct presentation of the character's mind; the failure of imagination is that of Dos Passos, not of his character. Another, and more dramatic, way of indicating the same thing would be to present the images which would make the impression of fantastic gibberish in order to indicate directly what is passing through Andrews' mind. The cacophony which follows cannot be produced directly by the resources available to literary art. Here Dos Passos would need the different resources of the motion picture sound track. The jangling phrases from various songs with their implied tunes which he includes in the Newsreels of U.S.A. is a closer approximation, however. By the difference in the mental impressions of its characters, Three Soldiers indicates that it is largely concerned with individual responses, however proliferated, to the situations with which it deals. The Newsreels of U.S.A. represent a refinement of this technique because they present directly the "fantastic gibberish" which is a part of the current mentality. They have the additional effect of establishing this "fantastic gibberish" as a common attribute of the U.S.A. situation rather

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[1] Ibid., pp. 276-77.

than a part of an individual personality. They represent an advance in technique in that they present the material more directly, and a difference in that in U.S.A. the current mentality, a kind of collective personality, is emphasized.

Of the work preceding U.S.A., Manhattan Transfer has more in common with it than any of the other books. While they are different in many respects, they are alike in their attempts to portray a part of the aggregate "personality" of their settings. The chapter introductions in Manhattan Transfer and the non-narrative devices of U.S.A. are different means for making generalized statements about these times. For the same purpose of characterizing the times, they both include the impressions derived from newspapers, advertising signs, and songs. The major factor which indicates that Manhattan Transfer was a stepping stone to the techniques of U.S.A. is its attempt to do away with the central hero. The attempt is not quite successful in that Jimmy Herf finally emerges as this figure. It is Jimmy Herf who, at the end of the novel, stands beside the road, hitch-hiking a ride to an unknown destination. In U.S.A. the unidentified "Vag" is seen in the same situation. It is a small thing, perhaps, but even in its ending, U.S.A. does not permit the reader to carry away an impression of any possible central hero.

With the background material relegated to devices which are separate from the direct consciousness of the character, Dos Passos can present the character with a minimum of author intrusion. Each character can be presented in his own idiom. The effect is like that of the dramatic monologue in that the character, through his rationalizations and self-deceit, his patterns of thought, or his sentimentality, betrays himself

in spite of the fact that he always seems to be presenting himself in a sympathetic way. The resulting ironic tone pervades the whole of U.S.A. In a like manner, Swift lets Gulliver present himself and his experiences in his own words; Gulliver, like the characters of U.S.A., presents himself sympathetically, but betrays to the reader the characteristics of his own personality. In effect, the character whose name serves as a title for a narrative section presents the material of that section himself. The idiom of his speech is maintained in descriptive passages and in his interpretation of the words and actions of the other characters. This technique is comparable to Faulkner's in the "Jason" episode in The Sound and the Fury. The difference lies in the fact that Dos Passos presents a number of characters by this technique in order to characterize the mental life of this period and the fact that his narrative contains little other than his character's own impressions.

Dos Passos' manner of presenting the character in the described way can best be seen within the context of a particular situation. For this reason one phase in the career of Eleanor Stoddard will be examined in detail. Her situation in the passages under discussion is briefly thus: she feels lonely and bitter, but she remembers that she will have to take another job in a department store if she is permanently detached from Moorehouse. Her sentimentality and financial concerns are mingled with a false patriotism and the momentary assumption of a virtue which makes her offer to give up Moorehouse because of his duty to his family. The war intervenes as a way out of the muddle. Moorehouse volunteers his services for a new Public Information Committee and is accepted. His wife agrees that it has all been an unfortunate misunderstanding even

though nothing could be farther from the truth. The section ends with Eleanor's decision to follow Moorehouse.

> Eleanor stood back against the wall looking at them. He wore a smoothfitting tuxedo. Gertrude's salmoncolored teagown stood out against the black. His light hair was ashgray in the light from the crystal chandelier against the tall ivory gray walls of the room. His face was in shadow and looked very sad. Eleanor thought how little people understood a man like that, how beautiful the room was, like a play, like a Whistler, like Sarah Bernhardt. Emotion misted her eyes.
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> "I'll join the Red Cross," she said. "I can't wait to get to France."[1]

Joseph Warren Beach has used the characters J. Ward Moorehouse and Eleanor Stoddard to indicate Dos Passos' methods of presentation. He notes their "essentially unsocial and amoral attitude toward the world" and their concern that their sentiments reflect complete correctness. He quotes at length from the same section which I have been discussing and concludes:

> This passage will give a notion of the schoolgirl naivete and intellectual immaturity of a woman of great practical shrewdness, who knows how to make the utmost profit out of every situation. It will give a notion of an insincerity and a confusion of mind which are no bar to success in a world of free-for-all competition, where much is gained by the cultivation of the right forms of sentimentalism.
>
> It will give a notion, too, of Dos Passos' skill in rendering the very logic and syntax of his character's thought.[2]

The same rendering of the very logic and syntax of his characters is seen in the following summary from the experiences of Joe Williams.

> Next boat he shipped on was the North Star bound for St. Nazaire with a cargo listed as canned goods that everybody knew was shell caps, and bonuses for the crew on account of the danger of going through the zone. She was a crazy whaleback, had been an oreboat on the Great Lakes, leaked so they had to have the pumps going half the time, but

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 361.

[2] Beach, American Fiction: 1920-1940, pp. 65-66.

> Joe liked the bunch and the chow was darn good and old Cap'n Perry was as fine an old seadog as you'd like to see, had been living ashore for a couple of years down at Atlantic Highlands but had come back on account of the big money to try to make a pile for his daughter; she'd get the insurance anyway, Joe heard him tell the mate with a wheezy laugh.[1]

In both this instance and that quoted from the Eleanor Stoddard episode, the effect is that of the character telling himself the events and his attitudes toward them. He might use some of these phrases and expressions in telling the story to someone else, but they are largely designed to characterize the experience for himself.

To suggest all the ramifications of Dos Passos' style would take infinite quotation or perhaps be the equivalent of reading the book itself rather than commenting on it. Its major characteristic is that of the speech of the character himself, and it is this attribute which gives U.S.A. its special tone and flavor. Here is a quotation from Charley Anderson:

> Next morning he got a letter that she must have written right after he left saying that she'd never loved anybody but him. That night after supper he tried to write her that he didn't want to marry anybody and least of all her; he couldn't get it worded right, so he didn't write at all. When she called up next day he said he was very busy and that he'd have to go up into North Dakota to see about some property his mother had left. He didn't like the way she said, "Of course I understand. I'll call you up when you get back, dear."[2]

There is something of this technique throughout U.S.A.; the material is presented as both a summary of action and a carrying forward of action. Dos Passos never quite seems to write a full-fledged scene in which the characters enter, say their parts, and then go on to other scenes. He is

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 59.

[2] U.S.A., III, pp. 40-41.

always summarizing and compressing the time sequence, then giving a sense of immediacy by indicating an actual speech of a character. In a way, each viewpoint character seems to be telling over the events of his recent life either to himself or perhaps to an intimate friend. While the characters are rarely if ever really honest with themselves, their contradictions and sentimentality show through the various poses which they assume. Their characteristic weaknesses are bared, as it were, inadvertently, so that the reader hears or divines thing which are not really meant for him to hear.

We are not held captive by the identification with a tortured personality such as that of Eugene Gant-George Webber in the novels of Thomas Wolfe, but are once removed from direct participation with the characters of Dos Passos. The voices of the radio, the newspaper, and the politician ring in our ears as they do for the character and we understand his plight, but it is always from the outside. When we see all, as we do in U.S.A., the characters do not impress us with their heroic attributes; instead, we see them as all too weak members of a horrifying human community.

Dos Passos in U.S.A. has utilized a large variety of fictional techniques. He belongs with Hemingway, Stein, and Anderson in his use of the spare, colloquial style of writing. Just as Mark Twain was proud of the subtle differences of dialect in Huckleberry Finn, so Dos Passos might well be proud of the variations in the speech of Mac, Joe Williams, and Charley Anderson. Dick Savage and J. Ward Moorehouse, with the females who cluster around them, have the studied, "correct" speech of respectability. Margo Dowling can turn a phrase with a pithy reminder of

her past as well as the best of the men. As a part of his naturalistic representation of the environment he has included the "voices" of the radio, the newspaper, the politician, and the song writer. In the Biographies we sometimes hear the rhetorical flourishes of the politician, or the brisk, authoritative tones of the radio announcer. These are all a part of the 'sound' of the collectivity which he is interested in presenting. The presentation of the characters without author intrusion, and as though they were speaking themselves, is in the direction of creating a better dramatic illusion.

It has been indicated that most of these techniques are not new to Dos Passos. Separately, close counterparts can be found in many recent works of fiction. It is the combination that Dos Passos has used in U.S.A. which gives that novel its unique flavor and tone. The ironic tone which pervades the Narrative is a result of Dos Passos' technique of presentation. In turn, the technique with its tone is directly responsible for creating the impression of helplessness and drift in the lives of the characters. It is not necessary for Dos Passos to state that his characters are confused; they illustrate the fact profusely. The relationship of their confusion with that of the "personality" of the times is emphasized in the Newsreels. Together they illustrate the theme of cultural disintegration.

PART II

It has been necessary on several occasions in this study to compare some aspect of U.S.A. to the techniques of the motion picture. Vertov's idea of the "Cine Eye" was mentioned as a possible source of Dos Passos' Camera Eye in U.S.A. In addition, mention has been made of the montage principle of film technique in connection with the effect of the Newsreel. The names which Dos Passos selected to designate certain sections of the work, "Camera Eye" and "Newsreel," suggest comparison as well as his own statement that he had been reading Eisenstein on motion picture montage during the period preparatory to writing the book. Critical comment on this aspect of U.S.A. has ranged from the assertion that the book owes a great deal to the theory and to the practice of the film to the comment that the book is the direct opposite of motion picture technique. That the work is not in any way comparable to a "shooting script" is obvious, but it is demonstrable that the ideas relating to film have, both directly and indirectly, influenced Dos Passos in the writing of U.S.A.

The most obvious parallel to film art to be found is the play. In a play, however, the same angle of vision is maintained throughout and the spectator remains the same distance from the scene of action. A more basic difference between the formal characteristics of the play and those

of the motion picture is that the place of action is always seen as a whole in space. The play may be photographed and presented as a film, but it is still essentially a play and not a motion picture while these characteristics are maintained.[1] The art of the film changes these basic principles in the following ways:

1. Varying distance between spectator and scene within one and the same scene: hence varying dimensions of scenes that can be accommodated within the frame and composition of a picture.

2. Division of the integral picture of the scene into sections, or 'shots.'

3. Changing angle, perspective and focus of 'shots' within one and the same scene.

4. Montage, that is the assembly of 'shots' in a certain order in which not only whole scene follows whole scene (however short) but pictures of smallest details are given, so that the whole scene is composed of a mosaic of frames aligned as it were in chronological sequence.[2]

These technical differences will be readily conceded, and may seem obvious and unworthy of mention, but on consideration it can be seen that they add up to an extension of vision which opens new possibilities of expression. Once the spectator has learned to "see" in the motion picture sense, these techniques can be imitated by the writer of fiction to provide a new means of expression for his medium.

Motion picture success depends upon the skills of a film director in planning and of an editor in putting together a series of "shots" which will convey the desired total impression. It is the responsibility of these persons to communicate pictorially the total effect which they

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[1] Balazs, op. cit., p. 30.

[2] Ibid., p. 31.

have in mind. The sound track aids in the impression of reality and may operate as an adjunct to pictorial presentation, but it can never take the place of it. If it does, the result is a "talkie" and not a "movie." Technically, the motion picture depends upon a slight characteristic of the human eye which can be called "persistence of vision"--that is, images picked up on the retina "persist" for an instant after they have in reality disappeared. From this characteristic, a series of still pictures, closely related and flashed in rapid sequence, gives the impression of a continuous flow of motion instead of a series of still shots. Each frame stops momentarily in the film aperture and thereby on the screen, and is then succeeded by the next frame. A modern sound picture is presented at the rate of twenty-four frames per second. Through persistence of vision the illusion of motion is maintained.

The technique of visual presentation is analogous to this process and might be termed "persistence of idea." Stated simply, this means that two sequences presented together demand from the audience an interpretation of their relationship although in reality they may have been photographed in entirely different situations. Let us suppose that a film company wished to present a sequence in which a hawk killed a prairie chicken. It would not be difficult to photograph a hawk circling an area slowly. If this image were immediately followed by a shot of a small clearing, the impression would be that this area was the one being circled. This might be followed by a shot of a prairie chicken entering the clearing. If the first shot is now repeated, the impression is that the hawk is circling this area "ominously." If a piece of raw meat were placed on the ground, the hawk would swoop down to get it and could be

photographed in this action. A later shot could be contrived in which a hawk was seen tearing apart the dead body of a prairie chicken. If these shots are arranged correctly, the total impression left in the mind of the viewer will be that he has actually seen a hawk kill and eat a prairie chicken. Actually, he has seen a hawk dive on a piece of meat and has then seen perhaps even a different hawk mauling the body of a dead bird. Through the tendency to arrange these diverse happenings in some reasonable fashion, the viewer has related them. This tendency and the result of it can be called "persistence of idea."

As motion picture technique became accepted and understood, viewers were no longer shocked and horrified at the "severed" limbs and "disembodied" heads which appeared in close-ups on the screen. As the audience became more aware and better trained in motion picture "seeing" it was possible to suggest sequences similar to the above described one in far fewer shots. Rapid shots of an army truck, a steam ship whistle, and a girl weeping might indicate the beginning of war; the magnification of significant detail could indicate increasingly complex nuances of feeling. William Wyler's production, Carrie, a film adaptation of Dreiser's Sister Carrie, included a scene in which the ticking of a clock was amplified to symbolize the futility of existence for Hurstwood at the end of the story. In Renoir's film, The River, an adolescent girl falls in love with an older army man; from a rooftop, they see brightly colored kites swirling in the wind. As their conversation continues, it becomes obvious that he is unaware of her feeling and he indicates that he considers her a child. The sequence ends with the kites torn and ripped and tangled in the tree tops.

Eisenstein's theory of montage and Dos Passos' interest in this theory have already been discussed. Those critics who disallow the influence and effect of film technique in relation to U.S.A. are confusing a "shooting script," which the book certainly is not, with an adaptation of film procedures to the different medium of the novel. It is the contention of this study that the Newsreels are constructed along the lines of motion picture montage--that is, they do not represent a logical continuum comparable to discourse, but are a series of images representing and magnifying significant detail. They are intended to convey an impression of the whole, their discontinuity indicating a simultaneity rather than a time sequence. The "soundtrack" of the Newsreels consists of interspersed bits of song which give a tonal quality and a tempo to the headlines and to the slogans. They also contrast or parallel the visual images with audio images. Pictorial presentation is not peculiar to film technique, but an attribute of poetry in general. Eisenstein cites numerous examples from the poetry of Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, and Keats to illustrate this point as well as the point that the images play "the role of syntactical phrase and the musical construction the role of rhythmical articulation."[1] In the passage from Book VI of Paradise Lost in which the rebellious angels are cast into hell, Milton says:

> Yet half his strength he put not forth, but check'd
> His Thunder in mid Volley, for he meant
> Not to destroy, but root them out of Heav'n:
> The overthrown he rais'd, and as a Herd
> Of Goats or timorous flock together throng'd

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[1]Eisenstein, op. cit., p. 56.

