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The Great War and the American Novel: Mimesis and Craft in Selected Fiction of Dos Passos, Boyd, March, and Hemingway

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THE GREAT WAR AND THE AMERICAN NOVEL: MIMESIS AND CRAFT IN SELECTED FICTION OF DOS PASSOS, BOYD, MARCH, AND HEMINGWAY

by

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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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Dedicated

to

Norton D. Kinghorn

1933-1990

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the influence of World War I on American literature and its effects on the American tradition of literary realism. It does so through an analysis of five war novels written by four American authors who had participated in the conflict as combatants or volunteers. These works include John Dos Passos' One Man's Initiation--1917 and Three Soldiers, Thomas Boyd's Through the Wheat, William March's Company K, and Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms.

The dissertation explores a development within the sub-genre of war novels from works of "witness and testimony," which were based on the authors' personal experiences in the First World War, to more finely crafted works of fiction, which employed carefully developed characterizations, plots, and themes. Especially with the first of these war novels, those of witness and testimony, a new narrative form was evident. These novels such as Dos Passos' One Man's Initiation--1917 and Boyd's Through the Wheat combined elements of fiction and non-fiction and are near-journalistic in their presentation of events witnessed by the authors during the Great War. Thus, they presage the "non-fictional novel" of the 1960s. With Dos Passos' Three Soldiers and the war novels of March and Hemingway, concern with the novel as art is more evident. The later war novels also employ more complex

narrative points of view. This widening of perspective allows a varied and complex presentation of the events of the Great War, but also results in greater ambiguity and irony.

Another area explored in this study is the accuracy of the mimetic re-creation of the Great War's conditions. Especially in the earliest war novels, graphic descriptions of the war's events are often depicted as a means of protest. However, even the later war novelists attempt to portray the war with some degree of verisimilitude, and collectively, these five war novels provide an often minutely accurate re-creation of the First World War. Because of their use of mimesis, their innovative combination of fiction and non-fiction, and their influence on later writers, these war novels represent an important development in twentieth-century American literature.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

For a generation, it was known, with only a trace of irony, as he "Great War," "the war to end war," "the war to make the world safe or democracy." Ultimately, it was not the world's greatest war, did not end war, and produced no lasting world movement for democracy, but the First World War did mark the beginning of the modern era. In many respects, it was the most horrendous four years of concentrated bloodletting that the world has ever known, even more so than World War II, with its higher death toll, because of the macabre nature of its deaths caused by massed artillery and machine guns within more confined battle zones. When World War I erupted in August 1914, it did so for no very good nor very apparent reason. Even though the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary on June 28, 1914, has often been pointed to as the war's cause, most Europeans, including Emperor Francis Joseph of Europe's Dual Monarchy, who had lost a much unloved nephew at Sarajevo, in the mid-summer of 1914 could not and did not see this event as the likely cause of a coming world catastrophe (Marshall 19-20). Other explanations such as militarism, nationalism, vain-glorious illusions of military honor, and Social Darwinism have all been used as reasons for the advent of the Great War, "yet none of this really explains why the war happened. It seems that people simply had grown bored and wanted a war" (Pfaff 38A).

Whatever the war's cause, the four years and three months of

rampant, mutual destruction that plagued the world from August 1914 to early November 1918 determined human history. Those years and the results of actions taken during them led to the deaths of millions, the downfall of four empires, and the rise of the United States as a world power. The Great War was, and must be viewed as, one of the central occurrences of the twentieth century:

> Without that war there would have been no Bolshevik or Nazi revolutions. Mussolini would have undoubtedly remained a turbulent Socialist factional leader and publicist. His lethal blend of Socialist idealism with combative nationalism might never have happened. . . .
>
> Without World War I, the European empires quite possibly would survive today. The United States might still be a regional power of the second rank. (Pfaff 38A)

Without the Great War, too, it is doubtful that twentieth-century literature would exhibit the variety which it does. For not only was the First World War the most concentrated bloodletting in world history, it was also the most literary war ever waged.

Virtually every nation whose nationals participated in the "war to end war"--a phrase conjured up by H.G. Wells in 1914 (Klein 2)--developed writers who published works of fiction, poetry, drama, and narratives based on the conflict. For example, a 1981 bibliography of World War I novels by Philip Hager and Desmond Taylor lists 900 adult novels and 370 juvenile titles published in English language editions alone, while Catherine Reilly in a bibliography of English,

Commonwealth, and American poets of the Great War located over 2,800 such poets. And Charles Genthe in a study of non-fictional American war narratives written between 1917 and 1918 found over four hundred such non-fictional treatments of war experience. When other English language war memoirs, short stories, and dramas, as well as poems, memoirs, diaries, fiction, and dramas by non-English writers are considered, the literary outpouring of the Great War can only be described as enormous, greater than that of either the American Civil War or World War II.[1] That this should be so is not terribly surprising. The First World War was for many of its participants the most important and most memorable event of their lives, and among the millions of conscripted soldiery--and this was the first war to use masses of drafted soldiery--and millions of Red Cross, Y.M.C.A. and other volunteers, were a large number of men and women with literary talent, or at least literary aspirations. Yet often the literature these writers produced was different from that of the previous generation, different from the type of "romanticism" safeguarded and maintained in what George Santayana labeled the "Genteel Tradition." For this was a distinctly unromantic war with its new means of technological death, with its machine guns, concentrated artillery barrages, poison gases, flame throwers, tanks, and other forms of mechanized destruction.

War, of course, has been a major theme in literature since Homer, but much of what was written about it until World War I emphasized heroic, "romantic" concepts of warfare, which were far removed from

actuality. In the nineteenth century, the Napoleonic, the Crimean, and the American Civil Wars provided what would seemingly have been more than ample material for writers wishing to present a truthful rendition of warfare. Yet, with the obvious exceptions of Stendahl and Tolstoy on the Napoleonic Wars and minor writers such as John DeForest and Ambrose Bierce, who did write realistic fiction based on the American Civil War, very little in the way of unromantic treatments of war was published. Commenting on this dearth of verisimilitude in American fiction of the Civil War, David Lundberg noted that this reluctance to depict war with fidelity to fact was a matter of literary convention:

> By suppressing or ignoring the more repellent aspects of their war experiences, Union and Confederate soldiers were probably conforming to the literary conventions of their time. They wrote about what they went through in a manner expected of them. Midcentury American writers were not in the habit of providing detailed descriptions of physical discomforts. For mid-nineteenth-century American men reticence about adversity, whether encountered on the frontier or the battlefield, was probably the norm. (375)

Victorian sensibilities, in short, could not be assaulted by unpleasant actualities. And, significantly, the only major American author to treat the Civil War as a subject for "realistic" fiction, to attempt to explicitly depict the physical and psychological destruction of warfare, was Stephen Crane, who was born after the conflict had ended and whose Red Badge of Courage (1895) was based on his own historical

research--a technique, incidentally, that would later be used by Ernest Hemingway. Crane, of course, represents an additional evolution in American rineteenth-century literary realism, the "slice of life" tradition in fiction, which arose in France with writers such as Gustave Flaubert and was promoted in the United States by such critics and authorities as William Dean Howells. This tradition of literary realism was expanded and strengthened in the literature of the Great War, which itself produced conditions that demanded an assault on the general population's sensibilities.

However, the First World War's impact on literature was not immediate, save in quantity, and with a few major exceptions, much of the war literature produced during the conflict itself reflected both the propagandistic themes of the embattled nations and the genteel, romantic, heroic treatment of war so common throughout the nineteenth century from Sir Walter Scott onward. For example, Arthur Empey in his "non-fictional" narrative "Over the Top" by an American Soldier Who Went (1917) provides a view of the trenches of World War I's Western Front that is little more than an extended romantic fantasy, complete with a squad being pulled out of the line to attend the funeral of a fallen comrade, whose dying words were, conventionally enough, "Well, Yank, they've done me in. I can feel myself going West" (55). In a war where many of the dead were left to rot where they fell and sudden, violent death occurred with numbing frequency, Empey's sentimental funeral and stoic Briton's farewell ring more than a little hollow.

Nor did this type of glamorized, heroic treatment of warfare end

with the Armistice on November 11, 1918. As late as 1923, writers such as Edith Wharton in her A Son at the Front--and a goodly number of others--portrayed the Great War in terms of heroism and sacrifice for higher truths, or as Stanley Cooperman acidly notes, ". . . Miss Wharton saw American troops as Boy Scouts out on a field trip, serious about killing Germans, gay among themselves, polite to women, and giving their lives as a sort of good deed for the day, with the merit badge of 'Glory' for their reward" (42).[2]

However, there were exceptions to this treatment of warfare as heroic sacrifice. One of them, The Backwash of War by Ellen N. La Motte (1916), provided a distinctly unromantic view of the Great War, gained a good deal of international notoriety, and even today raises a pertinent question over the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction in narrative. La Motte, an American, served as a volunteer nurse in France in 1915 and 1916, and her work, unlike the vast majority of war literature appearing during the conflict, is unheroic, candid, graphic, and bitterly satiric. Heroism is a sham: a wounded French soldier comments, "I was mobilized against my inclination. Now I have won the Médaille Militaire. My Captain won it for me. He made me brave. He had a revolver in his hand" (125). Her women are hardly the prim, virtuous beauties of the sentimental war novels: "Of course, the professional prostitutes from Paris aren't admitted to the War Zone, but the Belgian girls made such fools of themselves, the others weren't needed" (107). And the deaths of her soldiers are uniformly horrible:

His was a filthy death. He died after three days' cursing

> and raving. Before he died, that end of the ward smelled foully [from gas gangrene], and his foul words, shouted at the top of his delirious voice, echoed foully. Everyone was glad when it was over. (31)

The Backwash of War was received with more than a little hostility. Immediately after its release, the book was banned in France and Britain, and after the United States entered the war in April 1917, it was banned in America as well (Genthe 101).

In addition to the unusualness of its candid portrayal of war and its horrors, The Backwash of War presents a major problem: although it is usually categorized as a non-fiction narrative, this work has elements which suggest the fictional. At no place, for example, does La Motte employ an autobiographical first-person narrator; instead, the point of view is omniscient throughout. And this very omniscience allows the author to provide the reader with descriptions of incidents that would have been, in the circumstances existing during the First World War, impossible for a volunteer nurse to witness, i.e., it allows her to write beyond the limits of her own immediate experience. For example, one of The Backwash of War's vignettes--and the work consists entirely of a series of sketches--is titled "La Patrie Reconnaissante" and concerns the death of a particularly obnoxious French soldier, a poilu, as the result of gas gangrene. But La Motte begins her description of this incident at a place she could have never been, an aid station immediately behind the front lines: "They brought him to the Poste de Secours just behind the lines, and laid

he stretcher down gently, after which the bearers stretched and restretched their stiffened arms, numb with his weight" (17). And she follows this with a speech by the poilu addressed to the brancardiers, or stretcher-bearers, which she could have never heard:

> "Sales embusques!" (Dirty cowards!) he cried angrily. "How long is it since I have been wounded? Ten hours! For ten hours have I laid [sic] there, waiting for you! And then you come to fetch me only when it is safe! Safe for you!" (17-18)

In short, the division in The Backwash of War between the fictional and the non-fictional, between that created by the author imaginatively and that reported as the result of direct experience, is extremely vague. This lack of easy definition is typical of many of the early works on the war, as John Cruickshank noted in a study of French World War I novels:

> The immediate pressure of their subject-matter urged the early war novelists in the direction of documentation and witness. It was a pressure that left only limited room for conscious craftsmanship. Most writers were forced, by the requirements of authentic testimony, into an indeterminate area on the borders of autobiography and fiction. A measure of generic definition was lost [i.e., distinctions between fiction and non-fiction were blurred], but there were gains in terms of human conviction and a sense of actuality. (43)

But this desire to report the actuality of war, to provide "authentic

:stimony," with its resulting loss of generic definition points to a :eater, and more important, change occurring with the writing of ıese war narrative/novels.

Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg (The Nature of Narrative, 1966) rgue that narrative is composed of four main elements: the mimetic, he historic, the romantic, and the didactic. These components, riginally the basis of the epic's synthesis, developed separately fter the decline of the epic at the end of the classical period 13-14). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Scholes and :ellogg continue, a new synthesis occurred, and the four elements---or ıore properly, the empirical, containing the historic and mimetic, and :he fictional, containing the romantic and didactic--recombined to ɔroduce a new form, the novel (15-16). It would seem that throughout the nineteenth century this synthesis continued relatively unchanged, although writers of literary realism such as Flaubert and naturalistic writers such as Emile Zola tended to emphasize the mimetic and the historic at the expense of the romantic and, to a much lesser extent. at the expense of the didactic. With the novel of World War I, this tendency becomes even more apparent until the boundary between fictional literature and factual reporting of experience, often but not necessarily based on autobiography, becomes so indefinite that it is often impossible to definitively classify some individual works, such as Ellen N. La Motte's The Backwash of War. Also, while many of these war novels are didactic in the sense that their authors present an anti-war message or, in some cases, espouse alternative political

systems, romantic elements and the phrases, code words--honor, courage, duty, for example--and descriptions associated with earlier war novels, which often presented an inherently false image of armed conflict, are conspicuously absent.

John Cruickshank argues that works such as La Motte's, those written during the height of the First World War and soon after, relied on the mimetic presentation of event, on "witness and testimony," as a response to the Allies' propaganda war, which stressed the heroic role and mission of British, French, Belgian, and American soldiers (37). Later works on the war, written during the late 1920s and 1930s, are more concerned with the craft of fiction and, notes Cruickshank, are lacking in the "immediacy and authenticity" of the earlier "anti-war" novels (35). In other words, the earliest of these novels of "witness and testimony" tend to be all-inclusive, unrelentingly piling detail on unpleasant detail with little regard for the normal concerns of the novelist's craft such as character development, structure, and selectivity. At times, they verge on journalistic reporting, but in doing so convey a sense of accuracy in physical description lacking in works concerned with both developing fiction as art and presenting a factual portrayal of war as event. Thus, there is a development within the sub-genre of the war novel from narratives that are strongly mimetic and near-journalistic to more finely crafted works of fiction.

However, it would seem that at least some concern for the mimetic and historic representation of physical actuality is evident in all of

these war novels. What Cruickshank has observed is explicable in terms of degree: one common feature in the war narratives is an attempt to present fact, that is, physical reality, with fidelity. Authors, however, determined their re-creation of external or physical realities by the point of view, the perspective, they chose to employ. That choice would seem to have been dictated by the ideological concerns of the author, and even the reception accorded individual works seems to have been dependent on the ideologies of readers and critics.

Because of their underlying concern with mimesis and the literary re-creation of the Great War's actualities, however, the World War I novels play a significant role in literary history. They, especially the earliest of them--works of "witness and testimony"--represent a new combination of the fictional and the non-fictional. Their concern with the mimetic and the historic and their shift away from the romantic represent the emergence of a new literary form, which may not easily be defined or categorized. Thus, Truman Capote's boast of having created a new form, the "non-fiction" novel, is at the very least exaggerated. While the author of <u>In Cold Blood</u> may have devalued the journalist's prime goal of informing and, as William Wiegand observes, emphasized ". . . a whole battery of novelistic techniques which enforce the structure and hence meaning of the Clutter [murder] case," which served to promote the novelist's goals of "suggesting" and "extending," his was but the most sensational and evident later attempt to combine factual event with narrative fictional form (247). Capote's true predecessors are the anti-war novelists of the Great

n and perhaps none deserve to be recognized as such more than Ellen . La Motte and Henri Barbusse.

Ernest Hemingway said of Barbusse's most important novel, Le .eu, : Under Fire, that it was "the only good war book to come out during" ıe First World War and of Barbusse that he was the first to emonstrate ". . . that you could protest, in anything besides poetry, ıe gigantic useless slaughter and lack of even elemental intelligence n generalship . . . from 1915 through 1917" (Men at War xvi). Even ore than in the case of Ellen N. La Motte's The Backwash of War, enri Barbusse's Under Fire was a strident protest against World War I nd a tremendously controversial work. Published in late 1916 and ased on Barbusse's front-line experience between late 1914 and early 916, Under Fire sold nearly 250,000 copies by late 1918 (Cruickshank 9 n 201).[3] Quickly translated into English and other languages it nfluenced French, British, American and other writers. John Dos assos, for example, on February 18, 1918, wrote friend Rumsey Marvin:

> By the way get, in French if possible, Barbusse's Le Feu--"Under Fire" in English translation. It's the only good book the war has produced--as I see it--the only book that has any frankness or fervor of portrayal. (Fourteenth Chronicle 146)

specially in his first novel, One Man's Initiation--1917, Dos Passos ould find Under Fire a valuable resource.

Barbusse provides a graphic, unrelentingly brutal view of the attlefields of the First World War's Western Front, so graphic that

descriptions approach the macabre, as when Corporal Marchal describes the deaths of most of his squad:

> "Saturday night it was, at eleven o'clock. [Barbier] had the top of his back taken away by a shell, . . . cut off like a razor. Besse got a bit of shell that went clean through his belly and stomach. Barthélemy and Baubex got it in the head and neck. We passed the night skedaddling up and down the trench at full speed, to dodge the showers [of shrapnel]. And little Godefroy---did you know him?---middle of his body blown away. He was emptied of blood on the spot in an instant, like a bucket kicked over. Little as he was, it was remarkable how much blood he had, it made a stream at least fifty meters long." (49)

This passage, as with many of Barbusse's battle scenes, is calculated to depict the horror of war, but the depiction is relentlessly detailed for the purpose of bluntly and candidly informing the reader and eliciting both his or her sympathy for the embattled soldiers and revulsion of the war as event. "Little Godefroy---did you know him?" is addressed as much to Barbusse's reader as it is to his nameless narrator. Nor are such descriptions of the war's carnage isolated events in Barbusse's text; time after time, character after character is ruthlessly destroyed, and Barbusse spares his readers nothing. As Hemingway observed, Under Fire was a protest against the traditional heroic view of warfare, a view utilized by the French and other governments to placate and cajole civilians into continuing to support

the conflict, and a protest against the philosophy of a French military command that, with a motto of "everyone to the offensive," sent soldiers directly into machine gun fire armed with only rifle, bayonet, and élan.

However, Barbusse's novel is always based upon direct testimony, upon actual event, and so closely does the author adhere to the factual that some incidents appear, especially to readers not familiar with the more obscure events on the Western Front, to be fantastic. For Barbusse, the demands of accurate reporting have, in effect, forced him to abandon the novelist's concern for selectivity, a concern based upon the desire to avoid what appears to be improbable even though it be factual. Thus, in the last chapter of Under Fire, "The Dawn," Henri Barbusse's description of the flooded battlefield--"There are no more trenches; those canals are the trenches enshrouded. It is a universal flood" (332)--and the resulting truce between French and German soldiers, who discuss the war and propose solutions, seem to the uninformed an exercise in fantasy, a lapse into romance. But, as John Ellis makes clear in his study of World War I trench warfare, Eye-Deep in Hell, Barbusse has not deviated at all from fact: "In February 1915 in various parts of Flanders, both sides came into the open, and even met in no man's land, without any shots being fired because the trenches were completely flooded" (170). And although Barbusse ends Under Fire on a didactic note, an attack on nationalism--the author eventually became a communist and died in Moscow (King 43)--the prime emphasis throughout the novel is on the mimetic, on, in

ruickshank's phrase, "witness and testimony."

This same concern with the faithful rendition of actual experience ay be found in American fiction of the Great War, but it is specially evident in the earliest novels. John Dos Passos in his One an's Initiation--1917 and Thomas Boyd in his Through the Wheat are oncerned primarily with a mimetic presentation of physical reality nd actual occurrence, and that presentation often, as with Barbusse nd La Motte, entails a direct protest against the technological rutality of the First World War. With Dos Passos' second novel, Three oldiers, this concern with "witness and testimony" begins to change. lthough some elements of actual events are still present in the text, os Passos also attempted to construct a novel with elements of arrative art form, paying closer attention to traditional concerns uch as character development, structure, unity, and theme. By the ate 1920s and early 1930s, writers such as Ernest Hemingway in A arewell to Arms and William March in Company K, while still strongly otivated to anchor their narratives in experience, i.e., while still mploying mimesis as one of the concerns of their fiction, are also eenly aware of the demands of their craft. This awareness carries hem beyond the level of mere protest until, with Hemingway's A arewell to Arms, the literary tradition was left with a novel that uccessfully transcended the sub-genre of war literature.

What the following study proposes to do is a two-fold task: irst, to examine these selected novels--One Man's Initiation--1917, hrough the Wheat, Three Soldiers, Company K, and A Farewell to

Arms--in terms of their development from the near-journalistic narratives of "witness and testimony" of the early 1920s to the final, more carefully crafted war literature of the late 1920s and 1930s, and second, to explore the relationship between fact and fiction, the use of mimesis, evident in these works. Such an examination should provide insight into changes occurring in an important area of American literature in the period between the wars and reveal the manner in which mimesis became integrally important to literature decades before the "new non-fictional" novel was launched. Moreover, such an exploration of developing narrative technique and the use of mimesis in these novels has an abundance of materials on which to draw.

There have, of course, been other studies of the fiction of the Great War, the first of them appearing in the 1920s and others following with some regularity in every decade since, save perhaps for the 1940s when the world had yet another global conflict to divert its attention. Most of these critical works, however, are concerned with European First World War fiction; World War I literature in general; poetry, especially British poetry of the Great War; analysis of all twentieth-century American wars; or the World War I writings of one author. Perhaps the one study which has examined the American novel and its relationship to the Great War most closely is Stanley Cooperman's World War I and the American Novel. But Cooperman's approach is often superficial, and he neither examines the evolution of this fiction from its first near-journalistic beginnings to its final, polished form nor analyzes the relationship between actual

experience and its fictional presentation.

This is not to say that these critical works do not possess inherent value, both in general and as resources. Paul Fussell's The Great War and Modern Memory is essential to any understanding of the First World War; its literature, especially British literature; and the effect of the war on twentieth-century life. And general works, such as Wayne Miller's An Armed America: Its Face in Fiction, which covers American war literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and Jeffrey Walsh's American War Literature 1914 to Vietnam, provide insightful, although somewhat brief, commentary on individual novelists and the novels of World War I. Other more wide-ranging criticisms of twentieth-century literature such as Frederick Hoffman's The Twenties, Alfred Kazin's On Native Ground, and Maxwell Geismar's Writers in Crisis provide useful interpretations of the relationship among individual authors, their works, and the effects of World War I.

Moreover, there are studies in areas outside of literary criticism and literary history that furnish information on the Great War's effect on its participants and which may be used to explore literature's relationship to actual experience, including Eric Leed's No Man's Land, a study of war's effect on personality, and Denis Winter's Death's Men and John Ellis's Eye-Deep in Hell, both social histories of the First World War. General war histories are also useful in placing much of the war literature in context, and among the more helpful are those by Henry May, S.L.A. Marshall, René Albrecht-Carrié, Captain Liddell Hart, Laurence Stallings, and Keith Robbins.

