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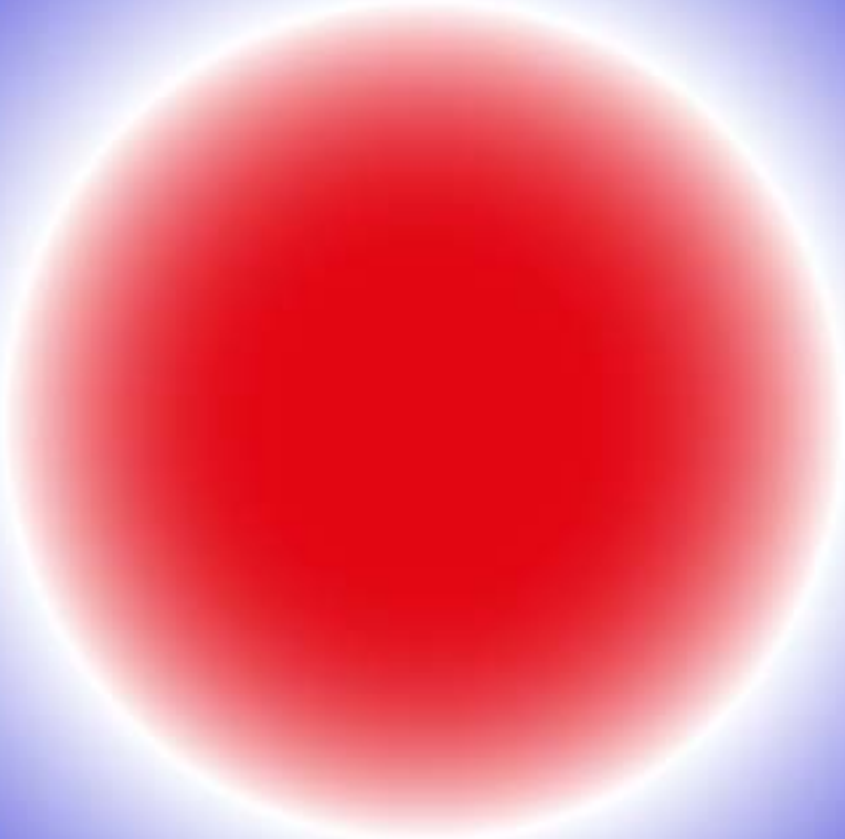

John Dos Passos: The Business of a Writer

Miguel Oliveira
(Guest Editor)

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Content

John Dos Passos:
The Business of a Writer

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1 Scholars became interested in the life and writing of John Dos Passos as early as the 1920s. In 1931, for instance, a German Ph.D. student, Werner Neuse, decided to work on Dos Passos's development as a writer at the *Hessische Ludwigs-Universität*, Giessen. At the time, Dos Passos had not yet completed his masterpiece, the U.S.A. trilogy. Only *The 42nd Parallel* had been published by 1930. *Nineteen Nineteen* appeared two years later, while *The Big Money* was released in 1936. And yet, in the early 1930s, Dos Passos was already a rising star in the literary firmament. He had acquired international fame with novels such as *Three Soldiers* (1921) and *Manhattan Transfer* (1925).

2 Deservedly, Dos Passos entered the canon of world literature with the above-mentioned works and became one of the most influential American authors of the twentieth century. Jean-Paul Sartre's statement that is commonly cited refers to Dos Passos as "the greatest writer" of his days (Sartre, qtd. in Oliveira 16). And yet, the interest of researchers started to ebb soon after. In the late 1930s, critics who adhered to a leftist philosophy condemned Dos Passos when the writer departed from the left—an ideology he had subscribed to until then. His work fell somewhat into oblivion. This changed again in the 1960s and the 1980s. Universities started to reintroduce Dos Passos into their curricula. Many dissertations were produced, whose corpus of analysis was dedicated to Dos Passos's fiction. With the advent of the new millennium a new height of Dos Passos scholarship was reached. Researchers in Australia, Brazil, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the U.S., among others, committed themselves to Dos Passos's life and to his *oeuvre*.

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3 This does not come as a surprise, since Dos Passos's writing enables us to study a wide range of topics. The scrutiny of modernism, politics (with a special emphasis on the dichotomy between communism and capitalism), migration, censorship, architecture and urban life, American lifestyle, tradition and history, music, realism, gender studies (focusing on both the representation of men and women), as well as comparative studies between Dos Passos and other writers shall serve as a few examples of what has been dealt with academically hitherto.

4 This special issue, too, deals with diverse subject matters always placing John Dos Passos at the heart of each article. The title "John Dos Passos: The Business of a Writer" chosen for the compilation of five individual essays published herein is based on an essay authored by Dos Passos, which he entitled: "The Business of a Novelist", printed in April 1934 in the *New Republic*. The general idea behind such a broad caption was to allow the invited scholars to select without restrictions an original research topic, using John Dos Passos's writings (not only his novels) as the anchor point.

5 I feel very honored and privileged that these distinguished Dos Passos scholars accepted my invitation to share their knowledge with us. I am deeply grateful to Lisa Nanney, Rosa María Bautista-Cordero, Fredrik Tydal, and to John Dos Passos Coggin.

6 Since all articles had to pass a double-blind review process, before they could be approved for publication within *AmLit – American Literatures*, I would also like to thank the reviewers. Themselves devoted Dos Passos's scholars, they gave their time to improve this journal's special edition with their suggestions.

7 Last but not least, I feel indebted to *AmLit*'s general editors, for their appreciation and their commitment to publishing this volume. Allow me, if I may, to show my special gratitude to Prof. Dr. Irakli Tskhvediani and to Prof. Dr. Stefan Brandt for having always been open and patient, when I needed their support regarding various concerns at the several stages of this issue's publishing process.

The Contributions in Detail

8 Lisa Nanney has published extensively on John Dos Passos. Her monographs hold a prominent place in Dos Passos scholarship. In her article titled "John Dos Passos and the Modern(ist) Machine" she analyzes how Dos Passos represented and evaluated the machine with both its destructive and advantageous influences on human life. Nanney demonstrates the ways in which the writer embodies his ambivalent attitude towards the machine, recreating the sense of modernity in his plays, modernist novels, and writing for motion pictures.

9 Fredrik Tydal, an outstanding contributor and currently the President of the John Dos Passos Society, in his article titled "Bayonets and Bananas: U.S. Imperialism and the Latin American Fruit Trade in Dos Passos's U.S.A. Trilogy," studies Dos Passos's depiction of U.S. dominance and exploitation of Latin America in U.S.A. He explores the complex manner in which U.S.-Latin American relations are outlined in *The 42nd Parallel*, *Nineteen Nineteen* and *The Big Money*.

10 John Dos Passos Coggin, the grandson of John Dos Passos and co-manager of the John Dos Passos Literary Estate, in his article titled "John Dos Passos and George Orwell: Intersecting Lives, Parallel Politics and Writing," compares his grandfather's political views with those held by George Orwell. Both writers had met during the Spanish Civil War. The article thus provides deep insight into the Dos Passos-Orwell connection and its impact on their political and literary careers.

11 Rosa María Bautista-Cordero is John Dos Passos's Spanish translator and a major researcher on the Spanish Dos Passos censorship files. In her article titled "The Making of a Spanish Dos Passos," she examines the image of Spain in Dos Passos's writings, along with the factors that may have contributed to Dos Passos's central position within the Spanish cultural system to this day.

12 Finally, Miguel Oliveira, who has worked comprehensively on Dos Passos and migration and the writer's Portuguese heritage, explains in his paper "John Dos Passos in the Crosshairs of Censorship: Investigating the Portuguese Censorship Reports during the *Estado Novo*, the Portuguese Dictatorship under António de Oliveira Salazar" why the Brazilian Portuguese translation of John Dos Passos's novel *Adventures of a Young Man* was forbidden during Portugal's authoritarian dictatorship, while a European Portuguese translation was authorized, albeit with cuts.

13 I hope the reader enjoys this special issue dedicated entirely to John Dos Passos who, without doubt, deserves his rank among the most prominent American writers.

Works Cited

Oliveira, Miguel. *John Dos Passos's Influence on Günter Grass: A Study on Two Memory-Writers and Two Distinct Approaches towards Migration as a Literary Theme*. BoD, 2008.

Biography

Miguel Oliveira holds a Ph.D. in American Studies, which he earned with distinction at the University of Lisbon. He has taught at several universities and colleges. From 2003 onwards, he directed the Language Lyceum in Funchal. Oliveira was appointed head of the Forum for Philosophical Studies of the Forum for Sciences, Arts and Culture on Madeira Island. He then worked for the John Dos Passos Studies Centre and the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs of the Madeiran Government. Furthermore, he founded the John Dos Passos's Portuguese Literary Prize and was invited to chair its first jury. In 2007, Oliveira wrote the Portuguese biography of the Nobel Laureate in Literature Günter Grass as well as various scientific monographs on the North-American writer John Dos Passos. He also translated Ödön von Horváth's novel *Jugend ohne Gott* into Portuguese. Oliveira is considered a major figure of Madeiran present-day literature. A selection of his work was included in several anthologies of contemporary Portuguese poets. In 2021, Miguel Oliveira became an Associate Professor at ISG, Lisbon's first Business and Economics School. Additionally, he teaches at the Language School at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon.

John Dos Passos and the Modern(ist) Machine

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University of North California / Georgetown University

Abstract

John Dos Passos's earliest essays decried how modern culture had been dehumanized by the development of what he called "Mechanical Civilization" (1916). The novelist's "business," he wrote, was to oppose its manifestations. This essay traces how the force and image of the machine became signs of these destructive powers in his work of the 1920s and his modernist novels of the 1930s, then explores how he evoked the force of modernity structurally in his work by holding in tension the concept and image of the machine as destroyer with the machine's creative potential. In his iconic *U.S.A.* and in his 1936 unpublished film treatment, "Dreamfactory," he recreates the ambiguous dynamics inherent in one of modernity's most iconic machines, the camera. The treatment demonstrates the problematic tension in the role of artists: They must not only reflect their culture but also acknowledge how they shape and interpret it.

Keywords

Cinema, John Dos Passos, Experimental Theater, Machine, Modernism, Montage.

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1 By 1941, John Dos Passos was clear about how he defined the business of the contemporary writer in his time: "to justify the ways of machinery to man" ("Duty" 205). Nonetheless, during most of his career and especially through the 1930s, when he was writing his most definitively modernist work, he was far less clear about whether the machinery deserved to be justified. But the tension between these conflicting perspectives generated the energy of his innovative, often cautionary recreations of the function of the machine in twentieth-century industrial American culture.

2 In 1935, in "The Writer As Technician," he had cast the writer as the watchdog of individualism against a mechanizing modernity: "At this particular moment in history, when machinery and institutions have so outgrown the ability of the mind to dominate them, we need bold and original thought more than ever. It is the business of writers to supply that thought, and not to make themselves figureheads in political conflicts" (170). A 1916 essay, "A Humble Protest," summarized the complex of intellectual, social, economic, industrial, and governmental forces that threatened individual autonomy with the term "Mechanical Civilization" (31).

3 But even as he was sounding the alarm about the dehumanizing dangers of modernization, he acknowledged its powerful potential: the same early essay that coins the foreboding term "mechanical civilization" asserts that despite its investment in "the worship of . . . Science and Industrialism," it is nonetheless "splendidly inventive" (31). Perhaps this early essay's admiring descriptor is satirical, but such conflicted perceptions persisted and became overt, even internally contradictory, in works across the genres he undertook in the 1920s and 1930s—plays such as *Airways, Inc.*, novels such as *Manhattan Transfer* and *The Big Money*—subtextually revealing a compelling ambivalence about what the machine signified or facilitated in twentieth century culture. This ambivalence extended into his very conception of the writer's vital role in opposing the dehumanizing impact of mechanization. Paradoxically, often positively, the language with which he characterized the writer's "business" invoked the functions of the very dynamos that powered modernity; it was the writer's role to combat these forces. The writer himself, Dos Passos declared in his 1929 *New Masses* essay "The Making of a Writer," has to be "a machine for absorbing and arranging . . . words out of the lives of the people around him" (116). By 1942, the machine that became his metaphor for the writer's function pointed to the technology that for him and for the world had come to epitomize and represent U.S. culture in the machine age: "I cannot see how even the most immortal writer is more than the best possible type of moving picture machine contrived to focus the present moment on the screen of the future" ("Duty" 205).

4 This is the machine—the motion picture camera as recorder and projector—that plays the most ambiguous role in Dos Passos's work, the machine that poses the greatest danger for abuse yet offers the greatest potential to activate the perceiver's critical thinking. In his representation of this machine in his work of the 1930s, his earlier ambivalence achieves its most open and complex expression. In *The Big Money*, written during the late 1930s, at the apex of his modernist innovations, Dos Passos places the industry created by the camera—filmmaking—under brutal and bleak scrutiny. But in "Dreamfactory," an unpublished, unproduced screen treatment he created in 1936 while also working on that final novel of the iconic trilogy, his conflicted consciousness of the camera's possibilities actually generated the work's form, and the form enacts the perils and the potential of motion picture technology. Moving fluidly among the positions of the agent, the object, and the audience of the camera even in a short work of twelve pages, "Dreamfactory" demonstrates the internal contradictions of Dos Passos's perceptions of the machine. The creative engagement among perspectives and contradictions produced a work whose strikingly original form, unique in Dos Passos's *oeuvre*, evokes the aesthetic and ethical questions central to Dos Passos in this pivotal moment—artistically and politically—of his business as a writer.

5 In his earliest published work, Dos Passos had often focused negatively on the global drift toward dehumanization as cultures became increasingly mechanized, even if more technologically sophisticated. As early as his first paid publication, "Against American Literature," in *New Republic* in 1916, he attributed deficiencies in American writing to "an all-enveloping industrialism" (36) that had short-circuited the nation's creative vitality. The same year, in his final essay for the *Harvard Monthly*, he indicted industrialism not only for not affording humankind with greater creative freedom but for actually "[binding] three-fourths of the world . . . in economic slavery" as laborers producing goods so that the "other fourth maybe enslaved" by consumer capitalism ("Humble" 31).

6 This conviction that "mechanical civilization" not only deadened creativity but also generated enslaving systems was a fundamental thematic and aesthetic principle of the experimental theater project Dos Passos helped pioneer in New York in the mid-1920s, the New Playwrights' Theatre. Its introductory manifesto declared that all its productions would be leftist critiques of capitalist dehumanization of the working class staged with non-traditional methods ("Why" xviii). The plays Dos Passos contributed often dramatized his concern with the dehumanizing effects of industrial capitalism and the creation of a hollow myth of success in an America where economic inequality increasingly widened the gap between workers and financial manipulators. His drama *The Garbage Man*, produced in 1926, demonstrates how the ideals

of its protagonist Tom are warped by American myths of success and wealth. Destitute and desperate, Tom robs a bank; afterward, he is stalked by the "garbage man," who identifies himself with "Success" but who is revealed as the protean figure of Death. As the play's arc traces Tom's spiritual downfall, "the sobbing croon of vast dynamos" moans continuously even as Tom shouts "Voice of the machine, I defy you. . . " (*Three Plays* 63, 73, 70).

7 Dos Passos brought to the project both his commitment to proletarian drama and his equal interest in the visual aspects of theater, presaging his exploration of the mechanized visual aesthetics of film. He created sets for the group that often literalized the suppression of individuality by modern industry, using the machine as a synecdoche for its forces. For Paul Sifton's 1927 *The Belt*, for instance, he devised a set consisting primarily of a massive, functional conveyor belt, at which players actually labored throughout the drama on a diagonal across the stage.

8 But the ambivalent perspective on the machine that became more conflicted in later work surfaces in the 1920s also. In his 1928 *Airways, Inc.*, the innovative aircraft the protagonist designs promises transcendent mobility, but marketing it industrially catalyzes his professional exploitation and the crash of its prototype eventually cripples him. Such dualism suggests the tense but creative conflict between a pessimistic view of emergent technologies and the cross currents of politically charged visual aesthetics that increasingly informed Dos Passos's work. Exposure to the innovations of avant-garde artists such as the Futurists had excited the writer when he first encountered their work in 1917, in Milan during World War I, as a member of the Norton-Harjes ambulance corps assisting the Italian wounded. The fascination with motion and process that infuses the Futurists' aesthetic and cultural agenda also characterizes the works of the Russian Constructivists, whose unconventional dramaturgical practices and minimalist set designs had influenced Dos Passos and his fellow New Playwrights. Amid the artistic ferment generated by the political upheaval in post-Revolutionary Russia, the Constructivists made industrialism and its enabling technologies integral parts of the theater experience, creating what they called "a theater of the machine aesthetic" celebrating both the worker and the technical circumstances of production (Haran 61).

9 In their positive representation of the transformative, dynamic velocity of the industrializing world and the power of the machine, Futurism and Constructivism, along with other modernist aesthetics such as Cubism, sought to engage the perceiving individual completely in the dynamism of the modern. Modernist artists often fragmented the set or the stage or the picture plane into its elemental components, then immersed the individual into a "flux of movement and interpenetration" to enact the simultaneity of multiple realities and perceptions whose realization was fundamental in the

scientific revelations that characterized early twentieth-century thought (Tisdall and Bozzolla 32).

10 Not surprisingly, given the methods evolved by such avant-garde artists to create a fully immersive spectacle for the participant, some practitioners of experimental theater found the evolving technologies of film powerfully effective to achieve the kinds of audience response envisioned by the New Playwrights and other leftist drama groups. Both Futurism and Constructivism celebrated film as a groundbreaking product of the machine age and often included actual film, film screens, or film projections onto transparencies in its set designs as part of its dramatic spectacle. Yet, Dos Passos quickly apprehended that film as a mechanism defining modern life had the potential to be exploited by commercial interests into a force capable of deadening rather than liberating individuals' creative potentials. When he wrote "Did the New Playwrights Theatre Fail?", his 1929 *New Masses* post-mortem evaluation of his short-lived drama group, he attributed what he saw as the inevitable failure of radical innovation on the stage chiefly to the public's growing demand for the movies. He asserted that experimental theater could never draw audiences or achieve its intended "political results" until it found "new tools" to provide something that "the Talkies" offered more successfully. In competition with the movies, experimental theater as Dos Passos saw it practiced in the 1920s was "doomed" ("Did" 120).

11 The masses, the audience for whom idealistic artists such as the New Playwrights crafted their work, had been conditioned rapidly to expect unchallenging entertainment for their twenty-five cent admission. Easily accessible movie houses and quickly-produced short films and feature-length productions flourished even before D.W. Griffith's 1915 silent *The Birth of a Nation*—whose aesthetic and political impacts are still controversial in the twenty-first century—broke records for attendance and established new standards in film editing artistry. As Dos Passos ruefully acknowledged, films succeeded in the one area in which he had most keenly felt the shortcomings of the New Playwrights: the cinema became a monolithic *cultural* force almost from the beginning of its development. Most discouraging for the ambitious dramatists, the cinema did so using the very tools that the New Playwrights and other practitioners of experimental theater believed would speak most directly to working-class audiences: the elements of "spectacle" advocated by the Russian Constructivists as appropriate for a people's entertainment and conducive to immersing the audience in the noise and dynamism of modern life—such "low culture" staples as filmed acrobatic performances and circus acts, magicians' tricks, or live vaudeville accompanying film. From the outset, early films and film technologies had used the machine—the motion picture camera—to achieve what even the radical theater apparently could not: to

thrust the viewer through direct sensory immersion into the immediacy of modernity.

12 Still asking what would be "the goal of this mechanical, splendidly inventive civilization of ours" ("Humble" 31), in the mid-1920s Dos Passos searched for narrative methods that would evoke from readers the same question and involve them actively in the same dualistic creative role with which he charged the artist—to be simultaneously *engagé* and *disengagé* ("Interview" 281). The onward rush of "mechanical civilization" threatened the creative, intellectual, and economic autonomy of the individual in the industrializing world, yet the creative ferment of the 1920s demonstrated the "splendidly inventive" potential of the machine age, and he was increasingly fascinated by the ways it was infusing the arts of innovators with whom he interacted creatively. When he encountered fellow artists such as poet Blaise Cendrars and painters Fernand Léger and Gerald Murphy in Paris, he saw in their work methods that made their work "stand up off the page," as he said of Cendrars' fusion of poetry with the visual in his "simultaneous texts" ("What" 272). Though working in different mediums, Cendrars, Léger and Dos Passos found their interartistic association crucial in evolving methods that could transcend the limitations of their own disciplines. They shared also an early attraction to Futurism's passionate interest in speed and its apotheosis of technology.

13 Both Léger and Dos Passos sought to convey directly the experience of modern life and to create through dissonant and powerful contrasts the essence of the machine age. One of the methods by which both achieved these goals was by incorporating the functions of the machine directly into the structures of their creations. A painting such as Léger's *Le Mécanicien* (1919) evokes the energy of the machine in the juxtaposition of exaggerated fragmented machine parts with the static diminutive figure of a human relegated to the right margin of the picture space. Likewise, in his 1925 *Manhattan Transfer*, which was already underway during his post-war periods in France, Dos Passos identifies what generates the power of New York City by fragmenting its working elements—transportation, industry, commerce, mass culture—and labeling them in chapters bearing the names of the machinery of the urban landscape: "Ferryslip," "Tracks," Steamroller," "Nickelodeon." As in Léger's painting, the mechanical dominates the human.

14 Because the mechanical was fundamental in creating the urban environment, assembling a portrait of the defining city of America as immediate as *Manhattan Transfer* demanded that Dos Passos confront the conflict between modernist fascination with the promises of technology and his own apprehension about its capacity to subsume the human. His narrative solution in the mid-1920s was to bifurcate how the novel acknowledges the duality of technology; the work's story shows how the city-machine overwhelms, but the work's form

conveys the energy and ingenuity of its mechanical engines and inventions. *Manhattan Transfer* succeeds in powerfully evoking on the page the velocity and clamor of an urban center of "mechanical civilization." But the ability to assemble a fully simultaneous text immersing the viewer in a spectacle that recreates the totality of experience, as Dos Passos had tried to do in his plays and sets for the experimental theater, was inherent in the structural potentials of film, and especially in film editing techniques, in a way neither narrative nor painting could achieve, both he and Léger realized. Adapting cinematic structural devices into narrative strategies offered the artist a way to "record the fleeting world the way the motion picture film recorded it. By contrast, juxtaposition, montage, [the artist] could build drama into his narrative," Dos Passos explained retrospectively of the impact of film technologies on his work ("What" 273). He plunges his reader directly into the elements of "mechanical civilization" in his portrait of New York City. It was critically acclaimed upon its publication, and critics such as D.H. Lawrence increasingly apprehended the style's adaptation of film editing techniques as the most radically innovative of its narrative strategies: "a very complex film . . . [of] New York," he wrote (364).

15 Through its cinema-inflected structure, *Manhattan Transfer* represents the most fully realized modernist aesthetic of his work to that point. As in earlier novels such as the anti-war 1921 *Three Soldiers*, in which the military constitutes a monolithic dehumanizing force, *Manhattan Transfer* focuses on the individual's relationship with a powerful mechanistic system—the city and the culture it represents. Both theme and form continue to explore the relation of the parts to the whole, a consistent concern in Dos Passos's writing. But in this novel, the parts have no center to imply a whole; instead, they work only in mechanical combination—like a machine in continuous motion. Accordingly, some critics have perceived this novel as reflecting only chaos: Lionel Trilling called it "an epic of disintegration" (21). If it is concerned with disintegration, it is the deconstruction of the human, the organic, the holistic; but at the same time, it constructs a powerful machine itself. The structure of *Manhattan Transfer* evokes the culture Dos Passos is portraying. His form—the constant motion of the narrative, its dynamic swirl mixing and propelling characters deterministically—is inseparable from his message.

16 How to portray a culture that no longer possesses any organic structure demands methods that can convey that fragmentation yet remain intelligible. To find a structural language equal to such an internally contradictory narrative problem, Dos Passos adapted the vocabulary of signs in modern culture—the aesthetics of the machine age. Visual artists such as Léger and Stuart Davis and Max Weber had used the quotidian objects and incidental signage of urban industrial America to evoke its material identity in their work of the 1920s. In narrative form, Dos Passos likewise employed the products and

processes of industry and technology—"the rhythms, images, and above all the headlong energy," as Alfred Kazin wrote of the radical achievements of Dos Passos's modernist style (x)—to make *Manhattan Transfer* a working machine composed of parts of the city. People, skyscrapers, trains, subways, songs, and newspaper clippings, the phenomena of popular culture, all function as mere cogs in an inexorable urban structure. The urban machine threatens to devour the individuals who people this novel, but the novel's mechanistic strategies function creatively for the reader, providing a way of perceiving connections among and humanity in them. The reader both enters the form and observes the mechanisms it recreates even as they overwhelm the characters; thus, Dos Passos thrusts the reader into the same creative position he proposes for the writer—to be simultaneously *engagé* and *disengagé*. Although critics such as Donald Pizer maintain that one reads *Manhattan Transfer* "not for its 'subject' but for its 'shape'" (17), its subject and its shape are in fact inseparable.