> Drove them before him Thunder-struck, pursu'd
> With terrors and with furies to the bounds
> And Crystal wall of Heav'n...[1]

The same visual device has been used in a recent film of war-torn Europe in which a similar flock is seen stampeding before advancing troops and characterizing the terror and confusion of the civilian populace. The parallel to human feeling is comparable to Renoir's torn kites which parallel the crushed hopes of the young girl. The comparisons made by Eisenstein indicate that the techniques used by the film are similar to those used by traditional poetry. What is different is that syntactical relationships have been dropped for relationships in feeling and emotion. Mr. Balazs says:

> Now the film is about to inaugurate a new direction in our culture. Many million people sit in the picture houses every evening and purely through vision, experience happenings, characters, emotions, moods, even thoughts, without the need for many words. For words do not touch the spiritual content of the pictures and are merely passing instruments of as yet undeveloped forms of art. Humanity is already learning the rich and colourful language of gesture, movement and facial expression. This is not a language of signs as a substitute for words, like the sign-language of the deaf-and-dumb--it is the visual means of communication without intermediary of souls clothed in flesh. Man has again become visible.[2]

If Mr. Balazs is correct in his assumption, the new awarenesses of which he speaks may be taken into account by the novelists who must still use words. If an audience, by reason of its training in motion picture "seeing," is more alive to the significance of small details and has become accustomed to the short-cuts and discontinuity of the film, then it will be more receptive to similar techniques employed by the novel.

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[1] Lines 853-860.

[2] Balazs, op. cit., p. 41.

It is, in addition, the first audience thoroughly familiar with the appearance of the rest of the world. The twentieth century audience can conjure up pictures of the physical appearance of past ages, of foreign lands, of the customs of medieval Europe in a way that would have been incredible fifty years ago. This single fact might explain the disappearance from the novel of the long, separate descriptive passages familiar in the English novel of the nineteenth century. The mention of a ricksha will bring up an image of an Oriental city, the scream of a tropical bird, the African interior. The rapid juxtaposition of images, the selection of a detail which suggests the whole, become as natural to the writer as they do to his audience since he, too, participates in the general culture-conditioning. The difficulty arises when the reader permits his previous experiences with the traditional novel to interfere with his appreciation of the new. If these expectations are disappointed, he may for a time be unaware that a new form of expression has evolved. If, however, he sees them with the montage principle, then they may be,

> ...mazes intricate,
> Eccentric, intervolv'd yet regular
> Then most, when most irregular they seem.[1]

With this view, U.S.A. might be said to be an enormous montage, combining the manner of the documentary film and that of the narrative film. The narrative sections of U.S.A. illustrate another comparison with a film device as yet undeveloped. In 1915, D. W. Griffith made a film entitled Intolerance. In this film, Griffith did not set out to tell a narrative. The theme, stated in the title, is expressed by four

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[1]John Milton, Paradise Lost, V, 622-624.

separate historical incidents.

> The four incidents chosen by Griffith to illustrate his theme were: the fall of Babylon; the intolerance of the world and the Pharisees towards Christ; the massacre of St. Bartholomew; and a modern story of capital and labour, set in an atmosphere of misunderstanding, vicious gambling dens and corrupt orphanages.[1]

In each incident, there are historical persons to provide the story with its setting, but each also has fictional persons who occupy the major part of the action in the same manner as the historical novel. The stories are gradually developed with a great deal of cutting from one of the historical incidents to another. The four stories are linked by a line from Walt Whitman: "out of the cradle endlessly rocking." For this purpose, a shot of Lillian Gish aimlessly rocking a cradle appears at regular intervals throughout the film. The exact relationship of Whitman's line and the film events must remain a matter for individual interpretation. What does emerge from all this is Griffith's attempt to center attention on the theme itself rather than on the career of a particular fictional person. In its interspersed narratives, its historical setting, and its concentration on theme, Intolerance can be compared with U.S.A.

The success or failure of Griffith's device need not be debated here. "It has been said that Intolerance was the first attempt to use the film in its correct manner."[2] Generally speaking, the "manner" involved here is the panoramic quality of the film and its emphasis and centralization of theme itself. There is no direct evidence that Dos Passos has seen this film nor that he knew of its general plan. Griffith,

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[1]Paul Rotha and Richard Griffith, The Film Till Now (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1949), p. 151.

[2]Ibid., p. 153.

however, had made a great success with his Birth of a Nation, the film which immediately preceded Intolerance. Dos Passos' general awareness of popular trends in music, art and other cultural manifestations of which U.S.A. gives ample evidence would indicate that he probably knew of the film. In addition, the similarities in the conception of Intolerance and U.S.A. are indirect evidence of a more than coincidental relationship between the two. Whether Intolerance suggested the format of U.S.A. cannot be directly decided, but their similarities indicate that Dos Passos participated in the same trends which were influencing the development of cinema technique. His participation is another indication of the relationship between U.S.A. and the motion picture.

The concentration on the outward behavior of the narrative characters in U.S.A. is also comparable to film technique. The film generally is restricted to the presentation of states of mind by the action, the expression, or the speech of its characters. In the screen adaptation of Hamlet by Laurence Olivier, the soliloquies were presented in the voice of the character in conjunction with his picture on the screen, but it was clear that the words were his unspoken thoughts. This technique is unnatural to the film, but necessary in this case. Hamlet without the soliloquies would violate the demands of the play. For the character to address the audience from the center of the screen would be unthinkable for the film. After we allow for the difference in media of the novel and the film, it is possible to see that Dos Passos is presenting states of mind in the filmic manner. He is "showing," through the character's actions and thoughts, the state of mind rather than giving a verbal description of it. Olivier is responding to cinematic rather than theatrical

conventions in presenting the soliloquies as Hamlet's thought instead of speeches to the audience. Dos Passos is responding to the demands of realism, but he goes beyond realism in his detachment from comment on the dramatic situation. He has arbitrarily imposed upon himself the limitations of the film director in the different medium of the novel. What Olivier cannot escape, Dos Passos does deliberately. The effect gained is that the character seems to present himself without author intrusion.

A discussion of the Newsreels and their relationship to the montage principle has already been presented in Chapter V of this study. To recapitulate briefly, the montage principle permits Dos Passos to create a new "image" appropriate to his theme by the juxtaposition of selected items from real newspaper captions, from scraps of popular song, and from current slogans. The Newsreels are not filmic in the sense that they are pictorial representations, but they are an adaption of a screen technique to the different medium of the novel.

The Camera Eye, in spite of its title and of the fact that the title was probably taken from Vertov's term "Cine Eye," does not bear close comparison with motion picture technique. In two instances, film influence in specific Camera Eye sections has been indicated, but it is not generally true that the Camera Eye is filmic either in technique or in the response that results from it. Like the Camera Eye, the Biographies present material in a manner which owes little to the influence or to the techniques of film. In both, the implied presence of a narrator is indicated by the predominance of direct narration. Their structure can be described without recourse or without comparison to the film except in the general sense that they contribute to the formation of a large

montage which is the whole of U.S.A. With these allowances, it can be said that U.S.A., while not a "shooting script," has been written by as well as for a sensibility trained in motion picture "seeing."

CHAPTER VIII

WIDE ANGLE LENS

The separate parts of U.S.A. and its careful documentation of the times have led to questions concerning the form of this novel. In fact, they have led to some speculation about whether it is a novel. Clearly Dos Passos is dealing with material, however it may play a part in the actual events of his setting, in a "dramatic" or fictional way. By this it is meant that the effect of the book is obtained by perceptual modes of communication rather than by those of ratiocination. Because it is an attempt to present theme and idea by perceptual modes of communication, it can best be discussed as a work of fiction rather than as a direct and rational exposition of certain social and political attitudes. It is, however, necessary to discuss the relationship of this work to current attitudes in psychology and sociology in order to understand the philosophical base for the fictional form.

Among the peculiarities of U.S.A. immediately available to the reader are the special devices of the Newsreels, the Camera Eye, and the Biographies. Other differences are found in the interspersed narratives and the twelve viewpoint characters. The Newsreels are made up of actual newspaper captions and songs from the time period. The Biographies are made up from the lives of historical persons. When these facts are added

to the fact that several diverse characters in turn take the center of the stage, it is clear that U.S.A. is concerned with a "society" rather than with the choices of an individual hero.

What it is that Dos Passos is trying to express in U.S.A. may be compared with the theory of collective or group representations in the sociology of Emile Durkheim. Durkheim has used the term "collective representations" to denote the factors which make up what more recent sociologists call "culture." His theory of "collective representations" has been applied to the form of the novel developed by Jules Romains which, in turn, is called the "collective novel." After developing the theory of group representations and indicating how this theory has been compared to the practice of Romains, this chapter will draw parallels with the practice of Dos Passos in U.S.A. in order to indicate more clearly the subject matter of his novel and to comment on its form.

It is evident that the multiplicity of characters in U.S.A. and its accurate documentation of the time period are parts of a literary attempt to express a complex social amalgam. It is in this way related to a number of currents in twentieth century thought which lead to more emphasis on the group and on group behavior. Emphasis on group activity is not a denial of the importance of the individual in any political or philosophical sense, but rather an attempt to comprehend social factors which cannot be perfectly accounted for in discussions of individual psychology. A number of ideas point toward more consideration of man in his group behavior rather than man as an isolated organism. Rousseau's idea of the "general will" by which he derived his notion of the state, Diderot's "oversoul," and the concern of the political scientist with a

"climate of opinion" are all to be considered as cases in point. The materialism and the economic determinism of Marx tend toward dealing with mankind in groups rather than as isolated phenomena. These concepts are not presented here as the components of the idea of group representations, but are presented only to indicate the current emphasis given to the study of man as a part of a complex rather than as an isolated organism. One of the expressions of the interest in man's group behavior is contained in the sociology of Emile Durkheim. Durkheim presents a theory of group representations which provides for a discussion of group phenomena without recourse either to mysticism or to materialism.

The present discussion is not intended to deny some similarities of the Durkheim thesis with that of the Marxist demand that literature reflect the actual state of society. The Marxist critic asked for a literature which reflected the class struggle with representative characters in representative situations.[1] The important difference lies in the fact that the Marxist critic had an *a priori* definition of the actual state of society. To him, the reality to be reflected in literature was the economic struggle between the exploited and the exploiters.[2] The purpose of literature for the Marxist critic was to present the struggle and to further the progress of the proletariat. Dos Passos, on the strength of *The 42nd Parallel* and *1919*, was praised as an important pioneer in the

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[1]Granville Hicks, "American Fiction: The Major Trend," *Proletarian Literature in the United States*, eds. Granville Hicks, Michael Gold, *et al.* (New York: International Publishers, 1935), p. 359.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 358.

Marxist novel,[1] but his later rejection by the Marxist critics and his own statement in 1930 that he was a "middle class Liberal"[2] suggest that the praise was premature. Dos Passos does deal with the plight of the worker, the inhumanity of finance capitalism, and the economic struggle because these are important elements of twentieth century life. He does not, however, presuppose that the Marxist position provides the solution for the problems nor does he share the limitations of pure economic determinism. For these reasons, the sociology of Durkheim provides a closer approximation of the position from which he writes.

Because the word "collective" appears frequently in the source material for Durkheim's theory and in his own writing, it must be stated at the outset that this term does not refer to the collectivistic society described by Marx nor does it necessarily have any political connotations whatsoever. Neither does it refer to the "collective unconscious" which appears in relation to the theories of Jung. Jung's "collectivity" refers to biological succession. Jung's collective memory of racial unconscious is transmitted biologically; just as the individual retains a memory of his experiences in the unconscious, so also he retains a memory of the experiences of his predecessors. The term "collective representations" is to be understood in this discussion as referring only to Durkheim's theory.

> The expression "collective representations" has been used by its originator, Emile Durkheim, to denote the units of the process of group thinking. That is to say that Durkheim believes that an en-

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[1] Ibid., p. 359.

[2] Wilson, The Triple Thinkers, p. 208.

> semble of collective representations forms the entire content of the collective, or group, consciousness, just as an ensemble of individual representations forms the entire content of the individual consciousness.[1]

The theory of group representations is used to define the area of investigation which is the field of the sociologist. Durkheim describes this area in the following manner:

> If one can say that, to a certain extent, collective representations are exterior to individual minds, it means that they do not derive from them as such but from the association of minds, which is a very different thing. No doubt in the making of the whole each contributes his part, but private sentiments do not become social except by combination under the action of the sui generis forces developed in association. In such a combination, with the mutual alternations involved, they become something else. A chemical synthesis results which concentrates and unifies the synthesized elements and by that transforms them. Since this synthesis is the work of the whole, its sphere is the whole. The resultant surpasses the individual as the whole the part. It is in the whole as it is by the whole. In this sense it is exterior to the individuals. No doubt each individual contains a part, but the whole is found in no one. In order to understand it as it is one must take the aggregate in its totality into consideration.[2]

In the introduction to Sociology and Philosophy, J. G. Peristiany explains a part of Durkheim's theory. He says:

> A social system presents the individual with institutionalized channels and models of action. It provides him with "collective representations," that is with a conceptual framework of action. ...Durkheim, of course, is fully aware that it is individuals who think and not a monstrous Group Mind. What he wishes to suggest is that the pattern, the grammar of thought, of a certain society is connected with its historical development and with the structure of society and of its system of values, which is something other than the structure and development of individual minds.[3]

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[1] Mildred Rubin Minter, "Collective Representations and Unanimism," Sociology and Social Research, XXV (July-August, 1941), p. 539.

[2] Emile Durkheim, Sociology and Philosophy, trans. by D. F. Pocock (London: Cohen & West Ltd., 1953), p. 26.

[3] Ibid., xxii-xxiii.

At the conclusion of his essay "Individual and Collective Representations," Durkheim is careful to distinguish his theory from mysticism or from some all-embracing theory of human unity which approaches mysticism. He also denies that his philosophy is that of materialism.

> Beyond the ideology of the psycho-sociologist and the materialistic naturalism of the socio-anthropologist there is room for a sociological naturalism which would see in social phenomena specific facts, and which would undertake to explain them while preserving a religious respect for their specificity. Nothing is wider of the mark than the mistaken accusation of materialism which has been levelled against us. Quite the contrary: from the point of view of our position, if one is to call the distinctive property of the individual representational life spirituality, one should say that social life is defined by its hyperspirituality. By this we mean that all the constituent attributes of mental life are found in it, but elevated to a very much higher power and in such a manner as to constitute something entirely new.[1]

Realizing that the term "hyperspirituality" was subject to misinterpretation, Durkheim hastened to add that "despite its metaphysical appearance, this word designates nothing more than a body of natural facts which are explained by natural causes."[2] From these statements, it is at least clear that Durkheim wishes to study an area which is more than that of individual consciousness, but that he wishes to investigate that area without the reductive atomism which makes man merely a complex mechanism and without recourse to a mysticism beyond the scope of science.

This area of investigation does not deny the importance of the individual, but it is not directly concerned with what happens within the individual. The area of study is rather the space between two or more individuals. The individual is of course still an entity, but the group consciousness is more than the aggregate of all the individuals which

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[1] Ibid., p. 34.

[2] Ibid.,

make it up. An example might be drawn from natural science in the observation of the collective life of the ant. The ant life is made up of the aggregate activity of all its members; an isolated ant becomes purposeless and has little or no resemblance to the ant joined with his community except in physical structure. The ant community is a super-organism which makes the activity of the individual ant meaningful. A laboratory investigation of the individual ant reveals little of his essential nature, since his essence is in the particular part he plays in group activity. The "reality" of his existence, then, lies in his participation in the group. With this concept of the importance of the group, the stage is set to apply the same techniques to the understanding of man and his society.