If the Great War's effects on subsequent twentieth-century life are wide-ranging and ever present, perhaps none is more enduring than the way in which it has continued to be an object of interest in literature, history, psychology, and elsewhere since it ended more than seventy years ago.

The reasons for that enduring interest are based firmly on the awareness that the Great War is one of the pivotal events of the twentieth century, and to understand its influence and the divergent ways in which that influence has manifested itself, it is first necessary to consider the fundamental differences in the European and American war experience.

NOTES

[1] Since World War II involved more nations and combatants than e Great War, this decline in the amount of fiction might at first pear incongruous. But there are clear reasons for the second nflict's failure to equal the First World War as a subject for terature. One of these is the nature of World War II's final solution. It is doubtful that writing about the 1939–45 conflict uld have been much of a priority in the most devastated parts of rope and Asia, especially in the decade following the end of the r. It is also, of course, apparent that free literary inquiry was t prized, promoted, or, for that matter, tolerated in Stalinist ssia or those European nations under its control after the end of ie war. Thus, many potential writers must have been frustrated by conomic and political circumstances. However, another factor would eem to be that the Second World War was indeed the second; it was not novel human experience, as was the First World War. Particularly ong Americans, those soldiers entering the armed services in 1941 d early 1942 did so with a certain grim determination, an attitude iat was best revealed in the phrase "let's get the job done." This is far removed from the innocent idealism displayed in 1917 by the reat War's doughboys. Among writers who had been participants in rld War I, at least some of the incentive to produce works about it

springs from their disillusion once their ideals had been proven false. World War II soldiers, on the other hand, experienced less delusion, having been exposed from the beginning to the twentieth century's essential irony, as Paul Fussell notes, a product of the Great War itself (35).

[2] Willa Cather's One of Ours is another target of Cooperman's attack on sentimental war novelists, yet there appears to be at least some possibility that he has misread the novel. Throughout One of Ours, Cather's protagonist Claude Wheeler is portrayed as a victim, his potential, both intellectual and human, diminished by his family, his education, and his marriage. It seems at least possible that Claude's military service and eventual death in World War I are intended to provide the final step in this reduction of potential with Claude a victim--yet again--of the false, romanticized goals of the American war effort. This is certainly suggested by a passage near the end of the novel:

> One by one the heroes of that war, the men of dazzling soldiership, leave prematurely the world they have come back to . . . . one by one they quietly die by their own hand. . . . When Claude's mother hears of these things, she shudders and presses her hands tight over her breast. . . . She feels as if God had saved him from some horrible suffering, some horrible end. For . . . she thinks these slayers of themselves were all so like him; they were the ones who had hoped extravagantly,--who in order to do what

they did had to hope extravagantly, and to believe passionately. And they found they had hoped and believed too much. (390)

[3] That Under Fire should have been published at all during World I with the various governments imposing strict censorship on all lications, and with works such as Ellen N. La Motte's being banned, ears to be little short of miraculous. Albert Shinz, no great irer of Barbusse, suggested a possible explanation in his French erature of the Great War (1920): ". . . because the minister of the erior was then Malvy, who was later charged with treason; Malvy owed the book to pass. . ." (36). And Shinz adds that Malvy, whom menceau accused of spreading "defeatest" propaganda, was "found lty of holding communication with the enemy and sentenced to five rs' banishment" (36-37). Malvy's punishment was not terribly harsh ring a period when French soldiers and officers were shot for lling to seize objectives and "for to encourage the others."

CHAPTER II. BACKGROUNDS

The Great War has left a legacy that touches upon numerous areas of contemporary life, from language and metaphor--e.g., "lousy" from the louse infected soldiers of the war's trenches and "in the trenches" from its battlefields--to the boundaries and political ideologies of modern nation-states. Until 1917, for most Americans it was something occurring "over there," Europe's war and Europe's problem, and as a result, the American war experience differed markedly from the European. However, the First World War did profoundly affect American life, as it affected the rest of the world, and the soldiers and volunteers who fought and participated in it. What must now be examined is the difference between the European and American war experience, the legacy of the war in America, and the personal experiences of Thomas Boyd, John Dos Passos, William March, and Ernest Hemingway during the Great War.

Twentieth-Century Jihad

On the night of April 2, 1917, after Woodrow Wilson had delivered his war message to the American Congress--a message that would bring a declaration of war against Germany four days later--and after he had heard the cheers of first Congressmen and then onlookers on the return drive to the White House from Capitol Hill, the President turned to private secretary Joseph Tumulty and said, "Think of what it was they were applauding. . . . My message today was a message of death for our

young men. How strange it seems to applaud that" (Wilson's War 203). Wilson was, of course, right to question the act of applauding the entry of the United States into the First World War, and events would soon find his concern over the deaths of young American men well-founded. He was, in brief, an idealistic man in an idealistic era who had just taken the first steps to propel the United States into a most unidealistic conflict. However, the war experienced by Wilson's young men was not to be the same war known to Europeans, who at the time of the President's war message to Congress had already endured two years and eight months of conflict. For World War I, at least on the Western Front, was a war of three pronounced stages: a period of mobile, almost traditional warfare ending with the race to the sea between Allied and German troops in late 1914; a period of static, entrenched warfare from 1914 to early 1918, the classic trench war known best through war literature; and a final stage of movement which began in March 1918 with German attempts at a breakthrough and ended with the Armistice on November 11, 1918. America would, for the most part, only participate in the last of these three stages and thus be spared from the more brutal experiences of static trench warfare in Flanders and northern France, the Western Front.

Despite its popularity in fiction and history the Western Front was only one manifestation in this war, and it is important to note that World War I also encompassed other regional conflicts such as the Austrian-Italian "theatre"; the war with Russia on Germany's eastern front; war in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania; the Dardenelles

expedition; war in East Africa; naval warfare; and the desert warfare between Ottoman Turks and the British in Palestine and other areas of the middle east. As historian Keith Robbins notes in his The First World War: "Within the continental struggle were individual wars which had a momentum and intensity of their own and whose outcome was of more immediate significance than the outcome of the general war" (25). While World War I, for most Americans, would come to mean that conflict fought in Flanders and northern France at places like Belleau Wood and the Meuse-Argonne, a few volunteers and servicemen such as John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway experienced the conflict elsewhere, particularly in Italy in the case of these two writers.

The fact that the Great War did vary so greatly in both time and space creates differences within the fiction of those writers who experienced its varied aspects. And even when only the Western Front, the best known theatre of the war, is considered, there are fundamental differences between American and European views of the conflict: these include the initial response to war participation, the very nature of the war soldiers fought, and reasons for the sense of malaise that the war left in its wake, a sense of dis-ease that pervades much of the war fiction.

In August 1914, when Europeans flocked to their recruiters to be issued uniforms of khaki, field gray, and horizon blue, the view of the conflict that was held by the aspiring soldiery was based upon a romanticized, heroic concept of warfare. For the British, as Mark Girouard points out in The Return to Camelot, this view of warfare

:flected a deeply ingrained concept of a chivalric existence:

> "Fighting" was one of the most honourable words in the vocabulary. . . . The language of battle and of chivalry had been used to provide metaphors for every aspect of life; life was a battlefield on which a gentleman had to fight impure thoughts in himself, injustice or ignorance in others, "whatever was mean and unmanly and unrighteous in our little world." The approval attached to the metaphors almost inevitably attached itself to the basic meaning. Of course, the fight had to be for a good cause. (281)

he German invasion of Belgium provided Britons with their "good ause," and large numbers of young Englishmen, Scots, Ulstermen, and elshmen hurried into the ranks, being viewed by their admirers as ypes of latter day knights and expressing themselves in language hich might have come directly from Le Morte d' Arthur or Chanson de oland, as for example John Manners, killed in September 1914, xpressed it:

> Mon ame a Dieu
>
> Mon vie au Roi
>
> Mon coeur aux Dames
>
> Et honneur pour moi (Girouard 283)

It was, as Paul Fussell in his seminal The Great War and Modern Memory notes, an "essentially feudal language" (21). And, in Britain at any rate, where the code of heroic chivalry ran deep in the general population, those who hesitated to mount their chargers and gallop to

he rescue of "Little Belgium" could be and sometimes were awarded by oung women with a white feather for cowardice when they appeared in ublic in civilian dress (Marwick 50).[1]

Steeped in the tradition of heroic romance like the British, rench and German civilians and soldiers responded to the beginning of he war with a similar enthusiasm, born of a desire for change and dventure:

> . . . for many, it was the prospect of fighting . . . which held promise. Carl Zuckmayer, a German writer, had felt gloomy before 1914 at the prospect of his compulsory military service with the restriction and subordination it entailed. Now the army represented liberation from bourgeois narrowness and pettiness. It relieved him (and many of his young contemporaries) from worrying about the profession his parents expected him to follow. War contrasted with that stuffy and petrified world. Death could well lie at the end of the road but was only "the worst friend and enemy." In early August, German and French poets expressed their joy at leaving home, though they were fully aware that they might be killed within the month. For many of them there was an apocalyptic and transcendental dimension to what was impending. (Robbins 17)

For many of those young heroes, death might not have appeared so alluring if they had known in advance just what hideous forms it could and would take in the four years immediately ahead.

Although American soldiers entering the conflict nearly three ears later in 1917 often shared the desire for adventure evident in heir European counterparts, other elements entered into the typical iew of the conflict displayed by the Great War's "doughboys"; these ncluded an inherent innocence, ignorance, and idealism.

Most Americans in 1917 had very little idea of the nature of uropean civilization, and what ideas they did have were frequently rroneous. Stanley Cooperman comments on this element of the American haracter in World War I and the American Novel:

> The impact of World War I must be seen not only in terms of the military and political realities for which soldiers and civilians alike were unprepared, but in terms of a naïveté so profound as to require an act of retrospective imagination only a few decades afterward. It was a naïveté in which war for most Americans was defined by the Vera Cruz expedition or by the picnic exercises of the local militia and Fourth of July celebrations; it was a naïveté in which educated Americans viewed Europe as the united base of western civilization and uneducated Americans regarded it as a fascinating combination of immortal traditions and sexual sophistications, of proud aristocracy and colorful peasantry. (55)

or many of these soon-to-be disillusioned young Americans, the source f that disillusion would rest not only on the grim realiza- ion--although perhaps not as grim as that of the longer embattled

British, Belgians, French, Germans, Italians, and others--of modern warfare's true nature and scope, but also on a realization that the Europe they had come so idealistically to defend was not the Europe they had envisioned, just as their ideals would be assailed by the realization that the peace they had fought to win was not the peace they had envisioned.

American entry into the Great War and the prevailing mood which carried American troops over the Atlantic and on to the battlefields of northern France were based upon a deeply ingrained sense of idealism, what Henry May refers to as "practical idealism," the concept that key abstract values--truth, justice, the morally right--could be achieved and made part of human existence. When Woodrow Wilson on April 2, 1917, delivered his war message to Congress he did so largely because Germany had announced its intention to resume unrestricted submarine warfare and had in fact done so in February.[2] Wilson, whose views of warfare reflected the general "romantic" concepts of the nineteenth century and of the American "Genteel Tradition," was able to comprehend neither the Great War nor the specific problems faced by German U-boat commanders. In his war message, for example, the President stressed the inhumane nature of German submarine warfare:

> Vessels of every kind, whatever their flag, their character, their cargo, their destination, their errand, have been ruthlessly sent to the bottom without warning and without thought of help or mercy for those on board, the vessels of

friendly neutrals along with those of belligerents. (Wilson 462-63)

ɹever, it is difficult to see how the Germans could have failed to ıct against American sales of arms to Britain and France, particular- when the British blockade made it impossible for anything, including ı-military items and food, to reach Germany, or how Germans could ɜsibly have implemented the type of humane, discriminating naval ɾfare Wilson favored, particularly during a war in which British ɜsels frequently flew American colors as a form of protection ainst submarine attack (Simpson 40).[3] Ideally, in the traditional ew of warfare held by Woodrow Wilson, the submarine was to surface, low passengers and crew to escape, and then sink the vessel. Earlier the war, German submarines attempting this noble form of warfare d themselves been sunk, either by shells from hidden guns or through mming, by armed merchantmen. Thus, Wilson with his highly idealized ew of warfare was unable to cope with or comprehend the grim alities of the Great War.