17 Perhaps the most potent of the novel's mechanistic strategies is to use the varying kinds of motion created by editing in film—montage—to immerse the reader into the vortex of the city along with the characters. Crosscutting establishes dynamic patterns of motion in the novel—linear, circular, and random—that sometimes intersect, but most often move in independent directions. By crosscutting between shots tracking the motion of central and incidental characters subsumed in these patterns of motion throughout the city as they struggle with its demands, Dos Passos achieves a narrative montage conveying the sensation of life in New York City through the early 1920s. Progressive manuscripts of the novel underscore the intentionality of the methods of literary montage Dos Passos evolved. Initially he created each of the central narratives separately, then broke them apart and spliced the various pieces into the order he sought, a process akin to film editing. Fragmentation, then, was both the technique and the theme, but his montage created simultaneity among his narrative threads—although the narratives do not always progress at precisely identical speeds—and created meaning by juxtaposing narrative threads, images, and themes.

18 Imagery in the novel also identifies the city as a machine inseparable from the engines of industrial capitalist culture in the U.S. The form of the work disallows protagonists in the conventional sense; the city itself may be said to be the novel's primary subject and character, and the novel's human characters are thematically defined by association with specific recurrent urban or mechanical signs of the city. The novel's predominant female character Ellen Thatcher, for instance, dehumanized by her quest for success on the city's superficial terms, survives as she drives toward fame as a celebrity actress by making herself impervious to organic relationship. Communicating Ellen's loss of humanity through images of machines and inexorable cyclic motion,

Dos Passos makes her characterization a part of the dynamic mechanism of the novel. She becomes "an intricate machine of sawtooth steel whitebright bluebright copperbright," with a voice "like a tiny flexible sharp metalsaw" (228) when she dances with one man, Jimmy Herf, in an effort to rid herself of her feelings for another, Stan Emery. After Stan's suicide in despair over his prominent family's insistence that he abandon his artistic goals as an architect for a more lucrative profession, Ellen feels like "a stiff castiron figure in her metalgreen evening dress" (261) as she continues her professional ascent. She sheds insufficiently advantageous marriages eventually to marry a man she does not love but who will assure her economic security and social position; then, as she seals the engagement with a kiss in a taxi, she sees "out of a corner of an eye whirling faces, streetlights, zooming nickelglinting wheels" (376). With any trace of an authentic self eradicated by her compromises for success, she is pulled into the vortex of the city's amoral energy.

19 The other more central character in the novel, Jimmy Herf, likewise confronts the city's demand that he sacrifice his humanity and principles to rise in his chosen profession, as a writer. To characterize Jimmy's struggle with the commercial goals of journalism and the cheapening of language and life those goals dictate, Dos Passos intercalates bits of newspaper stories into the narrative montage; lines from stories that exploit and dehumanize their subjects to sell sensationalized tabloids bring verbal signs of urban life into the text as Léger had done to lighter effect by incorporating words and phrases from advertising into his urban paintings. Jimmy comes to identify his relationship with Ellen with the city's hollowing out of his hope to deploy words truthfully, to reclaim what Dos Passos in *The Big Money* (1936) would call "the old words" on which the nation was founded—"the old American speech of the haters of oppression" (469). From Jimmy's first appearance in the novel—on the Fourth of July, with the Statue of Liberty in the background—the character is identified with a fundamental questioning of the fate of American values in an age of superficial materialism. In a pivotal passage that interweaves central images and circular patterns of motion and extends their significance to a symbolic level, Jimmy struggles to reclaim "the old words":

> Pursuit of happiness, unalienable pursuit . . . right to life liberty and . . . All these April nights combing the streets alone a skyscraper has obsessed [Jimmy], a grooved building jutting up with uncountable bright windows falling onto him out of a studding sky. Typewriters rain continual nickelplated confetti in his ears . . . . And he walks round blocks and blocks looking for the door of the humming tinselwindowed skyscraper, . . . and still no door. Every time . . . he stops arguing audibly with himself in pompous reasonable phrases the dream has hold of him. [Y]oung man to save your sanity you've got to do one of two things . . . one of two unalienable alternatives: go away in a dirty soft shirt or stay in a clean Arrow collar. But what's the use of spending your whole life fleeing the city of Destruction? . . . His mind unreeling phrases, he walks on

> doggedly. There's nowhere in particular he wants to go. If only I still had faith in words. (802-03)

20 While in thrall to the monolithic city whose symbol is the skyscraper, the apex of machine culture architecture, he can never regain "the dream," never construct truth from the culture's compromised language. If he is ever to regain "faith in words," then, he must reject the city, and he does. He escapes Manhattan without the money or the desire to travel at the city's pace or by means of its rapid transit, whose images and sensations zoom through the novel's pages. He is as uncertain of his destination as he is of how language can be reinvested with meaning or transformed to communicate the human experience as it has been remade in the machine age. But he has begun the process of discovery and reinvention—he is actively in search of his freedom—by "fleeing the City of Destruction."

21 In *Manhattan Transfer*, Dos Passos had confronted his conflicts about the powers of the mechanical in modern life by incorporating its dual potentials into a tension between narrative and form. Beginning to draw on the visual aesthetics inherent in motion pictures, the art form with which America became almost synonymous, he had recreated the fragmentation of modern culture and rendered visible the machines that drove it. In the three novels that followed—*The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *1919* (1932), and *The Big Money* (1936), the volumes of *U.S.A.*—the tension between the annihilating potential of the machine and its capacity to be "splendidly inventive" became more pronounced as Dos Passos built an even more complex formal structure than he had in *Manhattan Transfer*. Employing the dynamics of defining modern technologies, the trilogy's Newsreels and biography segments recreate sound and print media of the era; the fictional narratives depict the resonance of that constant cultural noise in the characters' lives; but all the segments, especially the Camera Eye, incorporate in their content and especially in their intricate juxtapositional interaction the capabilities and impact of motion picture technologies and processes. Concomitantly, the tension inherent in the artist's role moved to the foreground of the three novels as both a formal and a thematic concern. Where in *Manhattan Transfer* Dos Passos consciously tried to eliminate the subjective consciousness of the artist, even as the artist's hand was implicitly experimenting with the novel's form, in *U.S.A.* he shows his hand on the levers of the novel-machine: he acknowledges both his own consciousness and the purposes informing the structures he creates and, this time, explicitly defines. The voice of the Camera Eye device, it becomes clear, belongs to the same consciousness that owns the hands wielding the camera, choosing the Newsreel shots, focusing the angle of vision in the novels' biographies, and evolving the characters in the fictional narratives.

22 Once again, in these works that would come to define his career, his theme was the "basic tragedy" that, he observed in 1959, all his work expresses—"man's struggle for life against the strangling institutions he himself creates" ("Looking" 235). He knew both the scope and the materials of these new novels: "as much as possible of the broad field of the lives of these times" ("Introductory" 179) from 1916, as the U.S. becomes involved in World War I, through the 1920s, as the postwar economic boom leads to the Stock Market Crash of 1929. He wanted to create "a contemporary commentary on history's changes, always as seen by some individual's eyes, heard by some individual's ears, felt thorough some individual's nerves and tissues" ("What" 31). He came to know, during the course of completing the trilogy during the 1930s, that his aims in this new work were more overtly political than in *Manhattan Transfer*. As he found the methods of Communist factions within both the American and European Left increasingly intolerant of independent positions that deviated from their Party doctrines, he began to view the Left as a force potentially destructive to individual thought and agency just as the machine of industrial capitalism was. These goals, more complex and fraught than those of the disengaged if dynamic urban spectacle of *Manhattan Transfer*, would require methods that could articulate his conviction that the writer is the "architect of history" who has the responsibility to "write straight" no matter what the cultural or political pressures. Yet, to achieve both his artistic and his political goals without "preaching" ("Introduction" 147), he realized he needed to be both inside and outside of the narrative, as he insisted even at the end of his career the artist must be. To achieve dynamic interaction between passion and objectivity called for a dynamic structure that required the *reader's* active critical engagement. The structure Dos Passos evolved for these purposes places fiction and history, the subjective and the objective, into tension in interactive relationships that create meaning in the same way the planes and forms of a Cubist painting interact visually.

23 The vehicles of these relationships are the four modes of the three novels, first published together as U.S.A. in 1937. In the introduction to the 1937 Modern Library edition, he described the functions of these working parts of the trilogy's mechanisms. The fictional stories, the "long narrative" of the trilogy, he explained, recount "the more or less entangled lives of a number of Americans during the first three decades of the present [twentieth] century." Three other "sequences . . . [thread] in and out among the stories." Biographies of "real people . . . embody . . . the quality of the soil in which Americans of those generations grew." Newsreel sequences, built from fragments of newspaper and tabloid headlines and stories, snippets of popular songs, and lines from speeches, convey "the common mind of the epoch." The Camera Eye "aims to indicate the position of the observer" through impressionistic,

autobiographical observations in a stream-of-consciousness style emanating from the point of view of a persona who is contemporaneous with the era of the novels ("Introductory" 179). The persona's experiences and perceptions chart the growth of a writer's commitment to his vocation and articulate the genesis of his realization that "we have only words against POWER SUPERPOWER" (*Big* 1210). Dos Passos later observed that in the other three modes he "aimed at total objectivity by giving conflicting views," juxtaposing the segments purposefully, but he explicitly identified the Camera Eye persona with himself: the device was, he stated, "a safety valve for my own subjective feelings" ("John Dos Passos" 247).

24 However objective he asserted the other three modes were, his overt identification of himself with the Camera Eye reveals his own hand on the engine of the work. Indeed, these segments enact the speaker—and Dos Passos—assuming the creative charge toward which the novel's narrative builds: the novel's form is the manifestation of the artist's "business." In the Camera Eye persona's hard-won recognition of the tools available to contend against "power superpower," Dos Passos acknowledges implicitly that the trilogy is—the novel must be—a forceful machine itself, wielded forcefully by a maker, to militate against the social, economic, political, and cultural forces of "mechanical civilization." But the Camera Eye persona's control of all the narrative choices never asserts itself until very late in the trilogy, at a point where form and theme are revealed to be synonymous. That the disclosure occurs only after readers have perhaps internalized the relative functions of the novels' devices to reach this insight actively themselves may be a mark of the "hidden" nature of Dos Passos's art, as Sartre phrased it (85).

25 But cinematic montage, the formal paradigm for the interactive tension among the modes of the novels that makes its meaning, had already proven to be insidious in its power to control not only the vision but the volition of the viewer. As early practitioners in America and the Soviet Union evolved film editing techniques into powerful, highly adaptive dynamics, the political potential of montage became evident in American works such as *The Birth of a Nation*, with its revolutionary cross-cutting between parallel and contrasting narrative lines, unprecedented variations in focal lengths, transition effects, and orchestration of battle scenes. James Agee compared viewing it to "being witness to . . . the first conscious use of the lever or the wheel." In post-Revolutionary Russia, cinema supported by the state and developed in its service for a time fostered similarly highly innovative cinematic production from directors such as Sergei Eisenstein, who, like Dos Passos, combined fiction and history and exploited juxtaposition and simultaneity. The Russian innovator's 1925 silent propaganda film *Battleship Potemkin*, dramatizing the 1905 rebellion of the ill-treated crew of the battleship against their Tsarist

officers, used montage to appeal directly to the emotions of proletarian viewers and activate them politically. The New Playwrights were conversant with Soviet film innovations; Dos Passos traveled to Russia to see state-subsidized art in action in 1927; and they had shared with the Russian avant-garde the commitment to political film and theater and drama as spectacle that motivated the group.

26 Nevertheless, the "splendidly inventive" possibilities of the motion picture camera and the experience it made possible did not obscure or outweigh for Dos Passos its dangerous potential to be deployed in the service of "mechanical civilization." Griffith's film, despite its merits, has become notorious for the racial animus it promulgated through its representations of racial stereotypes and sexualized racial violence in the Civil War and post-bellum South. It exacerbated active persecution toward African Americans during the Jim Crow era and spurred a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan. Griffith's artistry not only showed audiences *what* to think about race but *how to act* on the prejudices it inculcated.

27 Dos Passos himself had experienced firsthand the potential for governments to use film to manipulate emotions, create alternate versions of history, and command mass behavior, while he trained in 1918 at Camp Crane, New Jersey for the military ambulance corps. In his journal of the period, he admitted the undiscriminating "delight" with which he and the other trainees fell under the spell of the movies screened nightly in camp (*Fourteenth* 220). In *Three Soldiers*, the anti-war novel that drew from his exposure to military routine and indoctrination, he recreates the power of film he had perceived in his own reactions when he depicts his three central characters watching a feature presentation. The three view along with the other troops a feature film rife with propaganda in which "soldiers in spiked helmets [march] into Belgian cities full of little milk carts drawn by dogs and old women in peasant costume." Even such contrived scenes inspire the soldiers to "hate the Huns" viciously: "I'd give a lot to rape some of those goddam German women," one soldier declares. Despite himself, John Andrews, the protagonist and representative conscience of the novel, feels "blind hate stirring" within him until he is "lost in it, carried away on it, as in a stampede of wild cattle." When he looks about him in the darkened movie hut, he sees not individuals but "one organism" united in "common slavery" (*Three* 108). Film, Dos Passos recognized, is a modern technology particularly adaptable by systems of government to obliterate individual will and extinguish independent thought.

28 This tension between the creative possibilities inherent in the motion picture and its dangerous possibilities for exploitation moves to the foreground as U.S.A. progresses, until the trilogy's final novel, *The Big Money*, brings the dualism into sharp focus and makes it central both narratively and structurally.

Not only the fictional engagement with the film industry in the novel but also its cinematic formal devices express Dos Passos's concern with the impact of cinema itself and the machine it had become in American culture. These concerns would continue to preoccupy his work as he became further involved with filmmaking itself, and they would dictate the method and the message of the one independent direct-to-film project he undertook, a never-produced film treatment, "Dreamfactory."

29 Before he directly confronted the dualistic potentials of the movie camera in his own screen treatment, Dos Passos gained entrée into the workings of the film industry as a contract screen writer. Hollywood had lured into its service some of Dos Passos's well-known contemporaries—Dorothy Parker, Herman J. Mankiewicz, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Raymond Chandler, William Faulkner—and, as Dos Passos wrote in his 1966 memoir, *The Best Times*, in 1934 when he "got a bid from Josef von Sternberg to work with him on a Spanish picture [*The Devil Is a Woman*] he was getting up for Marlene Dietrich," the writer accepted. For one thing, he needed the money: *1919*, the most recent volume of U.S.A., had been a "flop . . . on the sales end" (*Fourteenth* 437). But in addition to the income, the Paramount Studio contract to create the script for *The Devil Is a Woman* gave him a close-up education about the industry. Already at work on *The Big Money*, Dos Passos used this insider's exposure to the mechanics and the politics of film production to extract the material for one of the novel's major fictional threads—the story of the rise from squalor to film stardom of the opportunistic Margo Dowling and the calculating director, Sam Margolies, who engineers her ascent by molding and marketing her. Though the exploitative symbiosis between the two clearly draws from what Dos Passos observed of the Dietrich-von Sternberg alliance, the writer places his fictional adaptation of the successful professional strategies of the German actor and her director into an explicitly American economic and social framework. As in *Manhattan Transfer*'s depiction of the power of the capitalist engine in American culture to control individuals' self-determination, the Margo Dowling narrative in *The Big Money* demonstrates the destructive effect of commodifying sexuality and womanhood, and the addictive and corrupting nature of unachievable desires generated by the culture of celebrity and status. Like the earlier novel's Ellen Thatcher, in her youth Dowling possesses not only beauty but a vitality that suggests the potential for achievement and authenticity. But both women sacrifice that promise for luxury and fame—success as defined by Broadway and Hollywood—and both women eventually disappear into the hollow identities they have manufactured to monetize and reflect the desires and values of the cultures that produced them. In Ellen Thatcher's final appearance in *Manhattan Transfer*, as she mentally enumerates the wardrobe requirements for all her upcoming social appearances, she envisions herself

"all dressed up like a Christmas tree, . . . like [a] . . . walking talking doll." Yet, she senses a vestigial "sudden pang of something forgotten" which she cannot define (833-34).

30 Likewise, in Margo Dowling's final scene—in which she is relegated to a walk-on in a major narrative thread devoted to another character, Mary French—the reader sees Dowling narratively as well as culturally minimized and objectified. A crowd, of which Mary French is part, awaits Dowling's arrival at a social event at which she is to be the celebrity attraction. But when she enters the room, a cameo appearance narrated as if from the perspective of a fan, she is revealed to be merely "a small woman with blue eyes and features as regular as those of a porcelain doll" adorned with "a lot of big sapphires." And she is already a has-been: "it seems she's through," the crowd gossips; "it seems that she's no good for talking pictures . . . voice sounds like the croaking of an old crow over the loudspeaker" (1233-34). She has risen to the crest of stardom by the accident of her beauty and the ruthlessness of her ambition, in whose service she has manufactured a false history for herself, coupled and married opportunistically, and sacrificed any artistic talent to the production of superficial commercial film vehicles. But the cinematic creation Margo has become will be rendered obsolete and discarded by the relentless advancement of technology in an industry as intent as the star was on maximum exposure and profit by any means.

31 The incorporation into the novel's structure of the essential machine of the film industry—the camera itself—reveals insights as bleak as those disclosed by the fictional narrative borrowed from the industry. But the Camera Eye segments as structural elements of the novel also increasingly focus the reader on the artist's potential to affect the operations and outcomes of the discourses manufactured by cultural machines. Throughout the three novels, the cross-cutting between the Camera Eye segments and other modes has intensified the narrator's identification with the events that occur within the fictional and biographical modes. Although in the first two novels the persona has little sense of himself as an agent in history and seems caught up in his own isolated imagination, by *The Big Money* he has begun to define himself within the struggles of his times. He bears the "hated years in the latrine-stench at Brocourt under the starshells" (790); when he returns from World War I he feels the press of "Coca Cola signs Lucky Strike ads pricetags in storewindows . . . money" in New York (892-94); and he searches for a redeeming value in the 1927 deaths of "the brave men our friends" Sacco and Vanzetti, accused anarchists executed by "strangers who have turned our language inside out," the "betrayers" of truth (1156-57). When he joins the defense of the impoverished striking coal miners in Harlan County, Kentucky in 1931 (1209), the narrator struggles for some weapon to bring to bear against the economic

and governmental institutions that rob individuals of identity and substance. In identifying himself with the struggle against oppression in all its forms, he has become part of the "we" (Ludington 455)—the defense of Sacco and Vanzetti, the strikers in Harlan County and their allies, the common people who militate against "power superpower" as it has come to be represented by the forces of monopoly capitalism and its attendant institutions and vices.

32 Moreover, in defining himself as an individual, the narrator has also defined himself as an artist. In the penultimate Camera Eye segment in the trilogy, he concedes that "the scribbled phrases the nights typing . . . stringing words into wires the search for stinging words to make you feel who are your oppressors America" have not saved the accused anarchists from execution. But even in the face of the defeat of individual freedoms that their deaths symbolize for him, he asserts that "the old American speech of the haters of oppression" (*Big* 1157) is being renewed in the continuing efforts of common people to combat the corruption of the "old words" of America—the principles of individual liberty and equal opportunity on which the nation was founded. And although the narrator recognizes the seemingly invincible coalition of law and government, industry and finance, arrayed against the common workers he encounters in Kentucky, he ends the final Camera Eye by asserting that "we have only words against" that "power superpower" (*Big* 1210). In identifying language and its practitioners with the only possible defense against the multiple forms of oppression exerted by "mechanical civilization" in America at the beginning of the twentieth century, he has acknowledged and assumed the redemptive quality of the imaginative act: the narrator-author, announcing his identification with and control of the Camera Eye and of the work of art as a whole, has enacted his own theme.

33 Yet, the interposition and cross-cutting between the deterministic Margo Dowling fictional narrative and the struggle toward self-determination against "power superpower" enacted by the subjective Camera Eye segments maintain a tension that informed Dos Passos's other artistic engagement with the mechanics of film, his treatment for "Dreamfactory," included in full in *John Dos Passos & Cinema* (Nanney 200-211). The most direct exercise in the dynamics of film production and editing of his career, this work was initiated by an exchange of general ideas in 1936 with Joris Ivens following what proved to be a portentous acquaintance with the Dutch documentarist who in 1937 would direct the troubled production of *The Spanish Earth*. Dos Passos became involved with that project, intended as a relief effort for the Spanish Republican cause, as a commitment to their struggle against the fascist alliance of Germany and Italy in Spain. However, his experiences during the filming in Spain, a country Dos Passos knew well and identified with culturally, shook his belief in the integrity of the political methods of the

Left and in the artistic and personal integrity of the director Ivens and of his cohort, Dos Passos's longtime friend Ernest Hemingway, whose enlistment in the project brought it the publicity conferred by his literary celebrity. Dos Passos found himself at odds with the two over the aesthetic and personal compromises they were making to render the film a more compelling work of propaganda. For Ivens and Hemingway, the ends—eliciting financial support for the Spanish cause from American donors—justified the aesthetic and ethical means. Worse, Dos Passos discovered that they had concealed from him the execution of his close Spanish friend and translator José Robles, by the very Soviet Communist factions whom he was assisting and who were ostensibly allies of the Republicans. These professional, political, and personal disillusionments became major factors in the refocusing of Dos Passos's career and activism toward increasing conservatism and an anti-Communist agenda that characterized much of his work after 1937.

34 Though the making of *The Spanish Earth* in 1937 resulted in his lifelong estrangement from both other artists, when he first encountered Joris Ivens in 1936 Dos Passos recognized in the director kindred perceptions of both the power and the potential dangers of the film industry. Ivens had been enthusiastically received by leftists in the Hollywood community as he sought financial backing for upcoming projects, particularly one about American movies, and used his time in their midst to investigate the practices of the commercial film industry. Dos Passos would draw on what he learned about Hollywood during his brief employment at Paramount to develop the narrative and methods outlined in "Dreamfactory"; Ivens, being generously and personally supported by the members of the industry while brainstorming a project that might cast them as complicit in the political irresponsibility of the industry's products, practiced a more precarious ethical balancing act. A meeting with Dos Passos at the New York premiere of one of Ivens' films prompted an exchange of letters discussing an idea that had occurred to each of them independently, a "picture about the function of the movie pictures in the daily life of the people," as Ivens described it in one of his letters, printed in *John Dos Passos & Cinema* (Nanney 197). Ivens seems to have intended to use not only Dos Passos's ideas but also the writer's Hollywood connections to launch such a project. In a letter of 4 June 1936, Ivens communicated a general concept for a semi-documentary film contrasting actual life among the American proletariat with the pernicious effects on their values and behavior of the "false illusions" they imbibe from a Hollywood film (Nanney 197).

35 Dos Passos worked on the treatment, which he soon titled "Dreamfactory," progressing through notes and a series of short drafts that he sent to Ivens a few times to illustrate the direction the work was taking, until late 1936, when both artists went to Spain to collaborate on *The Spanish Earth*. After the events

in Spain not surprisingly terminated their professional relationship, work never resumed on the project. What exists of the treatment, in the Dos Passos Collection at the University of Virginia, consists of Dos Passos's handwritten notes and what seem to be four preliminary typewritten drafts, some with emendations and additions in Dos Passos's hand. They are in varying stages of completion and include a plot summary, notes on his goals for the film, a complete opening sequence, and character descriptions (Nanney 200-11).

36 The correspondence between Ivens and Dos Passos, also in the Dos Passos Collection, does not show Dos Passos responding specifically to the suggestions Ivens communicates, confirming, along with the drafts, that Dos Passos was sole author of "Dreamfactory." Indeed, the letters indicate that the artists had different conceptions of the film and its methods and that Dos Passos adhered to his own goals and aesthetics to develop the project. His intentions seemed to be to expose the reality of the Hollywood dream factory, to reveal the machinery by which Hollywood manufactures unrealizable desires, by artfully using the tools with which films create illusions. Ivens' intentions and his suggestions to Dos Passos, on the other hand, would have moved the project toward the narrative and aesthetic simplifications of social realism. The 1934 Communist Soviet Writers' Congress artistic manifesto, which Ivens—a member of the Communist Party of the Netherlands—enthusiastically endorsed, specified that the aims of social realism were to present straightforward uplifting stories of the worker's triumphant struggle, eschewing the individualist expressions of modernism.

37 This was the thematic goal toward which Ivens would try to shape *The Spanish Earth* in 1937. His letters about "Dreamfactory" encourage Dos Passos to foreground and develop the only character the director sees as a noble worker representing the "real life, the social fight going on" in the U.S.—Joe, a poor but enterprising airplane mechanist. In a letter of 8 October 1936 responding to Dos Passos's preliminary work on the treatment, Ivens is dismissive of characters whom he sees as unfit vehicles to convey the workers' struggle. He advises that Dos Passos minimize and simplify the female protagonists—Mabel Small, a single mother who works in a beauty parlor, fond of reading movie magazines and determined to get her daughter into moving pictures; and her daughter, nineteen-year-old Ella May, who longs to attain the fame, fortune, and romance the movies have made her believe are within her grasp. To Ivens they are "people who are in their life and profession . . . already predestined to fall easily in the hands of Hollywood." The second male lead, Fred Hammond, is a slick shallow bit player in the movies; he competes with Joe for Ella May's affections, trying to buy them while Joe tries to earn them, and Ivens dismisses Fred for his "almost criminal childishness" (Nanney 212-13).