> Society is essentially constituted by a collective consciousness, which is not a material phenomenon, since it resides in no specific organism, but which is a real fact of psychic order. Society is a psychic reality sui generis derived from the creative synthesis which takes place when individual consciousnesses interact, combine, and modify one another. The individual consciousnesses in interaction are not merely an aggregate; as in chemical synthesis, the elements, in compounding, produce a new entity.[1]

Miss Minter is talking about a phenomenon which has independent reality even though it is not material in nature. Individuals participate in it although they cannot be said to "contain" it. Just as the gases hydrogen and oxygen combine to form a new entity, water, so individual consciousnesses combine to form the collective consciousness. No recourse to mysticism is intended; the group consciousness is merely distinguished from the consciousness of individuals. The word "culture" in its most general application is a close approximation of what is intended

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[1]Minter, op. cit., p. 538.

here. The fact that a phenomenon of group consciousness can be distinguished from other phenomena suggests that it can also be the subject of a novel. A novel with an individual hero which has a slum as its setting still concerns itself with the success or failure of the individual. He may rise from his condition or degenerate within it, but the slum itself is only a secondary consideration. The novel of group consciousness reverses the situation and concentrates its primary attention on the social content itself. It does this by destroying the old concept of the hero in two ways. First, the characters are presented in stimulus-response patterns of behavior; and second, many characters are presented in order to remove from special consideration the story of any individual protagonist. The novels of Romains and Dos Passos' U.S.A. share these characteristics.

Miss Minter's study develops the similarities between the sociology of Durkheim and the literary work of Jules Romains. She says:

> In the works of Jules Romains we are not participating in the physical nature of the social group, but in the group consciousness. We are examining the group idea, the idea-force which is the reason for the group's existence. Literature, according to Jules Romains, should reflect life; it cannot, therefore, present a single individual as its nucleus, for life is the existence of collectivities.[1]

She indicates that the concept of collective representations found its literary expression in the philosophy and technique known as "unanimism."[2] Unanimism is defined as an attempt to indicate the relationship between the individual and the group and to indicate the ascendancy which the

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[1] Ibid., p. 544.

[2] Ibid., p. 543.

collectivity has over its parts.[1] It contains the belief that there is a collective psychic reality "superior to the individuals that compose it because it is a psychic continuum of which individuals are emanations."[2]

> The object of unanimist literature coincides with the object matter of the sociology of Durkheim; it is group life on the level of consciousness. By a common emphasis upon the hyperspiritual nature of social life; upon the psychic energy of collective thought; upon society as the origin of knowledge and ethics; upon the apotheosis of the group, but a group conscious of itself and of its responsibility; upon the real existence of a collective consciousness which has no single organic substratum, but which is exclusively a creative synthesis and, as such, a psychic continuum, the unanimism of Jules Romains and the sociology of Emile Durkheim mutually support each other and bear witness to the unanimist nature of collectivity today.[3]

She concludes that:

> It follows from this sociological concept and from this literary ideal that the solution to problems of the individual lies in concerted action of the collectivity as well as in the harmonious relationship of the individual to society.[4]

Just as naturalism in literature was a logical outgrowth of nineteenth century realistic science, so the collective novel is a natural outgrowth of the ideas enumerated above. It cannot be dismissed as merely a novel which has no central hero and covers a wide time range. A discussion of the reason for the collective novel and a rationale of its nature must take into account some of the diverse ideas which led to its development.

American critics of twentieth century fiction offer little help along this line, since they have dealt sparingly with the collective

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 544.

[3] Ibid., p. 547.

[4] Ibid., p. 548.

novel--in fact, have dealt only with its outward appearance. In a review of The Big Money, Malcolm Cowley brings forth his notion of the collective novel.

> His central problem, of course, was that of writing a collective novel (defined simply as a novel without an individual hero, a novel of which the real protagonist is a social group). In this case the social group is almost the largest possible: it is the United States from the Spanish War to the crash of 1929, a whole nation during thirty years of its history.[1]

According to Cowley, the idea of the novel is implicit in the choice of subject and form: "it is the idea that life is collective, that individuals are neither heroes nor villains, that their destiny is controlled by the drift of society as a whole."[2] There is little more to be found in criticism of fiction concerning the collective novel; it has not been widely accepted as a separate genre. Most of what has been said about the collective novel concerns itself directly with the practice of Jules Romains--specifically with his roman-fleuve, Les Hommes de Bonne Volonte--but there is also mention of it in connection with Zola and Balzac. The criticism of Romains has attempted to demonstrate the philosophy and the rationale of the collective novel. This idea-structure indicates that there is more involved here than is indicated in Mr. Cowley's simple definition.

According to Miss Minter's study, the collective novel arises from the same general factors as Durkheim's theory of group representations. The important ideas for the purpose of defining the collective novel are that "collective ideas are the facts of collective experience,"

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[1]Malcolm Cowley, "The End of a Trilogy," The New Republic, LXXXVIII (August 12, 1936), 23.

[2]Ibid.

and they, too, may be transmitted to the collective consciousness. What we call tradition or culture is that part of previous collective or group representations which still remain in the group consciousness. Since the society, like the individual, is constantly meeting new experiences and adding these to previous representations, it undergoes change and is dynamic in nature. "The totality of collective representations at a given time in a given society is not only that which the society is but also that which the society will become."[1] The writer of the collective novel focusses on the collective representations. To do so, he uses a naturalistic mode of expression, but discourages concern for any individual character by presenting many persons to express his theme. While he must present the issues of the day to be true to his material, he need not project a solution to problems because of the truly dynamic nature of society. He is also spared the pessimism of materialism and of determinism. The sociologist, Durkheim, is largely concerned to describe his area of investigation and to study it. The novelist, Romains, although he begins with similar assumptions, does not stop with a description of society. He adds a philosophical extension which will provide for the society "to emerge from itself." The philosophy behind the novels of Jules Romains is that there exists a real social continuum which is reflected in the individuals who make up society, yet this continuum is more than the aggregate of individuals. He calls the social continuum the "unanime" and he believes that it is possible for individuals to enter into direct, immediate, and intuitive contact with it.

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[1]Minter, op. cit., p. 543.

Romains calls for a literature which reflects the "reality" of life; therefore, it may not deal with the individual, but must deal with the "unanime." Life is the existence of collectivities. Beyond this point is the further one that the idea a society has of itself does not always correspond to its actual state. Because of the conflict between the actual state of society and the idea-of-itself, the society continues to emerge from itself. For Romains it can be teleological only if it is self-conscious. The direction of social movement is not a priori, but is a result of society's idea-of-itself. Self knowledge leads to a better idea-of-itself and thus leads to a better definition of social goals.

Parallels can be drawn between the practice of Jules Romains and that of Dos Passos. The similarity of their work in its subject matter and character depiction suggest that they may have shared a concept of the novel which is comparable to the Durkheim concept of group representations. Both novelists concern themselves with many actual historical figures and with much accurate documentation of the life of the times. It has been said of Romains that he

> manifests no superficiality in the painting of his major worlds: political, ecclesiastical, masonic, real-estate, military. The facts and figures of reports are integral parts of his narration. Names, measurements, hours of the day and night, notes of historical researches appear in close company with more expansive, abstract or lyric notations.[1]

With perhaps slight modifications, the above comment might be applied to Dos Passos' U.S.A. It is also a common criticism of both writers that their fictional characters are superficial and more like automatons than

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[1]Wallace Fowlie, "The Novels of Jules Romains," Southern Review, VII (April, 1942), 886.

human beings. Critics have difficulty in pinning down the specific social and political ideas of both writers. With the concept of "unanimism" these apparent lapses in character depiction and the apparent confusion of social point of view can be seen as resulting from a different concept of "realism," rather than from an inadequacy on the part of the writer. If the works of Romains and Dos Passos share the concept of society explained in Durkheim's thesis, then these apparent deficiencies become less important than they would be in the conventional novel dealing with a hero or with a specific a priori assumption about an "inevitable" direction of history.

The lack of a specific a priori assumption about the direction of social movement need not imply that either novelist is indifferent or that he does not have criteria by which to establish his preferences. Cerainly, Dos Passos is more than a dispassionate observer of the passing scene. Romains, too, feels that among all these, there must be some "men of good will."

Romains, like Dos Passos, is trying to put together all of the disparate experiences and feelings of a social group at a particular time and place in order to create the special feeling of an age. This "special feeling" may well be related to the "nearly indefinable subject" of which Lionel Trilling speaks in his essay, "Manners, Morals, and the Novel." He says:

> Somewhere below all the explicit statements that a people makes through its art, religion, architecture, legislation, there is a dim mental region of intention of which it is very difficult to become aware.[1]

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[1]Lionel Trilling, The Liberal Imagination (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1954), p. 200.

Mr. Trilling is not speaking here of the collective novel, but a parallel may be drawn. The essay goes on to make some distinctions concerning the "real" and the apparent which he finds to be the chief concern of the novel, from Don Quixote to the present. The collective novel, in spite of its obvious differences, is also concerned with a distinction between the real and the apparent and, by its technique, asserts that group representations are more "realistic" than the behavior of the isolated individual.

Once the idea of the collective novel is correctly understood, many of the difficulties in Romains and Dos Passos are removed. Their novels can be included in the tradition mentioned by Mr. Trilling--that of trying to distinguish the "real" from the "apparent." The "real" in this case is not the individual, but the collectivity. Rather than the often expressed notion that the real "hero" of the collective novel is the social group, the city, or, in the case of U.S.A., thirty years of American life, the subject of the novel is seen as being comprised of the group representations mentioned in Durkheim's theory. The collective novel does not have a hero in the old and accepted sense at all. The normal attempt to find the hero in the collective novel is to apply inappropriate means to the understanding of the genre. The maneuverings of the individual hero, in this concept, are like the random motor activity of the isolated ant in a laboratory jar. Neither can a city nor a period of time take the place of the hero. Such a concept does too much violence to the traditional concept of a fictional hero to be useful. Once attention is directed away from the search for a "hero," it can be directed toward the conflict between the actual state of society and the group

idea of it.

Out of this conflict each new collective representation comes, constantly changing as the process of emergence continues. The idea that society is moving toward some formulated perfection is discarded because each new experience modifies the group idea which in turn modifies the collective direction in which society goes. The function of the artist is not to plead any special economic or political idea, but rather to symbolize the collective process and make it available with the other ideas of man's relation to the universe. Just as the other ideas produced past unanimisms, so the self-consciousness of the group will in itself produce the new collectivities or unanimisms of the future.

It is not the purpose of this study to continue the parallels between the work of Romains and of Dos Passos. That they are dissimilar in many respects is apparent from even a casual reading. Nor is it much to the point to suggest the influence of one upon the other. Romains developed the idea of unanimism while composing La Vie Unanime, between 1904 and 1907.[1] He did not turn to the novel form until considerably later; the first volume of Men of Good Will appeared in 1932, the same year as 1919. Both Dos Passos and Romains obviously were writing the novels in question at approximately the same time. There is evidence that the idea of unanimism, if not the name, was shared by other writers early in the twentieth century. The novels of Jacob Wasserman constitute a case in point. The World's Illusion, like Men of Good Will, is constructed of a series of episodes and involves a multiplicity of characters.

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[1] Fowlie, op. cit., p. 881.

Joyce's progress from the technique of Stephen Hero to that of Finnegan's Wake could be interpreted as a movement away from the concept of the isolated individual to the concept of group consciousness. Aldous Huxley's Point Counterpoint and Andre Gide's The Counterfeiters, while maintaining many of the attributes of the conventional novel (both have heroes of a sort), also indicate the shift of attention from the choices of the hero to the independent collective life of which their heroes are a part.

The collective novel is an extension of naturalism or perhaps a new naturalism. In the naturalism of Zola, Flaubert, and Balzac, the philosophical base is environmental determinism. In the naturalistic novels which followed, the protagonist is shown writhing in the toils of an inescapable fate. In the novels of Dreiser and Norris, the protagonists and the antagonists are neither heroes nor villains but people driven along the paths they follow by irresistible forces. In Marxist and Utopian novels, where society appeared to be at fault, correctives might bring about the kind of environment which would produce maximum satisfaction for the society. Such projections are, of course, independent of the naturalistic novel and are rather taken from the various Utopian schemes which see society as a potential stasis rather than as a permanently dynamic process.

There is ample reason to believe that U.S.A. is a presentation of a society which is permanently dynamic. Many critics have found the social point of view which it expresses "inconclusive." It must naturally appear so unless the critics recognize that a social concept exists which is necessarily inconclusive in indicating a specific direction for social

movement. Huxley's novel Brave New World carries to a logical extreme the ideas inherent in the concept of a completely controlled society with specific goals to attain. It confronts man with the dilemma of present difficulties and future impossibilities. The concept of unanimism removes the inevitability of any direction that man seems to be taking at any given moment. The ends are constantly redefined as society constantly develops new ideas-of-itself. U.S.A. is concerned with presenting the process of redefinition. Veblen's "common sense society," Wright's concept of the "Usonian city," the sense of injustice generated by the Sacco-Vanzetti events are all a part of a new concept which will aid in defining the goals of the future.

The concept of unanimism provides a rationale whereby Romains can present his characters in the naturalistic manner without carrying this idea to what appeared in other views to be its logical conclusion--a pessimism and a hopelessness for man's lot. It is in this sense that the same idea can be applied to the apparent paradox in Dos Passos' treatment of character and of his implied, but obvious, demand that the evils of the society he described be corrected.

This discussion does not purport to demonstrate a series of influences running from Durkheim through Romains to Dos Passos. What it does propose is to discover a philosophical base which will provide a better explanation for a number of problems in the criticism of U.S.A. One of these problems is contained in the fact that Dos Passos presents his characters on the stimulus-response level of psychological behavior. His characterization need not imply that Dos Passos himself believes that the individual is not important; instead, such characterization is

for the purpose of emphasizing that it is the culture made up of group representations that is the subject of the novel. No writer can do everything in a single work and the loss in character study in U.S.A. is made up for by the gain in the delineation of the culture.

Another problem is that of the political and social attitudes which U.S.A. is intended to represent. Many of these can be described as parts of "liberal" thought of the first half of the twentieth century, but no specific social solutions are suggested by the novel. Recourse to the ideas of unanimism suggests that the novel might well present a number of "currents" in the political life of the time. The intention of the work can be to increase the self-consciousness of the society out of which can come a better idea-of-itself. Dos Passos can do this by presenting the evils of the present society.

It is believed that the concept of the "collective novel" will shed new light on Dos Passos' use of the devices of U.S.A. By eliminating a central hero, he has drawn attention to the fact that it is the collectivity which concerns him in the novel. This opinion is enforced by the documentation of the environment in which his characters move in the Biographies. In the Newsreels the very sounds and impressions of the culture are presented not as they are interpreted by individual characters, but as they exist and permeate the life of the time. It is in this sense that we may understand Mr. Beach's comment noted earlier that the function of the Newsreels is to suggest "the mentality which produces and is fostered by the newspaper, that epitome of our civilization."[1]

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[1]Beach, Twentieth Century Fiction, p 508.

The Camera Eye operates as the conscience or idea-of-itself which, however violated by the actions of the society, is yet a part of the total complex of the society.