Nor was this sense of idealism limited only to Woodrow Wilson; it s, as Henry May demonstrates a fundamental element of the pre-1917 erican "national character":

> The first and central article of faith in the national credo was, as it always had been, the reality, certainty, and eternity of moral values. Words like truth, justice, patriotism, unselfishness, and decency were used constantly, without embarrassment, and ordinarily without any suggestion

that their meaning might be only of a time and place. This central commitment entailed several corollaries, often stated and still more often taken for granted. First, most Americans were still certain that moral judgements applied with equal sureness in literature, art, politics, and all other areas. Second, it seemed clear that such judgements could be and must be applied not only to the conduct of individuals but also to the doings of trusts and labor unions, cities and nations. Finally, and this was perhaps the most often stated corollary of all, the United States, as the leader in moral progress, had a special responsibility for moral judgement, even of herself. (9-10)

h such a view of its moral mission built upon this "progressive" alism, it is not difficult to see how easily Woodrow Wilson could d a nation of reform-minded zealots into a war "to make the world e for democracy." What does contrast sharply, however, with this ile acceptance of abstract values is the post-war attitude found in rican letters, perhaps most strongly stated by Frederic Henry's en quoted comment in A Farewell to Arms:

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen

> nothing sacred, and things that were glorious had no glory, and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. (184-85)

timately, what the First World War was to do to Americans was to rry them, or at least the more perceptive of them, from the ogressive idealism described by May to the jaded disillusion pressed by Hemingway.

But in the heady days of spring and summer 1917, young Americans rried forth to defeat the Hun, and part of the reason for the thusiastic desire to achieve that victory rested upon what was until at time the world's most well-conceived and effective propaganda mpaign, one which was based on an understanding of the prevailing ral principles, high idealism, and inherent naïveté of the American aracter.

Beginning during the first months of the war, the Allies, and rticularly the British under Lord Northcliffe's direction, developed propaganda organization designed to justify the war and paint their emies as the most savage of barbarians:

> The war was made to appear one of defence against a menacing aggressor. The Kaiser was painted as a beast in human form. . . . The Germans were portrayed as only slightly better than . . . Genghis Khan, rapers of nuns, mutilators of children, and destroyers of civilization. Once the commitment to war had been made, an overwhelming majority of the nation's political and intellectual leaders joined this

propaganda campaign. (Knightley 82)

le every war has its share of atrocities--and the First World War ved no exception with a more than sufficient number of morally ious acts committed by soldiers from all the participating nations-- tales conjured up by Northcliffe and his capable staff exceeded thing probable or even readily imaginable. Popular tales included chopping off of Belgian male babies' hands to render them unfit future military service; the crucifixion of a Canadian soldier, or some versions an American nurse; and a German corpse factory where an bodies from the front were converted into nitrates for armaments. y of the atrocity stories were catalogued in the Bryce report lished in May 1915 shortly after the Lusitania sinking. They were quently circulated in the popular press and often emerged in eral different versions.

These tales and others were created less for the consumption of tish and Allied soldiers at the front, although they had some act there, than they were for the edification and persuasion of ilian populations and gullible neutrals, particularly Americans. ton Rascoe in a 1939 Saturday Review of Literature article "What y Read During the Last War" clarifies how the British propaganda ort was organized in the United States:

> . . . the activities of Wellington House [the British propaganda ministry], through its luxurious hospitality to distinguished American writers, whom they entertained and took on visits to the front, through its contacts with

> Americans of all degrees by author-lecturers, and through the ingratiating correspondence carried on by Wellington House writers with the 250,000 American names Sir Gilbert Parker and his aides culled from Who's Who in America and through all the other subtle appeals to American emotions and direct appeals to American passions (with the atrocity stories embodied in the Bryce report) were to have their ultimate effect. . . . (4)

In fact, the initial reaction to such atrocity tales by the American press was primarily to ignore or debunk them, but thanks to the steady efforts of the British propagandists when war with Germany did occur such tales were immediately resurrected and widely circulated (Ponsonby 130-31). The end result of this effort was to create in the minds of most American soldiers, at least initially, and many civilians a view of the Great War and America's part in it as a holy war, a veritable jihad. On one hand, there were the invading armies of vicious "Huns," or "Boche," murdering, raping, mutilating, and plundering their way across the landscape of Belgium and northern France. Opposed to them were the forces of light, truth, honor, justice, and, after April 6, 1917, the American Way, engaged in a veritable crusade, fighting for the morally right. This aspect of the war was often expressed by clergymen who either directly from their pulpits or in the United States among the Creel Commission's army (the American version of Northcliffe's propaganda machine) of some 75,000 "four minute speakers" thundered against the barbaric Hun and fed the wave of anti-German

hysteria sweeping the nation; as Stanley Cooperman notes, ". . . Jesus was dressed in khaki by clergymen who pictured the Savior as joyfully firing machine guns against the Hosts of Darkness. . ." (20-21).

The eventual exposure of the war fables as fables in the twenties would serve to deepen the sense of disillusion experienced by knowledgeable Americans. But perhaps their most damning contribution to post-World War I events was the measure of skepticism the atrocity tales later created among sophisticated persons who, remembering them, refused to believe or to accept the stories about World War II's very real atrocities, or as Paul Fussell notes:

> No one can calculate the number of Jews who died in the Second War because of the ridicule during the twenties and thirties of Allied propaganda about Belgian nuns violated and children sadistically used. (316)

The Great War's influence continued, and continues, after it in a myriad of forms.

In the summer of 1917, however, American and British transports carried company after company of Americans east across the Atlantic to France where they found a war different from what they had envisioned and yet also different from that experienced by their European counterparts. For by 1917, the European combatants had nearly exhausted themselves: to the point, in what would be one of the war's best kept secrets (Wilson's War 209), French soldiers in the summer of that year deserted their trenches and mutinied:

> All at once the French poilu had enough of letting himself

> be marched into German machine gun fire pour la patrie. Infantry regiments refused to attack. Red flags appeared. Military police ordered to suppress the mutinies were savagely slaughtered. In one camp behind the lines they hung gendarmes on the meathooks in the abattoir. (Wilsons' War 209)

The immediate cause for the French army's summer mutiny in 1917 was General Nivelle's suicidal attack on the German-held Chemin des Dames. The more important cause was the massive bloodletting in which French, British, Belgian, Colonial, Russian, Austrian, German, and other soldiers had participated since the end of mobile warfare in late 1914. From that time until March 1918 the embattled nations were involved in a mutual exchange of bloodshed fought out of the troglodyte world of the trenches where "victories" were measured in terms of meters, or at best a few kilometers, and paid for with millions--perhaps ten millions--of lives.

For the British, French, Belgians, and Germans the year 1915 had seen the disaster of the Dardanelles, the battle of Loos, and the second battle of Ypres where on April 22, 1915, Germany introduced the use of poison gas, failing to achieve a permanent breakthrough only because of a lack of reserves and the German troops' own fear of the chlorine gas (Liddell Hart 179-80). The apogee of the Great War's brutal warfare, however, was reached in 1916 in two battles which sapped the strength of all the contending armies: Verdun and the Somme.

More than one World War I historian has referred to Verdun as "the meat grinder," and for good reason. The total number of casual-

ties suffered by the German and French troops who fought it between February and December 1916 has been placed, by various authorities, at between six hundred thousand and one and a quarter million. Most of these dead and wounded died or were maimed because that was the sole intent of the general who planned the battle, Erich von Falkenhayn:

> Falkenhayn's memorandum made military history. Never through the ages had any great commander or strategist proposed to vanguish an enemy by gradually bleeding him to death. The macabreness, the unpleasantness of its very imagery could only have emerged from, and was symptomatic of, that Great War, where in their callousness, leaders could regard human lives as mere corpuscles. (Horne 36)

The German Field Marshall's stated objective was to force the French into a battle and then "bleed them white," and he intentionally kept, at least in the early months of the battle, his own commanders from receiving sufficient reserve troops to achieve a final victory. Yet what Falkenhayn refused to recognize was that while France bled, Germany hemorrhaged. At Verdun, there were no winners, but the battlefield carnage created by thousands of concentrated artillery pieces, by machine guns, by grenades and rifles created a scene that, while often approached in other sectors of the Western Front, perhaps surpassed them all in its fundamental barbarity:

> One of the first things that struck troops fresh to the Verdun battlefield was the fearful stench of putrefaction, "so disgusting that it almost gives a certain charm to the

odour of gas shells." The British never thought their allies were as tidy about burying their dead as they might be, but under the non-stop shelling at Verdun an attempt at burial not infrequently resulted in two more corpses to dispose of. It was safer to wrap the dead up in canvas and simply roll them over the parapet into the large shell-hole in the vicinity. There were few of these in which did not float some ghastly, stinking fragment of humanity. On the Right Bank several gullies were dubbed, with good cause, "La Ravine de La Mort," by the French. Such a one, though most of it in French hands, was enfiladed by a German machine gun at each end, which exacted a steady toll. Day after day, the German heavies pounded the corpses in this gully, until they were quartered, and requartered. . . .

As the weather grew warmer and the numbers of dead multiplied, the horror reached new peaks. The compressed area of the battlefield became an open cemetery in which every square foot contained some decomposed piece of flesh. . . . (Horne 175-76)

For good reason, Verdun is the best remembered battle of the Great War. However, on July 1, 1916, the British under Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig in an attempt to relieve the embattled French at Verdun, managed to imitate its horrors on the Somme.

On that day, Haig--of whom Dos Passos wrote, "an innocent godly man, no new idea was ever allowed to penetrate his head" (Wilson's War

191)--ordered the British army into an attack that resulted in sixty thousand casualties, one third of them dead, in the first twenty-four hours of the battle alone. As Keith Robbins observes, the battle could have--and should have--been called off at once, but Haig continued his attack, gaining very little in terms of territory, until mid-November when combined British, French, and German casualties totaled another million men (56-57).[5]

Such activity in what Dos Passos called "the mincing machine" was missed by the majority of American soldiers--there were, of course, scattered American volunteers in the Allied Armies and support services from the start of the war--whose primary battle experience was limited to the last few months of the conflict. And these few months differed greatly from what had preceded them in terms of the nature of warfare.

From mid-March through May 1918, the Germans, with their strength swollen by the shifting of divisions from their eastern front where Russia had withdrawn from the Great War following Lenin's October Revolution, launched a series of concentrated attacks against the British and French positions in Flanders and northern France. German General Erich Ludendorff, who was in many ways the intellectual equivalent of Britain's Haig, envisioned first an attack on the British at the Somme sector employing masses of troops "taking the tactical line of least resistance" and rolling Douglas Haig's forces back against the English Channel coast (Liddell Hart 368-69). This attack and two others first launched as diversions for the first, but later expanded into full offensives, met with astonishing early

success. The third of these offensives, struck between Soissons and Reims, resulted in the Second Battle of the Marne, threatened Paris for the first time since 1914, and also saw the first concentrated action by American troops at Château Thierry (Robbins 75-76). The very success of Ludendorff's triple offensives proved Germany's undoing since it proved impossible to maintain their momentum and as Liddell Hart observes: "[Ludendorff] had . . . pressed each too far and too long, so using up his own reserves. . ." (374). Germany, in short, exhausted itself with its spring 1918 offensives. But what this unexpected and unprecedented rapid movement of troops had done--along with Allied use of tanks on August 8 ("The Black Day of the German Army") on the Somme battlefield--was to restore the factor of movement to the war after more than three years of static trench warfare. Thus, American troops on the Western Front saw their first and only real military action, discounting some minor tours in quiet sectors during the previous fall and winter, in a fluid war of relatively quick action and sizeable shifts in territory.[6] And this relatively limited and, in a sense, atypical experience would affect the American reaction to the Great War itself.