38 Not only the ideas the two artists exchanged but also the sample scenes, shots, and techniques Dos Passos outlined in the film prospectus attest that while Ivens envisioned a reductive exposé of the evils of capitalism, the complicity of Hollywood motion pictures, and their assault on the American worker, Dos Passos was trying to discover innovative ways to lay bare the methodological manipulations of the entertainment factory by using its own tools—camera dynamics, editing, and internal continuity and juxtaposition. Using such methods, he indicates, could involve the viewer creatively as he was doing with the dynamics of U.S.A., opening for perceivers the possibility of agency in their engagements with cultural products of "mechanical civilization." The resulting draft of "Dreamfactory," even in its preliminary state, constitutes a much more complex implementation of the potentials of the camera and of editing techniques than in their literary adaptation to the page in U.S.A. Other modernists who wrote Hollywood novels placed them amid the mechanics of filmmaking and the "dream dump" *mise-en-scène* of capitalism and created characters involved in the construction of illusion—F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Last Tycoon*, for instance, or Nathanael West in *The Day of the Locust* (132). But none would go as far as "Dreamfactory" promised to do in using the studios' methods to dismantle their factories. Dos Passos's treatment employs the tools of its own making to critique itself as a product.

39 Dos Passos's overview and sample scenes for "Dreamfactory" prepare for this visualization of the professional and cultural dynamics that create the classic movie product and which it in turn creates. But in essence, the treatment turns an archetypal film of the Hollywood golden age such as *The Devil Is a Woman* inside out. In "Notes" included in the treatment, Dos Passos describes the opposing worlds the characters in the film experience: industrial production; "the dreamworld of the screen"; and the actuality of producing movies, both the technical processes and "the intrigue, finagling, big talk, and bootlicking behind the screen" (Nanney 207). He dramatizes the intersection between the characters' workaday worlds and the "dreamworld" offered by film initially at the level of plot and character; the plot is intended to be a simplistic paradigm of the kind of movie popular in the 1930s that sways credulous people like Mabel and Ella May and Fred.

40 The primary interest in the proposed film, then, lies in the structure Dos Passos outlines. Like Griffith's problematic masterwork, "Dreamfactory" constructs thematic parallels and contrasts through cross-cutting between narratives. Developing yet another layer of complexity in the technique, Dos Passos envisioned "Dreamfactory" as constantly revealing through metafilmic devices the manipulative mechanics of the movie industry and the interconnectedness of its cultural, social, and economic components. He even suggests specialized editing cuts or picture effects in places to alert the viewer to the metafilmic

level: “Shots of the camera and projector can be used to bracket the digression off from the story,” he suggests in a very early draft, or “Perhaps the real life section could use the whole screen and the movie part the small screen,” an early imagining of picture-in-picture technology common today (“Sample opening sequence”). These devices, unparalleled in his fiction, originate in his first extant notes on the project in the Dos Passos archive; they demonstrate the methods by which the “dreamworld of the screen” interpenetrates all the realities of the characters’ worlds (Nanney 207).

41 One metafilmic method recasts the mundane activities of the Smalls’ economically marginal world as events echoing those in a movie they attend, though the film version features glamorous parallel characters and upscale lavish production values that inspire envy and dissatisfaction in the starstruck mother and daughter. Another metafilmic montage demonstrates the destructive effect of such doomed longings for the unattainable. The “Sample opening sequence” for the treatment opens on a party Mabel has organized for her daughter out of her limited financial resources, where Fred and Ella “dance to the radio and drink gingerale.” While they dance, “there is a shot of the radio, the mike at the other end, the expensive nightclub the music is coming from.” Inserting this quick series of shots into the middle of a series of shots tracking Mabel around the lowly fixtures of their shabby bungalow, with the overlapping sound of nightclub music to connect them, visualizes both the relentlessness of the “continual drone of the big money luxury dream through the movies and the radio” and the hopelessness of such acquisitive dreams for people such as the Smalls (Nanney 211).

42 Innovatively mixing film genres within the same sequence was another way Dos Passos proposed to point the viewer toward the ways film functions to shape behavior. A documentary montage in the “opening sequence” visually situates Fred, Ella’s bit-actor suitor, as only one player in the complex process of the construction of film as fantasy and embedded cultural message. Leading up to the montage insert, Dos Passos cuts between shots of Ella and Joe, her other suitor, viewing a feature film and the film itself. Dos Passos then guides the viewer’s perspective as the camera zooms or irises in on Ella’s first excited glimpse of Fred onscreen as an extra, “looking verry [sic] dapper in evening dress.” The zoom or iris out then effects a transition between the feature film within “Dreamfactory” and a documentary montage within “Dreamfactory” to expose the production chain that placed Fred, a mere walk-on in clothes he had earlier pawned, on the screen and in the midst of a fabricated world of glamor. The complicated montage, now displacing the primary viewers of “Dreamfactory” by three metalevels and making them aware of their own role in the business of watching, reveals “the whole machinery of taking the picture.” It begins with Fred “on the set” during shooting, then moves backward

in time to shots of Fred "standing in line at the casting office, getting his dress suit out of hock," then widens to encompass the entire industrial process of production:

> Carpenters building the set
> Scenic artists desgining it
> Director working on the script
> Writers phoning back and forth from their offices
> Censorship
> The cutting room
> The camera
> The projector
> and back to the screen,
> where the picture is ending in the usual clinch. (Nanney 210)

43 Visually, the metadevice, crossing generic boundaries, unmasks the economic, creative, professional, technological, and political processes that generate and are generated by motion pictures. Like the juxtaposed modal segments of U.S.A., but with greater economy, the inserted montage creates what anthropologist Clifford Geertz called "thick" history (3).

44 Such innovative devices characterize the entire twelve-page treatment, enacting both the creative power and the potential for abuse of the camera eye. Its visual dynamics would have been radically experimental for commercial film in the 1930s, but there is no evidence that Dos Passos ever developed the treatment further or sought to pursue its realization on the screen. That decision was concomitant with and perhaps a result of the professional and personal crisis precipitated by the making of the Spanish documentary. The aesthetic and ethical compromises Dos Passos perceived as informing Ivens' professional choices of covertly manipulative and propagandistic methods in *The Spanish Earth*, and the larger compromises of integrity the writer began to believe were reshaping the methods employed on the Left in the U.S. and in Europe, challenged Dos Passos's thinking about the fragile interrelationship among aesthetics, political action, and the responsibility of the artist.

45 Whatever his position later became about these fraught interrelationships, Dos Passos never resolved the more specific issues that helped generate the achievements of his modernist work in the 1930s. Increasingly, the work confronted its audience with dualistic perceptions of the mechanistic and the conceptual and formal tensions they created. He continued to assert that the writer had to be part of society's machines to be able to accomplish the artist's cultural "business"—"to justify the ways of machinery to man" ("Duty" 205), even at historical moments when "machinery and institutions

have . . . outgrown the ability of the mind to dominate them" ("Writer" 171). Yet, the structural complexities of U.S.A. and the "Dreamfactory" experiment demonstrate Dos Passos's paradoxical insistence that the writer must at the same time be *aware* of his own immersion in "the obsessions of the hour" ("What" 268) and, most imperatively, must acknowledge the role of his own consciousness and his own hand at work in shaping the dynamics of his work.

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Biography

After faculty positions at University of North Carolina affiliates and Georgetown University School of Foreign Service-Qatar, **Lisa Nanney** co-edited and co-authored the 2017 study of John Dos Passos's visual work, *The Paintings and Drawings of John Dos Passos: A Collection and Study*. Her 2019 book, *John Dos Passos & Cinema*, investigates his little-known writing directly for the cinema and his concomitant re-evaluation of the Left. Nanney is also the author of *John Dos Passos Revisited* (Macmillan Press, 1998), a critical biography.

Bayonets and Bananas:

U.S. Imperialism and the Latin American Fruit Trade in Dos Passos's U.S.A. Trilogy

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Abstract

This article explores the theme of U.S. imperialism in Latin America built into the *U.S.A.* trilogy. It proceeds from the observation that while the focus of Dos Passos's work is on the United States, his approach is also transnational, taking in the emerging superpower's relationship to other parts of the world in its thematic compass as well. Specifically, I argue that contained within the trilogy is a story of U.S. hegemony and exploitation in Latin America at the hands of strong political and economic forces.

With the extended depiction of the Mexican Revolution in *The 42nd Parallel* as my initial focus, I show how Dos Passos, through his account of successive U.S. administrations' involvement in the conflict, sketches out an interventionist modus operandi that continues into the 1920s. Throughout, my analyses often depart from the Newsreel sections, whose contents repeatedly invoke U.S. political and economic involvement in Latin American affairs, revealed through their interaction with not only Dos Passos's other narrative modes, but also with the historical record itself. In the second part, I turn to the Latin American fruit trade, which constitutes a sub-topic that is referenced in each volume of the trilogy. Departing from the appearance of the novelty song "Yes! We Have No Bananas" in one of the final Newsreel sections, I argue that its seeming triviality belies a more sinister function, namely that of blocking out the Colombian Banana Massacre of 1928 from Dos Passos's narrative.

Keywords

The 42nd Parallel, Banana Massacre, John Dos Passos, Mexican Revolution, Modernism, *U.S.A.* Trilogy.

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1 Despite its title, John Dos Passos's U.S.A. trilogy does not take place exclusively on U.S. American soil. Even a cursory reading of the work as a whole reveals that the majority of the middle volume, 1919, is set in Europe as the focus and action shift to World War I. Less immediately apparent and not widely covered in criticism is the fact that a significant portion of the trilogy also deals with Latin America. Within that thematic cluster, Dos Passos tells a story of U.S. hegemony and exploitation through a confluence of political and economic interests. But the story that he presents cannot be read or accessed directly; rather, it has to be teased out and pieced together, being dependent on the logic of juxtaposition inherent to the trilogy.

2 In his monograph on the U.S.A. trilogy, Donald Pizer was the first to explore at length the mechanics of interplay between the four narrative modes used by Dos Passos: the narratives of fictional characters, the biographies of historical figures, the Newsreel sections of headlines and song lyrics, and the autobiographical prose-poetry of the Camera Eye segments. Through the logic of montage, as Pizer details, Dos Passos was able to suggest connections between the contents of these disparate textual modes, opening up a web of implications for the reader. "The juxtapositional richness of the trilogy is," as Pizer puts it, "almost infinite" (54). Following on these insights, Grace Kyungwon Hong has stressed the importance of dealing with the trilogy in a spatial rather than sequential manner. To this end, she suggests the work be viewed in terms of cartography. "Rather than progressing in a linear trajectory," she points out, "U.S.A. maps out a series of relationships and events that intersect with each other in myriad ways" (96).

3 As such, the story that Dos Passos tells of U.S. imperialism in Latin America also has to be approached spatially rather than sequentially; it needs to be read across the narrative modes, as well as back and forth between them, in a dialogic fashion. In his essay on 1919, Jean-Paul Sartre intuitively sensed the non-linear logic of Dos Passos's work: "Not for an instant does the order of causality betray itself in chronological order," he observed (90). For this reason, the point of departure for the present inquiry cannot be the first mention of Latin America in the work (the Camera Eye narrator's memory of hearing about a train journey his parents took to Mexico); nor can it be the first time one of the characters sets foot on Latin American soil (when Mac walks across the border from El Paso to Ciudad Juárez in his seventh narrative segment). Rather, and in keeping with the spatial logic of the trilogy, I want to map out the thematic cluster on U.S. imperialism in Latin America by turning to two connected fragments in the work, whose juxtaposition acts as a catalyst for interpretation.

4 Newsreel XIII, appearing halfway through *The 42nd Parallel*, contains two items that refer to Mexico. One is a fragment from a news article about the political

turbulence of the Mexican Revolution: "Washington considers unfortunate illogical and unnatural the selection of General Huerta as provisional president of Mexico in succession to the overthrown president" (184). The other consists of some lines from "La Cucaracha," the familiar Mexican folk song. Since the two items follow each other in the internal sequence of the Newsreel, the song could be seen as in some way commenting on the article fragment. Yet what is their connection? Although its roots stretch further back, the infectious "La Cucaracha" rose in popularity with the Mexican Revolution. As such, the song could very well be seen as mere flavor or atmosphere, an attempt to capture the everyday sounds of the revolution. But could it hold a deeper meaning? Consider the verse that Dos Passos reproduces, in the original Spanish: "*La cucaracha la cucaracha / Ya no quiere caminar / Porque no tiene, porque no tiene / Marijuana [sic] que fumar*," which translates as "The cockroach the cockroach / Doesn't want to walk anymore / Because it doesn't have, because it doesn't have / Any marijuana to smoke."

5 The narrative of the song is straight-forward, but gains a deeper meaning in the context that Dos Passos puts it into. In essence, the titular cockroach is dissatisfied because it has been deprived of marijuana, which is derived from the cannabis plant, a resource rich to Mexico.[1] Through countless iterations of the song spanning at least two centuries, the insect protagonist has been made to take on different identities—overtly or implicitly. During the revolution, it was sometimes associated with Pancho Villa and the rebels themselves, but at other times—and perhaps predominantly—it was used to mock and ridicule President Victoriano Huerta, the counter-revolutionary usurper. In an often-repeated claim, it is said that Huerta was a marijuana addict (e.g. Asprey 261), and in this light, performing the song could be seen as a way to comment on his parasitical rule. Indeed, the account from a journalist who traveled with Villa's forces makes clear that the revolutionaries referred to Huerta as *la cucaracha* (Campos 162). In his Newsreel montage, Dos Passos does juxtapose the song with the installation of Huerta as president, but importantly, the focus of the news fragment is not on the event as such, but rather on the U.S. response to this latest development in the revolution. In other words, the key context here is U.S. involvement in Mexican affairs, and it is against this background that both the identity of the cockroach and the nature of that which it has been deprived of become interesting. In the Mac narrative that makes up most of the first half of *The 42nd Parallel*, Dos Passos offers a provocative answer to each of these two questions.

6 Fainy "Mac" McCreary is the working-class character who drifts down to Mexico to "kinda get into things, into the revolution," as he himself puts it (114). His presence in Mexico is anomalous, however, since every U.S. American except for him seems to be in the country for one reason: oil, another resource

rich to Mexico. In fact, every single compatriot he encounters is connected to the oil industry: the oil prospector he meets in a bar, the independent oil promoter Ben Stowell, and J. Ward Moorehouse with his associates Janey Williams and G.H. Barrow in tow, who are in Mexico to mediate between U.S. oil companies and the newly-installed Carranza government. The oil business, however, is not running as smoothly as it used to, but has rather come to a standstill as a result of the political turbulence. As Mac is crossing the border to Mexico, we learn that "[t]he bars of El Paso were full of ranchers and mining men bemoaning the good old days when Porfirio Diaz [sic] was in power and a white man could make money in Mexico" (113). That is, in the days before the revolution, long-time president and de facto dictator Díaz allowed U.S. business interests to operate freely and extensively in Mexico.[2] The U.S. nostalgia for the days of Díaz is contrasted with the paranoia and fear of violence felt by the previously mentioned oil prospector in the narrative present of the revolution. Hiding out in a locale simply but significantly named "American Bar," suggesting something of a refuge, the man is shocked that Mac as a fellow U.S. citizen has no plans to get out of the country, exclaiming that "[t]hese bandits'll be on the town any day . . . It'll be horrible, I tell you," after which he counts the cartridges to his gun (265, ellipsis in original).

7 Whether exaggerated or not, an explanation for the hostility towards U.S. expatriates in Mexico is suggested by Ricardo Perez's comment to Mac that "[i]t was your ambassador murdered Madero," referring to the fact that the U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Henry Lane Wilson, conspired with then-General Huerta and other elements of the Mexican military to overthrow the democratically elected President Francisco I. Madero (115). The ambassador's actions constituted a significant change in cross-border relations: from having previously only nurtured commercial interests, the United States was now interfering with Mexican politics. This interventionist practice was continued by the subsequent U.S. administration under Woodrow Wilson, who grew averse to Huerta and actively sought to depose him, culminating in the U.S. occupation of Veracruz in 1914. While the professed motive was that of ousting a despot, the real reason may have been Huerta's failure to calm the social and political unrest that was hindering U.S. financial interests from resuming their business in Mexico. This is at least what Dos Passos suggests in Newsreel XIV, where a headline apparently referring to the amphibious landing at Veracruz ("RIDING SEAWOLF IN MEXICAN WATERS") is preceded by one describing a successful instance of economic lobbyism: "WILSON WILL TAKE ADVICE OF BUSINESS" (210). Accordingly, Mac's next narrative section begins with Huerta's resignation under the twin pressure of American occupation and domestic insurgency. As the fleeing president is succeeded by Venustiano Carranza, Dos Passos shows how representatives of U.S. corporate inter-

ests immediately flock to the scene: Ben Stowell, the oil contractor whom Mac befriends, is "trying to put through a deal with Carranza's government to operate some oilwells" (269), and J. Ward Moorehouse on his publicity trip is confounded by "Carranza's stubborn opposition to American investors," wishing only for "friendly coöperation," and expressing disappointment that "the Mexican papers had been misinformed about the aims of American business in Mexico" (276–77).

8 The flurry of activity to secure the flow of oil provokes a curious image, namely one of the United States suffering the inevitable withdrawal symptoms from having been deprived of its number one stimulant. Like the cockroach in the song, the United States literally cannot move or function normally without having its addiction appeased. It is of course an addiction brought on by technological modernity, one that would only escalate in the coming decades, which we can see dramatized in *The Big Money* through its focus on the automobile and aviation industries. And as is evident from the above discussion, the United States will go to great lengths to have its addiction satisfied. In this light, it becomes clear why, in the news item, Washington considers "unfortunate illogical and unnatural" the swift governmental succession in Mexico: the toppling of the Madero administration marks another change in power, forestalling any kind of political stability that could allow for meaningful business relations to resume (184).

9 The whole idea is neatly encapsulated in the secondary character G.H. Barrow, a union man working for the American Federation of Labor whom Moorehouse enlists to "peaceably and in a friendly fashion" ease the relationship between capital and labor (237). In this role, Barrow accompanies Moorehouse on his trip to Mexico, to mediate between U.S. business interests and Mexican officials, in a "purely unofficial capacity," as Moorehouse assures Mac (276). However, Barrow shows little interest in matters of labor, but rather seems to have his mind elsewhere, asking Mac and Ben "whether Mexicans were as immoral as it was made out," and "whether it wasn't pretty risky going out with girls here on account of the high percentage of syphilis" (271). When he is offered to be taken out for a night on the town, Barrow justifies his acceptance by saying that "[a] man ought to see every side of things when he's investigating conditions" (271). A night of revelry follows, where Barrow takes full advantage of the "conditions" of Mexico, drinking tequila, chasing women, seeking out prostitutes, as well as singing and dancing. In other words, rather than investigating conditions, it is clear that Barrow is more interested in satisfying his vices and addictions. Significantly, at one point during the night, "La Cucaracha" is requested and duly performed by the cantina band (273).

10 From the two original items, news fragment and song lyric, we can thus discern and piece together the whole: the connection between U.S. involvement in

Mexican affairs and a drunken *gringo* singing along to "La Cucaracha," with the figure of Barrow revealing the discrepancy between noble intention and sordid reality. Rather than merely providing flavor, the combination of song and news fragment spurs an alternative reading of history, in which the United States' policies and activities during the revolution had less to do with a genuine interest in bilateral cooperation or promoting democracy at large than with trying to reclaim its own commercial interests.

11 The theme of U.S. involvement in Latin American affairs is not limited to Dos Passos's segments and material on the Mexican Revolution, but continues as a recurring motif throughout the trilogy, only broken off by the war in Europe. For example, in *The 42nd Parallel*, a headline in Newsreel XII boasts: "ROOSEVELT TELLS FIRST TIME HOW US GOT PANAMA," no doubt indicating a certain imperialist bravado (151). The original article from the *Chicago Tribune* reports on a speech given by former President Theodore Roosevelt, in which he reminisced about the stalled negotiations over the construction of the Panama Canal. "Colombia was trying to hold up Uncle Sam," he asserted. "I decided that this should not be done." As he continued, he emphasized action over deliberation, illustrating his famous Big Stick diplomacy: "I could have sent a learned report to congress and there would have been an able debate, but I didn't. I took the isthmus and started the canal" ("Roosevelt Tells First Time How U.S. Got Panama"). Later in the trilogy, however, Dos Passos questions the methods through which the United States "got" the canal zone, suggesting that they were less transparent and more underhanded than Roosevelt lets on. This is implied through the biography of diplomat Paxton Hibben, who in his role as *chargé d'affaires* in Bogotá is described as helping to "wangle the revolution that stole the canal zone from the bishop of Bogotá," referring to the U.S. support of the separatist movement that caused the territory of Panama to be divorced from Colombia, giving Washington control over the strategically important canal zone (513).

12 In Newsreel LV in *The Big Money*, we find the ominous headline "AMERICAN MARINES LAND IN NICARAGUA," reflecting the latest development in the U.S. occupation of that country, which had just been thrown into civil war. Specifically, as a consultation of the original article reveals, the headline refers to an intervention in August 1926, in which U.S. troops were deployed in the coastal Bluefields region to safeguard commercial interests against advancing insurrectionists.[3] Considering this wider context of U.S. intervention in Latin American affairs, and the way in which Dos Passos appears thematically concerned with it, there is a seemingly trivial headline elsewhere in *The Big Money* that suddenly takes on greater urgency. For when "Pershing Dances Tango in the Argentine" in Newsreel LII, we are likely to be suspicious: is the U.S. military once again stepping across Latin American soil or is the

dance nothing more than a diplomatic show of interest in local culture? As a consultation of the original news story reveals, the answer is of course the latter—the retired general was there on a goodwill tour of South America—but there is nonetheless something unsettling about the headline in the context of U.S. foreign policy as sketched out by Dos Passos.[4] In fact, it bears mentioning that General Pershing commanded the 1916 military expedition in which the U.S. Army crossed into Mexican territory at the height of the revolution in pursuit of Pancho Villa, a historical fact that directly connects the suave dancer of the headline to previous interventionist incursions into Latin America.

13 General Pershing's dance captures in a single headline the jarring and uncomfortable combination of the trivial and the consequential characteristic of the Newsreel sections in the trilogy. To use an example unrelated to Latin America, we may think of how the headlines "LITTLE CARUSO EXPECTED" and "MACHINEGUNS MOW DOWN MOBS IN KNOXVILLE" follow each other in Newsreel XLIII, juxtaposing celebrity culture with race riots (755).[5] The purpose of this pattern is naturally to criticize the trivializing effect of mass culture, which "mixes and scrambles everything together"—as cultural critic Dwight Macdonald would put it two decades later (62). For the reader, it also helps to defamiliarize those seemingly trivial artifacts and signifiers, encouraging us to think more critically about their nature and role—that is, to return to the example above, whether celebrity culture was taking focus from far more important social issues, both in the media and in the public consciousness. This was at least Dos Passos's view and likely what he in part sought to convey through the Newsreels. As he wrote in 1927, shortly before beginning work on *The 42nd Parallel*, lamenting the perceived public indifference to the Sacco-Vanzetti case: "Tabloids and movies take the place of mental processes, and revolts, crimes, despairs pass off in a dribble of vague words and rubber stamp phrases without leaving a scratch on the mind of the driven instalment-paying, subway-packing mass" ("Sacco and Vanzetti" 99). Later, in 1968, Dos Passos would recall that "[t]he Newsreels were intended to give the clamor, the sound of daily life" ("An Interview with John Dos Passos" 283). The word choice here is revealing, as the Newsreels are not mere background noise but indeed clamor: there is something distinctly overpowering about them in their sensory overload, and as such, they also represent the ability of mass culture to divert focus and to drown things out.

14 The power of the media's clamor to obscure and drown out certain news events is in fact established early in the trilogy—specifically, in *The 42nd Parallel*'s Newsreel XXII. Here, in another thematically unrelated but formally significant example, the large headline "COMING YEAR PROMISES REBIRTH OF RAILROADS" is followed by "DEBS IS GIVEN 30 YEARS IN PRISON" in noticeably smaller print (445).[6] The former headline thus appears to literally

and figuratively overshadow the latter, and their contrasting size presumably corresponds to the varying amount of attention given to the two different items in the media: while the large font of the headline about the railroads may be understood to represent front-page news, the smaller font used for the Debs verdict suggests an item buried somewhere at the back of the paper. However, by putting them next to each other in the Newsreel, Dos Passos not only makes visible these medial strategies of selection and presentation, but also points to a connection between the two headlines. Because the two are of course related. Readers have already become acquainted with union leader Eugene V. Debs from his biography earlier in *The 42nd Parallel*, and there Dos Passos supplies the connection: "Debs was a railroad man," the piece opens, foregrounding the professional identity that would serve as the basis for his commitment to the labor movement (30). With a "gusty rhetoric that set on fire the railroad workers," the biography continues, Debs "made them want the world he wanted, / a world brothers might own / where everybody would split even" (31). His passionate activism and impulse for organization made him unpopular with the railroad companies, and he eventually landed in jail for a period after his involvement in a major strike outside of Chicago. Now, however, with Debs sent off to prison for a much longer time—as referenced by the headline—the railroad companies were no doubt rejoicing. With no one to organize the railroad workers, no one to start strikes and generally stir up trouble, the coming year would indeed promise a rebirth of the railroads. Thus, in the internal sequence of the Newsreel, the upbeat headline is made to obscure the underlying miscarriage of justice facilitating the railway industry's consolidation, in turn mimicking the media's ability to skew the news.