The motivation for writing a collective novel may well be similar to the motives which led earlier writers to the epic form. Like the epic, the collective novel can deal with the major values and cultural patterns of a given social group. The inclusiveness of the epic and its concern for the central beliefs of the culture it is intended to represent can also be compared with the concern for social issues which makes up the subject matter of the collective novel. U.S.A. is an attempt to characterize a culture and to demonstrate the values which determine its movement. By its nature and its name, the book indicates that it springs from a motivation comparable to that which produced the great classical epics.

CHAPTER IX

CRITIQUE

There is a symbolical-allegorical aspect which is inseparable from all literature. Characters in action, the working out of plot, and our literary habits give a significance to imaginative literature beyond our concern with the lives of the fictional figures. Those works of the past which have encompassed the broadest aspects of a cultural group are the epics. In the sense that the motivation for writing U.S.A. is comparable, it is a part of the same attempt. U.S.A. is a novel; it is "naturalistic" in the manner of its writing; it is "collective"in its treatment of a whole culture rather than of a central hero. But, in the motivation from which it springs, it is epical in nature and it may be interpreted allegorically and symbolically as other epics have been interpreted.

Vergil, in writing the Aeneid, is the apologist and the propagandist for the new society established by Augustus. Aeneas, the hero of the epic, is the embodiment of Rome, of Roman virtue, and of Roman law. It is he who will conquer and destroy Turnus, the embodiment of the moral chaos of Italy following a hundred years of revolution and turmoil. The heart of the Aeneid, and it appears at the very center of the epic, is contained in Anchises' vision and speech to Aeneas:

> Others with more graceful art, I suppose, will beat out lifelike bronze, or form living features from marble, plead cases more effectively, mark with a pointer the motion of the heavens, and foretell the rising of the stars. But you, Roman, remember to rule over peoples with your government. This will be your art: to impose conditions of peace, to spare the conquered, and to crush the proud.[1]

These lines are addressed to Aeneas, that is, to Rome. Vergil is celebrating the end of a period of confusion and of chaos and pointing up the virtues which will make possible a return to the virtuous and good life. His picture is a positive one, identifying the reign of Augustus and the Roman peace with the peace and the prosperity of the world.

Dos Passos, on the other hand, presents essentially a negative picture, but it is no less concerned with virtue for that reason. He has no central heroic figure to take the place of Aeneas. He is still writing from the period of chaos rather than looking back upon it. He sees in the "American ideal" the same possibility for the world that Vergil saw in Rome, but the very nature of modern life and of modern thought prevents him from embodying that ideal in a single figure. Vergil can say that the Roman ideal has established and will continue a satisfactory society; Dos Passos can present his version of the American ideal only as a possibility for such an establishment. Because Dos Passos sees this period as one of moral chaos, U.S.A. cannot show virtue embodied in a hero before the possibility for the establishment of moral order has been realized.

With his theme already given, Vergil found his story in the traditional subjects of the epic, travel and war. Although Augustus was only the adoptive son of Julius Caesar, the myth of Caesar as a descendant of

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[1]Vergil, The Aeneid. Trans. by Kevin Guinagh (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1954), p. 163.

Venus provided the foundation for Aeneas' connection with Rome. The well-established tradition of the epic and the examples of Homer provided the form for the embodiment of this material. Dos Passos takes as his theme the moral chaos of the age of industrialism. The virtues are implicitly those of democracy and Dos Passos' concept of the early principles of the American Republic. He, too, has a literary tradition from which to take a part of his form, but the nature of his theme and the materials of its embodiment require that he create a large part of the form he was to use. For these reasons, it is necessary to return momentarily to the materials which Dos Passos used and to comment on the form which finally evolved.

U.S.A. presents a relatively long time period and a number of characters; its major outlines include references to a large number of historical details taken from the first part of the twentieth century. Because the book is large in a number of ways, it is difficult to restrict its purposes to one theme. At one time, the problems of labor seem to predominate; at another, the issues of World War I; and again it appears that the personal behavior of a number of individuals is the real issue at stake. Dos Passos has been welcomed into the Marxist camp, then rejected as unsatisfactory. Some critics have refused to discuss U.S.A. as a novel, but have chosen to look upon it as a quasi-historical work. It participates in the genre of the "protest novel," yet no one institution is singled out for special treatment, nor does the "protest" seem to stem from a well-established or fixed social point of view. It defies a dogmatic Marxist interpretation, but it does contain a number of anti-Capitalist elements. It is possible to conclude that the novel

contains no central theme and that the confusion is that of the author. It is the conviction of the writer, however, that there is a unifying principle present in the work.

Dos Passos' review of E. E. Cummings' The Enormous Room has already been mentioned in another connection. In that review, written in 1922, Dos Passos says:

> The Enormous Room seems to me to be the book that has nearest approached the mood of reckless adventure in which men will reach the white heat of imagination needed to fuse the soggy, disjointed complexity of the industrial life about us into seething fluid of creation.[1]

Eight years later the first volume of the trilogy, U.S.A., appeared, but Dos Passos' statement in this review of Cummings' novel contained the germ of the idea which permeates U.S.A. Dos Passos is dealing with "the soggy, disjointed complexity of the industrial life about us" and with the resulting cultural disintegration. This, then, is the theme which provides a principle by which to connect and unite the slow educative process delineated by the Camera Eye and the sharp conflicts and jumbled ironies of the Newsreels with the often confused and contradictory careers of those persons whose lives embody the quality of the soil in which the characters grew.

The short introductory passage which Dos Passos affixed to the first edition of U.S.A. describes a "young man" who wishes to experience all there is to know of American life, ride all the trains, work at all the trades, and listen to the speech of all the people.

> The young man walks by himself, fast but not fast enough, far but not far enough (faces slide out of sight, talk trails into

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[1]Wilson, The Shock of Recognition, p. 1249.

> tattered scraps, footsteps tap fainter in alleys); he must catch the last subway, the streetcar. the bus, run up the gangplanks of all the steamboats, register at all the hotels, work in all the cities, answer the wantads, learn the trades, take up the jobs, live in all the boardinghouses, sleep in all the beds. One bed is not enough, one job is not enough, one life is not enough.[1]

The findings of this young man make up the volumes of U.S.A. He wishes somehow to characterize all the diverse experiences of growing up and living in this country His is the "eye" which sees the ironies in the captions of the newspapers, the contradictions between the speeches and actions of the politicians, and the troubled temper of the times. The novel proper takes up the beginning of the new century with its promise of a better world through its inventors and its political reformers. It continues through the hopes and the disappointments of World War I and the promised prosperity afterward. It ends with the nameless vagrant for whom all the promises and struggles have provided nothing except the needs which knot his belly. The promises of industrialization have been made by "juggling fiends...that keep the word of promise to our ear / And break it to our hope!"[2]

As America uniquely embodies a promise of improvement in the lot of everyman, so the twentieth century uniquely, with its enormous leverage over nature, seems to make the fulfillment of this promise possible. In America, this century was hailed as that of the common man; it believed first that man had become too civilized to engage much longer in warfare; then it fought its first great war to end wars and to make the world safe for democracy. Through the promise of industrialization and

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[1] U.S.A., v-vi.

[2] Macbeth, V, viii, 19-22.

political reform, it was to extend the advantages of civilization to the common man beyond the dreams of former kings. America, with its stable government, its broad economic base, and its technical ingenuity, is the symbol of this dream. Hence Dos Passos' title, U.S.A., and the setting of the novel. With its social instability, its pragmatic philosophy, and its cultural immaturity, it can also be the symbol of the shattering of this dream. America has thus in the past symbolized the dream to the people of the world; now "Americanization" is a bad word to many thinking Europeans. This change has taken place in the thirty years described by Dos Passos in U.S.A., and it is the nature of the change which makes up the central theme of the novel. The dream in its many forms is central to the twentieth century world; the theme of U.S.A. informs the present unrest in much of the world, the struggle for the Gaza Strip, a dam at Aswan. There is a promise in this dream, but, as Dos Passos reminds us, it may be a promise of juggling fiends.

Dos Passos had two major problems to solve in presenting his theme in the light in which he wanted it to be understood. The first of these problems was to find a form which would provide him an opportunity to present "the disjointed complexity of our times." It was necessary to demonstrate the very feel of the milieu--the sights, the sounds, and the impressions which form it. For this purpose, he devised the Newsreels and the Biographies. It was necessary, also, to use a form which would present character in its proper environment and which, in addition, would remove the choices of an individual character as a major condition. The interspersed narratives provided for both. The combination of these things relates Dos Passos' novel to the genre, collective novel, with its

concern for group representations rather than for an individual hero.

The second major problem to be solved was to make this material dramatic. Realism and naturalism emphasized the accuracy of setting as a goal of fiction. The motion picture made great attempts at historical accuracy in costume and sets according to the period depicted. The necessity for Dos Passos here was not to make the novel a slice of actual life, but to create the appearance of verisimilitude in order to fulfill the requirements of realism. The devices of the Newsreel and the Biographies are created to enhance the sense of historical accuracy that they provide, just as a motion picture may add to the dramatic illusion by the inclusion of historical persons.

Dos Passos extends the limits of naturalism in order to create the effect of verisimilitude in his novel, but it should never be forgotten that U.S.A. is a novel. Through the montage principle, he has shown that the mere presentation of some kinds of material is in itself interpretive. That is, when two things are presented simultaneously or in sequence, they can imply a meaning which need not be stated by the author. In this way, the whole of U.S.A. might be said to be a montage, just as one critic has found that all of Paradise Lost can be considered one great metaphor. The very accuracy of U.S.A. in the presentation of setting has led to the idea that it is a "documentary," and has resulted in a failure to evaluate it on the same terms that any other work of literature would be evaluated.

Implicit in this study is the idea that Dos Passos' U.S.A. must first be seen as a literary structure rather than as a political tract or as an attempt at writing history. Had Dos Passos used a more conventional

novel form, this problem would not loom so large. He chose, instead, to experiment with form at the same time that he was presenting a rather all-embracing theme. The "collective novel," with its attempt to represent a large social order, seemed best adapted for his purpose. Presenting the characters in stimulus-response patterns was best suited to the form and to the theme. In addition, Dos Passos combined the idea of montage from the motion picture with the requirements of naturalism in presenting his large group of characters and the milieu in which they lived. Medieval works of literature were often embodied in a "vision" which, while it had some relevance to the life of the times, was not mistaken for social documentation. Our nearness to the life of U.S.A. and our continuing involvement in similar problems, along with Dos Passos' care in his realistic method, stand in the way of a detached view of his novel.

Seen as a "vision" presented in accordance with the dictates of realism as the author sees them, U.S.A. is the embodiment of Dos Passos' perception that the industrial order of things corrupts individual morality. It is a vision of a society so mannered and so controlled by its mechanical contrivances that these in turn emerge as the most significant forces in the society. It is these contrivances which dictate the mechanical prose of the newspaper captions as well as the stimulus-response patterns in the activities of the characters. It is a negative picture informed by an implied demand that the industrial machine be harnessed to serve human needs. It is this vision of the horrors of industrial society and of the human rejection of such a society that makes U.S.A. a unified structure. As Mr. Trilling says:

Dos Passos' plan is greater than its result in feeling; his book tells more than it is. Yet what it tells, and tells with accuracy, subtlety and skill, is enormously important and no one has yet told it half so well.[1]

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[1]Lionel Trilling, "The America of John Dos Passos," p. 26.

APPENDIX

A Comparison of the Biographies in U.S.A. with the Accounts of Conventional Biographers and Historians.

Eugene Debs

Dos Passos gives the essential facts of Debs' life. He uses quotations from two of Debs' speeches. One is from a speech made at Turner Hall in Detroit on January 11, 1906. The other first appeared in Masses in 1913; it later appeared on the title page of Labor and Freedom in 1916; and it was used a third time by Debs as his final statement before being sentenced at the Cleveland Courthouse, September 14, 1918. The Dos Passos sketch ends with this statement:

> While there is a lower class I am of it, while there is a criminal class I am of it, while there is a soul in prison I am not free.[1]

The account of Debs is accurate in the details presented. Midway in the portrait is a series of questions: "Where were Gene Debs' brothers in nineteen eighteen when Woodrow Wilson had him locked up in Atlanta?"[2] The statement, taken literally, is a strange interpretation of the American judicial system. Nevertheless, there is some justice in

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 28.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 27.

the remark, since Wilson had refused executive clemency to Debs.[1] Presumably the men Debs had worked for remained sympathetic to his aims; many of them continued to work for his release, and further, he received over 900,000 votes for the presidency of the United States in the election of 1920 while he was still in Atlanta Penitentiary.

Luther Burbank

The emphasis of this Biography is on a controversy late in Burbank's life which started as a result of a speech he made concerning Darwin's principles of Natural Selection. Dos Passos implies that the subsequent attacks had something to do with his death ("and they stung him and he died"[2]) but it might be noted that he was seventy-eight at the time. Dos Passos calls this Biography THE PLANT WIZARD, a phrase he might have picked up from the early biography by Wilbur Hall in which Burbank is referred to as a "wizard of plant life."[3]

William D. Haywood

The details of Haywood's life are essentially accurate, but there are some interesting omissions toward the last years. Dos Passos' account reads:

> He went to Russia and was in Moscow a couple of years but he wasn't happy there, that world was too strange for him. He died there and

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[1]Charles Allan Madison, Critics and Crusaders (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1947), p. 504.

[2]U.S.A., I, p. 83.

[3]Luther Burbank and Wilbur Hall, Harvest of the Years (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1926), p. xi.

> they burned his big broken hulk of a body and buried the ashes under the Kremlin wall.[1]

Haywood went to Russia in 1921 and remained in Moscow for five years until his death in 1926. He was at first feted and made much of by Party officials and then ignored. He also took a Russian wife during this period.[2] Dos Passos excuses the fact that Haywood was out of prison on bail when he fled to Russia and thus left a number of people to make good his bond.

William Jennings Bryan

William Jennings Bryan is characterized largely by his "Cross of Gold" speech. The method of this study makes direct comparison with historical fact difficult. Fewer facts are given from Bryan's actual life. That he was a minister's son is mentioned. There is also reference to the Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee, where Bryan debated with Clarence Darrow over Darwinism. Dos Passos' portrait depends heavily on the speech which gained for Bryan the Democratic nomination for President in 1896. The matter is one of interpretation, but many historians would agree with Dos Passos' findings on the career of Bryan.

Minor C. Keith

There are some inaccuracies in Dos Passos' account, but they do not affect the sketch as much as does the tone in which it is written. The emphasis in this account is on the money getting propensities of the

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 96.

[2] Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. VIII, p. 468.

Keith family. Dos Passos says, "Minor C. Keith was a rich man's son."[1] Another study says of him that he was a man of moderate means.[2] In the first and last paragraphs of the account, Dos Passos mentions the "uneasy look under the eyes in all the pictures the newspapers carried of him when he died."[3] The photograph does show a large man in the style of business tycoons of forty or fifty years ago, but it is difficult to characterize him as having an uneasy look. From other accounts of his life, it is doubtful that Keith was weighed down by the social implications of his actions in the Caribbean. Apparently the building of the railway in Costa Rica was more of a challenge to him than just the opportunity to amass a fortune. It took nineteen years to complete the road. During this time, three of Minor's brothers died in the jungles and swamps over which the railway ran. The importance of Minor C. Keith's contribution to the world is debatable, but it is not a fair summary of his career to write him off as a man who "could smell money" and who died with an "uneasy look under the eys."