For Europeans, the Great War began as a heroic adventure, an opportunity to leave the mundane civilian world and participate in battle for King, patrie, or Fatherland. For Americans the challenge of World War I was far greater: it was an opportunity to instruct the world on the moral precepts of democracy and American idealism. Ultimately, the participants in the First World War, European and

American, emerged from the conflict profoundly disillusioned of their pre-war ideals and desire for adventure. But the basis of that disillusion was not the same for Americans as it was for Europeans.

Particularly among those French, German, and British war novelists and writers who had served between 1914 and 1918, the prime sense of moral, emotional and psychological disaffection, the angst, displayed in their works arose out of the conflict itself, out of the sense of having lived through an experience, as at Verdun or on the Somme, that effectively removed them from their past lives and separated them from non-combatants forever, possessed as they became of a deeper, and foreboding, knowledge of man's capacity for organized evil. Thus, Erich Maria Remarque in All Quiet on the Western Front wrote:

> Today we would pass through the scenes of our youth like travelers. We are burnt up by hard facts; like tradesmen we understand distinctions, and like butchers, necessities. We are no longer untroubled--we are indifferent. We might exist there; but should we really live there?
>
> We are forlorn like children, and experienced like old men, we are crude and sorrowful and superficial--I believe we are lost. (122-23)

Moreover, Remarque's psychological state is mirrored by other Europeans; in a sense, using Falkenhayn's phrase, even those Europeans who had survived the war had been "bled white." René Albrecht-Carrié in his The Meaning of the First World War also notes this sense of permanent, and unwelcomed, change in Europe as a whole: "However

strong the wish to return to the past . . . clearly too much had happened that . . . it was impossible to ignore or deny" (140).

For Americans, whose war experience had been so brief and so comparatively mild when compared to the Europeans, the source of disillusion, while perhaps influenced to some degree by awareness gained on the battlefields of Flanders, northern France, and elsewhere, was caused by the peace itself: it came into being in the mirrored halls of Versailles. And what emerged for Americans was the belief that they had been intentionally misled, cruelly used:

> In Keynes' favorite words, which he applied to Wilson, the American people had been "bamboozled," and a long roster of scapegoats was discovered to share the guilt of having taken advantage of well-intentioned and idealistic American innocence. There were the native dark forces, epitomized in such figures as J.P. Morgan and his foreign loans, the "merchants of death" callously making gain from cannon fodder . . . , or alternatively the lies of foreign propaganda; all had combined to take advantage of American trust. (Albrecht-Carrié 138)

For the United States, as a nation, this sense of betrayal meant a return to isolation--and a rejection of Woodrow Wilson's beloved League of Nations, perhaps one of the last manifestations of "pragmatic idealism."

It is, therefore, no accident that in American poet Ezra Pound's Hugh Selwyn Mauberley the disillusion springs not from the grim

reality of battle but from "old men's lies":

> Died some, pro patria
>
> non "dulce" non "et decor". . .
>
> Walked eye-deep in hell
>
> believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving
>
> came home, home to a lie,
>
> home to many deceits,
>
> home to old lies and new infamy;
>
> usury age-old and age-thick
>
> and liars in public places.

This sense of having been used, and of the inadequacies of the idealism of an older generation, was to create several fundamental changes in how American war veterans, and non-veterans as well, responded to the post-war world.

Aftereffects of the War

In The Dial of January 3, 1918, Robert Herrick, who in 1929 would earn a degree of infamous immortality by attacking A Farewell to Arms as a "dirty" book, made a penetrating observation on the probable effects of World War I:

> We cannot think as we once thought, we cannot feel as we once felt, we cannot plan as we once planned. We shall know that we have passed into a new world of self-consciousness, and for good or ill the doors of the old world are closed upon us--forever. . . . [The war] will pass into our hearts

> and souls. And then the war, having got under our skins, having become part of the national consciousness, must inevitably pass into our literature as the larger, the more absorbing part of ourselves. (8)

It is, of course, doubtful that Herrick had any idea of the form that the Great War would take once it passed into the national consciousness and national literature; his response to A Farewell to Arms indicates he was not ultimately particularly pleased with it. But pass it did, and its legacy was soon evident in areas of American life as diverse as greatly changed social mores, responses to technological innovation, and division within the American literary "community."

One of the Great War's most evident effects was the revolution in social mores that it helped to create in the 1920s, with that decade's prohibition, cheap gin, flappers, and promiscuous sex. An era of social unrest, post-war life in America stood in sharp contrast to the Victorian morals which guided and guarded public propriety before 1914. The war may not have been the sole cause of this moral revolution--the popularity of Freudian psychology and newly won women's rights, too, played a part--but it was undoubtedly a major contributor, as Frederick Lewis Allen observes:

> A whole generation had been infected by the eat-drink-and-be-merry-for-tomorrow-we-die spirit which accompanied the departure of the soldiers to the training camps and the fighting front. There had been an epidemic not only of abrupt war marriages, but of less conventional liaisons. In

> France, two million men had found themselves very close to filth and annihilation and very far from the American moral code and its defenders; prostitution had followed the flag, and willing mademoiselles from Armentières had been plentiful; American girls sent over as nurses and war workers had come under the influence of continental manners and standards without being subject to the rigid protections thrown about their continental sisters of the respectable classes; and there had been a very widespread and very natural breakdown of traditional restraints and reticences and taboos. It was impossible for this generation to return unchanged when the ordeal was over. Some of them had acquired under the pressure of war-time conditions a new code which seemed to them quite defensible; millions of them had been provided with an emotional stimulant from which it was not easy to taper off. Their torn nerves craved the anodynes of speed, excitement, and passion. (78)

The fascination with passion, excitement, and alcohol, of course, did not end--despite the best efforts of conservative clergy and legislatures like Ohio's, Virginia's, and Utah's which attempted to legislate hem lengths and decolletage (Allen 77)--until the stock market crash of 1929 trumpeted the end of the Jazz Age. Before then, it played a part in the literature of the 1920s.

Of course, there had been movements such as that represented by Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis before the Great War calling for a new

literature that was essentially more candid and more honest in depicting human experience than had been the case during the days of the Genteel Tradition. The Great War with its liberalizing effect on morals and manners intensified this development and helped to create an audience for authors who weren't afraid of damaging William Dean Howells' school girl. Malcolm Cowley in his Exile's Return lists full equality for women in all things and the principle of carpe diem as among the new ideals of the Bohemians in Greenwich Village in the 1920s. And F. Scott Fitzgerald not only chronicled this particular facet of the war's legacy in works such as This Side of Paradise, but at times with his wife Zelda seemed to embody it. Examples in literature abound with James Joyce's candid depiction of sexual and psychological realism as demonstrated by Leopold and Molly Bloom in Ulysses the most notable. Nor, of course, were such graphic representations of life in art made without the opposition of the guardians of public morality, trained in the traditions of Victorian prudery. The conflict between artistic honesty and the guardians of public propriety continued through the twenties and continues to the present.

And at times in the twenties, considerations of the response of lingering Victorian prudery continued to affect art. For example, Hemingway and Max Perkins carried on a lengthy debate over "proper" language in A Farewell to Arms before its publication:

> Bridges [editor of Scribner's Magazine where the novel first appeared] would not allow balls, cocksucker, fuck, Jesus Christ, shit, son of a bitch, whore, or whorehound to appear

> in the magazine. . . . Perkins, working under Scribner policy, put back Jesus Christ, son of a bitch, whore, whorehound [in the hardover edition]. The other words were still too strong for the public in 1929. (Reynolds First War 72)

lowever, even without the problem of language, A Farewell to Arms does lemonstrate something of the effect of the Great War on social and sexual mores, even if it only does so in terms of the basic relation-ship between Catherine and Frederic Henry. And the new morality of the .920s would also seem to be a theme in other works by Hemingway during :he post-war period, as for example in "Soldier's Home." In this short story, it would seem that at least part of the reason for Krebs' liscontent is the conflict between new and pre-war morality, with its emphasis on those girls of such a "nice pattern": for Krebs, fresh from Europe, a nice but not the right pattern.

The Great War's influence, however, did not end with changes in American morality; it affected other behaviors and other attitudes as well. The relationship between literature and industrialism has always been an uneasy one, as Leo Marx has demonstrated in The Machine in the Garden, but the First World War added new dimensions to the triadic relationship of man, technology, and literature. Prior to 1914, advances in technology had been met with general enthusiasm. Electrici-ty, the telephone, automobiles, and airplanes had recently appeared and had begun to revolutionize human existence. The war revealed another more shocking aspect of technology and science: automobiles

became camions, tanks, and ambulances, airplanes dropped bombs. The whole war became, in short, a nightmare of technology gone mad:

> Of all the factors that had contributed to the education of the novices of 1914, obviously none was more fundamental--for both sides--than the sickening effect that the new weapons of the industrial revolution had on the bodies of men. It was bad enough to be wounded at all, but at least a bullet was a relatively clean agent. If you were hit by either a rifle or machine gun, the chances were that either you were killed outright, or eventually you returned to life more or less in one piece. However . . . bullet wounds were in the minority; the greater part of casualties were caused by the terrible effects of shell fire. . . . In the First War the crude iron of the shells . . . shattered into huge ragged chunks that sometimes two men would be unable to lift. The effect on the soft human carapace of impact with these whirling fragments may be imagined. . . . (Horne 65)

If bombs, machine gun bullets, and artillery shells weren't sufficient to impress World War I's soldiers with the dangers and murderous efficacy of science then poison gases and flame throwers also were available to add emphasis to the lesson. Thus, it is not surprising that the literature of the twenties should express doubt as to the benefits of science. Elmer Rice's expressionist play of 1923, The Adding Machine, appears to do just this when the protagonist "Zero," threatened by replacement with an adding machine, reacts by killing

"the Boss." Similar responses to and questioning of the wisdom of unchecked industrialism proliferated in the 1920s:

> Several writers predicted that man would finally be destroyed by the monster he had created. In 1925 and 1926 a little magazine called The Pilgrims Almanach appeared in New York; its object was to point out the deterioration of the human personality in an age of machinery and industry. "Our minds are so contaminated by the consciousness of utility," the magazine editorialized in its fourth issue, "that we cannot grasp the ideal motives of the men of the past who laid the groundwork for our civilization, simply because their conception of life was so much nobler than ours." (Hoffman 301)

Of course, such deep-seated distrust of technology was not new to American culture or to American literature: Hank Morgan's bloody destruction of Arthurian England at the end of A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court suggests the same concern with the question of man's psychological stability and ability to control his innovations. Yet, with the Great War, this distrust of industrialism and science as expressed in literature increased in intensity and has remained a source of concern since 1918, as Joseph Wood Krutch illustrated in an article published in the 1960s: ". . . the man of lett[illegible] . . . believes that the scientist sometimes denies or forgets . . . that science exists to serve man, not man to serve science" (201).