15 If we keep in mind both the potential mechanisms of concealment in the Newsreels and the theme of U.S. intervention in Latin America, our eyes and ears will be alert when we reach a familiar novelty song in Newsreel XLIX, found at the beginning of *The Big Money*: "*Yes we have no bananas / We have no bananas today*" (815, italics in original). This may strike us as a humorous, seemingly harmless song—a blatant musical commodity, the very archetype of style without substance—yet it does more than refer to itself. Because implicit in these two lines of lyric is an inability to supply a demand, suggesting that potential profit is being lost as people want to buy when there is nothing to sell. As such, the exchange between vendor and customer in the song resounds through the broader economy, suggesting supply chain disruptions at a time of high demand.[7] This economic problem, contained in the quoted song lyrics, gestures back to the biography of fruit magnate Minor C. Keith found earlier in the trilogy. There, Dos Passos not only explains how bananas became so popular in northern markets, but also casts light on the grim origins of the supply chains enabling their consumption.

16 Dubbed "Emperor of the Caribbean" by Dos Passos in the biography title, Keith is born to a family that "liked the smell of money," and, as if governed by genetic determinism, he is drawn by the allure of profit throughout his life (211). The smell of money dominates his other senses to the point that when hundreds of men die during a disastrous attempt to build a railroad through the jungles of Costa Rica, Keith's response is to send in 1500 more workers, who also perish. When the railroad is finally finished, it is a financial disaster. In order to recoup his losses, Keith starts planting bananas along the tracks, so that the trains might have something to haul: "this was the beginning of the Caribbean fruittrade," Dos Passos explains (213). In an attempt to make the railroad viable, Keith continues to trade in rubber, vanilla, tortoiseshell, sarsaparilla, and whatever he can get his hands on. "[A]nything he could buy cheap he bought," we are told, and "anything he could sell dear he sold" (213). Suddenly, lo and behold, there is a change in the fruit-eating habits of the northern hemisphere, as a previously exotic delicacy is now becoming widely popular: "in Europe and the United States people had started to eat bananas" (213). As the co-founder and vice-president of the newly-formed United Fruit Company, Keith swiftly responds to the demand by cutting down the jungles of Central America to plant more bananas, and to build more railroads to transport the bananas. And as a result, "every year more steamboats of the Great White Fleet / steamed north loaded with bananas," until Dos Passos reaches the final punchline of historical causality: "and that is the history of the American empire in the Caribbean, / and the Panama canal and the future Nicaragua canal and the marines and the battleships and the bayonets" (214). Thus, Dos Passos suggests that it is the popular demand and appetite for an exotic fruit that inaugurates an era of U.S. political, economic, and military domination in Central America, beginning with bananas and ending with bayonets.

17 The juxtaposition of bayonets and bananas does not only remind us of the connection between U.S. political and economic interests in Latin America, but it also brings to mind a major cause of supply chain disruptions in the fruit trade at the time, which could offer an answer to why the vendor in the song is out of bananas: strikes and labor unrest. In fact, as Dos Passos was completing *The 42nd Parallel* in 1929, which featured the biography of Keith, a United Fruit strike with deadly consequences had recently made the news. This was the Colombian Banana Massacre of December 1928, in which striking workers at a United Fruit plantation in the coastal town of Ciénaga were gunned down by the domestic military. The workers were demanding higher pay, collective insurance, and more sanitary housing—but United Fruit was not willing to yield (Elías Caro & Vidal Ortega 32). After days of unrest, and following skirmishes between the strikers and the military, General

Carlos Cortés Vargas issued the order to decisively quell the workers, fearing that the U.S. military might otherwise intervene in the conflict. "Prepare your mind to face the rebels and kill before foreign troops tread upon our soil," he reportedly told one of his commanders before the attack (qtd. in Farnsworth-Alvear et al. 470–71). As we already know from Dos Passos, the general's fears would not have been unfounded, since the U.S. marine had indeed landed in Nicaragua two years earlier to protect national interests from a local uprising. Exactly how willing the U.S. government was to intervene in the Colombian disturbance is not known, but it is clear that the dissolution of the conflict was viewed positively. After the massacre, U.S. ambassador Jefferson Caffrey sent a dispatch to Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg, whom he had kept updated about the conflict: "I have the honor to report that the Bogotá representative of the United Fruit Company told me yesterday that the total number of strikers killed by the Colombian military exceeded one thousand," he wrote (qtd. in Farnsworth-Alvear et al. 470).

18 Curiously, despite Dos Passos's vilification of Minor C. Keith in *The 42nd Parallel*, there is not a single reference to the Banana Massacre to be found in the trilogy, even though the events in Ciénaga took place within the time period covered by the work as a whole. While Keith had stepped down as vice-president of United Fruit by the time of the strike and ensuing massacre, he was nevertheless the co-founder of the company, and his uncompromising business mentality had arguably left an imprint on its operations. Given the wide compass of what Dos Passos holds Keith responsible for ("the Panama canal and the future Nicaragua canal"), it is surprising that he does not take the opportunity to include the Banana Massacre in the catalog of misdeeds enumerated in the biography. Add to this the fact that the character Joe Williams takes up employment on a United Fruit ship in 1919, written and published after the massacre, and there learns more about the company and its practices, which again shows Dos Passos's antipathy towards Keith's business empire. While loading cargo in Dominica, Joe meets an older man living on the island, who proceeds to denounce the "United Thieves Company," as he calls it: "it's a monopoly," he vents, "if you won't take their prices they let your limes rot on the wharf" (492). The fruits are different, yet the methods are presumably the same. Perhaps this is another reason for why the vendor in the song has no bananas to sell: they are rotting on a wharf somewhere. Since they effectively hold a monopoly, United Fruit would rather let the fruit go to waste than risk decreasing their profit margins. These business practices, in which profit maximization takes precedence over all, are undoubtedly consistent with the labor policies that ultimately led to the Banana Massacre.

19 Even though it would seem to thematically fit into his narrative, it is not possible to say whether Dos Passos was aware of the Banana Massacre.

A survey using the digital archive *Newspapers.com* shows that the violent confrontation and its immediate aftermath were covered by over fifty U.S. dailies between December 7–10 in 1928, from the *Los Angeles Times* to the *Boston Globe*. Yet at that time, Dos Passos was on the move, traveling through Europe on his way back from the Soviet Union, so he could not have caught any U.S. coverage of the Colombian tragedy.[8] He would not return stateside until around Christmas (Ludington 274–75). But even if he had been at home and perusing the papers as usual, avid consumer of the news as he was, Dos Passos would not necessarily have become much the wiser about the events in Ciénaga. For the vast majority of the more than fifty articles published in the U.S. press were identical, consisting of the same Associated Press reports. Notably, in all their three articles on the situation as it was unfolding, the Associated Press avoided all mention of United Fruit—a conspicuous omission that would almost have to be intentional. Only two news articles mentioned the U.S. fruit corporation in relation to the affair: the dispatch from the *Chicago Tribune*'s own correspondent, and a United Press piece ("Yankee Cruiser Waits Order to End Banana War," "24 is Death Toll"). The former was republished in two regional newspapers, and the latter had much smaller circulation than its Associated Press counterpart, only appearing in five outlets.[9] As such, the Associated Press take on the events—their narrative, if you will—dominated the news coverage. Thus, even if Dos Passos had read about the strike and its violent dissolution, he would most likely have done so without any reference to United Fruit and as such would not have been able to connect it to the pattern of U.S. hegemony he was thematically inserting into the trilogy.

20 The way in which the Banana Massacre was divorced from the U.S. economic interests it was bound up with, and thus toned down in the public consciousness, both mirrors and validates the critique of mass media dramatized in Dos Passos's Newsreel sections. As we have already seen in the example of Debs and the railroads, Dos Passos was acutely aware of the ability of the mass media to obscure or drown out certain news items, and this is precisely what happened in the case of the Colombian atrocity, as United Fruit was conveniently omitted in the majority of news coverage. Although a handful of newspapers did mention the United Fruit connection, it would not have been enough to form a critical mass and enter the public consciousness. As such, and in line with Dos Passos's theory of mass culture, it was lost in the clamor.

21 From this follows that when Dos Passos was later scouring newspapers from the late 1920s for material to use in the Newsreels sections of *The Big Money*, he would most likely not have found one about the Banana Massacre that appeared relevant to his thematic concerns of U.S. domination in Latin America. Unbeknownst to him, the very editorial strategies of concealment and exclusion that he was criticizing in his work were keeping him from it—

not only literally, but also on an epistemological level. Later readers, however, may be familiar with the massacre thanks to Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), whose fictional representation of the tragedy brought it into the popular and historical consciousness.[10] These readers may well find the massacre hidden between the lines of the *U.S.A.* trilogy, as a natural albeit unexpressed part of the pattern of U.S. political and economic hegemony in Latin America. In this way, they may sense it beneath "Yes! We Have No Bananas," as if a dissonant counter-melody. For, as we have seen, the Colombian atrocity perfectly fits in Dos Passos's work, and would surely have been part of it—as words on the page—had the role of United Fruit not been whitewashed in the press at the time.

22 In looking back on the *U.S.A.* trilogy in his later life, Dos Passos highlighted its totalizing ambition: "I felt that everything should go in," he said, "popular songs, political aspirations and prejudices, ideals, delusions, clippings out of old newspapers" (qtd. in Chametzky 62). By casting such a wide net and running the material through his "four-way conveyor system," as he referred to the narrative modes, Dos Passos had created a literary engine capable of producing a wealth of meaning through allusion, implication, and juxtaposition (*14th Chronicle* 487). Granted, much of what he included in his compass was selective, chosen and arranged to make specific points or to steer the reader in certain directions. The thematic cluster on Latin America definitely falls into this category, as the frivolous "La Cucaracha" is made to resound through the Mexican portion of the work and take on greater meaning, at once illuminating and mocking U.S. interventionism. Yet the case of the Banana Massacre shows that Dos Passos's literary engine could also produce effects beyond the purview of intention. In fact, as I have suggested, it could even summon forth that which had been repressed in the public consciousness and kept from the author's own horizon of knowledge. It is a testament to Dos Passos's comprehensive chronicling of the time period, then, that the Banana Massacre in some sense manages to be present in the *U.S.A.* trilogy despite its absence.

Notes

[1] It should be noted that, at this point in the narrative, the production and use of marijuana was legal in Mexico, and as such it could rightly be seen as a national resource among others. It was criminalized in 1920 (Campos 200).

[2] In *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, Robert B. Asprey addresses the issue of U.S. commercial interests in pre-revolutionary Mexico, stating that "American companies owned three quarters of the mines, half the oil fields . . . and vast cattle ranches in the North—all together, by 1910, an investment of some $2 billion" (240).

[3] The headline matches in large part the one put by the *New York Times* on an Associated Press story from August 28, 1926 ("American Marines Land in Nicaragua to Protect Aliens").

[4] The source of the headline is an Associated Press story that was published in several newspapers nationwide, including the *New York Times*. It mentions that Pershing "danced the Argentine tango with the daughter of his host" while also "tast[ing] his first cup of yerba mate" ("Pershing Dances Tango in Argentina").

[5] The headlines would seem to refer to Enrico and Dorothy Caruso expecting their first child, Gloria (born December 18, 1919), and the race riots in Knoxville, Tennessee on August 30, 1919, during which the Tennessee National Guard indeed used machine guns, killing two people.

[6] The differing font sizes of the headlines are present in the first edition of *The 42nd Parallel*, and are also reproduced in the Library of America edition of the trilogy. However, not all later editions of the U.S.A. novels preserve this important formal feature.

[7] The reason for the banana shortage in the song has sometimes been linked to the spread of Panama Disease, a fungus infection that plagued plantations in the period. However, while a survey of U.S. newspapers confirms that the disease was reported on in the early 1920s, it was by all accounts not part of the inspiration for the song. Frank Silver, one of the two songwriters, told the story behind the song to the *Hartford Courant* in July 1923, crediting the title phrase to a Greek fruit and soda stand operator on Long Island, who was fond of beginning sentences with the word "yes." According to Silver: "It occurred to me that there was a good jingle in his 'Yess [sic],—we have no bananas' and Cohn [his co-writer] and I drummed it out." As the author of the article points out, there was no deeper significance to the song: "The writer admits the number is meaningless" ("'Bananas' Writer Owes His Fortune to Fruit Peddler"). A United Press piece on the song from later in the summer makes clear that there was no general banana shortage to speak of that year: " . . . the produce merchants claim sales have mounted so rapidly they almost have to say 'yes we have no bananas today'—then another boat load arrives" ("'Banana Boys' Clean Up $60,000 On Their Jazz Song").

[8] Whether Dos Passos picked up anything from the European press is unclear but unlikely, given that he was traveling through Poland and Germany whose national languages he did not master.

[9] A week after the massacre, the Associated Press put out an update on the events in Ciénaga, focusing on the human and material cost, but it saw less circulation than their original series of articles, appearing in only ten newspapers in my search. Here, United Fruit is actually mentioned, but symptomatically only as one among other parties that had incurred property damages as a result of the disturbances, with no reference to the company being the subject of the strike ("Strike Damage Exceeds Million").

Notes

[10] Marcelo Bucheli comments on the importance of García Márquez's novel in bringing attention to the massacre: "[B]efore 1967, no serious historical studies had been written about the 1928 strike or about the social dynamics surrounding the banana industry in Colombia" (2).

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Biography

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John Dos Passos and George Orwell:
Intersecting Lives, Parallel Politics and Writing

John Dos Passos Coggin
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Abstract

Today, vast space separates the political and literary legacies of John Dos Passos and George Orwell. Orwell dominates American culture, transcending partisan political classification as a champion of human rights and anti-totalitarianism, filling summer reading lists in K-12 schools, and shaping political speech from the White House to city council. Dos Passos, who occupied the first rank of American letters in the 1930s, has fallen into obscurity in the United States, categorized as an ideologue man of the Left or the Right, or a rusted literary naturalist. Critics' narrow political and literary strictures have trimmed his legacy to bits.

Dos Passos and Orwell, however, share much in common: Outsider youths at elite schools, horror at empire, brave defenses of Republican Spain, profound appreciation for political revolution's violent ends, distaste for political orthodoxy, and lifelong commitment to individual rights. They met briefly in Spain and Dos Passos remembered it to his death. Dos Passos saw in Orwell a rare honest man in an age of political betrayal, and it is likely Orwell saw the same in Dos Passos.

Keywords

Communism, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, George Orwell, José Robles, Spanish Civil War.

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Orwell and Dos Passos Meet in Spain, 1937

1 For all their shared political and literary values, Orwell and Dos Passos only met once in-person—during the Spanish Civil War. Perhaps the most accurate account of the meeting's logistics comes from the letters and memoirs of an American husband and wife, Charles and Lois Orr, living and working in Barcelona in early 1937. Dos Passos himself disparaged his notation of the meeting's basic details in his posthumously published final novel, *Century's Ebb: The Thirteenth Chronicle*, where he retold meeting Orwell in a fictional format. "They settled in two chairs in a corner," said Dos Passos, using "Jay Pignatelli" as his alias while casting the story as fiction. "The Englishman uttered his name in a low voice. Jay scribbled it on a corner of his notebook and promptly forgot it" (Dos Passos, *Century's Ebb* 94).

2 The Orrs were young socialists. Charles worked as editor for the POUM's English-language bulletin, *The Spanish Revolution*, and broadcast English-language news on Radio POUM. According to the Orrs' accounts, Dos Passos met Orwell sometime between April 25 and 28, at the office of Andreu Nin, Secretary of the POUM, a section of anti-Stalinist Spanish communists. The office was on Las Ramblas, the main boulevard through the Barcelona city center. Charles Orr, at the POUM's behest, had arranged for Dos Passos to interview Nin. Eileen O'Shaughnessy, Orwell's wife and Charles's secretary, helped set it up. At the time, Orwell was serving in the POUM militia at the Aragon front; like many Americans who emigrated to Spain to fight, Orwell believed in the anti-fascist, anti-Franco cause. He happened to be on leave and in Barcelona visiting Eileen. From his wife, he knew that Dos Passos was in town on business. According to Charles Orr, Orwell asked Eileen to ask Charles to somehow arrange a meeting between Dos Passos and the young British writer. "I arranged that he should meet Dos Passos," recounts Orr, "in the hallway in front of Nin's office, where they chatted for a few minutes. I wanted to invite him to accompany us in. But who was I, to drag this husband of my secretary, this militiaman—in his baggy, tan coverall uniform—into a private interview? So we just left Orwell standing in the hallway … Orwell waited half an hour, sitting on a bench, until we reappeared, and he was able to speak with Dos Passos for a minute or two again" (Charles Orr 180).

3 Unfortunately, Communist secret police raided Orwell's Barcelona hotel soon after his meeting with Dos Passos, so it is likely Orwell's side of the story remains locked in Russian archives in Moscow (Orwell, *Orwell Diaries* xix).

4 Dos Passos was in Spain trying to help the family of his dear friend and Spanish translator José Robles, who had been helping the Republican cause but was recently missing and now presumed dead. Dos Passos tried to secure an official death certificate for Robles, so his widow Márgara could collect the life insurance payout due to her through her husband's professorship at Johns

Hopkins University. Given Dos Passos's intricate knowledge of Spanish politics and his lifelong respect for Orwell, it is likely we can trust his nonfiction account of the substance of their conversation, found in an obscure but significant summation of his political journey, *The Theme is Freedom*, published in 1956. "It was only later," tells Dos Passos, "that I discovered that one of the Englishmen I met at the Barcelona hotel was George Orwell, a man for whom I have come to feel more respect with each passing year" (Dos Passos, *The Theme Is Freedom* 145). In particular, he spotlighted their shared outlook on Spanish politics:

> We didn't talk very long, but I can still remember the sense of assuagement, of relief from strain I felt at last to be talking to an honest man. The officials I'd talked to in the past weeks had been gulls most of them, or self-deceivers, or else had been trying to pull the wool over my eyes. The plain people had been heartbreaking. There's a certain majesty in innocence in the face of death. This man Orwell referred without overemphasis to things we both knew to be true. He passed over them lightly. He knew everything. Perhaps he was still a little afraid of how much he knew. It was the difference I'd felt so often in the earlier war when I'd been a nameless ambulance driver instead of a goddam campfollower. The men at the front could allow themselves the ultimate luxury of telling the truth. It was worth the dirt and the lice and the danger and racket of shellfire to escape the lying and the hypocrisy and the moral degradation of the people in the rear. Men who are about to die regain a certain quiet primal dignity. Orwell spoke with the simple honesty of a man about to die. (Dos Passos, *The Theme Is Freedom* 145-46)

Orwell was a newcomer to Spain when he arrived for the first time in December 1936, full of brio for the Republican cause and eager to enlist in the military resistance to Francisco Franco. He knew neither the Catalan nor Spanish languages, and undoubtedly had difficulty learning the labyrinth of Spanish politics at such a disadvantage (Horn, *Letters from Barcelona* 177). When he met Dos Passos, Orwell was a young writer full of promise but short on achievement and reputation. Before leaving for Spain, he had learned that his nonfiction book, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), had secured a publisher, but it was years before fame.

5 In contrast, Dos Passos had studied Spanish language, art, architecture, poetry, and politics since 1916 and enjoyed high political and literary reputation in the country in 1937. He had devoted his 1922 collection of essays, *Rosinante to the Road Again*, to the country's history and culture. In 1931, Ernest Hemingway had written to Dos Passos: "You are the great writer of Spain" (Hemingway 342). In December 1936, *The Big Money*, Dos Passos's novel published that year, had become a bestseller and was due for translation into French, Italian, Hungarian, and German (Vaill 94).

6 Yet, Dos Passos and Orwell's kinship was strong and immediate upon meeting in Barcelona. They were both young, idealistic, anti-imperialist, anti-ortho-

doxy, romantic men of the Left at the beginning of one of the worst years of their lives.

Before the Spanish Civil War: Young Men of the Left

7 Parallels abound between Orwell's and Dos Passos's early lives. Dos Passos was seven years older than Orwell—a good deal less than a generation apart. In fact, the similarities between their upbringings make an argument for counting them as cohorts in the Lost Generation. Orwell simply took those rites of passage a few years later.

8 Foremost, Dos Passos and Orwell enjoyed elite educations at boarding schools and then selective universities. Orwell attended St. Cyprian's and then Eton; Dos Passos attended Choate and then Harvard. Dos Passos's first formal schooling was at Peterborough Lodge in the London suburbs, as his father, John Randolph Dos Passos—known informally as 'John R.' —hoped his son would go on to Oxford or Cambridge. John R. was a devoted Anglophile; according to his son, "although proud of his Portuguese extraction he never ceased to believe that the Anglo-Saxon tradition of law and representative government was the only possible basis for the development of a worldwide Christian civilization" (Dos Passos, The Best Times 11). But after only six months at Peterborough, the

9 Dos Passos family moved to America (Townsend Ludington, *Odyssey* 21-22). Orwell and Dos Passos would look back on their school years with frustration and rebellion. Dos Passos visited Choate at least once in his adulthood but never reconnected with Harvard. In his memoirs, *The Best Times*, he recalls bullies taunting him at Choate, calling him "Frenchy and Four-eyes and the class grind." He did find one good friend at Choate, Franklin "Skinny" Nordhoff; the two went camping and caught rodents, snakes, and frogs. Dos Passos even kept a pet raccoon at Choate for company (Ludington, *Odyssey* 25). According to Orwell's biographer Bernard Crick, "the posthumously published account of his prep school days, 'Such, Such Were the Joys,' is so unhappy and so horrific a picture of institutional despotism that some have seen it, rather than the political events in Europe of the 1930s and 1940s, as the origins of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*" (Crick 2). Orwell explains in "Why I Write," that from the beginning his "literary ambitions were mixed up with the feelings of being isolated and undervalued" (online).

10 Dos Passos and Orwell were well-traveled young men with strong affinities for England and Europe, and an appreciation of their small place in a global community. Orwell, born in British India in 1903 as Eric Arthur Blair, began life with a sense of the enormity of the British Empire. Dos Passos lived a significant portion of his boyhood in Belgium, where he learned French, and his father often wrote him letters in French. Before Dos Passos began Harvard, his father sent him on a Grand Tour of Europe and the Near East, where he visited

England, France, Italy, Egypt, Greece, and Istanbul, then known as Constantinople. Though Dos Passos eventually put down roots in America and started a family there, he always felt a stranger. Certainly, his surname proved unpronounceable to most. In his autobiographical novel, *Chosen Country* (1951), Dos Passos calls himself a "double foreigner … A Man Without a Country" (26).

11 After university, Dos Passos and Orwell spent more time outside England and the United States, exposing themselves to foreign languages, literatures, histories, and politics in the hopes that it would enrich their writing and out of sheer curiosity. From 1922 to 1927, Orwell served as a police officer in the British colony of Burma, now known as Myanmar. He resigned the service because, in his words, "I could not go on any longer serving an imperialism which I had come to regard as very largely a racket" (Crick 129). He poured this sentiment into his first novel, *Burmese Days* (1934). "So at the end of his *Burmese Days*," writes Orwell biographer Bernard Crick, "a specific hatred of imperialism is clear which he soon turned into a general critique of autocracy of any kind" (Crick 131). Dos Passos shared an anti-imperialist stance, evidenced by his satire towards it in the U.S.A. trilogy. The first pages of the work begin with a mournful reference to U.S. involvement in the Spanish-American War in the Philippines: "There's been many a good man murdered in the Philippines/ Lies sleeping in some lonesome grave" (Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel* 3).

12 Dos Passos spent the 1920s constantly on the move, painting, drawing, and writing. Some of his most significant travels were in the Near and Middle East, where he visited Georgia, Armenia, Morocco, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. He crossed the Syrian Desert, observed the aftermath of the Greek-Turkish War, climbed the Caucasus, explored Persia during the rise of Reza Kahn, and recorded the creation of Iraq by the British. "With the name of Allah for all baggage," Dos Passos writes in *Orient Express* (1927), his nonfiction memoir of the journeys, "you could travel from the Great Wall of China to the Niger and be fairly sure of food, and often of money, if only you were ready to touch your forehead in the dust five times a day and put away self and the glamorous West" (Dos Passos, *Orient Express* 70).

13 Dos Passos and Orwell also both benefited from stays at the "University of Paris"—the strong fellowship of expatriate artists in Paris in the 1920s that included Louis Bromfield, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, and Gertrude Stein. Though Orwell did not arrive in Paris until spring 1928, when Dos Passos was in New York City and Key West, he drank from the same creative springs while in the arts capital among expatriates. Orwell biographer D.J. Taylor likened the experiences of the two writers in Paris (Taylor 94). At the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Dos Passos had been climbing the rungs of the U.S. literary world for almost twenty years and enjoyed a good view from the top. After gaining critical acclaim with *Three Soldiers* (1921) and *Manhattan*

Transfer (1925), John Dos Passos's U.S.A. trilogy, first published as a complete set in January 1938, placed the Portuguese-American author in the first rank of American letters alongside Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Lewis called *Manhattan Transfer* "a novel of the very first importance," and "more important in every way than anything by Gertrude Stein or Marcel Proust or even the great white boar, Mr. Joyce's *Ulysses*" (Ludington, *Odyssey* 241).