Andrew Carnegie

The portrait of Andrew Carnegie is one of the shortest and least accurate in U.S.A. Dos Passos starts with the usual account of the early life of the subject, but this one contains several mistakes. Dos Passos

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 241.

[2] B. C. Forbes, Men Who are Making America (New York: B. C. Forbes Publishing Co., 1916), p. vi.

[3] U.S.A., I, p. 244.

says of Carnegie that he "ran around Philadelphia with telegrams..."[1] According to his biographer, the city in question was Pittsburgh.[2] The account continues: "was a military telegraph operator in the Civil War."[3] Carnegie was actually head of the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad at this time and went to Washington to take over an office in the War Department in charge of telegraphy.[4] Dos Passos' account reads: "Andrew Carnegie started out buying Adams Express and Pullman stock when they were in a slump."[5] There is no indication that the Adams Express stock was in a slump at the time that Carnegie purchased it; it had been recommended as an investment and Carnegie followed the advice and bought it in 1856. There was no Pullman Company as early as Dos Passos indicates here. A man named Woodruff showed Carnegie a plan for a sleeping car at a time when Carnegie was working as an executive for the Pennsylvania Railroad. Carnegie helped initiate the company and was granted one-sixth interest in it.[6] The Dos Passos account makes these early investments sound like a stock market coup, whereas the Adams Express stock was purchased as an investment at a time when Carnegie was working as a Western Union messenger boy and the Woodruff stock was received years later as his share in the exploitation of a new invention--the Woodruff

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 264.

[2] Burton J. Hendricks, Life of Andrew Carnegie (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1932), I, 56.

[3] U.S.A., I, p. 264.

[4] Hendricks, op. cit., p. 106.

[5] U.S.A., I, p. 264.

[6] Hendricks, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

sleeping car. These small errors add up to an inaccurate characterization of the figure. The final statement which sums up the man is also difficult to justify--that he endowed institutions for peace "except in time of war." During the Civil War, Carnegie had no steel to sell and the war merely delayed his rise as a railroad executive. During the Spanish-American war, he had already placed his interests in the hands of other managers and was planning his retirement. He sold out to the Morgan interests in 1901. He had been retired for fourteen years when World War I started and had created indignation in his native Scotland by his peace views in the early days of the war.[1]

Thomas A. Edison

The Biography of Edison presents him as an experimenter constantly tinkering with new materials and devices which would "smash the ancient universe."[2] Dos Passos catches the single-mindedness of Edison in solving practical problems of mechanics without worrying about the possible implications for society, but he also catches something of the newspaper reader's concept of Edison as "the wizard of Menlo Park." Except for minor details over which the conventional biographers disagree, the portrait of Edison is factually correct.

Charles Proteus Steinmetz

Dos Passos presents the Socialistic views of Steinmetz along with

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[1]Forbes, op. cit., p. 37.

[2]U.S.A., I, p. 300.

a half-dozen other "eccentricities" which the General Electric Company humored in its "most valuable piece of apparatus."[1] When he talked of electricity or "jotted a formula on his cuff," power plants and dynamos sprang into action; but when he spoke of human relations, "nobody understood." Steinmetz in the Dos Passos portrait remains just a piece of apparatus "until he wore out and died." This does not seem an unfair evaluation of the attitudes of the management of the General Electric Company; that large corporations in this era were less concerned with the social implications of their activities than they might have been is easily documented.

Robert La Follette

In this Biography, Dos Passos tries to recreate the mind and feelings of the youthful La Follette. He turns from factual reporting to an imaginative account.

> riding home in a buggy after commencement he was Booth and Wilkes writing the Junius papers and Daniel Webster and Ingersoll defying God.[2]

Place commas after Booth, papers, and Webster, and you get the intended meaning of the passage. Booth, the Shakespearean actor, suggests the attitude or pose to the youthful idealist. Another characteristic device of this Biography is that of the near quotation from actual people to indicate the activity or attitudes of the subject. Dos Passos says of Philetus Sawyer that he was "used to stacking and selling politicians the

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 365.

[2] U.S.A., I, p. 366.

way he stacked and sold cordwood."[1] La Follette in his autobiography says, "he bought men as he bought sawlogs."[2] This statement may well have been the source of the remark in U.S.A. In a later passage, Dos Passos, quoting John C. Payne [sic], actually Henry C. Payne says,

> "La Follette's a damn fool if he thinks he can buck a railroad with five thousand miles of continuous track, he'll find he's mistaken... We'll take care of him when the time comes."[3]

La Follette, commenting on the same remark, quotes it as: "La Follette is a crank, if he thinks he can buck a railroad with five thousand miles of line he'll find out his mistake."[4] In both instances, the Dos Passos version is sharper and emphasizes more directly the point to be made.

In the final section of the Biography, Dos Passos has dramatized the efforts of La Follette to stop the Armed Ship Bill proposed by President Wilson in 1917. He quotes Wilson's remark, "the little group of willful men expressing no opinion but their own," by which Wilson characterized the eleven senators who opposed the bill. Dos Passos then takes some liberties with the facts to indicate the public hostility to the filibuster: "in Wheeling they refused to let him speak." Here a group of business men cancelled a long standing speaking engagement with La Follette.[5] A few lines later, Dos Passos says, "They wouldn't let

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 366.

[2] Robert M. La Follette, La Follette's Autobiography (Madison, Wisconsin: Robert M. La Follette Co., 1913), p. 54.

[3] U.S.A., I, p. 367.

[4] La Follette, op. cit., p. 75.

[5] Franklin L. Burdette, Filibustering in the Senate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 123.

him speak,"[1] in reference to the counter filibuster by the proponents of the Armed Ship Bill. After La Follette's group indicated that they would attempt to tie up business in the Senate during the closing hours of the session, Senator Hitchcock of Nebraska spoke and refused to yield the floor in order to prevent La Follette from speaking in the presence of the crowded galleries.[2] The closing lines in U.S.A. are: "and an undelivered speech on his desk, a willful man expressing no opinion but his own."[3] By paraphrasing Wilson's remark, Dos Passos indicates the loneliness of La Follette's position and reiterates the idea, "they refused to let him speak." The actions against La Follette did represent an attempt to silence him; he was not even permitted to filibuster against the Armed Ship Bill.

John Reed

This Biography begins with an elliptical characterization of Harvard where both Reed and Dos Passos were students. "And Copey's voice reading..." refers to Professor Charles Copeland of Harvard.

> good English prose the lamps coming on across the Yard,
> under the elms in the twilight
> dim voices in lecturehalls
> the dying fall the elms the Discobulus[4]

In real life, Reed shipped out for Europe on a cattleboat immediately after graduating from Harvard, then returned to live in New York. Dos

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[1] U.S.A., I, p. 368.

[2] Burdette, op. cit., p. 121.

[3] U.S.A., I, p. 369.

[4] U.S.A., II, pp. 12-13.

Passos divides his New York period and places the first European trip between the two divisions.

> Washington Square!
> Conventional turns out to be a cussword;
> Villon seeking a lodging for the night in the Italian tenements on Sullivan Street, Bleecher, Carmine;[1]

Place and street names indicate Greenwich Village in New York City.

According to the Dictionary of American Biography, Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell first aroused Reed's interest in social problems. Dos Passos indicates the Steffens' influence:

> Linc Steffens talked the cooperative commonwealth
> revolution in a voice as mellow as Copey's, Diogenes Steffens with Marx for a lantern going through the west looking for a good man, Socrates Steffens kept asking why not revolution?[2]

Dos Passos is close to the actual facts of Reed's life. He abandons the actual facts in the following passages, however, in order to characterize Reed's social position and to indicate the development of Reed's social attitudes.

> his blood didnt run thin enough for the Harvard Club and the Dutch Treat Club and respectable New York free-lance Bohemia.[3]

Actually, Reed joined both clubs while in New York, but later abandoned them.[4] While a free lance writer in New York, Reed went over to New Jersey to write up a strike of textile workers. Dos Passos says,

> ...before he knew it he was a striker parading beaten up by the cops in jail;
> he wouldn't let the editor bail him out, he'd learn more with the

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 13.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 14.

[3] U.S.A., II, p. 14.

[4] Madison, op. cit., p. 510.

striker in jail.[1]

In reality, Reed was not beaten; he was arrested and sentenced to twenty days in jail for refusing to leave the strike scene; he was released, however, on the fifth day.[2] This Biography continues, indicating events in Reed's life with short phrases and sometimes a single word.

> and in 1917
> he was with the soldiers and peasants
> in Petrograd in October:
> Smolny,
> Ten Days That Shook the World;[3]

Reed had managed to get to what was then St. Petersburg in time for the October Revolution in which the Bolsheviki took control of the government and occupied quarters in the Smolny Institute buildings. Reed's book, Ten Days That Shook the World, described the first few days of the new Soviet government. The Dos Passos account continues:

> Delegate,
> back in the States indictments, the Masses trial, the Wobbly trial, Wilson cramming the jails,
> forged passports, speeches, secret documents, riding the rods across the cordon sanitaire.[4]

Reed returned to the United States from Russia in 1918 and was sent to Chicago to report the trial of the members of the Industrial Workers of the World. As a result of another article by Reed, Masses magazine and Reed himself were indicted. At this time he led the Communist Labor Party and was sent from this organization as a delegate to the Communist

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 14.

[2] Madison, op. cit., p. 511.

[3] U.S.A., II, p. 16.

[4] U.S.A., II, p. 16.

International. Since he could not get a passport because of the indictment, he fled the country and had great difficulty in returning to St. Petersburg, the scene of the meeting.[1] Wilson was not exactly "cramming the jails," although this was a period of a red scare. The cordon sanitaire was a series of buffer states between Soviet Russia and the western world. Most of the remainder of the sketch concerns Reed's work for the new Soviet government. This work could not have been too extensive, since he arrived in what was now Petrograd in March, 1920 and died of typhus in Moscow in October of the same year. Smolny Institute refers to the building where the Bolsheviki conducted the organization of the new government.

Randolph Bourne

In this Biography, Dos Passos picks up a phrase attributed to Bourne: "War, he wrote, is the health of the state."[2] This statement by Bourne is not explained in the text. It occurs in an unfinished study of the state by Bourne in which he distinguishes between the "state" and the "nation"; the state is "the organization of the herd to act offensively and defensively against another herd similarly organized." The nation, on the other hand, is synonymous with the people and serves their intrinsic welfare. War is the health of the state in that it unifies the people and completely subjugates them to the will of the government.[3]

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[1]Madison, op. cit., pp. 523-526.

[2]U.S.A., II, p. 104.

[3]Madison, op. cit., pp. 438-439.

Dos Passos also remembers a black cape which Bourne bought in Europe and wore after he got back to New York. It apparently came to symbolize Bourne both for him and for others, since it is mentioned by Madison. Dos Passos calls attention to it three times, each time adding something to his picture of Bourne: "and bought himself a black cape," "tiny twisted bit of flesh in a black cape," (Bourne was a humchback) and "a tiny twisted unscared ghost in a black cloak."[1]

Theodore Roosevelt

Once again, Dos Passos remembers the Harvard Clubs, mentioning that Roosevelt "made Porcellian and the Dickey,"[2] but omitting that he also made Phi Beta Kappa. On April 10, 1899, Roosevelt made a speech before the Hamilton Club of Chicago in which he said, among other things,

> I preach to you, then, my countrymen, that our country calls not for the life of ease but for the life of strenuous endeavor...slothful ease and ignoble peace...the life of strife.

Dos Passos "quotes" this speech as: "I wish to preach not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife,"[3] thus firming up the periods and strengthening the parallelism of the original. Farther along in the Dos Passos account are a number of statements jammed together in which the actual order of events has been changed and in which there are some misstatements of fact. It is necessary to quote the entire passage, then

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[1] U.S.A., II, pp. 104-105.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 143.

[3] U.S.A., II, p. 143.

unscramble it, in order to compare it with the real events in Roosevelt's life. The Dos Passos account reads:

> T. R. married a wealthy woman and righteously raised a family at Sagamore hill.
> He served a term in the New York Legislature, was appointed by Grover Cleveland to the unremunerative job of Commissioner for Civil Service Reform,
> was Reform Police Commissioner of New York, pursued Malefactors, stoutly maintained that white was white and black was black,
> wrote the Naval History of the War of 1812,
> was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy,
> and when the Maine blew up resigned to lead the Rough Riders.[1]

Theodore Roosevelt was married for a second time in 1886 to Edith Kermit Carow, who had been his playmate as a child; her wealth was probably an insignificant factor. Sagamore Hill was the name of his home on the North Shore of Long Island Sound, about thirty miles from New York City. During 1882-1886, he served two terms in the New York Legislature. As part of his duties he served on a special legislative committee to study Civil Service reform; in 1889, President Harrison appointed him national Commissioner of Civil Service. It was in 1895 that he was appointed Reform Police Commissioner of New York, where he was overzealous and accomplished little.[2]

The Naval History was written in 1882 and Roosevelt was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1897. Dos Passos has juxtaposed the two events with the possible intention of an ironic contrast between the problems of an historian of the War of 1812 and those of an Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1897, or perhaps this is merely the association technique common to the stream of consciousness method. Even the last

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 144.

[2] Dictionary of American Biography, XVI, p. 136.

statement is open to question. Actually, the Maine blew up on February 15, 1898, but Roosevelt did not resign until May 6, 1898; and then with perhaps as much an ambitious politician's eye for publicity as an adolescent enthusiasm for derring-do.[1]

Dos Passos gives an account of the San Juan Hill affair which is entirely unfavorable to Roosevelt, but this is difficult to comment on since, by all observers, this was an extremely confused affair.[2] Dos Passos continues: "T. R. got up a round robin to the President and asked for the amateur warriors to be sent home and leave the dirtywork to the regulars."[3] The famous round robin was actually organized by General Shafter and approved by Roosevelt. More important, however, it asked that all troops, regular and amateur, be sent home, largely because so many were dying of tropical diseases.[4] "Czolgocz made him president"[5] refers to the assassin who shot President McKinley on September 6, 1901.

Roosevelt's travels, after his second term as President had ended, are described. Here Dos Passos says, "he lectured the Nationalists at Cairo telling them that this was a white man's world,"[6] both overstating the situation of the speech as well as misinterpreting the tenor of Roosevelt's remarks. Roosevelt had accepted an invitation to speak

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[1]Walter F. McCaleb, Theodore Roosevelt (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1931), pp. 51-78 passim.

[2]Ibid.

[3]U.S.A., II, p. 145.

[4]McCaleb, op. cit., p. 84.

[5]U.S.A., II, p. 145.

[6]U.S.A., II, p. 146.

before the students at Cairo University. A month before his speech was scheduled, Prime Minister Boutros Pasha was assassinated by a Nationalist group. In spite of British and American diplomats, Roosevelt decided to speak, although he was warned that an unfortunate remark might incite the Nationalist sympathizers among the students. He did not tell the students that "this was a white man's world," but told them that lawlessness such as the recent assassination was not commensurate with the demand for self-rule on the part of the Nationalists.[1]

In Dos Passos' account of Roosevelt's participation in the Panama revolution, he mentions the "famous hocuspocus" in which forty million dollars vanished into the hands of the international bankers. He does not mention, curiously enough, that this money was deposited with the J. P. Morgan Company of New York, although Morgan comes in for plenty of criticism in the subsequent Biography of which he is the subject. As a key phrase with ironic overtones, Dos Passos picks up a name from Roosevelt's travels--the River of Doubt. It is first merely mentioned, "He ran the rapids of the River of Doubt." Next, Dos Passos describes the Bull Moose bolt from the Republican Party in 1912 and says, "Perhaps the River of Doubt had been too much for a man of his age."[2] Actually, this trip started after the 1912 campaign, on October 4, 1913.[3] In order to suggest that Roosevelt, himself, had begun to have doubts about his political convictions, Dos Passos repeats the phrase several times.