In addition to introducing a new code of morality and intensify-

ing suspicions over the benefits of technology, World War I also, as Robert Herrick suggested it would in early 1918, "passed into our literature." Its effects there were not as benign as Herrick and others of his generation had hoped and expected them to be. For the Great War serves as a watershed between two American generations, dividing the Genteel Tradition in literature, the writings of the older generation of authors such as William Dean Howells, from the new post-war literary generation of the 1920s, represented by the works of Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, and others. At least a portion of the reason for the division arose because of the older writers' unfailing support in their writings and elsewhere of the Great War and their advocacy of it as moral, idealistic crusade. Writers such as Henry James, who had expressed his dismay at America's unwillingness to aid the allies in 1915 by becoming a British subject; Edith Wharton, who in two novels, The Marne and A Son at the Front, had described the war as a crusade to save noble, democratic France; and Willa Cather, whose One Of Ours was widely--and perhaps mistakenly--seen as supporting the war, had been, or were perceived as, loud advocates of the crusade against the dark forces of the Hun. Since they were necessarily only distant spectators to the war's brutal actuality because of age or gender, these writers often presented descriptions of combat lacking in verisimilitude. Ernest Hemingway, for example, was offended by Willa Cather's battle scene in One of Ours: "Do you know where it came from? The battle scene in Birth of a Nation. . . . Poor woman, she had to get her war experience somewhere"

(Wilson, Shores 118).

After the war, in the general re-examination of the conflict and its causes in which many writers and intellectuals participated, the older writers lost a good deal of their appeal and their credibility. Charles Fenton in "A Literary Fracture of World War I" observes this effect of the war and ascribes it to ". . . the extraordinary willingness of the older writers to lend their prestige and talent to the most bloodthirsty and archaic aspects of the war" (119). Fenton also notes that the older generation of writers, members for the most part of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, failed to keep pace with the changing tastes of American readers, and were for the most part, because of their Victorian morality and own lack of then contemporary experience, unable to do so: ". . . it is also true that the subsequent professional opportunities of the post-war period, necessarily restricted in large part to the younger writers, made the war in retrospect an equally painful dislocation for the senior generation" (119). It was this failure to adapt to the new era, along with the decline of the idealism which they had advocated so strongly, that led to a rapid eclipse of the reputations of writers such as Hamlin Garland, Booth Tarkington, Bliss Perry, and others.[7] Instead of turning to them and their works as models for emulation, the new generation of the 1920s, including Hemingway, Lewis, and Fitzgerald, looked to writers outside the then literary mainstream, such as Theodore Dreiser, Robert Frost, and Edgar Lee Masters, and to writers from America's literary past who had previously been ignored, to

Twain, Melville, Whitman, and Dickinson (Fenton "Fracture" 131). This change in literary influence produced effects not only in the direction American literature developed after the Great War, but in the manner in which what was historically significant in American literature was perceived, i.e., in what would become the emphasis for study within American academic life.

But the greatest legacy of the Great War to the 1920s and beyond--one which perhaps served to divide the pre- and post-war generations of Americans and of American writers more than any other--is the basic, philosophical question of purpose in human existence which it served to emphasize. Until August 1914, the majority of humankind could and did believe in a steady improvement in human affairs, in a progress toward something that could be defined as simply as a "better tomorrow." For some, this included the idea that something provided purpose and direction in human affairs. But, as Paul Fussell notes, this belief and hope was severely damaged on the battlefields of the war: ". . . the Great War was perhaps the last to be conceived as taking place within a seamless, purposeful 'history' involving a coherent stream of time running from past through present to future" (21). With its maimings and horrid deaths, the Great War cast the idea of progress in human affairs into permanent doubt; if progress brought only death and violence and increased oppression, what good was it, and what--if anything--controlled human destiny? Much of the twentieth century's tragic tone or angst, a feature of much that has been written in the last seventy years, was conceived in

August 1914 and born, paradoxically enough--and ironic paradox is one of its manifestations--at places like Verdun, the Somme, the Meuse-Argonne, and Caporetto. At places such as these, Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Boyd, William March, and John Dos Passos encountered and acquired modern man's sense of angst.

Ambulance Drivers and Marines

For idealistic young Americans from April 1917 to November 11, 1918, and even earlier for some volunteers, the Great War represented a glorious opportunity for both adventure and the advancement of American idealism. And although the United States, like the other embattled nations, employed conscription in procuring a large portion of the two million souls who eventually made their way to the battlefields of Europe, an extremely large number of volunteers, many of whom circumvented personal physical limitations, made their way into, if not the American Expeditionary Force, then into support agencies such as the ambulance service and the Red Cross, or even foreign military organizations. For some this desire to serve, based apparently on both idealism and a wish not to miss what at the time appeared to be the new century's greatest spectacle, predates America's entry into the First World War. As just one example among many, poet Alan Seeger served with the French Foreign Legion from almost the beginning of the war until he romantically kept his "rendezvous with death" on the Somme in 1916. Even more glamorous than Seeger's death at the hands of German machine gunners, the fledgling French Air

Force's Escadrille Lafayette, originally the Escadrille Américaine until pressure from American isolationists forced a name change, was formed in April 1916 and at first consisted of only seven American pilots under the command of two French officers (Horne 209). Ground-mired foot soldiers watched the antics of the Lafayette Squadron and other Allied and German flyers with envy; the air war was the one component of the Great War which retained its aura of chivalry and adventure until the very end. However, one of the greatest attractions for American volunteers was the ambulance service.

The Norton, the Harjes (later combined), and the American Ambulance Field Service were all formed in 1914 and 1915 by private benefactors wishing to ease the suffering of the French wounded, and they almost immediately attracted a host of eager, young Americans anxious to alleviate suffering and see the war from the driver's seat of a Fiat or a Ford. These American volunteers in the various ambulance services were highly idealistic and, for the most part, highly educated, at least by the World War I era's standards. Charles A. Fenton in his "Ambulance Drivers in France and Italy: 1914-1918" notes that Harvard led in number of volunteers with 325 and Yale followed with 187; most American universities contributed at least a few such volunteers, while even college preparatory and military schools were represented among the ambulance drivers (337-38). Among these individuals, there were also a large number of aspiring writers--it seems that virtually all the drivers kept diaries--some of whom would in the post-war world achieve various degrees of fame in

literature, criticism, and poetry. Among those so destined were E. E. Cummings, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, Malcolm Cowley, and a few lesser lights such as Harry Crosby and Robert Hillyer. As Fenton observes, in the disillusioned 1930s it was fashionable to deprecate the war efforts of the ambulance men, and their particular duties did leave them in a strangely spectatorial role, usually living better than common infantry men while enjoying officers' privileges and a fair degree of safety. Guy Emerson Bowerman, Jr., a twenty-year-old Yale freshman when he volunteered for the Army's Ambulance Service in 1917, displayed this curiously detached air of the uninvolved bystander when he wrote in his diary on July 18, 1918, describing a group of Allied soldiers being shelled: "As [the men] crouch behind a wall or tree and then run wildly across the open spaces they look like nothing I can think of, but it so unnatural that one cannot help but believe that he is at a movie" (118). For his part, Bowerman did find that his sense of active involvement increased as the war grew hotter, and Charles Fenton observes that nearly eight hundred former Field Service men ". . . received commissions in aviation, infantry, artillery, or other branches" thus increasing their degree of participation and carrying the spirit of volunteerism to higher levels (335). For writers such as Dos Passos and Hemingway, the ambulance service provided an opportunity to both participate in the Great War and gain experience which they would, to varying degrees, apply to fiction.

John Dos Passos, the illegitimate son of New York attorney John Randolph Dos Passos and Lucy Madison, was born in 1896; his parents

married after the death of the senior Dos Passos' first wife. Educated at a series of boarding schools, the future novelist entered Harvard in 1912 and graduated, after his mother's death in 1915, with the class of 1916. He sailed to Europe in October 1916 to study architecture in Madrid after being dissuaded by his father from immediately joining the Norton-Harjes ambulance unit. The death of the senior Dos Passos in February 1917 removed the future novelist from all parental control and left him free to follow his first inclination in the summer of 1917.

After training with the Norton-Harjes ambulance unit near Paris, John Dos Passos' section was transferred to a small village near Verdun, just in time for the Allied offensive in that sector in 1917. This experience in mid-August constituted Dos Passos' initiation to war, and as he revealed in a letter on August 23 to friend Rumsey Marvin, his impressions of that initiation were hardly favorable:

> The war is utter damn nonsense---a vast cancer fed by lies and self-seeking malignity on the part of those who don't do the fighting.
>
> Of all the things in this world a government is the thing least worth fighting for.
>
> None of the poor devils whose mangled bodies I take to the hospital in my ambulance really give a damn about any of the aims of this ridiculous affair---They fight because they are too cowardly and too unimaginative not to see which way they ought to turn their guns--

> For God's sake . . . everything said and written and thought in America about the war is lies--God! They choke one like poison gas-- (Fourteenth Chronicle 92)

Obviously, while the experiences which were to form the basis of One Man's Initiation--1917 and, to a lesser degree, Three Soldiers were being lived, Dos Passos was already formulating attitudes which would lead him to support the extreme left in the 1930s, the beginning of an ideological metamorphosis that would find him championing Barry Goldwater in 1964.

In mid-November 1917 Dos Passos and his unit of the Norton-Harjes drivers were transferred to Italy for service with the American Red Cross. There he wrote a letter to a Spanish friend, very much in the same vein as that to Rumsey Marvin. Intercepted, this letter led authorities to view the future writer as being pro-German in sentiment, and when his enlistment expired in June 1918, Dos Passos had to return to Paris to defend himself and his beliefs. It could not have been much of a defense since the final verdict was that he be given the choice of either being deported or voluntarily returning to America. He returned, sailing for the United States on August 12 and on the voyage finished what was to become One Man's Initiation--1917 (Fourteenth Chronicle 84-85). Therefore, this is a novel written during and immediately after Dos Passos had confronted the Great War. Published by Allen and Unwin in London in 1920, One Man's Initiation sold the disappointing total of sixty-three copies in its first six months (Fourteenth Chronicle 205). It was and remains a disappointing

text in terms of its aesthetic merits, but it very clearly demonstrates the mimetic use of the war as an event in fiction.

For his part, Dos Passos, on arriving back in the United States immediately enlisted in the Army Medical Corps, was shipped back to France, and in March 1919, like John Andrews in Three Soldiers, was released to attend classes at the Sorbonne.

Brief and undistinguished as John Dos Passos' war experience was, it did nevertheless affect him deeply, as John Rohrkemper observed in a 1984 article:

> Not only did he publish the first important war novel by a combatant, but he also made the war the recurring thread that was to weave through his entire career. Dos Passos wrote four books about the war [One Man's Initiation--1917, Three Soldiers, 1919, and Mr. Wilson's War]. . . . It would be a mistake to explain this interest merely as the desire to use the war as a vehicle or backdrop; for Dos Passos the war always served as an important touchstone. He viewed the war as the most momentous event of his time, remarking many years afterward [in a 1962 NBC television broadcast] that "the 19th century came to an end in August 1914" and that a new era, one filled with "a great deal of evil," began with the war. (38)

This same deep and abiding influence by the Great War may be observed in the case of fellow ambulance driver and Dos Passos' friend--there is some slight evidence the two may have met briefly in 1918 in Italy

(Pizer 111)--Ernest Hemingway.