14 On August 10, 1936, Dos Passos appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine. Literary critic T.K. Whipple said in 1938, "How close does 'U.S.A.' come to being a great American novel? That it comes within hailing distance is proved by the fact that it has already been so hailed; indeed, it comes close enough so that the burden of proof is on those who would deny the title" ("Dos Passos and the U.S.A." 89). That same year, critic Lionel Trilling said, "U.S.A. . . . stands as the most important American novel of the decade, on the whole more satisfying than anything else we have" ("The America of John Dos Passos" 93). The critic Alfred Kazin called U.S.A. "one of the great achievements of the modern novel" (Kazin 353).

15 Dos Passos, moreover, leveraged that fame to strengthen his voice behind leftist political causes, including justice for Sacco and Vanzetti, two Italian immigrant anarchists convicted of murder in 1921 and executed in 1927. Their deaths reinforced Dos Passos's thinking that writers and artists should be engaged in political activism; he called political indifference "sinister" (Ludington, *Odyssey* 264).

16 Orwell and Dos Passos, however, for all their leftist passion, eschewed orthodoxy and institutions, running against the current of the times. In the 1920s and 30s, writers could curry favor with the British and American literary establishment and perhaps earn better book reviews by continually affirming socialism or communism without reservation. It was easy to believe in revolution when few writers in New York City, London, or Paris had actually seen Russia. "The amount of influence the Communists have had on the liberal in-gangs that have made a hash of non-partisan literary criticism in this country would make an interesting study," Dos Passos said in 1970 (Lynn online). In 1938, he wrote, "The Marxist critics are just finding out, with considerable chagrin, that my stuff isn't Marxist. I should think that anybody with half an eye would have noticed that in the first place" (Dos Passos, *Fourteenth Chronicle* 516). Even in 1926, though, when Dos Passos was at his most radical on the Left and in the full flower of youthful idealism, he despised groupthink. That year, he joined the executive board of the *New Masses*, a publication with many communist writers. In the June 1926 issue of the magazine, he wrote, "I don't think it's any time for any group of spellbinders to lay down the law on any subject whatsoever. Particularly 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 continent. Why not develop our own brand?" He added, "I'd like to see a magazine full of introspection and doubt" (online). In 1932, when the editor of the *Modern Monthly* asked Dos Passos if writers should join the Communist Party, he responded: "It's his own goddam business. Some people are naturally party men and others are natural scavengers and campfollowers. Matter of temperament. I personally belong to the scavenger and campfollower section" (Hicks 23). Lionel Trilling said in 1938 that Dos Passos "pins no faith on any force or party—indeed he is almost alone of the novelists of the Left (Silone is the only other one that comes to mind) in saying that the creeds and idealisms of the Left may bring corruption quite as well as the greeds and cynicisms of the established order" ("The America of John Dos Passos" 95).

17 George Orwell's transcendence of political labels and general commitment to human rights is far better known in academia and popular culture than Dos Passos's. A recent editorial in the *Australian Financial Review* notes Orwell's "contempt for left-wing 'orthodoxy sniffers,' as he called them, and for British fellow travelers of the Soviet Union" (Cowley online).

After the Spanish Civil War

18 The Spanish Civil War was tragedy and turning point for Orwell and Dos Passos. POUM leader Andreu Nin, the subject of Dos Passos's interview in April 1937, was soon after arrested, tortured, and executed in a Stalinist purge. In May of that year, Orwell was serving with the POUM on the front line near Huesca, when he took an enemy sniper bullet to the throat. When the Stalinist section of the Spanish Loyalists declared the POUM and its militia illegal, Orwell "spent the following nights trying to sleep in the ruins of bombed-out buildings and tried to blend into the Barcelona crowds during the day" (Martinez de Pisón 209). Dos Passos never served in combat but regularly reported on the front lines. As freethinking writers and anti-Stalinist dissidents, they were both fortunate to leave Spain with their lives. Orwell and his wife left Spain on the 23rd of June, one day after the Republican government of Spain, led by Juan Negrín, created a Special Tribunal for Espionage and High Treason, which probably would have convicted them both for their connections to the POUM and the British Independent Labor Party (Martinez de Pisón 210).

19 In his essay "Why I Write," Orwell explains that "The Spanish war and other events in 1936-37 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic socialism, as I understand it." At his first opportunity, he documented his horror at the Stalinist purges and other sectarian violence on the Left in Spain in a nonfiction account,

Homage to Catalonia (1938). Though given the socialist and communist sympathies of the British literary establishment, finding a publisher proved difficult. Victor Gollancz, editor of the Left Book Club in London rejected the manuscript without reading it. Once published, it sold poorly.

20 Dos Passos returned to America in May 1937 or thereabouts. He arrived still hurting from the Robles disappearance case and the thousand barriers to solving it. To add to the sting, Hemingway warned him that should Dos Passos print the truth of the internecine warfare in Spain, the New York literary establishment would destroy his reputation (Ludington, *The Fourteenth Chronicle* 496). Nevertheless, he published all he could on the Stalinist infiltration of Republican Spain and wrote in deeply emotional terms. First was a July article in *Common Sense*, "Farewell to Europe," where he settled on the United States as the once and future beacon of democracy and criticized the governments of England, Spain, and France. That fall, he wrote to John Howard Lawson, writer and friend, "you think that the end justifies the means and I think that all you have in politics is the means; ends are always illusory" (Dos Passos, *The Fourteenth Chronicle* 514). Then he published a fuller autobiographical account of the Spanish betrayal in the novel, *Adventures of a Young Man* (1939).

21 Had Dos Passos and Orwell met again after 1937, they surely would have found kinship again, though Orwell stayed on the Left and Dos Passos moved right steadily. The moment one of them broached the topic of Spain, they would have spoken from a common plane of political disillusionment and personal despair. Perhaps they would have been amused by their reversal in literary fortunes since their first meeting, too, as Dos Passos steadily declined in reputation after *Adventures of a Young Man* while Orwell steadily grew in stature after *Animal Farm* (1945) seized the world's imagination. In fact, Dos Passos wrote to Orwell to praise him for *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) (Crick 509). Perhaps they would have corresponded more or crossed paths in-person had Orwell not died from tuberculosis in 1950.

Orwell and Dos Passos Today

22 Orwell and Dos Passos today inhabit different continents of literary reputation. Orwell is one of the most popular writers in the world, attracting constant attention in American academia, politics, and popular culture. He is widely taught in America at the K-12, undergraduate, and graduate levels. Literary scholars, politicians, and journalists lionize him as a visionary and prophet whose crusade for individual liberty defies the political spectrum. A recent editorial in the *Australian Financial Review* by Jason Cowley, editor of the *New Statesman*, claims Orwell "was neither on the left nor the right"; instead, he was "a kind of border stalker, moving across ideological divides, cussedly

independent, forging his own way" (online). References on TV and film to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm* are especially common. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is on its way to becoming a new television series (Kanter online). In December 2020, a downloadable computer game adaptation of *Animal Farm* was released. Orwell's book sales are strong, too. When Trump was elected U.S. president, sales of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* soared (Charles online).

23 Orwell's rapid ascent to global phenomenon began during the Cold War, when he became a symbol for American and British propaganda. With CIA and British intelligence support for what they interpreted as an anti-Soviet message, his books inundated the world and enjoyed translation across a massive spectrum of languages. The Congress for Cultural Freedom, a Cold War-era CIA organization, "did not leave the canon untouched, but rather helped to shape it, define it, regulate it, administer it, co-opt part of it, and in some cases silence and marginalize writers" (Rubin 8). The U.S. Army published *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in serialized format in its German magazine *Der Monat*, while the Congress for Cultural Freedom published the novel internationally in *Encounter*, *Preuves*, and *Tempo Presente* (Rubin 42). Meanwhile, British intelligence, acting via the British Foreign Office, sponsored the translation of Orwell's *Animal Farm* into Farsi, Telugu, Malayalam, Greek, and Vietnamese (Rubin 37). Additionally, the Foreign Office, through a division called the Information Research Department, financed *Animal Farm* cartoon strips, including translations for a vast league of cities, including New Delhi, Rangoon, Eritrea, Bangkok, Saigon, Caracas, Lima, Mexico City, Karachi, Ankara, Cyprus, Bogotá, Reykjavík, Rio de Janeiro, Singapore, Colombo, Ceylon, Benghazi, and Montevideo. By 1955, ten years after publication of *Animal Farm*, the British government had bought the rights to translate the novel into Chinese, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Finnish, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Indonesian, Latvian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also saw a generous translation blitz, courtesy of the Foreign Office. Further, the CIA's Office of Special Projects commissioned a 1954 animated feature film adaptation of *Animal Farm* and distributed it globally with help from the British government (Rubin 43-44).

24 In his seventy-four years, Dos Passos wrote about forty books, but only three are taught with any frequency—usually at the undergraduate and graduate levels. These are *Three Soldiers*, *Manhattan Transfer*, and U.S.A. These titles are also his bestselling works and the works that receive the most interest from literary scholars. In today's news media, the Left and the Right sometimes claim his words to defend their arguments, but no political entity seems to trust his integrity fully after the Spanish Civil War, which prompted his departure from the Left and embrace of American conservative politics, including writing for William F. Buckley's *National Review* magazine. Dos

Passos endorsed William Z. Foster, the communist candidate for president, in 1932, but endorsed archconservative Barry Goldwater for president in 1964.

25 In the U.S. literary world, which thrives on classification as much as biology depends on taxonomy, Dos Passos often resides in the category of naturalism with Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, and Frank Norris. Donald Pizer, currently one of the most revered Dos Passos scholars in the world, considers the author to possess naturalist and modernist styles (Pizer viii). Dos Passos knew and respected Dreiser. "From my youth I'd had great admiration for Dreiser," said Dos Passos in his memoirs. "It was the ponderous battering ram of his novels that opened the way through the genteel reticences of American nineteenth-century fiction for what seemed to me to be a truthful description of people's lives" (Dos Passos, *The Best Times* 206). Indeed, the naturalists' best works still bite with political satire today. Upton Sinclair's 1927 novel, *Oil!*, inspired the 2007 American film masterpiece, *There Will Be Blood*, giving the naturalists a moment in popular culture ("Blood and 'Oil!'").

26 In popular culture, in literary criticism, and in the classroom, however, the naturalists have mostly languished in dark corners, and Dos Passos may have suffered in reputation from his association with them. In his 1969 book, *Red, White, and Blue: Men, Books, and Ideas in American Culture*, literary critic John William Ward claimed that "USA is generally placed in the tradition of naturalism in our literature, but naturalism is one of those large abstractions which threatens to conceal reality rather than disclose it or define it" (Ward 123). In his 1974 collection of critical essays on Dos Passos, the most significant such collection ever published, editor Andrew Hook speculates that the naturalists lost reputation because their style failed to meet Henry James's standard of what a novel should look like. Therefore, by the James test, "they contributed nothing to the art of fiction. Even worse, they were suspected of an indiscriminate documentation of life rather than an imaginative and aesthetically satisfying enrichment of it" (Hook 3). As Pizer noted, Dos Passos was both a naturalist and a modernist, but he has not enjoyed the same canonization as other American modernists like Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and William Faulkner.

27 The works of Dos Passos, moreover, have never been adapted to TV or film, depriving them of Hollywood's significant legacy-burnishing effect. From time to time, Dos Passos receives a positive reevaluation in the media. For example, in 2003, historian Douglas Brinkley celebrated a new Library of America collection of Dos Passos's writing. In 2019, *The New Yorker*'s Matt Hanson declared that *Nineteen-Nineteen* "has—perhaps unsurprisingly—aged quite well" ("What John Dos Passos's '1919'"). Writing for *The Paris Review* in 2020, Jennifer Schaffer said of U.S.A., "To say that it's a trilogy of 'renewed relevance' would be to suggest the story of America has ever been otherwise"

("Quarantine Reads"). But in the main, Dos Passos is as forgotten to American literature and politics as Orwell is remembered.

28 Orwell's contemporary eminence is so ubiquitous it can smack of predestiny, but Orwell scholar John Rodden deftly argues that literary legacy is a fickle thing and subject to prevailing political winds and artistic trends. In *The Politics of Literary Reputation*, he notes that many of Orwell's contemporaries on the Left, including Dos Passos, shifted their politics over the years—some by a few degrees and some by vast turns of the wheel. "Orwell's early death," Rodden notes, "has meant that many intellectuals of his generation have assumed the right to speak in his name as his generation's spokesman." Yet, had he lived longer, Orwell might have gone in any number of directions politically. "What is likely," Rodden asserts, "is that, had he lived, it would not have been so easy to claim him as an all-purpose patron saint. Nor, surely, would he have been turned, by the mid-1950s, into a 'media prophet'" (Rodden 272-273).

Dos Passos's Last Word on Orwell

29 Despite their meaningful intersection during the Spanish Civil War, scholars rarely compare Orwell and Dos Passos or discuss them together in the context of Spain. Writing in 1986 for a French review of American literature, Robert Sayre likens the two. "At the opposite end of the spectrum from Cowley," says Sayre, "we would place Orwell and Dos Passos, both of whom immediately and thoroughly denounced the overall role played by the Comintern in the Spanish conflict. Dos Passos—the author we will focus on here—stands closer to Orwell than to any other Anglo-American writer involved in the war" (Sayre 265). In his 1972 book, *Dos Passos' Path to U.S.A.*, Melvin Landsberg argued that Dos Passos's concern with American politicians' manipulation of language presaged *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Landsberg 192). He highlights a passage from *The Big Money* (1936): "America our nation has been beaten by strangers who have turned our language inside out who have taken the clean words our fathers spoke and made them slimy and foul" (Landsberg 371).

30 Literary critic Christopher Benfey, writing in 2004 for *The New Republic*, asked a compelling question arising from such comparison: "Was Dos Passos an American Orwell, converted from youthful fantasies by the hard facts of twentieth-century total war?" ("Deserters"). Perhaps both authors' truest political compass pointed toward individual liberty, no matter the ephemeral movement or party or label that furnished it. Critic John Williams Ward argued as much in 1969:

> The shift from left to right may look contradictory, but I think is not. Dos Passos is a man always opposed to power. He saw power in the hands of capitalistic businessmen in the 30s and was, therefore, on the radical left; he sees power today in the hands of liberal intellectuals, allied with labor, and is now on the conservative right. I would, of course, stress the fact that Dos

> Passos is responding to his own sense of where power lies in our society; we can make sense out of his position, but to accept his position would require an analysis into the accuracy of his location of power. But Dos Passos has always been a negative function of power; that is, one finds him always at the opposite pole of where he conceives power to be. In this sense, he is more an anarchist, and always was, than a socialist or conservative. (Ward 126)

Alfred Kazin echoed this political assessment of Dos Passos, which mirrors what many have said about Orwell: "It is in this concern with the primacy of the individual, with his need to save the individual from society rather than to establish him in or over it, that one can trace the conflict that runs all through Dos Passos's work" (Kazin 344).

31 The two authors wrote similar mission statements for their lives. In his article, "The Writer as Technician," Dos Passos says, "American writers who want to do the most valuable kind of work will find themselves trying to discover the deep currents of historical change under the surface of opinions, orthodoxies, heresies, gossip and journalistic garbage of the day" (Dos Passos, The Writer as Technician, 82). In his essay, "Why I Write," Orwell explains that "What I have most wanted to do throughout the past ten years is to make political writing into an art" (online). Looking back on his U.S.A. trilogy in 1959, Dos Passos made one his clearest descriptions of his political enterprise: "I can't see any particular virtue in consistency, but the basic tragedy my work tries to express seems to remain monotonously the same: man's struggle for life against the strangling institutions he himself creates" ("Looking Back on 'U.S.A.'").

32 Towards the end of his life, Dos Passos published one last statement on his shared values with George Orwell, in the form of a biographical section in *Century's Ebb* called "Towards 1984," revealing the kinship he still felt with him thirty years after the Spanish Civil War. Rather than sharpening his satirical blade, Dos Passos leads with compassion. "Acquaintances cut him on the street," Dos Passos writes, referring to Orwell's political shift after the Spanish Civil War. "In his old haunts Orwell found himself a pariah. He never flinched. He'd tell the truth if it killed him" (Dos Passos, *Century's Ebb* 63). The profile continues:

> All this while Orwell was at work on *Animal Farm*. He thought he had found his pulpit. In writing humorous fantasy perhaps he could say what he wanted without having people blow up in his face. He couldn't have been more mistaken. As Britain's brave ally, Communist Russia was in the good books again. It wasn't cricket to spoof the Soviet Union. Three publishers turned the book down in a hurry. (Dos Passos, *Century's Ebb* 65)

Dos Passos compliments Orwell, comparing him to the great satirist Jonathan Swift. Perhaps Dos Passos saw something of himself in Orwell. The two masters of satire dedicated themselves to writing the hardest truths of their times, no matter the political consequences.

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Biography

John Dos Passos Coggin is an independent writer based in Alexandria, Virginia. His poetry has appeared in *Cathexis Northwest Press*, *Pangyrus*, and *The Blue Mountain Review*. He wrote an authorized biography of Florida governor and U.S. senator Lawton Chiles, *Walkin' Lawton*. He also co-manages the John Dos Passos literary estate and serves on the advisory board of the John Dos Passos Society.

The Making of a Spanish Dos Passos

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Abstract This article explores the position of Dos Passos as a writer in the Spanish polysystem, in which the story of the Spanish translator of *Manhattan Transfer* has been central in keeping Dos Passos's legacy alive in this country. After an overview of Dos Passos's bonds with the country from the American writer's first trip to Spain in 1916, this analysis of the presence of Dos Passos's works in Spain begins on the last days of Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, when the Spanish translation of *Manhattan Transfer* was first published in Madrid in 1929; continues through the Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975), and takes us to present-day twenty-first century Spain.

Keywords Censorship, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, *Manhattan Transfer*, Polysystem Theory, Spanish Civil War, Transatlantic Literary Studies, Translation.

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How fine to die in Denia
Young in the ardent strength of sun
Calm in the burning blue of the sea
(John Dos Passos, A *Pushcart at the Curb* 1922)

Introduction

1 American writer John Roderigo Dos Passos (1896-1970) built strong bonds with Spain since his first visit to the country in 1916. Not only did he learn the language and immerse himself in Spanish history, art, architecture, and literature, but he also made lifetime friends. Spain plays an important part in *A Pushcart at the Curb* (1922), a collection of youth poems, in the travel essays *Rosinante to the Road Again* (1922) and in those included in "Introduction to Civil War (1916-1937)," collected in *Journeys Between Wars* (1938), in the final chapter of his novel *Adventures of a Young Man* (1939), and in his memoir *The Best Times* (1966). The country was also the focus of some of his finest artwork, his letters, and his diaries. In turn, Spanish readers have considered Dos Passos one of the most prominent American writers of the twentieth century, and his works continue to be published regularly in Spain, most notably *Manhattan Transfer* (1925). Unlike in the United States, where his popularity seemed to decline upon his disillusionment with the left at the end of the 1930s and was never truly regained, his fame in Spain has ever remained in a central position as one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century. In this article I will explore some key socio-cultural factors that have contributed to our understanding of John Dos Passos from a Spanish perspective, in which the Spanish translation of *Manhattan Transfer* has played a determining role in the "making of" (cf. Pitavy 83)[1] a Spanish Dos Passos.

2 From a theoretical perspective, this paper may be framed within the polysystem theory in a broad sense, in that it looks at literature as part of a multiple system that functions as a structured whole with interdependent members. Drawing on the concept of system as defined by Russian Formalism as a starting point, in the 1970s Itamar Even-Zohar claimed that literature should not be studied as an isolated activity but as something that takes into account all the various socio-cultural factors that have a transformational influence on it at different times. The term *system* in this context was first defined by Tynyanov (1929) to denote "a multilayered structure of elements which relate to and interact with each other" (Shuttleworth 197). Even-Zohar, however, understood the concept of *system* as something more dynamic than his Russian predecessors did, and thus he proposed the term *polysystem* to escape more static interpretations of the concept by previous theorists (Even-Zohar 9-13).

3 Even-Zohar conceived the *polysystem* as a "heterogeneous, hierarchical system of systems that interact to bring about an ongoing, dynamic process of evolution within the *polysystem* as a whole" (Shuttleworth 197). In this way, the literary

system of any given country (including translated literature) is seen within a larger socio-cultural *polysystem*, which is also formed by other systems such as the political, religious, or artistic ones. From this broader perspective, literature is not seen as a static set of texts, but in conjunction with a number of factors that determine both their production and reception. In this light, the individual study of literary works in isolation is not an end in itself (Even-Zohar 11).

4 Among the many factors that may be considered beyond the mere interpretation of translated texts, power, ideology, and manipulation deserve special attention for the purposes of this article, due to their role in the history of the Spanish Dos Passos. Indeed, the decision to translate one particular work and not another, or what translation theorist Gideon Toury referred to as "translation policy" (Toury in Venuti, *Translation Studies Reader* 202) may be determined not only by literary worth, but also by the expected effect in the target system.Rewritings in the form of criticism, translation, film, press, and, more recently, digital media contents, play a major role in the reputation of every literary work and thus in its survival through time (cf. Lefevere). This is particularly true in the case of John Dos Passos in Spain, as I will argue in the following pages.

Spain in John Dos Passos

5 John Dos Passos was among those young American writers who found their inspiration in the Europe of the 1920s, and who searched for new ways of expression feeding from European *avant-garde* movements. In turn, they left a strong European imprint in American cultural imagery. The names of Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, or Gertrude Stein have been considered as the most notable figures of that generation; quite unfairly, the name of Dos Passos is seldom included as one of them, despite the fact that, in 1938, Jean-Paul Sartre referred to him as the "greatest living writer" (Sanders 302). Whilst Paris was the common denominator for this so-called *jazz-age* generation, Spain played a major role in the lives and works of Stein (cf. Murad), and later in those of Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos.

6 The names of Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos were inseparable during the 1920s up until the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939); they were best friends and in those early years, shared their love for adventure, travel, and writing, as well as their political ideals. Although their friendship cooled down upon serious disagreement on the developments of the Spanish Civil War, and more particularly over the death by execution of *Manhattan Transfer*'s Spanish translator José Robles, 'Hem' always remained an important part of Dos Passos's life. While the circumstances surrounding their falling out are not the focus of this paper, the story has attracted scholars from both sides of the Atlantic, with the triangle Dos Passos-Robles-Hemingway at the centre of some interesting works, such as *The Breaking Point* (2005), by Stephen Koch, *To Bury the Dead* (2009) (in Spanish

Enterrar a los muertos, 2005), by Ignacio Martínez de Pisón, and more recently J. McGrath Morris's *The Ambulance Drivers* (2017). But as Dos Passos recalled three years after Hemingway's death, "Some of the best times I ever had in my life were with Ernest Hemingway in Key West." ("Old Hem Was a Sport" 60).

7 Whilst Hemingway[2] was attracted by the powerful inspiration that bullfighting and the ritual of death and battle provided, Dos Passos's Spanish writings reflect an understanding of the country's history, literature, art, and politics, which was grounded on both erudition and empathy for the Spanish people. The reader of Dos Passos's writings about Spain will discover an American writer whose voice does not sound foreign, whose heart seems to beat in Spanish. As Dos Passos wrote in 1916, he felt as if "I'd lived here [in Madrid] all my life" (Ludington, *Fourteenth Chronicle* 53).

8 When Dos Passos first visited Madrid in 1916, he had just graduated from Harvard. Deeply impressed by Spain, as he wrote to his good friend Rumsey Marvin (cf. Ludington, *Fourteenth Chronicle* 63), Dos Passos would become so fond of the country that he took every opportunity to visit as often as he could in the following years, mostly up until the Spanish Civil War but also later in his life, the last time being as late as November 1967 (see C. Trulock 40). During that first stay in Madrid, Dos Passos immersed himself in Spanish literature and art, popular culture and flamenco; his father's introductory letters led him to the cultural elite of Madrid, where he went to cafés and *tertulias* and was introduced to Valle Inclán and Juan Ramón Jiménez, two of Spain's most reputed authors of the time (see *Best Times* 30).

9 In January 1917, Dos Passos travelled to the east coast of Spain (Gandía, Játiva, Valencia, Sagunto) and on his return he had initially planned to stay in Madrid at least until spring. However, his father's sudden death made him return to America in February 1917. From those months in Spain Dos Passos took back with him a sincere admiration for Spanish culture and for its people, and a good knowledge of the country. His impressions were recollected in "Young Spain", published in *Seven Arts*, August 1917. After a brief return to America, Dos Passos came back to Europe (France and Italy) in the fall of 1917 to serve as an ambulance driver in World War I until 1919. In August that same year he went back to Spain, where he visited the Basque country, Cantabria, Madrid, Extremadura, Andalusia, Segovia, Alicante, and Barcelona. His stay was longer this time—from August 1919 to April 1920—and it resulted in more material for the completion of the writings he had initiated during his former visit: *A Pushcart at the Curb* (1922) and *Rosinante to the Road Again* (1922). Among the writers he had the opportunity to meet this second time were Ramón J. Sender, Maurice Coindreau,[3] and Antonio Machado whom he visited in Segovia. He developed his admiration for the writers of *Generación del 98*, particularly Pío Baroja. He also worked on the novel that was to become his first success:

Three Soldiers (1921). Some of Dos Passos's most beautiful watercolours are from this period. In the spring of 1920, he spent a few days in Mallorca in the company of his good friend Kate Drain, John Howard Lawson's[4] wife, and his sister Adelaide, who was an artist herself (cf. Nanney, *Dos Passos Revisited* 152). In the summer of 1924, after some time in Paris, he travelled to Pamplona in the company of Ernest Hemingway and some other friends. As Dos Passos recalled later in his life, in Spain he was captivated by "scenery and painting and architecture and the *canto hondo* and the grave rhythms of flamenco dancing. And the people, the people, the infinitely tragical, comical, pathetic and laughable varieties of people" (*Best Times* 81).