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[1]McCaleb, op. cit., p. 289.

[2]U.S.A., II, p. 147.

[3]McCaleb, op. cit., p. 332.

Such use does violence to the original meaning of the phrase. It is a literal translation of a Portuguese phrase meaning a river about which we do not know. It referred to the fact that the volume of the Amazon could be accounted for by the presence of an unexplored river in a remote area. After Roosevelt had confirmed this theory by actual exploration, the river was named the "Roosevelt." Because of the Brazilian difficulty with the English "r" it has since become known as the "Rua Teodore." In the same paragraph, Dos Passos says that Roosevelt was shot in Duluth during the 1912 campaign, but the location of this event was actually Milwaukee.[1]

Paxton Hibben

The Biography of Hibben is made up of long sections directly quoted from Who's Who interspersed with the usual account of Hibben's life. The Who's Who account gives the bare facts of Hibben's life; Dos Passos embellishes the account with the hard reality which lies behind such unassuming words as "War Corr Collier's Weekly 1914-15, staff corr Associated Press in Europe, 1915-17; etc."[2]

Woodrow Wilson

Dos Passos indicates the Calvinistic background of Wilson, carries him through his career first as a college teacher, then as President of Princeton, and finally as a politician. He says:

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[1] Dictionary of American Biography, XVI, p. 143.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 183.

> And in 1910
> the democratic bosses of New Jersey, hard pressed by muckrakers and reformers, got the bright idea of offering the nomination for governor to the stainless college president who attracted such large audiences.[1]

In reality, the idea seems to have come from Colonel Harvey, who was editor of Harper's Weekly. It was he who pushed New Jersey Democratic boss James Smith into offering the nomination to Wilson. Harvey's idea was to groom Wilson for the Presidency.[2]

> Wilson fooled the wiseacres and doublecrossed the bosses, was elected by a huge plurality;[3]

The year 1910 was a reform year in American politics and the Republicans were in power; as usual in the off-year elections, the representation of the "out" party increased. This factor, plus the growing concern for reform, swept Wilson into the Governor's chair in New Jersey and a number of Democrats into Congress.[4] As for his "huge plurality," it was 49,000 votes; two years before, President Taft had received a plurality of 82,000 votes.[5] It still was a surprising victory, as Dos Passos indicates, but then it was a surprisingly Democratic year in the entire election.[6]

> and at the convention in Baltimore the next July the upshot of the puppetshow staged for sweating delegates by Hearst and House behind the scenes...was that Woodrow Wilson was nominated for the

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 243.

[2] William E. Dodd, Woodrow Wilson and His Work (Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1920), pp. 80-88.

[3] U.S.A., II, p. 244.

[4] Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era (New York: Harpers, 1954), p. 7.

[5] Dodd, op. cit., p. 89.

[6] Link, op. cit., p. 7.

presidency.[1]

The convention was rigged, but it was rigged for Champ Clark;[2] the coupling of the names Hearst and House suggests at least that they were co-conspirators whereas Colonel House was interested in getting the nomination for Wilson while Hearst supported Champ Clark.[3] The support of Bryan finally permitted the nomination to go to Wilson, but this was far from a puppet show since the issue was really in doubt and Wilson could not be nominated until the forty-sixth ballot. "What had seemed impossible only a few days before was now a reality; one of the miracles of modern American politics."[4] Following the account of the convention is this remark: "pitiless publicity was the slogan of the Shadow Lawn Campaign."[5] Dos Passos here clearly intends the campaign of 1912, but Shadow Lawn was Wilson's temporary summer home in New Jersey after his nomination for a second term in 1916. He made his acceptance speech there on September 2, 1916.[6] The phrase "pitiless publicity" again refers to the 1916 campaign, if the term "pitiless" can correctly be applied to the efforts of a major political party to elect a President. It was "pitiless" only in the sense of being overwhelmingly large--"millions of pamphlets and thousands of newspaper advertisements."[7]

Dos Passos continues through the intervening years until he reaches American participation in World War I. "First it was neutrality

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 244.

[2] Dodd, op. cit., p. 244.

[3] Link, op. cit., p. 11.

[4] Ibid., p. 13.

[5] U.S.A., II, p. 244.

[6] Link, op. cit., p. 238.

[7] Ibid., p. 243.

in thought and deed."[1] What Wilson actually said was, "We must be impartial in thought as well as of [sic] action."[2]

> Five months after his reelection on the slogan He kept us out of war, Wilson pushed the Armed Ship Bill through Congress and declared that a state of war existed between the United States and the Central powers.[3]

Actually, the Armed Ship Bill passed the House of Representatives but was filibustered to death in the Senate, as Dos Passos noted in the Biography of La Follette. Wilson started arming the ships, however, under the authority of an ancient statute revived for this purpose. The statement that Wilson "declared that a state of war existed..." is an exaggeration of the tenor of Wilson's war message to Congress. What he said was: "I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German Government to be in fact nothing less than war aginst the Government and people of the United States."[4]

The Morgan loans are discussed in an over-simplified manner. Dos Passos does not mention that President Wilson and his Secretary of State, Bryan, at first refused to permit the loans to foreign belligerents (the issue came up over a request of the French Government to the J. P. Morgan Company for a loan of one hundred million dollars), nor does he give credit to Bryan for resigning when Wilson refused to soften his demands on the German Government. After Bryan's resignation, the loans to Britain,

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 245.

[2] Speech in Philadelphia, May 10, 1915.

[3] U.S.A., II, p. 245.

[4] U.S., Congressional Record, 65th Congress, 1st Session, 1917, pp. 102-104.

France, and Canada were approved by the State Department.[1] The Hearst press consistently opposed the loans. The American State Department approved the loans on the grounds that American prosperity must be preserved and that Britain should be given advantage of her superior position on the seas.[2]

"Wilson became the state (war is the health of the state)."[3] This statement refers to the extraordinary powers given to a President in time of war, and Dos Passos recalls the distinction made by Randolph Bourne between the state and the nation.[4]

J. Pierpont Morgan

Dos Passos gives the facts of Morgan's early life. He says that Morgan was "trained in England." This fact is not mentioned in his biography, which gives what appears to be a thorough account of his education. It does, however, mention that he went to the English High School in Boston.[5] Dos Passos describes him as of 1857 as a "lanky morose young man of twenty."[6] Morgan's biographer, Allen, says of him at the same period that he was hulking and solid shouldered, energetic,

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[1]Link, op. cit., p. 166.

[2]Ibid., p. 173.

[3]U.S.A., II, p. 245.

[4]U.S.A., II, p. 103.

[5]Frederick Lewis Allen, The Great Pierpont Morgan (New York: Harpers, 1949), p. 11.

[6]U.S.A., II, p. 337.

enterprising, and confident.[1]

> just in time for the panic of '57.
> (war and panics on the stock exchange, bankruptcies, warloans, good growing weather for the House of Morgan)[2]

According to Allen, this panic, far from being "good growing weather," almost ruined Morgan. Peabody of London, whom he represented in the United States, was on the verge of bankruptcy as a result of the financial crisis in the United States.[3]

> When the guns started booming at Fort Sumter, young Morgan turned some money over reselling condemned muskets to the U.S. army and began to make himself felt in the gold room in downtown New York.[4]

Morgan's responsibility for the musket deal is more limited than Dos Passos indicates. In the summer of 1861 he lent a man named Stevens $20,000; it was Stevens who carried out what came to be known as the "Hall Carbine Affair." Stevens purchased outmoded carbines from the War Department for $3.50 each and sold them to General Fremont for $22.00 each. We do not know how much Morgan knew of this matter. He made $5400 on the deal plus $156.04 in interest on the loan. Morgan was not involved in the subsequent Congressional investigation of this affair. In October, 1861, Morgan married an invalid, abandoned his business, and took her abroad in the hope of restoring her health. She died four months later and he returned to New York in September of 1862.[5] It was in 1863 that

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[1] Allen, op. cit., pp. 18 and 29.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 337.

[3] Allen, op. cit., p. 18.

[4] U.S.A., II, p. 337.

[5] Allen, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

Morgan "began to make himself felt in the gold room." Morgan and Ketchum bought gold and shipped half of it abroad to depreciate American currency and raise the price of the gold they had left. The scheme worked and, according to some reports, they divided a profit of $160,000.[1] "At the same time young Morgan was fighting Jay Cooke and the German-Jew bankers in Frankfort."[2] In a rather extensive account of the financial fights of the time, Allen mentioned the conflict between Morgan and Gould, but did not mention Cooke.[3]

> The panic of '75 ruined Jay Cooke and made J. Pierpont Morgan the boss croupier of Wall Street; he united with the Philadelphia Drexels and built the Drexel Building...[4]

The year of the panic is corrected to '73 in the 1946 Riverside Press edition of U.S.A., but the sentence is still inaccurate since the Drexel Building was built in 1871.[5] At this time, J. P. Morgan had thoughts of retirement at the age of thirty-three. His father needed an American connection to protect his vast loan to the United States, so he encouraged J. P. to go into business with Drexel of Philadelphia.[6]

> In the panic of '93
> at no inconsiderable profit to himself
> Morgan saved the U.S. Treasury[7]

He made exactly $295,652.93, which Allen says was a rather small amount considering the sums of money involved and the extent of Morgan's interests.[8] "He...liked to take pretty actresses yachting. Each Corsair

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[1] Ibid., p. 27.
[2] U.S.A., II, p. 337.
[3] Allen, op. cit., p. 38.
[4] U.S.A., II, p. 337.
[5] Allen, op. cit., p. 37.
[6] Ibid., pp. 36-37.
[7] U.S.A., II, p. 338.
[8] Allen, op. cit., p. 125.

was a finer vessel than the last."[1] Allen hints that Morgan did invite a number of women to his yachts, but he does not describe them nor indicate their professions. Corsair was the common name of three yachts, each larger than the preceding one.

> The last year of his life he went up the Nile on a dahabeeyah and spent a long time staring at the great columns of the Temple of Karnak.[2]

Here Dos Passos has put together some widely disparate events and given them an imaginative interpretation. In 1877, the Morgan family had been photographed visiting the Temple of Karnak and it is possible that the then young J. P. might have been caught staring at the columns. In the last year of his life (1913), Morgan again went up the Nile, but not on a dahabeeyah, which the dictionary identifies as a Nile houseboat. Instead, he travelled in a specially built all-steel river steamer.[3]

Dos Passos quotes Morgan's answer to the questions of the members of the Pujo Committee during the investigation of the Money Trust: "Yes, I did what seemed to me to be for the best interests of the country."[4] The investigation by this committee indicated to what extent the economy of the country was involved with a few of the financial magnates of Wall Street. Morgan actually had more influence on financial affairs than did the United States government. After this investigation, renewed agitation resulted in the adoption of the Federal Reserve System. The account

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 339.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 339.

[3] Allen, op. cit., p. 2.

[4] U.S.A., II, p. 340.

ends:

> (Wars and panics on the stock exchange,
> machinegunfire and arson,
> bankruptcies, warloans,
> starvation, lice, cholera and typhus:
> good growing weather for the House of Morgan)[1]

While Morgan did profit from wars through his great loans and from some, but not all, bankruptcies and panics, the "good growing weather" seems to have been peace, good times, rapid expansion of the economy, and the lack of Federal banking and anti-monopoly laws.

Joe Hill

Dos Passos' Biography of Joe Hill leads the reader to the supposition that Joe Hill was framed and executed for murder because of his labor activities. It is difficult to determine what actually happened in this case, but the contemporary accounts give a different interpretation of the story. Joe Hill, or Joseph Hillstrom, arrived in Bingham, Utah to help organize a branch of the I.W.W. A grocer, Morrison, was shot to death during what appeared to be an attempt to rob his store. There was an exchange of gunfire and one of the two men who fled the scene appeared to stagger as though he had been hit. A few hours later, Joe Hill received medical treatment in a nearby town for a gunshot wound in the chest. When the doctor became suspicious and asked for an explanation, he was told that Hill had been shot in the bedroom of a married woman who could not be identified for obvious reasons.[2] There seems to have been no feeling in the contemporary accounts that Hill was framed.

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 340.

[2] "A Governor Under Fire," The Outlook, December 1, 1915, p. 769.

The Dos Passos account reads:

> The angel Moroni moved the hearts of the Mormons to decide it was Joe Hill shot a grocer named Morrison. The Swedish consul and President Wilson tried to get him a new trial but the angel Moroni moved the hearts of the supreme court of the State of Utah to sustain the verdict of guilty. He was in jail a year, went on making up songs. In November 1915 he was stood up against the wall in the jail yard in Salt Lake City.[1]

The "angel Moroni" is one of the prophets of the Book of Mormon; there was no apparent relationship between the Mormon faith and the case. Dos Passos is merely using the name as a rhetorical device. Dos Passos says that "Joe Hill stood up against the wall of the jail yard, looked into the muzzles of the guns and gave the word to fire."[2] This statement, too, is a bit of romance. Hill struggled to free himself when he was taken out of jail, was actually strapped into a chair for the execution. He did, however, finally call for the fatal shots to be fired.[3]

The suggestion that both the Swedish consul and President Wilson were concerned about the fate of Joe Hill is misleading in its implication that their interference was a commentary on the guilt or innocence of the subject. The Swedish consul intervened because there existed the question of Hill's citizenship. He had come over to America from Sweden and it was not known whether he was ever made an American citizen. President Wilson echoed the request of the Swedish consul as a gesture toward international relations and not from a sense that Joe Hill was being framed in the courts of Utah. The real merits of the case remain buried unless we

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 423.

[2] U.S.A., II, p. 423.

[3] Ralph Chaplin, Wobbly (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 189.

are willing to accept the verdict of the court. The I.W.W. members in the area threatened violence and Governor Spry of Utah was threatened with personal attack unless he granted a stay of execution. Unlike the Centralia, Haymarket, and Sacco-Vanzetti cases, this one has been ignored by the scholarly historians of labor injustice. Even Ralph Chaplin, himself a member of the I.W.W., refers to his account which is favorable to Joe Hill as "The I.W.W. version of the story."[1] He then reprints Hill's protestation of innocence and says:

> Only an innocent man with nothing to fear from a fair verdict would have had the courage to declare, "I do not want a pardon or commutation of sentence. I want a new trial."[2]

Chaplin does not print the facts of the case nor the evidence by which Hill was convicted; the above assertion does not constitute any real reason for granting a new trial. Hill's renunciation of a commutation or a pardon is meaningless since there was no chance that he would receive either. The world-wide publicity which the case received brought it sufficiently to the attention of those who normally point out instances of injustice to radicals. Their subsequent silence suggests that this was not a clear-cut case. The Dos Passos version makes it clearly an instance of the miscarriage of justice, but until more of the actual facts are available this version cannot be verified.

Wesley Everest

Everest was one of the principals in the unfortunate Centralia

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[1] Ibid., p. 186.