With the possible exception of William Faulkner, no American author of the twentieth century has been the object of as much critical attention as Hemingway, and the general outline of his life, from his birth in Oak Park to his death in 1961, is too well known to bear yet another repetition. However, thanks in large part to Hemingway's tendency to re-invent, to exaggerate, his own past and his own exploits--and perhaps as well to a tendency on the part of some early critics to fail to distinguish between the Hemingway fictional protagonists and their creator--only recently has an accurate record of Hemingway's experiences in the First World War begun to emerge. About all that was clearly established for decades was what the author of A Farewell to Arms told Malcolm Cowley in 1948: "In the first war I was hurt very badly in the body, mind, and spirit, and also morally. The true gen 's I was hurt bad all the way through, and I was truly spooked at the end" ("Hemingway" 112). Despite his tendency to exaggerate and mislead critics, it is now evident Hemingway suffered, physically and very probably emotionally, as a result of his experiences on the Piave and in Milan during 1918. However, the difficulty remains in determining the exact nature of those wounds and how precisely they were acquired.

One thing that is strikingly evident about Ernest Hemingway's war experience in Italy during the summer of 1918 is that it was distressingly brief: distressing for both Hemingway and those critics who insisted the experiences of Frederic Henry in A Farewell to Arms

were based on the author's own in Italy. Hemingway arrived in Italy in June 1918 and spent a short period of two weeks or so driving an ambulance in the Dolomites near Schio--a region so far removed from actual combat it was known as the "Schio Country Club" (Apprenticeship 57). Unhappy with this non-combative and safe duty, he transferred to a Red Cross canteen at Fossalta, a village on the Piave River. There while in the trenches on July 8, 1918, most accounts agree, he was struck by a mortar shell while handing out chocolate, cigarettes, and other equally prosaic items to Italian troops (Oldsey 43). Despite the best efforts of critics, who were misled by tales conjured up by the author himself, such as Charles Fenton and the editors at Scribner's to place him with Italian troops in October 1918, this incident effectively terminated Hemingway's direct experience of Great War combat. However, the wounding also carries a certain amount of heroic myth, or at least uncertainty.

Numerous accounts have the badly wounded Hemingway lifting an equally badly wounded Italian soldier to his back and making his way to a first aid station. Whether in fact he did so seems to be at least questionable. The fact that he was decorated by the Italian government has been used to support the account of the wounded Italian, but Robert W. Lewis observes in "Hemingway in Italy: Making It Up" that unlike other Red Cross workers who were honored for acts of valor by the Italians, ". . . Hemingway's experience was not written up and not immediately recognized by the decorations that were commonly if not casually awarded to the Americans" (215). Hemingway, in fact, did not

receive his citations until long after the event, the Silver Medal of Military Valor in 1920, and as Robert Lewis notes, there was little unusual about the two military awards the young man did receive: ". . . the silver medal was awarded to all soldiers who were wounded, and . . . the war cross . . . to all who were engaged in action in the war. . ." ("Hemingway in Italy" 224). Nowhere in the official Italian reports does there appear to be any mention of that wounded Italian infantryman, supposedly carried by the mortar-blasted Hemingway--they speak only of "generous assistance"--and his existence seems to depend chiefly on a letter Hemingway wrote to his parents describing the mortar incident and his wounds more than a month after the event. One of the central problems in separating biographical fact from invented experience in the case of Ernest Hemingway during the war and immediately after is the author's tendency to spin yarns. Michael Reynolds in his The Young Hemingway refers to this as Hemingway's ability to modify his experience to fit the moment: "In 1919, the age demanded heroes, and if his experience did not quite fit the mold, then Hemingway would expand a bit here and there until it did fit" (21). What this strongly resembles, as has often been noted, is the experience of Krebs in Hemingway's "Soldier's Home." In order to be listened to Krebs has to lie: "His lies were quite unimportant lies and consisted in attributing to himself things other men had seen, done, or heard of, and stating as facts certain apocryphal incidents familiar to all soldiers" (Short Stories 146).

Even the exact nature of the young writer-to-be's wounds remains

somewhat mysterious with most critics solemnly accepting the account Hemingway wrote home on August 18, 1918, from his hospital bed in Milan:

> The 227 wounds I got from the trench mortar didn't hurt a bit at the time, only when my feet felt like I had rubber boots full of water on. Hot water. And my knee cap was acting queer. The machine gun bullet just felt like a sharp smack on my leg with an icy snowball. However it spilled me. But I got up again and got my wounded into the dug out. (Selected Letters 14)

Later in the same letter, Hemingway describes himself as having carried his Italian soldier one hundred and fifty yards ". . . with both knees [only one was mentioned previously] shot through and my right shoe punctured in two places." The entire incident seems to be well on the way, only a little over a month after it occurred, to becoming an old soldier's yarn.[8]

What the incident did without any doubt do was to propel the almost twenty-year-old Ernest into a Milan hospital bed, and the--perhaps reluctant--arms of Agnes von Kurowsky. Von Kurowsky has been assumed by Henry Villard and others to be the model for Catherine Barkley of A Farewell to Arms, but several critics, including Reynolds, suggest Catherine is a composite containing elements of other women in addition to Agnes such as Hemingway's first and second wives, Hadley Richardson and Pauline Pfeiffer. The generally accepted view until recently has been that von Kurowsky was a reluctant participant in this seemingly harmless flirtation and Hemingway the ardent pursuer.

Lending credence to this view, in 1974 Agnes told Henry Villard, himself a fellow patient with Hemingway at Milan's American Red Cross Hospital in 1918, she ". . . had never been _that_ kind of a girl" ("In a World War I Hospital" 92).

However, Agnes von Kurowsky's war diary and her letters to Hemingway were published by Villard and James Nagel in October 1989 and suggest that while she may very well not have been "_that_ kind of a girl," the attraction between Agnes and Ernest was a good deal more mutual than hitherto revealed by Agnes, who told Michael Reynolds she misled Hemingway into believing she would marry him to save him from being corrupted in Europe. Reynolds, to his credit, found the explanation "almost too self-sacrificing" (_First War_ 207). The first indication of any mutual attraction is noted in a diary entry for Monday, August 26, 1918:

> Ernest Hemingway is getting earnest. He was talking last night of what might be if he was 26-28. In some ways---at some times--I wish very much that he was. He is adorable and we are very congenial in every way. I'm getting so confused in my heart and mind I don't know how I'll end up. (_In Love and War_ 72-73)

In mid-October, Agnes was reassigned during an influenza epidemic, and her letters to Hemingway contain a degree of romantic commitment guaranteed to shock those critics who thought they knew the limits of this romance:

October 21-22 [1918]

> Miss Jessup thinks that you are merely an infatuated youth, whom I allow to write me, and I've let her think so--for reasons of state. You must never think I am ashamed of you. Why, some times I'm so proud of you, and the fact that you love me, that I want to blurt it all out, and just have to hold on tight, so it won't get out. That is our war-sacrifice, bambino mio, to keep our secrets to ourselves--but, so long as you have no secrets from me, and I have none from you (at least, I can't think of anything you don't know already) why, we should worry about whether the old world knows. And I'm afraid the world doesn't understand everything anyhow, and would make very harsh criticisms. But dopo la guerra [after the war]--we should worry about criticism. . . . Peace is going to mean a lot more to us than it did when we first came over, n'est-ce-pas? (In Love and War 107-08)

If the content of these letters weren't available to convince a reader that Agnes von Kurowsky did indeed have some emotional attachment to Ernest Hemingway in the autumn and winter of 1918, then their salutations--"Kid, My Kid" [Hemingway's nickname], "Ernie, my dearest," "Ernie, my darling"--and their closings--"Yours only," "Yours very securely," "Yours, Mrs. Kid"--would be sufficient.

But, by early March 1919, the romance was over, and the letter Agnes von Kurowsky sent Hemingway, who had returned to the United States in January, must have cut deeply:

> So Kid (still Kid to me, and always will be) can you forgive me some day for unwittingly deceiving you? You know I'm not really bad, and don't mean to do wrong, and now I realize it was my fault in the beginning you cared for me, and regret it from the bottom of my heart. But, I am now and always will be too old, and that's the truth, and I can't get away from the fact that you're just a boy--a kid. (In Love and War 163)

The closing on this letter, by the way, is "Ever admiringly and fondly, Your Friend." The reason for this change of heart was that Agnes had fallen in love with an Italian officer she expected to marry, but didn't. Hemingway, for his part, didn't take rejection well, writing Elsie MacDonald, according to Henry Villard, ". . . that he had hoped Agnes would stumble and break all her front teeth when she stepped off the boat in New York" (In Love and War 44). As to the degree of intimacy between them, despite the warm tone of Agnes' letters--Hemingway's to her were destroyed--James Nagel is probably correct when he suggests that both Ernest and Agnes were sexual innocents, still at this time adhering to a soon to be obsolete code of Victorian morality (In Love and War 261).

Thus, Hemingway in his nine-month tour of the war in Italy, only six days of which were spent under what might properly be called combat conditions, experienced two shattering woundings, one physical and one emotional. At least to some extent, they would reappear in his fiction in different guises. If experience does indeed teach, then

Italy for Hemingway had proven a highly instructive tour of duty, as Michael Reynolds has observed:

> From the Italian war he brought back a pistol and a bottle of kummel shaped like a bear: authentic trophies. In his damaged leg he still carried bits of metal, equally authentic. If the war had not been so glorious as advertised, its true experience was still instructional: the whores in the government brothels who teased him for blushing; the taste of grappa; the faces of men bleeding to death; the sound of in-coming artillery; the blue eyes of a nurse; the smell of his own blood; the way dead bodies bloated in the sun. In less than a year he had become a charter member of modern times. (Young Hemingway 31)

And Reynolds might have added that for the next decade, Ernest Hemingway would use those experiences in several short stories and one fine novel that very much helped to define the period between the world wars.

However, not all the volunteers who streamed across the Atlantic occupied the driver's seat of a Fiat or a Ford ambulance; some of them, anxious to experience the adventure of the First World War more directly, to serve American idealism more completely, simply enlisted in combat units, the United States Army, the Navy, or the Marines. Such was the case with Thomas Boyd and William March, whose experiences during the Great War are so nearly identical it almost seems

possible that they could have met on the battlefields of northern France.

Thomas Boyd is a shadowy figure. The author of four biographies, five novels, and a collection of short stories in a brief twelve year career, he has been the subject of very little criticism.[9] Yet, his first novel, Through the Wheat, was once called ". . . probably the most authentic novel yet written by an American about the war" by Edmund Wilson (Bruccoli 276). His life was nearly as brief as it is unexamined.

Born in Defiance, Ohio, in 1898, Boyd left high school before graduation to fight with the Marines in the Great War, or as he phrased it in an autobiographical note written shortly before his death in 1935:

> When I was eighteen, I volunteered in the Marines and was with the Second Divison A.E.F., of which the Marines were a part, from the time it was formed until I was put out of action on October 6, 1918, at Blanc Mont by a gas shell. (Wilson Bulletin 170)

Boyd's military experience prior to Blanc Mont included actions at Verdun (not to be confused with the French-German slaughter of 1916), Belleau Wood, Soisson, and St. Mihiel. At Belleau Wood, he earned the Croix de Guerre (Vecchi 81). It was, in effect, the typical American doughboy's experience, the abbreviated chain of battles fought by the American Expeditionary Force in 1918. It is also the same chain of battles that William Hicks, the protagonist of Through the Wheat, is

involved in.

After leaving the army in 1919, Boyd worked for the St. Paul Daily News in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was also a part-owner of the Kilmarnock Bookstore at Fourth and Minnesota in the same city, and there sometime in the early 1920s he met F. Scott Fitzgerald. It was Fitzgerald who convinced Max Perkins at Scribner's to re-examine the already rejected manuscript of Through the Wheat and thus both salvaged and launched Boyd's literary career (Vecchi 81-82).