10 Among the many Spanish friends that Dos Passos had made in Madrid, his dearest was José Robles Pazos (*Pepe* as he used to be called familiarly) whom he had met on a train trip to Toledo in the winter of 1916. They were both keen travelers and shared similar cultural interests; Dos Passos was trying to improve his Spanish and Robles, his English. They frequented the same academic circles, at the Residencia de Estudiantes and the Centro de Estudios Históricos. Dos Passos was staying at a small boarding house, Pensión Boston, located in Espoz y Mina Street, near Puerta del Sol.[5] He attended courses on Spanish language and literature taught by Tomás Navarro Tomás (Martínez de Pisón 9-10). In *The Best Times*, Dos Passos described Robles as an ironic man who was always willing to laugh at anything; an extraordinary talker whose spirits were closer to Baroja's characters than to his mates' at the Institución Libre de Enseñanza. Dos Passos and Robles had the chance to go on more trips to the Sierra madrileña, or to the bullfights (32-33).

11 According to Spanish writer Martínez de Pisón, in 1918, Robles graduated from college and started working as an instructor of Spanish literature at the Instituto-Escuela, part of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza. In the two years that followed, he also collaborated with the Centro de Estudios Históricos. By the summer of 1920, he was accepted as an assistant lecturer at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. One year earlier, he had married Márgara Villegas, a well-educated woman who shared many interests with Robles and who, in fact, worked as a translator for much of her life. They were both friends with the French writer and translator Maurice Coindreau, who was then a student at the University of Madrid and who would translate *Manhattan Transfer* into French some years later. Coindreau met both Valle Inclán and Dos Passos through Robles, who introduced them one day at the library of the Ateneo[6], in Madrid (cf. Martínez de Pisón 9-39). In 1922, Robles was promoted to the position of associate professor, and he settled in Baltimore until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. During those years in America, Robles and Dos Passos frequently wrote to each other, and both Márgara and Pepe would visit Dos Passos in New York whenever they had the

opportunity to do so, particularly on their way to/back from Spain, where they used to spend their summer holidays. Despite their move to Baltimore, the Robles had kept in touch with their Madrid friends and continued to be regulars at the *tertulias* every summer, particularly Valle Inclán's[7] at the café Granja El Henar, an old dairy shop that was turned into a modern café in 1925, and which was located in Alcalá street, next to the Círculo de Bellas Artes (Azcárate). Between 1927 and 1928, Robles wrote for *La Gaceta Literaria* which was at the time the main journal for young Spanish writers. His first two essays under the section "Libros yanquis" were devoted to *Manhattan Transfer* and Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. Around the same time, Márgara started working on the translation of *Rosinante to the Road Again* and Pepe on the translation of *Manhattan Transfer* (cf. Martínez de Pisón 9-39).

12 The 1930s saw the peak of popularity in Dos Passos's career. He had started working on the U.S.A. trilogy around 1927, the first volume of which, *The 42nd Parallel*, was published in 1930; two years later, he published the second one, *1919*, both to very positive reviews. He was also attracted by the idea of travelling to Spain again after the proclamation of the *Segunda República*,[8] but unfortunately, he was convalescent for nearly two months. According to his biographers, during those days his friends were often visiting and/or writing him, "Scott Fitzgerald who was undergoing psychiatric care . . . José Robles visited frequently" while "the Murphys [Gerald and Sarah] sent two tickets for their trip abroad" (316). In June Dos Passos and his wife Katy could finally set out and the writer eventually managed to sign a contract with Harcourt, Brace to write a book on the Second Republic which would provide some funding for the trip (cf. 317). After some weeks visiting friends in Antibes, Katy and Dos travelled to Spain and stayed there for the rest of the summer. During this trip, they rented a car —which they nicknamed "*the cockroach*"— and toured Northern Spain, though most of their time was spent in Madrid. Even if forced to rest again because of his recurrent illness, Dos Passos "obtained interviews with Manuel Azaña, the then Prime Minister, and with the famous philosopher Miguel de Unamuno" (319). He frequented the library of Madrid's Ateneo, and had the opportunity to visit old friends, among them José Giner, Claude Bowers —then U.S. ambassador to Spain— and Ernest Hemingway, with whom he shared lunches at Botin's. In Dos Passos's words, "these lunches were the last time Hem and I were able to talk about things Spanish without losing our tempers" (*Best Times* 220).

13 Although he did not manage to write a monograph on the Segunda República as he had planned, partly due to illness, his impressions about the political situation in Spain were nevertheless collected in the piece "The Republic of Honest Men," and included in a lengthier volume, *In All Countries* (1934), which contained other markedly political travel writings on Russia, Mexico, Chicago,

Detroit, and Washington. Worried about the political developments in Europe with fascism looming, his view of the situation in Spain was not particularly positive.

14 In the summer of 1936, Dos Passos was worried about the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, and his activism in defense of human rights led him to join the American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. This movement aimed at raising funds, as well as providing medical help and refugee aid to Spain. Among its members were communists, Christian organizations, and ordinary citizens. In an effort to convince American society and American politicians that action was necessary, and that the Republican government was the only legitimate one, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Lillian Hellman, and Archibald McLeish, among others, set up "Contemporary Historians," a company to produce a documentary film about the Spanish Civil War, and thus raise funds for the loyalist cause. For the project, they hired Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, a communist. Hemingway and Dos Passos agreed to meet in Madrid for the filming and to work on the script. Hemingway travelled as a war correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA), whereas Dos Passos committed himself to writing three articles for *Fortune*, a magazine edited by his friend—and member of Contemporary Historians—Archibald McLeish. Dos Passos was convinced that "unless the American government intervened, the country was, in effect, handing Spain over to fascism as well as to Communism" (Spencer Carr 357-362).

15 During their time in Madrid in April 1937, John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway, like other foreign correspondents, stayed at the Hotel Florida, located in Plaza del Callao. It was just a short walk from the Telefónica building in Gran Vía, where the government's censorship office had established its headquarters. In a news feature covering their stay in Madrid, titled "Dos camaradas de América," and published by the Spanish newspaper *Ahora*, the two American writers were portrayed as loyal friends of the Spanish Republic, who were in the country for the shooting of a documentary: "Llegaron cuando muchos desertaron poniendo pretextos inútiles," (they came over [to Spain] while others fled under worthless excuses) writes the Spanish reporter, *camarada* Delgado (8). The caption under Dos Passos's photo reads that he was in Spain to "*torear obuses*" (11), a bullfighting metaphor meaning he was to face the shells as a *matador* and overcome the enemy.

16 Dos Passos started his journey to Spain in 1937 determined to support the loyalist cause. Once in the country, the news that his old Spanish friend and translator of *Manhattan Transfer*, José Robles Pazos, had been executed sometime in the fall of 1936 by the Soviets in Spain meant the final turning point in a chain of events that had been gradually undermining the American writer's trust in the Communist Party. As is well known, Robles happened to

be in Spain on vacation when the war broke out and chose to stay to support the loyalist cause as an officer working for the Republican administration in Valencia, instead of returning to the safety of his position at Johns Hopkins University. One evening several people in civilian clothes knocked on his door and asked him to accompany them for some "routine" questioning. After unlawful detention, he disappeared. Dos Passos's desperate efforts to find out about his friend's fate were painful, only to discover eventually that he had been executed without a trial, possibly by the Soviet intelligentsia. The tension generated between Hemingway and Dos Passos at the news of Robles's execution made Dos Passos abandon the project that had originally brought them together to Spain that spring of 1937—the filming of *The Spanish Earth*.

17 A sympathizer of the left and a firm supporter of social causes, in *Rosinante to the Road Again* (1922), Dos Passos had written about his historical vision of Spanish politics and expressed his hope in a new way of social ruling that had to come from the Spanish working classes. Years later, in "The Republic of Honest Men" (1933), he had analyzed the political crisis that Spain underwent during the Second Republic with mixed feelings of hope and pessimism. In his Spanish Civil War writings of 1937, references to the evils of bureaucracy and power in the section titled "Coast Road South" reflect Dos Passos's political disillusionment, which had been developing since his trip to Russia in 1928. "Official luncheons are hunt breakfasts," he wrote in Valencia after learning of Robles's execution by the Russians (*Journeys between Wars* 357). Dos Passos's accounts were permeated by his sympathy towards the suffering of ordinary people struggling to carry on with their lives as usual, and he felt there is a "nightmarish" atmosphere in Madrid (366). In the last section of "Madrid Under Siege," titled "The Nights Are Long," Dos Passos's thoughts are with the people: "And in all the black houses children we'd seen playing in the streets were asleep, and the grownups were lying there thinking of old friends and family and ruins and people they'd loved and hating the enemy and hunger and how to get a little more food tomorrow" (373). This and other similar reflections may be found throughout Dos Passos's accounts of the Spanish Civil War, no doubt influenced by his own suffering at the loss of his best Spanish friend, Pepe Robles.

John Dos Passos in Spain

18 A number of Spanish scholars have explored Dos Passos's fictional works of Spanish inspiration, his essays, letters, and diaries. Among them, scholars Concha Zardoya, Catalina Montes,[9] and Pilar Marín Madrazo[10] were pioneers. More recently, Spanish writer Ignacio Martínez de Pisón, filmmaker Sonia Tercero, and Professor Eulalia Piñero-Gil have all shed light on our understanding of Dos Passos from a Spanish perspective. However, Dos Passos's works inspired

by Spain, such as *Rosinante to the Road Again* (1922) [*Rocinante vuelve al camino* 1930], *A Pushcart at the Curb* (1922) [*Invierno en Castilla y otros poemas* 2018], *Journeys Between Wars* (*Viajes de entreguerras* 2005) *Adventures of a Young Man* (1939) [*Las aventuras de un joven* 1962] or *The Best Times: An Informal Memoir* (1966) [*Años inolvidables* 2006][11] are rarely known by the Spanish readership.

19 In Spain, Dos Passos is popularly known and referred to as "the author of *Manhattan Transfer*." Indeed, it is this novel that has traditionally attracted the Spanish reading public (as seen by the number of editions that appear regularly), rather than, for example, his widely appraised work by American critics, the U.S.A. trilogy (1938) [*El Paralelo 42*, *La primera catástrofe: 1919*, and *El gran dinero* 1959]. If you take a Sunday stroll around Madrid's fleamarket *el Rastro* and ask at any of the second-hand book stalls if they have anything by Dos Passos—the reply will invariably be if you are looking for a copy of *Manhattan Transfer*. But what are the reasons for the centrality of *Manhattan Transfer* in Spain as compared to other Dos Passos's works?

20 In my view, three major socio-cultural and/or political factors which operated in the Spanish polysystem at different historical times have played a significant role in the Spanish construction of John Dos Passos. The first determining factor is the context in which the first Spanish rewriting of Dos Passos—in the form of translation—took place: the publication by Cenit in 1929 of the first edition of *Manhattan Transfer*. The fact that it was a communist publisher and not any of the other general or purely literary publishers gave *Manhattan Transfer* and John Dos Passos a very specific status as a leftist writer. The second one is the banning of the novel by Franco's censors for about twenty years, followed by its unexpected reappearance in a luxury collection of classics by Planeta publishers, whose powerful marketing and sales strategy combined with an ability to elude censorship turned John Dos Passos into a "reputable" author in the 1960s. The fact that Cenit's edition of the novel had been censored and unavailable in bookshops for so many years made it an object of cult for the more liberal intellectuals in the 1960s and 70s. The third factor is the book, film, press and digital rewritings of the Robles-Hemingway-Dos Passos triangle in the context of the Spanish Civil War literary boom over the last few decades, also fed by an ongoing interest in Spanish society to vindicate the country's historical memory in recent years.

21 *Manhattan Transfer*, "the most translated novel in Spain" (see Lanero par.1) was first published in Spain in 1929 by Cenit, seven years before the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. It must have been a success, since there was a second edition only one year later, in 1930. The first-hand testimony of Ernest Hemingway, who happened to be in Spain shortly after its publication, in 1931, suggests Dos Passos's growing popularity in the country. He wrote:

> You are the great writer of Spain . . . They all think I am bullshitting because I claim to be a friend of yours. Nobody has read Manhattan [Transfer] less than 4 times. In spite of descriptive introduction you are supposed to be an old man about Unamuno's age – otherwise how did you have time to know the Bajo [sic] fondos so well and have so much experience. (qtd. in Ludington, *Fourteenth Chronicle* 342)

22 From the immediate reactions contemporary to the novel's appearance in the late twenties and early thirties, to more recent analysis of the work decades later, the Spanish critics' view of *Manhattan Transfer* has been an extremely positive one, characterized by a fascination of the city of New York and of Dos Passos's innovative techniques both in the use of language and in the structuring of the novel. There is enough evidence to say that Dos Passos was indeed a very popular writer in Spain between 1929 and 1936.

23 The first translation of *Manhattan Transfer* into Spanish falls into the initial period of communist Cenit publishers (1928-1936), which was one of the so-called *editoriales de avanzada*. These were a number of new publishing houses that focused on socio-revolutionary books, both fiction and non-fiction that emerged in the period 1927-1933 as a result of the new workers' movements and against the horrors of the Great War. In their initial period, Cenit published mostly literary works, especially novels. These were written by what they called *novelistas nuevos*, writers whose works had a strong political and/or social component, plus in many cases an anti-war attitude. Some of the authors published by Cenit came from America, like Dos Passos or Sinclair Lewis—whose novel *Babbitt* was also first published by Cenit in a translation by Robles—but many came from the Soviet Union and Germany (Santonja 138). The list included Henri Barbusse, Hermann Hesse, Upton Sinclair, Mijail Cholokhov, Fedor Gladkov, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Maksim Gorki, among others. Spanish authors included Ramón J. Sender and César Vallejo. From today's perspective we can say that Cenit and the other *editoriales de avanzada* played a key role in the shaping of the Spanish polysystem. They broadened the Spanish cultural system not only by opening it to the more "advanced" or radical views of the time, but more importantly, by also making them accessible to the general reading public. During its existence (1928-1936), Cenit introduced a long list of foreign titles into the Spanish literary system through translation with ideological motives: providing affordable paperbacks to the working class that would open their minds to leftist causes and revolutionary ideals.

24 During and after the war in Spain, many libraries—particularly those known as *Bibliotecas Circulantes Populares* set up by the Second Republic—were destroyed. Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* was one of the "revolutionary" books included in their catalogues, and thus many copies of the novel were burnt. Officially banned in 1948 by Franco's censors on "moral grounds"

(Bautista, "Spanish Translations of Manhattan Transfer and Censorship" 154), the Spanish reception of Dos Passos in post-war years was marked by censorship. However, the fact that the novel was banned for a number of years did not have a negative effect on its reception by the Spanish reading public. In 1960, Planeta published the novel in Spain, making it available for the first time after the 1930 Cenit edition. The physical embodiment of Planeta's edition in its luxury binding suited the taste of those years, in which books in the bookshelves of homes were a symbol of economic and cultural status, and these were expected to look fine as a decorative item. Thus, *Manhattan Transfer* left behind its proletarian look and became a hard-covered, bible-paper edition with gold letters. Some of the language was softened, and a few dialogues including blasphemies and/or overtly sexual scenes were slightly changed. In the 1960s, the novel's edition lost its "underground" appearance and acquired the status of a respectable, classic bestseller, present in the bookshelves of many Spanish middle-class homes.

25 Although Francisco Franco's regime lasted from the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 to his death in 1975, from the late 1950s onwards and in the 1960s there was clearly a gradual relaxation in book censorship, regarding both imported copies of foreign books and previously banned translated works of foreign authors, such as *Manhattan Transfer*, which was finally allowed to be re-printed in 1957. The censorship restrictions had affected other Dos Passos works, too. Despite the fact that there were no major political changes, there was a gradual economic liberalization, as well as a communication campaign that aimed at making the western allies see or believe that Spain was making progress over time. Between 1945 and 1951, there was no American ambassador to Spain. However, the American administration considered it essential to approach Spain for its unique strategic location in the Mediterranean; Franco, in turn, needed to appear more democratic (after the failure to receive American aid under the Marshall Plan in the late 1940s) and become a member of the United Nations (1955) (cf. Twomey 68-70).

26 It was in this political context that John Dos Passos was recovered for the Spanish public by publisher José Manuel Lara, in quite a different format. This time, *Manhattan Transfer* was not the work of a radical, young promising Dos Passos of 1929, presented by Cenit communist publishers. Instead, Planeta moved Dos Passos towards the center of the Spanish politically correct cultural system of the 1960s, marketed as a classic writer in a luxury format and presenting a respectable, mature writer with an accomplished literary career. The Spanish John Dos Passos of the 1960s and 1970s was devoid of any overt political connotations as mandated by time circumstances, and the editions of his works were aimed at the growing middle-class readership.

27 Planeta's editions and reprints of *Manhattan Transfer* continued to be sold until the 1980s, and other popular publishers made *Manhattan Transfer* available from 1982 onwards, among them Bruguera (1982), Plaza and Janés (1986) and Círculo de Lectores (1989), more often in the form of paperbacks. The most notable feature of the presence of *Manhattan Transfer* in the Spanish cultural system in the last three decades is that in some of the editions its translation was initially credited to a non-existent José Robles Piquer, first by Bruguera (1984) and later on by Círculo (1989; 1995; 2002), Debate (1999), Mediasat (2003), and Debolsillo (2004; 2006; 2009; 2014). In turn, the translations published by Plaza and Janés (1991), Ediciones Diario El País (2003) and Edhasa (2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2011) were all credited to José Robles Pazos. There was even a 1992 edition by Planeta in which the translation of *Manhattan Transfer* was credited to Enrique Robles. Plagiarism and unforgivable mistakes are some of the reasons given by other scholars in the past[12] to explain such discrepancies; whatever the reason, fact is that these translations are different in ways that indicate not only multiple actors, but also that intellectual property rights of the translator(s) have not been respected.

28 In recent years, John Dos Passos's involvement in the Spanish Civil War has not escaped the literary *boom* surrounding the conflict, a theme which continues to maintain a central position in the Spanish polysystem. The name of Dos Passos has not only been recurrently present in accounts of the Spanish Civil War but, more significantly, it has kept *Manhattan Transfer* in a prominent position within our cultural system through the echoes of the story of its translator, José Robles Pazos. It is worth mentioning that when we consider the presence of John Dos Passos in today's Spanish media, more specifically his presence in newspapers and on the Internet, his name is invariably connected to leftist politics, while his political shift is frequently ignored. For example, historian and political scientist Antonio Elorza—a sympathizer of the left—referred to a casual encounter in 1919[13] between a Russian activist under the pseudonym of 'Borodin' and Dos Passos at the *Ateneo de Madrid*, a cultural center frequented by the more progressive cultural and social elite of the time. Apparently, Borodin asked Dos Passos if he knew of anybody who might be interested in founding a Spanish communist party, and Dos Passos directed him to Fernando de los Ríos, who in turn directed Borodin to someone else (par. 1). Elorza goes on to note that years later, during the Second Republic, Dos Passos's article titled "Doves in the Bull Ring" ("Palomas en el ruedo") appeared in Ramón J. Sender's communist paper *La Lucha*. In it, Dos Passos reflected on the social tensions during a socialist meeting at the Santander bull ring, again in the company of Fernando de los Ríos, during his visit to Spain in 1933. In both cases brought up by Elorza, Dos Passos is portrayed as a friend of the Spanish left, and no reference is made to his later conservative turn. Examples

abound in newspaper libraries that similarly ignore Dos Passos's political transition later in his life.

29 Interpretations of John Dos Passos's search for José Robles during the Spanish Civil War are numerous in the Spanish press, frequently echoing the work of historians or writers who have dealt with the matter. The impact of two of these has been more frequently present in the Spanish media: Ignacio Martínez de Pisón's 2005 book *Enterrar a los muertos* (in English, *To Bury the Dead*, 2009) and, more recently, Sonia Tercero's documentary film *Robles, Duelo al Sol* (2015). Although it has been said that Martínez de Pisón's *Enterrar a los muertos* may have been inspired by Stephen Koch's *The Breaking Point: Hemingway, Dos Passos and the Murder of José Robles*, fact is that the former was published in February 2005, a couple of months earlier than Stephen Koch's book in the United States; both books deal with the same events but in quite a different tone and from different perspectives—Koch's book reads like historical fiction and focuses on the idea of Hemingway's political falseness. However, both have successfully contributed to the revisiting of John Dos Passos.

30 Martínez de Pisón's book has generally been positively reviewed, although one particular aspect, his portrayal of poet Rafael Alberti, raised some criticism by writer and journalist Benjamín Prado; the controversy is about the passage in which Martínez de Pisón mentions the accusation against Alberti, in 1977, by writer and surrealist artist Eugenio Fernández Granell for not having denounced the numerous killings by the Stalinists, among them professor Robles's, "a poet and a cartoonist, at the hands of the Russian generals"[14] (qtd. in Martínez de Pisón 33). According to Martínez de Pisón, by keeping silent about such things, Alberti had managed to become a communist *star* (cf. 33). A regular at the Madrid *tertulias* with the Robles and other writers and intellectuals of the time, such as León Felipe or Valle-Inclán, Alberti was the son of wealthy sherry traders and as such—Azcárate recalls—before the war used to live in an elegant apartment in Madrid's Lagasca street and dressed impeccably like a dandy or "señorito." In the summer of 1936—the war had just broken out— the Robles were very surprised when Alberti came to visit them, at the Madrid flat where they used to stay over the summer periods, transformed into a militiaman (*miliciano*), fully equipped with "cap, overalls, and espadrilles" (*gorra, mono y alpargatas*) (Azcárate). This happened at a time when the way you dressed could mean the difference between life and death (see Trapiello). Months later, when Pepe Robles went missing, despite their mutual friendship and Alberti's communist connections, together with the fact that he was living in Valencia at the time of Robles's disappearance, no help came from him, nor from their editor at Cenit, Wenceslao Roces,[15] someone who had been a close friend of Pepe's. Years later, Roces went into exile in

Mexico,[16] as Márgara did. They both frequented the same social circles of Spanish exiles, but she refused to ever speak to him again (Azcárate). It seems Márgara, or Margarita Villegas *de Robles*,[17] as she would sign her translations in exile, could never forgive them.

31 In 2014, Sonia Tercero's work on the documentary *Robles, Duelo al Sol* brought a renewed interest in Dos Passos in Spain and mainly in *Manhattan Transfer*. The film is built on Tercero's research and the contributions of major writers, historians, and academics, as well as friends and relatives of the protagonists, John Dos Passos and José Robles. Among the most relevant contributors are Martínez de Pisón, historian Paul Preston, Lucy Dos Passos and her son, John Coggin, Luis de Azcárate, and Carmen Robles, daughter of Ramón Robles. The John Dos Passos Society held its Second Biennial Conference in Madrid in 2016, gathering scholars from nine different countries to focus on Dos Passos's relationship to Spain and his works of Spanish inspiration. The event made it possible for the grandsons of Dos Passos and Robles, John Coggin and Mario Ortiz-Robles, to meet for the first time. Press coverage included participation of the Society's members in various radio programs, plus references in major newspapers.

32 The year 2018 marked two further milestones in the history of Dos Passos's presence in the Spanish polysystem. One of them was the publication of Dos Passos's youth poems collected in *A Pushcart at the Curb*. Translated by Eulalia Piñero-Gil with the title *Invierno en Castilla y otros poemas*, it is a valuable contribution to the corpus of Dos Passos's works in translation. The other one was the publication of the first annotated Spanish edition of *Manhattan Transfer* by Cátedra, in a revised version of José Robles's original translation. These are again clear expressions of the continuing interest that Dos Passos raises in Spain.

Conclusion

33 Translated literature plays a determining role in the shaping of cultural polysystems. There are external factors beyond the purely literary ones that make certain authors and/or some of their works become part of the literary canon of any given cultural system. The reasons that first lead publishers within a given polysystem to accept or reject a text coming from outside the system will surely include ideological and economic considerations as well as poetical ones. But the reasons that maintain such work in the system over time are not only connected to ideology, economy, and/or poetics, but also to the nature of its rewritings.

34 The socio-cultural and political context in which *Manhattan Transfer* was first published, combined with Dos Passos's popularity in Spanish intellectual circles in the 1920s and 1930s, had a positive influence on the novel's initial success. The fact that it was published by Cenit—a communist publisher—during the agonizing

reign of Alfonso XIII and Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship gave Dos Passos the status of a leftist writer that has endured over time; his political shift has not affected his reputation as a writer in Spain. The first edition of *Manhattan Transfer*, in 1929, with a reprint in 1930, was a paperback with an urban illustration on the front cover; the translation approach by Robles was characterized by his efforts to convey the vivacity of Dos Passos's characters, including the frank, vulgar language of the *bajos fondos*, as Hemingway had put it in his 1931 letter to Dos Passos. Furthermore, the friends Dos Passos had made during his first stay in Madrid, many of them connected to the Residencia de Estudiantes, gave him a highly reputed status in the Spanish intellectual circles that made him a well-known, respected author.