[2] Ibid., p. 187.

affair which occurred in Centralia, Washington on Memorial Day, 1918. An I.W.W. hall was raided by a Citizens Protective League; three men of the League were killed by rifle fire from the Hall. Wesley Everest, who was armed, and eleven other members of the I.W.W. were jailed and Everest was taken from the jail and lynched the same night. Dos Passos, in the main, agrees with more conventional accounts of this affair. Of the initial encounter, he says, "Grimm and an exsoldier were hit."[1] Actually three men from the Protective League were killed by rifle fire from the I.W.W. Hall; they were Warren O. Grimm, Ben Casagranda, and Arthur McElfrish.[2] Dos Passos' account reads:

> The Coroner at his inquest thought it was a great joke.
> He reported that Wesley Everest had broken out of jail and run to the Chehalis River bridge and tied a rope around his neck and jumped off, finding the rope too short he'd climbed back and fastened on a longer one, had jumped off again, broke his neck and shot himself full of holes.[3]

Actually, there was no inquest; the sheriff allegedly reported the incident: "Everest broke out of jail, went to the Chehalis River bridge, and committed suicide. He jumped off with a rope around his neck and then shot himself full of holes." The multiple rope business was not a part of the sheriff's facetious account, but of the actual lynching. According to Murray's account, "his killers twice thought the rope too short, were satisfied with a third." Dos Passos continues, "They jammed the mangled wreckage into a packing box and buried it." In truth, four of

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[1] U.S.A., II, p. 459.

[2] Robert K. Murray, Red Scare (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota, 1955), p. 183.

[3] U.S.A., II, p. 461.

his comrades in the jail buried him.[1] Everest was emasculated on the way to the lynching, and in every respect the events are a travesty of American order and justice. Dos Passos, however, omits the fact that three men from the Protective League were killed.

Frederick Winslow Taylor

Dos Passos describes Taylor's early years in which he began the studies of time and motion. These same studies led to Taylor's theories of scientific management. Dos Passos continues the account of Taylor's rise in industry and the objections on the part of both labor and management to his techniques. Dos Passos states that Taylor was fired by the new owners of Bethlehem Steel because he increased the pay scale in accordance with the increase in efficiency.[2] Taylor was actually fired by the Company on May 1, 1901, and the new owners, including Schwab whom Dos Passos mentions, did not buy the company until August, 1901.[3] Taylor was released from the company for a variety of reasons. In the first place, he was a short-tempered man who had a way of over-riding the objections of others and of insisting on his own way; secondly, his new ideas of scientific management were startling to management and labor alike. The officials of the company were puzzled by his emphasis on coordinating activities; previously they had acted more or less arbitrarily in the management of their own particular responsibilities. Labor leaders

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[1] Murray, op. cit., p. 184.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 23f.

[3] Frank Barkley Copley, Frederick W. Taylor (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1923), II, 153f.

were also suspicious and felt that Taylor was getting increased production from their men without giving them adequate compensation. There were, in addition, the usual groups hostile to any change and full of jokes about Taylor's assistants who did nothing but stand by the working men with timing devices and notebooks. Taylor also made some expensive errors while retooling the company for his speed-up techniques. His personality and the long history of opposition to him caused the original owners to dismiss him before the sale of the company. In this instance, Dos Passos is mistaken both as to the time of the dismissal and the reasons for it. His implication seems clear--that the greed of the owners in the one matter of increased pay for workers was the reason for Taylor's release. Dos Passos, in several passages, contrasts the "skilled mechanics" of the past with the "plain handyman" which Taylor allegedly wished to create for future industrial operations. In this instance, Dos Passos refers to the theory that modern industrial methods did away with the skilled craftsman and substituted for him an automaton who constantly repeated one small operation.

The account in U.S.A. ends in a manner more dramatic than the facts justify:

> Pneumonia developed; the nightnurse heard him winding his watch; on the morning of his fiftyninth birthday, when the nurse went into his room to look at him at four-thirty, he was dead with his watch in his hand.[1]

Taylor owned a particularly fine Swiss watch in which he took a certain amount of pride. Each morning he wound the watch and it became a kind of

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 25.

joke in the hospital since his timing techniques were well known. The biographer of Taylor records his end with less dramatic flourish than does Dos Passos.

> About half past four he was heard to wind his watch. It was an unusual hour, but nothing was thought of it. Not until half an hour later did the nurse enter the room, to find that he had died there alone.[1]

Henry Ford

The Biography begins with the quotation from a feature story which appeared in the Detroit New Tribune on February 4, 1900.[2] It describes a trial run of one of Ford's early automobiles; the quoted paragraph ends with the statement, "As she ran on there was a clattering behind, the new noise of the automobile."[3] The Biography of Ford ends with a description of his antiquarian interests--the rebuilding of his father's old farmhouse, the restoration of early American structures, and the construction of Greenfield Village which was to resemble an older American town. The phrase, "the new noise of the automobile," has come to symbolize the rapid changes in American life which Ford distrusts and which he helped bring about with the manufacture of cheap automobiles and his adoption of mass production methods.

Dos Passos has misstated a few minor facts; for example, he reports that Ford drove his automobile, the 999, a mile in thirty-nine and

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[1]Copley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 452.

[2]Allan Nevins, Ford, the Times, the Man, the Company (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 180.

[3]U.S.A., III, p. 47.

four-fifths seconds.[1] Ford drove the car at the rate of a mile in one minute and eight seconds.[2] Barney Oldfield managed to beat this mark when he took over racing and trial driving for Ford.[3] Dos Passos describes the workers at the Ford plant as being dissatisfied, although according to Nevins, Ford seems to have been no better and no worse than the other automobile manufacturers in the Detroit area. Sward gives a different account and bears out the Dos Passos version. According to some observers, Ford's adoption of the "five dollar day" represented the most advanced labor policy in the world. This plan was adopted and announced on January 9, 1914, a depression year. The prevailing wage rate at the time was $2.30 per day.[4] After recognizing the five dollar day, Dos Passos adds, "(of course it turned out that there were strings to it...)"[5] The strings referred to by Dos Passos consisted mainly of the activities of the Ford Sociology Department, which determined the workers qualified for the profit sharing plan. Dos Passos describes the qualified workers as:

> ...good, clean American workmen
> who didn't drink or smoke cigarettes or read or think,
> and who didn't commit adultery
> and whose wives didn't take in boarders[6]

These qualifications, far from being exaggerated, are actually understated.

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 49.

[2] Nevins, op. cit., p. 217.

[3] Ibid., p. 218.

[4] Ibid., p. 539.

[5] U.S.A., III, p. 51.

[6] U.S.A., III, p. 51.

It was also necessary that the recipient be over twenty-two years of age, and the head of a household, that he practice thrift, and be of good character.[1]

As sometimes happens in the U.S.A. Biographies, the time sequence of events has been scrambled in the account. Dos Passos has a statement about Ford's purchase of the Dearborn Independent in order to campaign against cigarette smoking. This is followed by an account of the war in Europe and Ford's attempt to stop the war by the organization of a peace ship. In reality, Ford bought the Dearborn Independent on January 11, 1919.[2] Rosika Schwimmer sold him on the idea of the peace ship on November 17, 1915.[3] It was shortly after this date that Ford announced to the newspapers that they would have the boys out of the trenches by Christmas.[4] On December 4, 1915, the ship sailed from Hoboken amidst a field day of ridicule on the part of the metropolitan press. It is difficult to separate fact from fiction in this bizarre undertaking. Most of the persons whom Ford had originally invited, such as the President of Harvard and other figures of like dignity, had declined the invitation and he now found himself with a collection of pacifists, do-gooders, and eccentrics of all sorts.

Dos Passos mentions that Bryan went down to see them off and made a farewell speech; this constituted an impressive sanction, since

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[1]Keith Sward, The Legend of Henry Ford (Toronto: Rinehart, 1948), pp. 58-59.

[2]Ibid., p. 140.

[3]Ibid., pp. 84-85.

[4]Ibid., p. 86.

Bryan had resigned as United States Secretary of State only four months before. "An eloping couple was married by a platoon of ministers in the saloon."[1] Actually, correspondent Berton Braley, sent to accompany the ship at the last minute, arrived with his bride-to-be, but they were not eloping. They were married in the saloon, but by the Reverend Jenkin Lloyd Jones, who, it turned out, had no license to officiate in New Jersey. The couple was married again by the captain after the ship reached the high seas.[2] "Mr. Zero...dove into the North River and swam after the boat."[3] This man was Urban J. Ledoux, a welfare worker; his motives were never known. It may have been that he wanted to go along or that he merely wished publicity. He was fished out of the river by a tug and returned to the Bowery.[4] Bud Fisher, creator of Mutt and Jeff, also went along and did a daily strip for the newspapers with Mutt and Jeff as members of the peace delegation.[5]

After indicating that the peace ship had arrived at Christiansand, Norway, Dos Passos says: "Mrs. Ford and the management sent an Episcopal dean after him who brought him home under wraps."[6] Actually, Dr. Marquis, the Episcopal dean, sailed with the Oscar II, Ford's ship. He was sent along because officials of the Ford Company became aware that

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 53.

[2] Mark Sullivan, Our Times (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), V, 175.

[3] U.S.A., III, p. 53.

[4] Sward, op. cit., p. 89.

[5] Sullivan, op. cit., p. 178.

[6] U.S.A., III, p. 53.

Ford's attempt to stop the war in this fashion was making him the laughing stock of the world. Dr. Marquis apparently was supposed to stop Ford if he could and if he could not, to lend as much dignity to the procedure as he possibly could. He was successful in persuading Ford to return to the United States.

Dos Passos mentioned Ford's participation in the manufacture of war materials. Ford at first had refused to take war contracts and said that he would not manufacture any munitions. When the United States entered the war, he began manufacturing Eagle boats, Army trucks, and other instruments of war. "He announced to the press that he'd turn over his war profits to the government, but there's no record that he ever did."[1] This statement is confirmed in other accounts of Ford's wartime activities.[2]

"One thing he brought back from his trip was the Protocols of the Elders of Zion."[3] Ford returned from the ill-fated peace voyage early in 1916, but he did not begin his campaign to enlighten the world on the iniquities of the Jews until May 22, 1920.[4] The Protocols of the Elders of Zion mentioned by Dos Passos as having been one result of the voyage to Europe of the Oscar II were actually picked up in New York. Liebold, one of Ford's most important secretaries, was sent to open a New York office specifically for the purpose of collecting information about the

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 53.

[2] Sward, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

[3] U.S.A., III, p. 53.

[4] Sward, op. cit., pp. 146-148.

Jews. The Protocols were forged Russian documents of 1905 vintage which purported to be an account of a Jewish plot to take over the world. It had been used as a diversionary tactic by the Czar in the unsuccessful Russian revolution in 1905, and was then forgotten until someone managed to sell it to Ford's agents in New York sometime in 1921.[1] This and other anti-Semitic material appeared for years in Ford's Dearborn Independent. Sometime later Ford denied the charge of anti-Semitism, and it was claimed for him that he had been victimized by his editors, who had adopted such a policy for the paper without his knowledge.

"Henry Ford denounced the Jews and ran for senator and sued the Chicago Tribune for libel."[2] Ford did not begin his campaign against the Jews until May of 1920. He ran for Senator on the Democratic ticket in 1918 in Michigan.[3] He sued the Chicago Tribune for a story which was printed in 1916 calling Ford an "ignorant idealist" and an "anarchist." The case came to trial in Mt. Clemens, Michigan, in 1919. The defense tried repeatedly to get Ford to read something before the court in an attempt to prove the truth of the statement concerning his ignorance. In the face of these repeated attempts, Ford announced that he rarely read anything other than the headlines in the newspapers or countered by saying that he had failed to bring his spectacles. He was finally granted $.06 for damages and both sides claimed a victory in the case.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 148.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 54.

[3] Sward, op. cit., p. 118.

[4] Ibid., pp. 103-106.

> In 1922 there started the Ford boom for President (high wages, waterpower, industry scattered to the small towns) that was skillfully pricked behind the scenes
> by another crackerbarrel philosopher,
> Calvin Coolidge[1]

Dos Passos does not give the details, but they seem necessary for a full understanding of this passage and very likely would have been necessary to most readers of this volume on its first publication in 1936. During World War I, the United States government had started extensive development of the potential hydroelectric power in the Tennessee Valley. As a result of the Armistice, the development of Muscle Shoals and other projects was abandoned. The primary work--centralization of the land ownership and the building of some necessary dams--had already been done. Ford hoped to get control of large parts of the Tennessee Valley development in order to set up industry. His interest in the Tennessee Valley coincided with the early twenties' Ford boom for Presidency. President Coolidge, then completing Harding's unfinished term, discouraged Ford from running by hinting at the possibility that the Federal government would convey to him its interest in the Tennessee Valley holdings. Ford abandoned his propsects for the presidency, but he did not get the Tennessee Valley project either.[2]

> Idle hands cracked and chapped with the cold of that coldest March day of 1932,
> Started marching from Detroit to Dearborn, asking for work and the American Plan, all they could think of at Ford's was machineguns.
> The country was sound, but they mowed the marchers down,
> They shot four of them dead.[3]

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[1] U.S.A., III, pp. 54-55.

[2] Sward, op. cit., pp. 124-25.

[3] U.S.A., III, p. 56.

This quotation refers to a march of about two hundred unemployed persons which occurred in February, 1932. The idea of the march was to emphasize the plight of these jobless men, and it was thought that a march to Ford's huge plant in Dearborn would be the most dramatic action that could be taken. There was, apparently, no thought of property destruction or anything other than a demonstration for jobs. Ford guards, armed with tear gas and pistols, stationed themselves along the high fence around the Dearborn plant and then fired into the marchers. The four men killed were Joe York, George Bussell, Coleman Levy, and Joe DeBlasio.[1] Dos Passos refers to the "private army" hired by Ford to protect his plant. This was the so-called Ford Service led by Harry Bennett which protected the Ford plants against the unemployed and against union organizers as well.

Thorstein Veblen

The account is factually accurate and coincides with that of the best biography of Veblen to date, Joseph Dorfman's Thorstein Veblen and His America.

Isadora Duncan

The account of Isadora Duncan presents a picture of a woman in rebellion against conventional society, but at the same time presents the woman as indulging her varied appetities without being willing to pay for the privilege. From all accounts, the Duncan family did lead a precarious

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[1] Sward, op. cit., pp. 235-236.

financial existence for a long time, but not to the extent that it appears in Dos Passos' account. He says:

> Whenever they were put out of their lodgings for nonpayment of rent Isadora led them to the best hotel and engaged a suite and sent the waiters scurrying for lobster and champagne and fruits outofseason; nothing was too good for Artists, Duncans, Greeks.[1]

The Duncan family, Isadora, her mother, brother, and sister, were in London when this incident happened. They were put out of their lodgings for non-payment of rent. Since it was spring, they had remained in the parks for three days before Isadora was led to this desperate stratagem. She then did go to a good hotel, but ordered "coffee, buckwheat cakes and other American delicacies."[2] This happened only once; it was not their customary practice, as Dos Passos implies. "Isadora and her mother and her brother Raymond went about Europe in sandals and fillets and Greek tunics."[3] Raymond did make sandals for the family for use in their Paris studio, but the Greek dress is an exaggeration except that Isadora wore it on the stage. While they were visiting in Greece, they did wear the traditional costume.[4]

> She went to America in triumph as she'd always planned and harried the home philistines with a tour; her followers were all the time getting pinched for wearing Greek tunics; she found no freedom for Art in America.[5]

Her first American tour after some success in Europe was with an eighty

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[1] U.S.A., III, pp. 155-56.

[2] Isadora Duncan, My Life (Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1927), p. 52.

[3] U.S.A., III, p. 156.

[4] Duncan, op. cit., p. 124.

[5] U.S.A., III, pp. 158-9.

piece orchestra conducted by Walter Damrosch. The tour began in July, 1908. At first she was neglected and unsuccessful. Some ministers objected to her dance in Washington, D.C., but President Roosevelt voiced his approval.[1] This tour was neither a triumph for Isadora nor harassment of philistines--nor is there any evidence that either she or her followers were prosecuted.

Characteristically, Dos Passos has mixed up the time sequence of some events to give more point to what he is saying.

> When October split the husk off the old world she...danced the Marche Slave
> and waved red cheesecloth under the noses of the Boston old ladies in Symphony Hall
> But when she went to Russia full of hope...it was too difficult.[2]

"October" refers to the Russian Revolution of 1917, after which Isadora did a dance to the music of the Marche Slave in the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.[3] The second event happened after her Russian trip, probably around 1921-1922; she danced with a red scarf (referred to by Dos Passos as red cheese cloth) in Boston. She had gone to Russia in 1921, hoping to start a dancing school like the one she had started in Paris; however, the Soviet Government withdrew financial support.[4]

> She picked up a yellowhaired poet
> and brought him back
> to Europe and the grand hotels.
> Yessenin smashed up a whole floor of the Adlon in Berlin in one drunken party, he ruined the Continental in Paris. When he went back

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[1]Duncan, op. cit., pp. 216-19 and p. 273.

[2]U.S.A., III, p. 160.

[3]Duncan, op. cit., p. 334.

[4]Lloyd Morris, Not So Long Ago (New York: Random House, 1949), p. 62.

to Russia he killed himself.[1]

This man was Sergei Essenine, the only man Isadora ever married. He was a violent and erratic person, but it is not recorded that he ever "smashed up a whole floor" of a hotel.[2] They both returned to Russia and were divorced; "some years later Essenine committed suicide."[3] In these two instances, the hard-boiled style has done less than justice to the events. While Isadora did have an affinity for both progressive causes and fair haired young men, her attitude is not adequately to be characterized as thumb-to-nose.

Rudolph Valentino

This Biography has as little relation to the actual life and feelings of the famous movie star as most newspaper reports about screen figures. Dos Passos' account is full of inaccuracies and fantasy. His account makes Valentino sound like a ne'er-do-well Italian boy who could not be managed by his parents and was therefore shipped off to America to fend for himself. There he found an opportunity to indulge his taste for tango dancing and bright lights until he wangled an opening in Hollywood and became the idol of all American women. He is presented as a woman chaser and profligate. A more factual and sympathetic biography gives a different picture of Valentino, which indicates a confused boy of nineteen entering a strange country in which he could not even speak the

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 160.

[2] William Bolitho, Twelve Against the Gods (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1929), p. 323.

[3] Morris, op. cit., p. 62.

language.[1] He was not discarded by his parents; his father died when he was eleven; his mother retained throughout her life a real regard for him and an interest in his prospects. He had attempted and failed to enter the Italian Cavalry and the Navy, and had finally managed to graduate with honors from an agricultural school. As a result of some youthful indiscretions, lack of opportunity for financial advancement, and the fears of his uncles that he would disgrace the family name, he was shipped off to America with a stake of eight hundred pounds. It remained his ambition to make a career in landscape gardening and eventually to return to Italy with enough money to buy a farm.

He learned dancing while in New York and took an interim job as a dancing partner in Maxim's Cafe. Dos Passos identifies his first partner as Jean Acker, whom Valentino later married, but actually he did not meet her until he arrived in Hollywood. His early dancing partners were Bonnie Glass and Joan Sawyer.[2] Dos Passos says that Valentino was stranded on the coast and headed for Hollywood. Actually, he was stranded while on a tour with an unsuccessful acting company. There remained enough money to give the troupe fares home. Valentino asked for a ticket to San Francisco in the hope of getting started on a farm in California.[3] Dos Passos sums up the marital difficulties of Valentino in a few lines.

> He married his old vaudeville partner, divorced her, married the adopted daughter of a millionaire, went into lawsuits with the producers who were debasing the art of the screen, spent a million

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[1]Alan Arnold, Valentino (London: Hutchinson, 1952).

[2]Ibid., pp. 38-40.

[3]Ibid., p. 41.

dollars on one European trip.[1]

Valentino married Jean Acker, with whom he had never worked. She was a highly successful screen star who had been recently jilted. They were sympathetic with each other and the marriage was largely egged on by mutual friends. It resulted in a separation at the end of one month. His next wife, Natacha Rambova, was the step-daughter of the cosmetics millionaire, Richard Hudnut, who had been born Winifred Shaunessy. Although they were subsequently divorced, there is strong reason to believe that Valentino was devoted to her and hoped to the end of his life for reconciliation. The lengthy and expensive law suits with Famous Players-Lasky Corporation were motivated by the desire of Valentino and Natacha to select the stories in which Valentino would star and to have a greater part in production decisions. The suit had nothing to do with "debasing the art of the screen." On the European tour, it is estimated that the Valentinos spent almost $100,000, not one million, much of it for clothing and art objects for use in their studio for costumes and sets.

Dos Passos says, "When the Chicago Tribune called him a pink powderpuff..."[2] Actually, this editorial concerned a men's washroom of a new public ballroom. The washroom contained a vending-machine which dispensed pink talcum powder; the editorial writer attributed this foppishness to the Valentino influence with the suggestion that Valentino was homosexual or at least effeminate.[3] Valentino was shocked at the impli-

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 191.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 191.

[3] Arnold, op. cit., pp. 150-51.

cations of the editorial and even H. L. Mencken was sympathetic to Valentino because of this unpredictable and unjustified attack.[1] Valentino, like other famous persons and particularly those concerned with motion pictures, was the object of numerous publicity stunts. Some of these stunts stemmed from a desire on the part of the distributors of his pictures to stimulate audience interest and others from the hunger for sensational copy on the part of those occupied with getting out a daily newspaper. Much of the Valentino "story" was actually a fabrication stirred up by the two groups mentioned and given just enough factual basis by the lack of judgment of a man both young and in a strange country.

The Wright Brothers

The Biography begins with an exact quotation of the telegram which the Wright brothers sent to their father announcing the first successful flight of a machine which raised itself from the ground by its own power. It ends with the reminder of "the snorting impact of bombs and the whine and rattle of shrapnel."[2] In spite of the reminder of the use to which this invention was put, the account emphasizes the feeling of the marvel of flight finally accomplished by the two bicycle repairmen. The selection of Kitty Hawk itself as the site of the first flight illustrates their naivete. They discovered through a study of weather reports that the average wind velocity at Kitty Hawk (which had the other desired characteristics) was fifteen miles per hour, which they considered ideal.

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[1] H. L. Mencken, Prejudices: Sixth Series (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), pp. 307-309.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 279 and p. 284.

for their purposes. They did not realize what was considered in the "average" wind--that it was attained by days of sixty mile per hour gales mixed with days of complete calm.[1] In general, this Biography is accurate in the presentation of its facts.

Frank Lloyd Wright

This Biography is in striking contrast to the account of Isadora Duncan. Both individuals had extensive domestic difficulties, but Wright's are presented as "the disasters that would have smashed most men forever,"[2] rather than the confused living which is suggested in the Duncan Biography. Dos Passos mentions with respect the dreams of Wright--Broadacres City, a new concept of modern building which makes obsolete both the city and the rural area; or "the Usonian city," Wright's new name for the United States, taken from the words "union" and "use." Dos Passos' tone here is different from that used in discussing the values of Duncan. Wright is presented as a man to be admired because he had strength enough to live outside the conventional limits of behavior.

William Randolph Hearst

The life of Hearst is summed up in the lines:

> Caesar's life like his was a millionaire prank. Perhaps W. R. had read of republics ruined before;
> Alcibiades, too, was a practical joker.[3]

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[1] F. C. Kelly, The Wright Brothers (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1943), p. 55.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 432.

[3] U.S.A., III, p. 470.

According to Dos Passos, Hearst

> ...bought the Morning Journal
> and started his race with the Pulitzers
> as to who would cash in most
> on the gee whizz emotion.[1]

This expression was originated by Hearst editor Arthur McEwen, who said that reader response to page one of the newspaper should be "gee whiz," to page two, "Holy Moses!" and to page three, "God Almighty!"[2]

> his editorials hammered at malefactors of great wealth, trusts, the G.O.P., Mark Hanna and McKinley so shrilly that when McKinley was assassinated most Republicans in some way considered Hearst responsible for his death.[3]

Hearst's New York Journal editorial on McKinley's re-election said, "If bad men cannot be got rid of except by killing, then the killing must be done." Another New York newspaper reported that Czolgosz had with him when he shot McKinley several inflammatory clippings from the New York Journal.[4] The suggestion of Hearst's responsibility was much more definite than Dos Passos makes it sound, although no investigation or charges were made officially.

> In nineteen five he ran for Mayor of New York on a municipalownership ticket.
> In nineteen six he very nearly got the governorship away from the solemnwhiskered Hughes.[5]

In the first election, he actually won but Tammany thugs threw the ballots

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[1] U.S.A., III, p. 471.

[2] Stewart H. Holbrook, The Age of the Moguls (Garden City: Doubleday, 1953), p. 311.

[3] U.S.A., III, p. 472.

[4] Ferdinand Lundberg, Imperial Hearst (New York: Equinox, 1936), pp. 89-94.

[5] U.S.A., III, p. 473.

into the East River. When a recount was demanded, new ballots were hastily marked. In 1906, however, he did not have a chance to win. He was the only Democrat who lost; Murphy, the boss of Tammany Hall, was against him and had instructed his aides that Hearst was not to win.[1]

> He managed to get his competitor James Gordon Bennett up in court for running indecent ads in the New York Herald and fined $25,000, a feat which hardly contributed to his popularity in certain quarters.
>
> In nineteen eight he was running revelations about Standard Oil, the Archbold letters that proved that the trusts were greasing the palms of the politicians in a big way.[2]

The indecent ads were thinly veiled assignations with prostitutes; this trial against Bennett was held in 1907 and he was fined $31,000.[3] Hearst had bribed a personal servant of John D. Archbold, the President of the Standard Oil Company, to bring him the contents of the office waste-baskets. By this means, he got copies of letters which incriminated several Senators in having favored legislation or opposed it according to the interests of the Standard Oil Company and which indicated that they had received large amounts of money. Hearst released incorrect copies of these letters between the years 1908-1912; he had obtained them in 1905.[4]

In at least one part of this Biography, Dos Passos seems strangely sympathetic with at least some aspects of Hearst's career.

> Sometimes he was high enough above the battle to see clear. He threw all the power of his papers, all his brilliance as a publisher

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[1]Lundberg, op. cit., pp. 104 and 118.

[2]U.S.A., III, p. 474.

[3]Oliver Carlson and Ernest Sutherland Bates, Hearst Lord of San Simeon (New York: Viking Press, 1936), p. 148.

[4]Ibid., p. 165.

> into an effort to keep the country sane and neutral during the first world war.[1]

While it is true that Hearst did not care for the European War, his papers were warning that Japan meant to attack the United States. He advocated war with Mexico. His papers attacked England and supported various Irish-American and German-American causes. Hearst owned Das Morgen Journal, New York's German language newspaper. His International News Service reporter at the front, William B. Hale, was a former employee at the German Embassy in Washington, D.C.[2] Dos Passos says, "for his pains he was razzed as a pro-German." He was pro-German.[3] His activities in this period can hardly be compassed within the "effort to keep the country sane and neutral," which Dos Passos suggests. On September 28, 1915, Hearst's New York American called for war with Japan.[4] Hearst was motivated by a personal hatred for Great Britain in his pro-German attitudes in World War I and also by the fact that his papers were widely read by Americans of Irish and German origin.

Dos Passos quickly indicates a change of heart on the part of Hearst,

> by coming out for conscription
> and printing his papers with red white and blue borders and with little Americian [sic] flags at either end of the dateline and continually trying to stir up trouble across the Rio Grande.[5]

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[1] U.S.A., III, pp. 474 and 477.

[2] Holbrook, op. cit., p. 315.

[3] Lundberg, op. cit., pp. 217, 226, and 234.

[4] Carlson and Bates, op. cit., p. 183.

[5] U.S.A., III, p. 475.

While Hearst's papers were often critical of events in Mexico, the significant effort on his part to stir up trouble occurred ten years later in 1927 when some clumsy forgeries almost involved the United States in a war with Mexico.[1] From November 14 to December 10, 1927, the Hearst newspapers published a series of documents purporting to be an account of a Mexican plot to bribe four American Senators with $1,215,000. Hearst paid $20,000 to Avila, a known agent, for the forgeries.[2] The senators implicated were: Borah, Heflin, Norris, and La Follette. There is some suggestion in one report of the affair that Hearst may have originally planted the forgeries though the evidence is meagre. "With one exception only Hearst's enemies were discredited by the forgeries."[3]

> The people of New York City backed him up by electing Hearst's candidate for Mayor, Honest John Hylan,
> but Al Smith while he was still the sidewalks' hero rapped Hearst's knuckles when he tried to climb back onto the Democratic soundtruck.[4]

This cryptic account of Hearst's political maneuvering shortly after World War I needs some explanation. Hylan was elected Mayor of New York with Hearst's support in 1917. In 1918, Al Smith was elected governor of New York with the support of the Hearst newspapers. In 1922, Hearst wanted the nomination for governor for himself, but Smith refused to accept the Democratic nomination for the Senate with Hearst on the ticket. A compromise was worked out in which Smith accepted the nomination for

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[1] Holbrook, op. cit., p. 316.

[2] Lundberg, op. cit., p. 286.

[3] Ibid., p. 287.

[4] U.S.A., III, pp. 475-6.

re-election as Governor and Copeland, a Hearst selection, was agreed upon for the Senate nomination. The knuckle rapping was not as effective as it might have been.[1]

> In spite of enormous expenditures on forged documents he failed to bring about war with Mexico.
> In spite of spraying hundreds of thousands of dollars into movie-studios he failed to put over his favorite moviestar as America's sweetheart.[2]

The first statement has already been commented on above; the "enormous expenditures" must refer to the $20,000 paid by Hearst for the documents. It probably did not strike the man who left an estate valued at $400,000,000 as enormous. The second statement refers to Marion Davies, whose liaison with Hearst was well known. The movie studios were International Films, owned by Hearst, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, partly owned by Hearst, and Warner Brothers, which also was partly owned by Hearst. He also exerted a considerable influence in the movie colony through the power of the gossip column of his employee, Louella Parsons.

Samuel Insull

Insull's career is accurately traced from his first job in America as Edison's private secretary to his flight and eventual ignominious return and trial. Edison appointed him president of the Chicago Edison Company. In fifteen years he took over other utilities until the companies he controlled served customers in 3,500 communities scattered over thirty-nine states. He controlled a twelfth of the power output of

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[1] Lundberg, op. cit., pp. 248-255.

[2] U.S.A., III, p. 476.

America.[1] When his paper empire crashed, it brought down hundreds of lesser men. Dos Passos' account includes his subsequent trial on charges of embezzlement after Federal agents had pursued him all over Europe from October, 1932, until April, 1934, when he was finally captured. Insull, after admitting to an accounting error of ten million dollars, was acquitted. He was granted a pension of $21,000 per year by the directors of the companies he formerly controlled.

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[1] Holbrook, op. cit., p. 234.

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