35 From the 1990s onwards, with almost yearly reprints of *Manhattan Transfer* available, a new element has appeared in the revisiting of the novel by the media—the association between the Spanish Civil War, Dos Passos, and José Robles. Indeed, in recent years *Manhattan Transfer* and John Dos Passos have been revisited by Spanish critics interested in the cultural, literary, and historical background of Civil War Spain. After Martínez de Pisón (2005) reconstructed the story of José Robles Pazos—often referred to as *the* translator of *Manhattan Transfer*—the name of Dos Passos has been re-linked to Spain for present-day readers. Currently, the Dos Passos-Robles connection is the most distinctive feature of the Spanish reception of *Manhattan Transfer*, and one that distinguishes it as compared to its reception in other countries. Translators of the trilogy *U.S.A.* Marcelo Cohen (*Paralelo 42*), Jesús Zulaika (*El gran dinero*) or Mariano Antolín Rato (*1919*) remain almost anonymous (just like most translators), whereas Robles and *Manhattan Transfer* have become part of Spanish cultural identity. Almost one hundred years after the publication of the first translation of a work by Dos Passos in Spain, the American writer remains a thought-provoking character in the Spanish cultural imagery.

Notes

[1] In his essay "The Making of a French Faulkner: A Reflection on Translation," Pitavy declared he aimed at providing "a case study in examining the process of translation, *displacement*, of a given literary text from production to reception" (83).

[2] Spain inspired some of Hemingway's best short stories, such as "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" or "The Butterfly and the Tank," his novels *Fiesta* (1926) and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), probably the most popular English language novel set in Civil War Spain, and his only theater play, *The Fifth Column* (1938).

[3] According to Ignacio Martínez de Pisón (39) it was Pepe Robles who introduced Dos Passos to Maurice Coindreau at the Ateneo cultural centre in Madrid. Coindreau would later translate some of Dos Passos's works into French.

[4] John Howard Lawson, a playwright and social activist, met Dos Passos on board the *Chicago* on their way to Europe during World War I. He later became one of Dos Passos's closest friends in the 1920s. They shared interests, political ideas, and projects, and they worked together in the New Playwrights Theater. Their friendship broke upon differences of opinion on the Spanish Civil War in 1937.

[5] Poems II and IV of "Winter in Castille," included in *A Pushcart at the Curb* (1922), were inspired by this street.

[6] Founded in 1835, The Ateneo was a cultural center frequented by liberal writers, intellectuals, and politicians. See also endnote 3 above.

[7] José Robles sometimes helped Valle-Inclán financially, since they were good friends and paisanos gallegos. (Conversation with Azcárate: July 2015)

[8] The Segunda República or Second Spanish Republic (1931-1938), a republican regime in Spain preceded by the Restoration and followed by Franco's dictatorship was proclaimed when King Alfonso XIII left the country after anti-monarchist candidates won the elections in the spring of 1931.

[9] Catalina Montes, with her book *La visión de España en la obra de John Dos Passos* (1980), is the author that—so far—has given the most detailed account of Dos Passos's works on Spain, providing valuable bibliographical and chronological detail for anyone interested in the topic.

[10] Like Catalina Montes's study, Pilar Marín Madrazo's *La Gran Guerra en la obra de Hemingway y Dos Passos* was published in 1980. Although it only mentions the Spanish connections of Dos Passos tangentially, it is illustrative of a period of more intense research on his life and works at the Universidad de Salamanca, probably under the leadership of North American literature professor Juan José Coy.

[11] The dates provided for the Spanish translations of these works correspond to the first editions; only *Las aventuras de un joven* is out of print.

[12] Rabadán, Broncano and Martínez de Pisón have all referred to the change of the translator's name.

[13] After his first stay in Spain in 1916-17; Dos Passos returned to the country and stayed there from August 1919 to April 1920, when he completed *Three Soldiers* (cf. Pizer, *Towards a Modernist Style* 14).

[14] Translated by the author of this article from the Spanish original quote which says: "poeta y dibujante, a manos de los generales rusos."

Notes

[15] For Spanish writer Andrés Trapiello, Wenceslao Roces was a gray man serving criminal Soviet interests: "a dark man at the service of the Soviet NKVD, one of those officials that seem to plot all sorts of white-glove crimes from the shadows" (Original quote in Spanish: un hombre oscuro al servicio del NKVD soviético, uno de esos funcionaros que parecen combinar impávidos en la sombra toda clase de crímenes de guante blanco") (Trapielllo par. 10).

[16] Both Wenceslao Roces and Rafael Jiménez Siles, Cenit editors and friends of the Robles up until Pepe's execution, went to exile in México. While Roces taught at various Mexican universities, Jiménez Siles owned a bookshop, La Pérgola, and took an active part in the cultural life of Spanish intellectuals in exile (Azcárate).

[17] Márgara continued to work as a translator in Mexico, mostly for the Fondo de Cultura Económica, but also for Séneca, a publishing house led by poet José Bergamín, among others. After leaving Spain for Paris, and then briefly staying in the U.S. to recover Pepe's life insurance, she moved to Mexico to join her sister, Amparo Villegas, whose career as an actress had begun in Spain before the war and continued successfully in her Mexican exile. Márgara's Spanish friends in exile included writer León Felipe and historian Juan Marichal. Her correspondence with Dos Passos continued after her husband's death for many years (Ortiz).

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Biography

Rosa María Bautista-Cordero (PhD in English and North American Literature) has taught undergraduate and graduate courses at various Spanish universities and at NYU (Madrid campus). She is currently an Assistant Professor at the English Department of Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. An avid researcher of American writer John Dos Passos, she authored an annotated edition and revised translation of *Manhattan Transfer*, which was published by Cátedra in 2018, and is working on the translation of *Tour of Duty* to be published in 2022. Her published translations include Bruce Chatwin, V.S. Naipaul, Erica Jong, Hugh Thomas, Amos Oz, Tom Wolfe, Peter Balakian, and Allen Ginsberg, among others. Her research on Dos Passos includes several articles, book chapters and an edited volume with Prof. Aaron Shaheen, from the University of Tennessee, titled *John Dos Passos's Transatlantic Chronicling: Critical Essays on the Interwar Years* (UTP 2022), to which she has also contributed a chapter on Dos Passos as chronicler of the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War –"Glenn Spotswood as Cannon Fodder: Myth vs. Reality at the International Brigades." She is vice-president of the John Dos Passos Society.

John Dos Passos in the Crosshairs of Censorship:

Investigating the Portuguese Censorship Reports during the *Estado Novo*, the Portuguese Dictatorship under António de Oliveira Salazar

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Abstract

This paper aims to shed light on how the Luso-American writer John Dos Passos and his *oeuvre* were submitted to censorship during the *Estado Novo* ("New State"), the Portuguese dictatorship that lasted from 1933 to 1974.

A short introduction will explain how censorship functioned and how other North-American writers, such as Upton Sinclair, Howard Fast, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, and Norman Mailer were blue-penciled, too.

After this general overview, I shall explore in depth the ways in which John Dos Passos was subjected to cuttings and banning. Based on his particular case, I will show what the bowdlerization eventually meant for the author. In doing so, I will mention and quote from—so far—inedited archive documents, namely the existing censorship reports on John Dos Passos, i.e. the reports on *Adventures of a Young Man*, *The 42nd Parallel*, *1919*, *The Big Money*, and *Chosen Country*.

Keywords

1919, The 42nd Parallel, *Adventures of a Young Man*, *The Big Money,* Censorship, John Dos Passos, *Estado Novo,* Ernest Hemingway.

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Introduction

> We now have the moralizing aspect of censorship, its necessary intervention in personal attacks and immoral language . . . I understand that this inspection irritates journalists, because it is not done by them, because the surveillance is handed over to censorship, which can also be passionate, since it is human, and that will always mean for those who write, oppression and despotism. I do understand that censorship irritates you, because there is nothing that a man considers more sacred than his thinking and the expression of his thinking. . . . Censorship is a defective institution, sometimes unfair, subject to the free will of the censors, to the variations in their temperament, to the consequences of their bad mood. . . . I myself have been the victim of censorship and I confess to you that I got hurt, that I got angry, that I even had revolutionary thoughts. . . [Yet, we will not revoke censorship to prevent] the illegitimacy of misrepresenting the facts out of ignorance or out of bad faith.—Dr. António de Oliveira Salazar (qtd. in Franco 101[1])

1 With the overthrow of the first Portuguese Republic (1910-1926) and the implementation of the *Ditadura Militar* ("military dictatorship" that lasted from 1926 to 1933), the practice of censorship was intensified (Almeida 66).[2] Even speaking about the existence of censorship was, if not forbidden, at least avoided. Yet, the journalist António Ferro questioned Salazar—at the time already head of government—about its significance, during a 1932 interview, published in *Diário de Notícias*, a newspaper of national importance and influence. Soon afterwards, Ferro—known for being an admirer of Salazar—assumed, at the invitation of the dictator, the position of secretary of propaganda. Ferro's question, which no other journalist could have dared to ask at the time, might have been pivotal to Ferro's extraordinarily rapid career advancement. The question proved useful to Salazar, since now the dictator could blatantly explain why he considered censorship necessary and legitimate. He could thwart an increasing unpopularity regarding the suppression of free speech within Portuguese society and discourage the hope of the ordinary people that the end of the detested *Ditadura Militar* and its transition into the *Estado Novo* would mean the end of censorship. The people believed that this "New State"—the English translation for *Estado Novo*—stood for a socio-political improvement, orchestrated by Salazar.

2 The truth, however, was that censorship was to be maintained in force throughout the prolonged existence of the *Estado Novo*, which remained a dictatorship after all. As stressed in the epigraph, quoted above, António de Oliveira Salazar defended censorship even though he recognized its arbitrariness, pointing out that it was a necessary evil to prevent attacks against him and his governance, as well as to forfend a distortion of facts. Of course, any criticism of the newly founded *Estado Novo* was regarded as a misrepresentation of the facts or the truth. Censorship was thence practiced "*a bem da nação*," "for the good of the nation." Article 3 of the decree that

substantiated censorship and which passed into law on April 11, 1933, expressed that the declared purpose of censorship was to prevent

> the perversion of public opinion as a social force; it should be carried out in such a way as to defend public opinion from all factors that may misguide it against truth, justice, morality, efficient administration and the common good, and to prevent any attack on the basic principles of the organization of society. (Spirk 10-11)

It was up to Salazar to decide which principles were part of Portuguese society or not, as well as to select what should be understood as the common good, truth, justice, morality, and efficiency.

3 Furthermore, censorship had the function of conveying both internally and externally the image of a country that worked successfully on all levels due to the capacity of its astute leader and the reliability of the newly instituted governmental organs. Yet, the fact that social ills nonetheless persisted exposed the country's perfect image as a lie. Incapable of developing policies to solve social problems, censorship had the purpose of preventing the mentioning of these misfortunes. What was forbidden to be expressed, mentioned, or widely and critically discussed in public, apparently ceased to exist. In such a way, as stated by César Príncipe,

> [t]here were no . . . political prisoners. No suicides. No slums. No cholera. No price increases. No abortions. No hippies. No strikes. No drugs. No flu. Nor were there homosexuals. No crises. No massacres. Not even nudism. No floods. No yellow fever. No imperialism. No hunger. No violations. No pollution. No derailments. Not even typhus. There was no Communist Party. No fraud. . . . No racism. (12)

The *modus operandi* of Censorship

4 A commission was founded to guarantee the proper functioning of censorship, with headquarters in Lisbon, responsible for the entire South, whereas in Oporto, a commission was in charge of practicing censorship in the North of Portugal; and another one in Coimbra was accountable for the central part of the country. There was a delegation in Madeira, namely in Funchal, which was responsible for controlling the Portuguese islands. Each commission was further divided into several departments. However, for the purpose of this

5 study, only the "*secção de livros*," the "book department," will be of interest. Within these book departments the censors were called "*leitores*," "readers." They were high-ranking officers, specifically lieutenants, captains and majors, as well as lieutenant-colonels. Many of these military officers were well educated; they were able to read in different languages, among them, of course, French (at the time the internationally spoken language), Spanish,

Italian, some English, and German. This was quite outstanding at a time when the bulk of the population was still illiterate and could hence not even read Portuguese.

6 The law allowed the confiscation of suspect books to be presented to the *leitores* for their inspection. The apprehension was executed by PIDE (*Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado*), the political state police; the ordinary police force; the customs at all harbors or at the country's frontier with Spain; the Portuguese post office; as well as by the National Library. Editors, small local libraries, and bookstores were regularly inspected by the authorities to ensure that no forbidden literature was being printed, sold or lent. Furthermore, individuals and other institutions (like colleges and schools) could denounce authors, publishers, libraries, and bookstores to the commission or directly to PIDE. Offenders would face penalties such as heavy fines, or they were forced to close down their shops or printing houses, eventually facing bankruptcy. In some cases, when, for instance, Salazar or the *Estado Novo* had been severely criticized in print, both authors and editors could serve a sentence in prison or be deported to the colonies, like to *Colónia Penal de Tarrafal*, a concentration

7 camp on the island of Santiago, Cape Verde.

Books that had been forbidden by the "*comissão de censura*," "censorship commission," were seized and usually taken to the headquarters of PIDE, where they were stored for destruction.[3]

8 The *comissão de censura* exercised censorship in two ways. On the one hand, "post-publication censorship" was applied to those books that had already been published (normally prior to 1934 or to those books that were imported from abroad). On the other hand, "pre-publication" censorship compelled authors, translators and editors to send in their manuscript in three copies for prior approval (cf. Spirk 7).

9 After reading the books or manuscripts, censors would come to one of the following conclusions: "*autorizado*," "authorized," which meant that the text could be published or sold as it had been presented to the censorship services without any alterations; "*autorizado com cortes*," "authorized with cuts," which meant that specific words, sentences, paragraphs or entire pages, chapters, etc., which were carefully and methodically registered, had to be removed from the manuscript before being published; "*suspenso*," "suspended," which essentially meant that the censor was not sure if the manuscript or the book could pass as is; in these cases, a second opinion was required, normally from a higher-ranking 'reader;' and, last but not least, "*proibido*," "prohibited," which meant that the book or manuscript could not be published or traded within the country.

10 In Italy, the text could sometimes be altered to avoid prohibition, as it happened, for instance, with Cesare Pavese's translation of John Dos Passos's

The Big Money, in 1938, when Pavese confessed having "scrupulously followed the ministry's suggestions, that is, [he had] anglicized all Italian names, cut all mention of Lenin and the Soviets, deleted or replaced any mention of Fascism, omitted or translated with dignity *wop* or *dago*" (Bonsaver 139). This procedure was not approved in Portugal. Any alterations to the text, except cutting, were not allowed. Article 6 of the country's censorship law "stipulated that censorial boards should not introduce changes in the censored texts but limit themselves to eliminate the questionable passages only" (Spirk 7).

11 Principally, the censors would try to authorize publication with cuts, rather than forbid the entire work, since the Portuguese government did not want people to realize that censorship was so thoroughly exercised. In fact, only the authors, the translators and editors would know which parts had been suppressed. The book's reader would never become aware of the mutilations of the text. To somewhat dilute the idea of randomness, a "*relatório de censura*," "censorship report," had to be elaborated and signed by each censor. In it, the *leitor* had to explain and to justify their decision, which, nevertheless, remained an act of arbitrariness and subjectivity.

12 What mostly irritated censors, resulting in the prohibition of a work, was the use of foul language; the description of eroticism, which *leitores* more often than not associated with pornography; works about homosexuality; free love; adultery; feminist literature that encouraged emancipation; books about contraceptives, even medical studies; books about abortion and infant mortality; works that discussed the social acceptability of divorce; books that went against Christian morality; publications on witchcraft; murder mysteries that were considered too realistic or too violent were forbidden to prevent imitation; any political criticism of Salazar and his government: any mention of misspending, anti-colonialism or anti-militarism, or any disapproval of the dictatorship in any other form; any criticism uttered of the country's allies.[4] Any favoring of opposing ideologies like the sponsoring of socialism, syndicalism, communism, anarchism; books by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, and Mao[5] were considered of the most sordid propaganda; any pro-democratic or liberal treatises, too. Moreover, it was not allowed to write about important social problems like crime; low wages; organized labor strikes; or about the fact that a great part of the Portuguese population lived under very poor conditions and suffered from hunger, was housed in barracks, still walked barefoot, had almost no schooling; that a part of the male population had drinking problems; domestic violence was not to be mentioned, either. It was forbidden to write on women making a living out of prostitution. It was not allowed to write on asylums and the treatment of mental disorders. From the early 1960s onwards, information on the ongoing wars in the colonies was suppressed; as well as the fact that people were jailed for political reasons.

Censorship Applied to American Authors

13 To shortly exemplify the magnitude of censorship and the real damage caused in particular to North-American literature within the *Estado Novo*, I shall briefly refer to a few American authors, whose works were censored, before analyzing how censorship was exercised on John Dos Passos who was not treated differently.

14 It should not come as a surprise that Norman Mailer's *An American Dream* (i.e. its Portuguese translation) was forbidden "rigorously and effectively." The *leitor* justified his decision by writing that Mailer's novel broached the subject of "perverted sexual pleasures . . . of the lowest sensualism" (Censorship report on Mailer 1-4).

15 For the same reasons, John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* and Henry Miller's *The World of Sex* were banned, given their "sexual immoralities" (Censorship report on Updike 2) with the latter's censorship further justifying that it had been "refused in England and in America" as well (Censorship report on Miller, *The World of Sex*). According to the 'reader,' almost all books by Miller were banned, such as *Tropic of Cancer*, a frequently "discussed book, like all the other works of the author, whatever his literary merit may be, he uses the most reckless language," the censor concluded by calling the novel the "most sordid pornography" (Censorship report on Miller, *Trópico de Cancer*). Neither did the Nobel Laureate William Faulkner escape this labeling with *Sanctuary*. The censor found the novel "condemnable for its perversion, sadism and vicious amorality" (Censorship report on Faulkner).

16 Moreover, the censors found "scandalous revelations" also made by Irving Wallace in *The Chapman Report*; not only was the English original forbidden, but also its Portuguese translation (Censorship report on Wallace).

17 The Spanish version of Emma Goldman's *The Traffic in Women* was banned, since this essay described "prostitution throughout history, stating that it had a religious origin." Furthermore, the essay criticized the fact that women were treated unfairly, as they received unequal pay for equal work. Curiously enough, the censor did not see herein any embarrassment, concluding that "there is no great inconvenience in the circulation of this leaflet or any benefit either, since no lessons are learned from it" (Censorship report on Goldman). Nevertheless, the essay was eventually forbidden by a second 'reader,' who did not agree with his colleague and found the essay feminist enough to have it banned.

18 Howard Fast, on the other hand, was censored for theming "homosexualism" in *Spartacus*. The work was nonetheless authorized, although with cuts; "words and sentences" had to be eliminated because they "referred with too much cruelty to masculine homosexualism." The reason for the authorization had to do with the fact that the censorship film department had allowed a

screening of the movie "in one of Lisbon's first cinemas." Since the motion picture did not bring up the subject of homosexuality, the *leitor* decided that "a translation could be published" with what he called slight and "minor eliminations" (Censorship report on Fast, *Spartacus*).

19 Tennessee Williams's play *Summer and Smoke* (in a translation by the Portuguese playwright Luís de Sttau Monteiro, who had been censored and imprisoned during the *Estado Novo* himself) was authorized, too, even though the censor considered several passages to be overly "realistic." However, he did not "think them so immoral that" he would have to "propose a ban on the sale of the book" (Censorship report on Williams 3).[6]

20 Other books were outlawed for being "communist propaganda" (Censorship report on Reed) or for "sympathizing" with the communist movement (Censorship report on Steinbeck). Further examples included: John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World*, the French version of John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle* as well as Howard Fast's *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti* (cf. Censorship report on Fast, *A Tragédia de Sacco e Vanzetti*). For serving the "propaganda of democratic principles that are being combatted by the *Estado Novo*," even Thomas Jefferson's writings were considered inopportune and were thus banished (Censorship report on Jefferson).

21 A censorship report that stands out deals with Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, since the *leitor*, a major in the Portuguese army, perceived its "authorization as an inconvenience, despite" the fact that the work was "of first-rate." The "defeatist" tone and some passages that the 'reader' considered "anarchist" and "immoral," drove the censor to advise the prohibition of the novel (Censorship report on Hemingway, *Adeus às Armas* 1-2). Yet, in the end, the Portuguese translation *Adeus às Armas* was authorized with cuts. Contrary to what happened to Emma Goldman, a second censor preferred to authorize the book (even though mutilated) rather than to forbid the work completely, particularly so because Hemingway was a writer of such international fame, as professed in another censorship report, this time on *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, in which the censor somewhat worships Hemingway by stating:

> the author is considered one of the greatest North-American novelists of our time. I already read this very revered work some three years ago. . . . The book is very well written; the action takes place during the Spanish Civil War between red legionnaires. The Spanish nationalists are viewed by a democratic and anti-fascist American writer. I don't think that the work was written with the intention to propagate communism, even though I think it is quite inconvenient given the Portuguese position towards the Spanish Civil War. . . Yet, bearing in mind that the book is already available for three years, I think it is not opportune, at least for now, to prohibit it. (Censorship report on Hemingway, *Por Quem os Sinos Dobram*)

Even though *For Whom the Bell Tolls* clearly criticizes (Spanish) Fascism, the censor astonishingly does not advise to forbid the novel, apparently because of his personal taste, using the argument that the book had already been available for three years as some sort of justification.

22 Michael Gold did not have the same luck. In 1947, *Jews without Money* was considered "bolshevist" and "absolutely prejudicial." Exaggeratedly "realistic especially concerning pornography," the censor concluded that the novel was "without any interest," so he decided "that its sale should be prohibited in Portugal" (Censorship report on Gold, *Judeus sem Dinheiro*, 1947). In 1936, the novel had already passed through the hands of the censorship commission. Back then, however, the outlawing of the book had been justified differently. The censor of the thirties thought that Gold defended "libertarian ideas" (Censorship report on Gold, *Judeus sem Dinheiro*, 1936). In this opposing assessment of the very same novel, one might notice how illogically and contradictorily censorship was executed and how dependent it was on each of the censor's (mis-)interpretations. The same might be observed as regards Samuel D. Proctor and Malcolm X.

23 Proctor's *The Young Negro in America* was forbidden to circulate in Portugal. The censor justified his decision by stating: "As true apostles of equal rights, and of anti-racism, we would have nothing to oppose the publication of this book, if it was not, in fact, an expression of inconvenient racism given the revolutionary action of blacks against American whites and whites in general" (Censorship report on Proctor 2). On the other hand, Alex Haley's biography on Malcolm X (a Spanish translation) was curiously enough, considered to depict a man that had come out "in favor of a movement crucial to the history of black emancipation." "Even though some references in the book could raise some objections," the censor nonetheless concluded that the work's prohibition was not advised, since "the Portuguese ultramarine politics" and interests were "not directly touched" (Censorship report on Haley 1-2). Whereas Proctor's approach was considered a discrimination against whites, Malcolm X's attitude and discourse were, oddly, not.

Censorship Applied to John Dos Passos

24 Just like the authors to whom I succinctly referred above, John Dos Passos was a victim of censorship during the *Estado Novo*. Being a prominent writer and having Portuguese ancestry did not mean that he was treated in a different way. In this part of my article, I want to comprehensively explore how and for what reasons censorship was applied to John Dos Passos.

25 Dos Passos not only produced poetry, novels, plays, essays, but also articles for periodicals. Consequently, I questioned if Dos Passos's journalistic work had likewise been subject to censorship in Portugal. According to Prof. Dr. Orlando

César Gonçalves—to whom I am much obliged for our correspondence—the only article by John Dos Passos published in Portugal, in *Notícias da Amadora*, on January 29, 1966, titled: "Rodolfo Valentino, Um ídolo que se fez mito" had not been "subject to any cuts," since nothing in the text (dealing with the Italian-born American actor Rudolph Valentino) had roused the suspicion of the censorship commission (Gonçalves). Consequently, I shall focus on the writer's novels henceforward.

26 John Dos Passos's *The 42nd Parallel* (in a Brazilian Portuguese translation by Silveira Peixoto for Guaíra, Rio de Janeiro) was suspended, according to the handwritten report, dated from July 12, 1949. Only one day later, it eventually became authorized by a second *leitor*, a captain, who made a few handwritten remarks on the same report himself. Whereas the first censor commented that *The 42nd Parallel* was: "a realistic novel about. . . life in America" with some passages that he considered not yet "pornographic," he stressed that in it "references to mainly socialist doctrines" were made. Unsure whether these should be suppressed, the 'reader' forwarded the novel "for superior appreciation," informing his superiors that "the pages where the subject is dealt with at length [had been] marked." The second 'reader' observed that these "were of no [such] importance" that could justify "the prohibition of the book." He hence concluded that the novel "should be authorized" (Censorship report on Dos Passos, *Paralelo* 42 1-2).

27 In spite of this, the English original of 1919 (the second novel that follows *The 42nd Parallel* in Dos Passos's U.S.A. trilogy) had been forbidden, as a matter of fact, already on September 25, 1938. The censor explained his decision by writing in his report that the novel was composed of:

> Romanticized episodes with partial criticisms of the events of 1919 (peace treaty) and the action of the Americans in the Great War. By using a language of raw realism, the intention is revealed to propagate leftist and anti-militarist ideas. There is no advantage in promoting this work that can be considered preparatory for the expansion of leftist social ideas. (Censorship report on Dos Passos, 1919)

A member of the military forces, the captain, did not appreciate the novel's anti-military remarks. Whereas in *The 42nd Parallel*, the censors found the mentioning of leftist concerns unproblematic, things changed with 1919. I concur with many scholars who characterize Dos Passos's "early fiction," such as the U.S.A. trilogy, as criticism of the capitalist system, which, to Dos Passos, was corrupted by the greediness of the rich. During this period, it is claimed that Dos Passos sympathized with leftist—the communist and the anarchist—movements (see Oliveira, *From a Man* 258). He, for instance, defended Sacco and Vanzetti, two anarchists who were charged with armed robbery and

murder, and the young poet, David Gordon, who served a prison term for having written an obscene poem published in 1927 in the *Daily Worker*, a communist paper.

28 Another reason to ban Dos Passos's work was its realism, since the censors, as already mentioned, did not like authors to discuss social ills in their writings. The social and political faults and difficulties that Dos Passos depicted in his novels existed not only in America but also in Portugal, such as poverty and the hardships of the working class to make a decent living, and accordingly had to be kept silent. Describing how things really worked, and how people really lived, was feared, since the ordinary reader of the novel could jump to conclusions, i.e. that things had to change. This went against the expressed aim of Fascism, which sought to preserve society as it was. Subsequently, the dissemination of *1919* was condemnable and not advised.

29 Not surprisingly, *The Big Money*, Dos Passos's third novel in his trilogy (translated into Portuguese by Peixoto and Zenha Machado) was forbidden as well on July 13, 1949. The header of the report clarifies that the Brazilian Portuguese translation had been seized by PIDE that handed it to the *direcção dos serviços de censura*, "directorate of censorship services." "This book," the censor noted in his report,

> is made up of a series of 'news', without any interest, where here and there sentences are read that denote communist ideas and, therefore, if it had not already been published, it would be advised not to get published. In the following pages are the sentences to which I refer: 11-21-22-33-36. . . (Censorship report on Dos Passos, *Dinheiro Graúdo*)

Once more, the dissemination of the work of an author that defended communist thoughts was considered undesirable and even of no interest. The literary importance of this canonical work was, of course, ignored and left out of the decision-making process.

30 Another work by Dos Passos that was forbidden on June 6, 1957 was the French translation of *Chosen Country*, which had been confiscated by C.T.T. (*Correios, Telégrafos e Telefones*), the Portuguese post office, and handed over to the censorship commission. In his report, the censor noted:

> The author makes his autobiography out of this book. He is an internationally known writer, with deep knowledge of philosophy and sociology. However, for the immorality that he reveals, for the communist mystique that he demonstrates to possess and which he intends to advertise and for the anti-warmongering that . . . he manifests—in no case he admits that war should exist—the book is to be forbidden. [signed] The reader (Censorship report on Dos Passos, *Terre Elue*)

This interpretation of *Chosen Country*, first published in 1951, is somewhat flawed. One of the incidents in which Dos Passos reveals 'immorality' in his novel is the scene in which the quasi-autobiographical character Jay Pignatelly sleeps with a prostitute in Paris during WWI; "When they woke up his whole body felt easy. They yawned and stretched and smiled at each other. They were slow getting dressed because they had to take their clothes off again half way. He gave her fifty francs and she gave him a friendly kiss" (Dos Passos, *Chosen Country* 192). Even though the scene is rather harmless, and contains no description of the sexual act, the censor must have considered the mere fact that a character slept with a prostitute as immoral and condemnable.

31 Moreover, Dos Passos is accused of wanting to propagate communism; yet the truth is that, by then, he had become increasingly disillusioned with the left. As a matter of fact, Dos Passos's disenchantment with communism had already occurred in the late 1930s, when his friend and Spanish translator José Robles Pazos was executed by "the Russians on suspicion of espionage" (Bautista-Cordero 148). From then onwards, Dos Passos no longer found the communists reliable since they had no scruples in killing their own supporters for their cause. Dos Passos later said:

> The Soviet Government operated in Spain a series of 'extra legal tribunals,' more accurately described as murder gangs, who put to death without mercy all whom they could reach and who stood in the way of communists. Subsequently they smeared their victims' reputations. (Dos Passos, qtd. in Oliveira, *Classified and Confidential* 121-22)

With *Chosen Country* Dos Passos had sustained

> his opinion of late that America was after all a country worthy of living in; America's freedom and democracy, established since its early settlement, allowed its citizens and immigrants to overcome all difficulties and become successful. North America was the land of opportunity; the American dream was not a myth anymore, since according to Dos Passos it had turned out to be true. (Oliveira, *From a Man* 207)

32 Yet, the dream, based on democracy, could have been jeopardized by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Consequently, Dos Passos started to write against it; "The communisti," Dos Passos stated in *Chosen Country*, "they want martyr. They don't mind about one . . . man" (Dos Passos, *Chosen Country* 374). Moreover, Dos Passos "denounces" "Communist politics" and "all crooks who deceive the poor" (Dos Passos, *Chosen Country* 390). Dos Passos had become "a conservative to the point of sponsoring McCarthyism, i.e. the purge of the reds, which Dos Passos believed treacherous, and a menace to the free world; as he now saw them, they would not halt at killing their own supporters if

these dared to express freely an opinion contrary to the party-line" (Oliveira, *From a Man* 206).

33 Another misinterpretation in the censorship report concerns Dos Passos's anti-war remarks. In fact, Dos Passos had criticized military hierarchies and the cruelty of war before (in *Three Soldiers*, among other works), but the censor's belief that, as a result, Dos Passos would not approve of any wars, was incorrect. "John Dos Passos was no pacifist. According to him, some wars had to be fought in the name of liberty;" for instance the Spanish Civil War, in which Dos Passos sought to get involved, sponsoring the Republicans against General Franco, and, shortly afterwards, WWII that freed the world of National-Socialism (Oliveira, *From a Man* 197). Yet, the fact that Dos Passos had taken sides against Franco—who besides being Fascist like Salazar, was one of the country's allies—was reason enough for censors to prevent these denunciations from being spread.

34 Actually, *Adventures of a Young Man* might be considered Dos Passos's first novel in which the author disclosed to have made up his mind about communism. And yet, PIDE seized its Brazilian Portuguese translation and had it submitted to the censorship commission. The reason the political state police might have spotted the novel was due to the fact that its Brazilian translator Enéas Camargo had changed the title to: "*Aventuras de um Comunista*" ("Adventures of a Communist") instead of maintaining the English original *Adventures of a Young Man*. Undeniably, the translation's title (with the word 'communist' in it) was decisive for the confiscation of the novel. On December 23, 1958, the novel published by Guaíra in Rio was ultimately forbidden. Even though the censor acknowledged that the book had been "written by a determined author" and that it did "not seem intended [to spread] propaganda" he believed: "The title—stupid and contrived." He paradoxically stated that the title "seems to be sheer propaganda and it aims at being attractive to the masses" and thus, in the end, he decided on "prohibiting the book" (Oliveira, *From a Man* 450). This opinion about the novel seems rather contradicting and confusing. On the one hand, the censor believed the book not to be propagandistic, and yet, on the other hand, he thought that its title was. Further down in his report, he eventually resolved that the book was "frankly Communist-Marxist." As already stated, the novel was, above all, against communism. Its main character, Glenn Spotswood, was betrayed by the very movement he believed in, a fact that did not go unnoticed by the censor, who summarized the plot by stating that the novel "depicts a time and environment where youngsters are thrown into life to make up for themselves and are thus an easy prey for audacious and domineering or fashionable ideas. Their environment collides with poverty, . . . and it contrasts with empty lives, vice and wealth," while "the hero . . . ends up [being] killed by the reds—during the Spanish Civil War." Therefore, the

censor established: "The work is dangerous and seductive to youths" (Oliveira, *From a Man* 450).

35 This rather self-contradicting report contrasts with another one that was written nearly three years later, when the state-owned publishing house *Empresa Nacional de Publicidade* (National Advertising Company) asked the censorship commission for the approval of a new (European) Portuguese translation of *Adventures of a Young Man*. This time, the censor received the French translation of the novel (*Aventures d'un Jeune Homme*) by Mathilde Camhi for Gallimard in Paris. Herein, the word 'communist' did not figure on the book cover and thus the censorship report read very differently from the first one. The new report resolved that the work was neither communist nor propagandistic, but that the novel contained descriptions which the censor found too realistic and cruel and consequently advised their elimination.

> Schematically this book is a historiography of communist infiltration and action in the United States of North America. At the same time, and providing the romantic background, the life of an idealistic young American develops, who has lived fighting for the social demands of the most unprotected workers and classes. But the work is not of communist propaganda; rather it is a political-sociological analysis as clearly shown in its final conclusion (p. 350). There are, however, throughout the book, expressions or words so realistic and crude that I think that they should be suppressed in the translation that is intended to be done, especially since they do not imply anything with the general line of the work nor its deletion distorts its intention. . . . I also believe that some sentences that are marked (pages 70 and 317) should be deleted due to the possibility of political misinterpretation. With these slight deletions, I believe the translation into Portuguese of this French translation could be authorized. The reader (Censorship report on Dos Passos, *Aventures d'un Jeune Homme*)

Today it may seem rather peculiar that a novel is translated from another translation instead of from the original version. Nevertheless, in those days, as already stated, French was the hegemonic language spoken by the upper classes in Europe, including Portugal. Thus, the Portuguese translator Antunes das Neves used the French version as source text.

36 In his report, the censor clearly marked which pages contained words and expressions that he wanted to be removed from the forthcoming translation. In the following, I shall examine what the censor meant by 'realistic' and 'crude'. Whereas the French translation reads: "— Du diable si je le sais. Je suppose que tu ne connais pas en endroit dans cette putain de ville où l'on puisse trouver quelque chose à boire?" (Dos Passos, *Aventures d'un Jeune Homme* 33), the Portuguese version of this excerpt misses the word *diable* (which stands for 'devil,' or 'damned') and the word *putain* (that stands for 'whore') (cf. Dos Passos, *Aventuras dum Jovem* 35). By 'realism,' the censor meant hence 'realism of language;' Dos Passos let his characters swear and curse and use profane

language, since the author intended to depict in his novel how people really talked in everyday life. This, however, was seen as c/rude by the censor, who therefore advised the elimination of the words which he considered offensive. The same applied to expressions in the next passage. "Entre, Toby, espèce de c… Bon Dieu, c'que je suis content de te revoir! — Et alors, Duke, vieil enfant du putain, elle te plaît, notre capitale?" (Dos Passos, *Aventures d'un Jeune Homme* 34) In the Portuguese translation, the 'c…' (in itself an evidence of Dos Passos's own self-censorship) is missing, as well as "*Bon Dieu*" —"my God"—the English original reads "Jesus Christ" (Dos Passos, *District of Columbia* 31); and finally "*putain*" again, which this time is not omitted but translated into a less vulgar expression, actually with the Portuguese equivalent for "dude" (cf. Dos Passos, *Aventuras dum Jovem* 37).

37 The censor assumed that by deleting these expressions, among others, Dos Passos's text would not suffer major alterations. The truth, however, is that *Aventuras dum Jovem* was bluntly castrated, since the *Empresa Nacional de Publicidade* not only had the selected words and sentences deleted but surprisingly went beyond the censor's instructions. They eliminated entire pages, even the last page of the novel (p. 350 in the French version referred to by the censor), the very page that was so conclusive for the *leitor* and from which he established the non-communistic character of the novel. Actually, all of the missing pages illustrate Dos Passos's gradual disillusionment with communism. While early pages in the novel are still filled with praise towards the communist movement, it becomes less and less euphoric as the novel progresses and turns into severe critique.

38 The editors of the *Empresa Nacional de Publicidade* that was under the control of the Fascist government seemingly decided to blue-pencil much more than indicated by the censor, most probably because they feared that deleting a sentence here and there would not have been enough to avoid the so-called inconvenient, 'political misinterpretations.'

39 Quoting from the English original version, here are two passages that were altogether omitted in the Portuguese translation:[7]

> THE CAPITALISTS rigged their corporations to buy cheap and sell dear . . . They tried to trade with Mussolini when he took over paralyzed Italy and fell dreaming himself Caesar among the ruins of Rome. They thought Hitler would keep the trade unions in order and wages low . . . The capitalists had invented advertising, a bombardment of lies and half truths in pictures and print and stories and songs . . . the Fascists had discovered the trick of making lies as plausible as truth; the Communists lumped all these inventions that degrade to shoddy the mind of the medium man to serve a simple globecircling dogma: those who would not submit their will to the will of the Party (which meant the will of the Central Committee, which meant the will of the autocrat supreme in the Kremlin scheming mankind's domination were enemies of the human race. (Dos Passos, *District of Columbia* 307-309)

It is certainly curious that the censor did not refer to this passage in his report and it may become clear why the editors therefore decided to censor this passage themselves. Dos Passos not only criticizes both Mussolini and Hitler but also Fascism in itself, exposing the followers of the movement as liars. The part concerning the communists is in line with what could have been published at the time. Yet, *Empresa Nacional de Publicidade* must have decided that it would be best to eliminate the whole passage.

40 Even though Dos Passos criticizes communism on the last page of his novel, this was removed, too, since Dos Passos stresses freedom as an opposing and desired force.

> In America the Communist Party grew powerful and remarkably rich out of the ruin of freedom in Europe and the sacrifice of righteous men. . . . Stalin, the schoolingmaster of fascism, could become in the editorials in liberal newspapers the grand antifascist; . . . because the American People had forgotten our primer of liberties: that every right entails a duty that free institutions cost high in vigilance, selfdenial . . . and that the freedom of one class of people cannot be gained at the expense of the enslavement of another; and that means are more important than ends. (Dos Passos, *District of Columbia* 340-41)

Besides having removed pages that had not been mentioned in the censorship report, Dos Passos's editors further decided to autonomously eliminate the titles of certain chapters and thus to restructure the novel. For instance, the title of the second chapter, "Man in God's Image," simply disappeared. In the Portuguese translation, the two chapters (chapter I and II) were merged into one. Instead of five subchapters, as in the original, the Portuguese rendition gained four subchapters more. Herewith, Dos Passos's Portuguese editors created an unnecessary imbalance of chapter arrangements, since Antunes das Neves could have simply altered the title (a common practice in translation) that the editors must have found inconvenient for religious reasons.

Quod erat demonstrandum: A Brief Conclusion

41 In this article, I have discussed the fact that North-American writers were censored for several reasons in Portugal during the *Estado Novo* dictatorship. Their works were described as being pornographic; theming adultery and homosexuality; making use of foul language; expressing feminist ideas; being too realistic; presenting communist propaganda; disseminating libertarian and democratic ideas; being too defeatist; exposing anti-militarist sentiments; and containing racism against whites.

42 John Dos Passos's works were censored, too: *The 42nd Parallel* (in a Brazilian Portuguese translation by Silveira Peixoto) was authorized, but *The Big Money* (translated into Portuguese by Peixoto and Zenha Machado), *Chosen Country*

(i.e., the French translation *Terre Elue* by Yves Malartic), 1919 (the English original), and *Adventures of a Young Man* (in a Brazilian Portuguese translation by Enéas Camargo) were forbidden; while the European-Portuguese translation of the same book (by Antunes das Neves) was authorized with cuts; thence words, sentences, and whole pages were erased in the latter.

43 I believe that John Dos Passos did not know that *Aventuras dum Jovem* had been censored. Having been a victim of censorship on several occasions,[8] Dos Passos went vehemently against the suppression of freedom of speech. For instance, when "referring to Christ as 'old boy,'" Dos Passos's editors "objected" to print *One Man's Initiation* in 1920, and demanded that the young author rewrite the passage, which they considered "offensive." Even though Dos Passos was forced, then, to give in, he was nevertheless reluctant and preferred "to delete the entire scene" rather than submit to the printer's "dictums." In a letter to his editors, he stated "I am willing to have almost anything omitted, but I cannot consent to paraphrases" (Ludington 192-93). Yet, by becoming an eminent writer (especially after *Manhattan Transfer* had become a huge literary success in 1925), Dos Passos no longer approved of any omissions. In the early thirties, Harper's pressured Dos Passos to delete the biographical thumbnail about John Pierpont Morgan in 1919, since the editor considered the text an "insult," and because Harper's finances depended on the loans made by J.P. Morgan's bank institute. Dos Passos declined and switched to Harcourt, Brace and Company, where his novel appeared without suffering any of the imposed changes (Ludington 296).

44 In fact, the young Dos Passos had to struggle with being published or not and was thus initially forced to consent to the publication of a "slightly censored book," as suggested by his authorized biographer Prof. Dr. Charles Townsend Ludington (193). Yet, the famous Dos Passos no longer agreed to the publication of his works with deletions and neither did he agree to be silenced in any other form. As a matter of fact, in the early 1930s, as stressed, when he "published in *The Nation* and the *New Republic*," his "requirements were that the magazines be free from censorship" (Willig 10). Furthermore, Dos Passos "opposed any type of censorship and [henceforth] insisted on freedom to publish" whatever and "wherever he chose" (Willig 17).

45 It is often claimed that by succeeding Salazar in 1968, Prof. Marcello Caetano, who essentially preserved the *Estado Novo*—and thus continued the dictatorship—nevertheless allowed the country a short breath of freedom. Censorship was, however, maintained. It was only after the Carnation Revolution on April 25, 1974 that the constitution of the newly implemented Portuguese Republic officially outlawed the suppression of free speech.

46 Nevertheless, John Dos Passos's censored books like *Aventuras dum Jovem* are still available at Portuguese public libraries without any note that the edition underwent censorship. This might pose a problem in terms of the author's reputation as well as the literary identity of his work. In my opinion, publications that were subject to cuttings should be marked as such. In Dos Passos's case, *Aventuras dum Jovem* was so much disfigured that the translation became rather dull and lifeless. It should not, however, be removed from the shelves of the libraries, since these translations are, as a matter of fact, a significant part of the country's translation history.

47 Finally, I feel obliged to point out that my article is an incomplete study, since, unfortunately, right after the revolution, many censorship reports, which were to be archived at the Torre do Tombo in Lisbon, went missing. It is estimated that some 22% of the total amount of reports disappeared. Some resurfaced in the assets of private collectors. Others, however, have not reappeared, which ultimately means that scholars have lost valuable archive material to conduct comprehensive studies on censorship and specific authors. The same applies to John Dos Passos, since no matching reports could be traced for the requests for Portuguese translations that must have been submitted in the 1960s to the censorship commission by Portugália for the novels that were published eventually that decade, such as *The 42nd Parallel*, (translated by Hélder Macedo[9]) or 1919 and *The Big Money* (translated by Daniel Gonçalves). Furthermore, no reports were found on: *Manhattan Transfer* (translated by Alfredo Amorim), *Three Soldiers* (translated by Luís Pizarro de Melo Sampaio for Arcádia), *Most Likely to Succeed* (commissioned by Minerva and translated by Fernanda Rodrigues), *The Best Times*, and *The Portugal Story* (requested by Íbis and translated by Maria da Graça Cardoso). It would be too naïve to believe that these missing reports could be brought to light one day.

Notes

[1] All translations in this article are the author's own, unless otherwise noted.

[2] Contrary to popular belief, censorship did also exist during the first Portuguese Republic. It had been introduced to inhibit pornography from being disseminated, and to protect, particularly youth, from perversion. Furthermore, all information that could have been considered harmful to state security and national defense had to pass through censorship, especially so from 1916 onwards, when Germany declared war on Portugal. The declaration of war had been issued, since the republicans had ordered the apprehension of some seventy German vessels anchored at Portuguese harbors, after having been put under severe diplomatic pressure by Sir Edward Grey, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. From then onwards, censorship aimed at suppressing all criticism of Portugal's involvement in WWI.

[3] As the saying goes, the forbidden fruit is always the sweetest, so these banned books soon became underground bestsellers. Some store owners risked their necks by hiding the banned books and selling them only to clients of their utmost confidence. Having interviewed for my studies one of these vendors in an old Lisbon bookstore, he remembered that among the concealed books was one in particular whose cover stated that it had been written by Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov. Indicating Ulyanov as the author granted to some extent that the police, ignorant of Lenin's real name, would not spot the book right away as subversive literature.

[4] In 1943, a German pamphlet, printed and disseminated by the German representative in Lisbon, was forbidden and seized, since the brochure stirred up sentiments against Portugal's oldest and most important ally and was thus considered by the censors "anti-British propaganda" (See censorship report on *Ingleses sôbre Portugal*).

[5] Books by Marx and Engels normally did not even need to be read. They were automatically forbidden, since their authors were directly associated with communism. Consistent with this practice, a French version of their authorship (*Textes sur le Colonialisme*) was outlawed right away as "anti-colonial and communist doctrine" (Censorship report on Marx and Engels).

[6] Of course, not all American writers were subject to prohibition nor were all of their texts cut. Among those that were not censored was *This Side of Paradise*, a novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The censor considered the book "a true panorama" of the decade between 1910 and 1920 in the United States and did not find any immoral, sexualized or pornographic scene that could have justified "the ban on the novel" (Censorship report on Fitzgerald). There was also "no inconvenience" with the "dissemination" of *Dodsworth* by Sinclair Lewis (cf. Censorship report on Lewis) or with Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, a book that the censor enjoyed and thus considered having been written "by a genius of a great imagination" (Censorship report on Capote).

[7] The following pages are missing in the Portuguese translation by Antunes das Neves: 1-3; 21-2; 66-68; 179-81, and 341-42. (Pagination of the English original, referred to in my bibliography as *District of Columbia*) Almost all of these passages are used by Dos Passos to introduce each of his chapters, whereas pp. 341-42 are the final pages of the novel.

[8] Dos Passos had been censored before, during his service at the front, as an ambulance driver in the course of WWI. His "anti-war and anti-officialdom remarks in his letters," which he sent home, were caught by the military "postal censorship" and culminated in Dos Passos's dishonorable discharge from the American Red Cross, since the "Sedition Act" forbade Americans

Notes

to use "disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the U.S.A. government, flag, and armed forces" during the war (see Oliveira, *Classified and Confidential* 51-52).

[9] I feel deeply honored that Dr. Hélder Macedo, Prof. Emeritus at King's College London, a famous writer in his own right, generously gave his time to correspond with me on his translation of *The 42nd Parallel*, which was published in 1963. Macedo used the English version for his translation. He knew that at the time "the writings of John Dos Passos were not appreciated" in Portugal and he was *au courant* that Portugália had submitted several manuscripts that had been turned down by Salazar's censorship commission. Thence, Macedo was aware of the "considerable risk" that his editors were running (Macedo). Whereas many translators were fearful at the time, Prof. Macedo stated not to have been afraid, since, by then, he was already living in England. Yet, those who remained in the country, every so often, felt fear, like José Cutileiro, who expressed in one of his poems: "It is with fear that I write. With fear that I think" (Ferreira 53). Even though it might be assumed that no cuts were made to Macedo's translation of *The 42nd Parallel* (its Brazilian Portuguese version had been authorized without cuts, too), "a novel," which Macedo "wrote in the 1960s could not be published." Of course, Macedo could have committed himself to self-censorship. Yet, as he disclosed, he rather "preferred not to publish than to self-censor." Actually, many translators and writers had to follow through with self-censorship as confessed by Ferreira de Castro, in November 1945, in an interview he gave to the newspaper *Diário de Lisboa*. Castro stated that: "Writing like this is a real torture. The problem is not only in what censorship prohibits but also in the fear of what it can prohibit. Each of us places, when writing, an imaginary censor on the table—and that invisible, incorporeal presence takes away all spontaneity, . . . [and] forces us to disguise our thinking, if not to abandon it, always with that obsession: 'Will they let this pass?'" (Ferreira 55)

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Biography **Miguel Oliveira** holds a Ph.D. in American Studies, which he earned with distinction at the University of Lisbon. He has taught at several universities and colleges. From 2003 onwards, he directed the Language Lyceum in Funchal. Oliveira was appointed head of the Forum for Philosophical Studies of the Forum for Sciences, Arts and Culture on Madeira Island. He then worked for the John Dos Passos Studies Centre and the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs of the Madeiran Government. Furthermore, he founded the John Dos Passos's Portuguese Literary Prize and was invited to chair its first jury. In 2007, Oliveira wrote the Portuguese biography of the Nobel Laureate in Literature Günter Grass as well as various scientific monographs on the North-American writer John Dos Passos. He also translated Ödön von Horváth's novel *Jugend ohne Gott* into Portuguese. Oliveira is considered a major figure of Madeiran present-day literature. A selection of his work was included in several anthologies of contemporary Portuguese poets. In 2021, Miguel Oliveira became an Associate Professor at ISG, Lisbon's first Business and Economics School. Additionally, he teaches at the Language School at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon.

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