Yet it seems that Fitzgerald did not hold a particularly warm personal view of Boyd or a particularly high regard for his literary talents, as one of the few articles on the nearly forgotten author--J. Albert Robbins' "Fitzgerald and the Simple Inarticulate Farmer"--makes abundantly apparent:

> As you know despite my admiration for Through the Wheat, I haven't an enormous faith in Thomas Boyd either as a personality or an artist--as I have, say, in E. E. Cummings and Hemminway [sic]. His ignorance, his presumptuous intolerance, and his careless grossness which he cultivates for vitality as a man might nurse along a dandelion with the hope it would turn out to be an onion, have always annoyed me. (366)

If Fitzgerald's assessment of Boyd's talent in this letter written to Max Perkins in 1925 was correct, it is perhaps not surprising that with the exception of his World War I literature, Boyd and his works have largely vanished from literary memory.

Thomas Boyd wasn't around very long to annoy F. Scott Fitzgerald, personally or artistically. After moving to Vermont and running unsuccessfully as a communist candidate for governor of that state in 1934, he collapsed and, very shortly after, died of an apparent cerebral hemorrhage in early 1935 while on a trip to see his publisher in New York.

William March enjoys a somewhat greater literary reputation than Thomas Boyd, although he published about the same amount of literature. One reason for this is that in the 1970s March criticism underwent a small regional revival in the south, particularly in Alabama.[10] The revival was not unwarranted: March, especially in his later works, developed into a gifted writer.

The name March was a nom de plume adopted by the writer, William Edward Campbell, from his mother's maiden name. The son of an Alabama lumberman, March left school at fourteen, although he later attended a business college, spent a year at Valparaiso University in Indiana, and worked in a Mobile, Alabama, law office. Like Thomas Boyd, in 1917, March joined the Marines and fought in the same series of battles: Verdun, Château Thierry, Belleau Woods, Soissons, and Blanc Mo . And like Boyd, he received the Croix de Guerre, but he also was aw ded a Distinguished Service Cross and Navy Cross. March seems to have quickly been disillusioned of his idealism and any heroic misconceptions about war, writing his family from occupied Germany in 1919 ". . . that he had seen things too hard to forget" and informing them on his return ". . . that the first thing the front line knocks out of

a man is his conceit--war deals in elementals" (Going 432-33). As a result of his war experiences he also suffered a life-long series of psychological problems (Simmonds, "William March" 191).

After the war, March became an officer in the Waterman Steamship Company, spending much of his time in first New York and then briefly London. In 1933, he published his first novel, Company K, which it seems may very well be based upon some of those "things too hard to forget." After 1938, William March devoted himself entirely to his writing, living in New York until 1952 when he moved to New Orleans, dying there in 1954. In addition to Company K and about seventy short stories, many of them set during World War I, March wrote five other novels. Two of these, The Looking Glass (1943) and The Bad Seed (1954), were especially well received (Simmonds "William March" 192-93).

Dos Passos, Boyd, March, and Hemingway each experienced the Great War in 1917-1918, but their exposure to the physical actualities of combat and the grimmer aspects of the conflict varied greatly. The fiction that they produced reflects their personal experiences, but it does so to varying degrees. The very first war novels, Dos Passos' One Man's Initiation--1917 and Boyd's Through the Wheat, tend to be works based closely on autobiographical experiences, examples of "witness and testimony." With Dos Passos' Three Soldiers in 1923, the emphasis begins to shift; although some autobiographical elements are present, greater concern for traditional elements of narrative, i.e., character, structure, and theme, is apparent. By the end of the 1920s and in the early 1930s, novels such as Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms and March's

Company K, while still seeking to present the war realistically, in mimetic terms, are also concerned with achieving artistic quality. Rather than being simple journalistic accounts or protests against the Great War, they strive to be works of literary art. It is this development which must next be examined.

NOTES

[1] Male/female attitudes toward the Great War provide an interesting area of study and contrast. Those British women handing out feathers for cowardice to young men soon created a good deal of hostility in the men who accepted the challenge and rushed off to Flanders, northern France, and elsewhere for the glorious opportunity to die. One problem stemmed from the indiscriminate nature of such "featherings." Denis Winter notes in Death's Men that "Fitzclarence, leader of the Worcesters in their crucial bayonet charge at Gheluvelt during Ist Ypres, was presented with a white feather on his next home leave while in civvies" (167).

Another female/male area of contention concerned the question of social advancement. While British and other men fought and died in the trenches, women rushed into areas of employment, in war and other industries, that had previously not employed them, often at highly inflated wages. As Sandra M. Gilbert notes in a 1983 article in Signs, many women dreaded the end of the war, and it had a profound effect on women's roles in the twentieth century: "Nothing would ever be the same again. But no war would ever function, either, the way this Great War had, as a battle of the sexes which initiated 'the first hour in history for the women of the world'" (449).

[2] While Germany's resumption of unlimited submarine warfare was

the immediate cause of the United States' entry into the war--and the German high command knew how their actions would be received by the American government--the other great catalyst for America's declaration was the incredibly stupid Zimmerman telegram, which was exposed by the American press in March 1917 and which revealed a plot to embroil the United States in a war with Mexico should Germany find itself at war with the former. This incident is explored most completely in Barbara Tuchman's The Zimmerman Telegram.

[3] A number of questions, moral and otherwise, arise over the use of submarine warfare by Germany during World War I. One of the strangest cases, of course, is the Lusitania sinking in 1915, as Stanley Cooperman observes:

> Shortly before the sinking, for example, Sir Edward Grey asked Colonel House [Woodrow Wilson's personal envoy] what would happen if an "ocean liner" were sent to the bottom. "A flame of indignation would sweep across America which would in itself carry us into the war," Colonel House replied. The sinking of the Lusitania, then, had been envisioned before the event. The liner herself was carrying six million rounds of small-arms ammunition; German warnings, and the repeated pleas of men like Bryan that a ship carrying countraband should not rely upon passengers to protect her from attack were ignored. And the course of the Lusitania was most peculiar: completely without convoy protection, she made no use of the zigzag, which by then had become standard for

ships in enemy waters, but hugged areas which were known to be favorites for German submarines. (17)

nerica did erupt in "a flame of indignation," but Woodrow Wilson's eclaration of being "too proud to fight" (Teddy Roosevelt wasn't) and erman renunciation of unlimited submarine warfare halted the crisis. rofessional military men responded differently than the politicians, owever, and British Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher wrote German dmiral von Tirpitz--the two carried on a secret correspondence--on arch 29, 1916, "I don't blame you for the submarine business; I'd ave done exactly the same myself" (Simpson 18).

[4] Fussell treats some of these tales as myths developed in the renches by soldiers who romanticized the events around them. Perhaps n the case of the crucified Canadian (or whomever), Fussell's argument hat the myth grew out of the ". . . insistent visual realities of the ront," i.e., that the tale was based on soldiers' distant or obscured ightings of crucifixion cavalries erected at Belgian and French rossroads, carries some weight (117-18). Yet it would appear a istinction should be made between those tales manufactured "out of hole cloth" by Northcliffe's writers and widely believed fables such s the Golden Virgin on the Basilica at Albert whose fall was thought o indicate the end of the war, or the identity of the eventual winner.

The author of The Great War and Modern Memory also may be istaken when he states, ". . . no one knows who it was who contrived he German Corpse-Rendering Works, or Tallow Factory" (116). John Dos assos in Mr. Wilson's War, only one of several writers on the war who

as noted the birth of this particular atrocity story, observes:

> General Charteris, a British intelligence officer in France, snipped off the caption of a German photograph of dead horses being taken to a rendering plant and pasted it on a photograph of a trainload of human corpses being removed from the front for burial. The German explanation that the word kadaveren [sic] in their language only referred to animal corpses made no impression on the Allied press. (126)

5 One feature of the Great War is its simple lack of competent commanding generals. Only a few stand out as having possessed anything more than the right family or personal connections. Among the Germans, only Hoffman who engineered the early victory at Tannenberg appears to have been capable. The French, after experimenting with a host of failures, found two reasonably competent commanders in Petain, who was disgraced during World War II, and Foch. Pershing, for the Americans, at least according to the testimony presented by Laurence Stallings in The Doughboys, was far more aware of events and in control of actions than any of his colleagues or enemies.

6 In addition to the ultimate failure caused by the initial success of Ludendorff's spring 1918 offensives, German Major Hermann von Gierhl in a 1922 article published in the Infantry Journal suggests another explanation for German collapse in 1918:

> . . . influenza broke out in the form of an army epidemic in May--a disease which was usually harmless at its first appearance, but nevertheless weakened the soldiers and

rendered them incapable of fighting for about a fortnight. The epidemic raged with such severity that the number of men absent at one time from a single division often amounted to from 1,000 to 2,000. (146)

And if this disease weren't enough to reduce the fighting effectiveness of German troops in 1918, malnutrition, shortages, and the much reduced quality of manpower--many of Germany's finest troops lay dead at places like Verdun--were.

[7] Not every American writer or every American intellectual subscribed to America's idealistic mission in World War I. War fever burned hottest in New England and cooled markedly westward from the Atlantic. Certainly one voice of restraint was that of Randolph Bourne who in June 1917 attacked the wave of hysteria sweeping the nation and his fellow intellectuals who "have identified themselves with the least democratic forces in American life," adding "idealism should be kept for what is ideal" (5, 8).

[8] Hemingway in later wars did actively, perhaps too actively, pursue what appears to be heroic and dangerous action. William S. White in his autobiography, The Making of a Journalist, describes an incident in which Hemingway and his "Guerrillas, perhaps a dozen French youths . . . put into American fatigues and armed with American weapons," attacked three German tanks during the Second World War:

> At one point in this zany but rather sticky affair, Hemingway went up to a French colonel and tried to tell him that the Hemingway Guerrillas, who were operating on the

division's right flank, had spotted three German tanks hulking behind an abandoned airdome just up the road. The colonel grandly and preemptorily waved Hemingway aside. Whereupon Hemingway and his guerrillas broke off to their right, shortly put a bazooka into action and knocked out at least one German tank. I did not see what happened to the other two, and I never later asked Hemingway about them. (115-16)

[9] Boyd's works include four novels in addition to Through the heat. These were The Dark Cloud (1924), about the American revolution; Samuel Drummond (1925), on the life-style of American farmers rom the mid-1800s to the 1920s; Shadow of the Long Knives (1928), a istorical romance; and In Time of Peace (1935), a sequel to Through he Wheat. Point of Honor (1925) is a collection of short stories, any of them about World War I. The biographies include Simon Girty, he White Savage (1928); Mad Anthony Wayne (1929); Light-horse Harry ee (1931); and Poor John Fitch, Inventor of the Steamboat (1935).

[10] Particularly valuable as a source for March criticism is Roy . Simmonds' "A William March Checklist" published in the Mississippi uarterly, volume 28, Fall 1975: 461-88. Simmonds appears to be one of he more prolific March critics.

CHAPTER III. LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE WAR NOVELS

The first American novels based on World War I and written by participants in the conflict tended like the narratives of La Motte and Barbusse to be near-journalistic renditions of autobiographic experience. Their primary concern was with reporting the war as event, with telling the "truth" as their veteran-authors had experienced and perceived it. In one of the first of the Great War's narratives of "witness and testimony," Under Fire, Henri Barbusse's nameless writer-narrator reveals his purpose in response to a question from the poilu Barque: ". . . I shall talk about you, and about the boys, and about our life" (174). He also promises to put "the big words [i.e., candid language] in their place . . . for they're the truth" (175). Thus, for Barbusse and early American writers on the First World War such as John Dos Passos and Thomas Boyd, the most important element of their war literature is its reporting of the war as event, the mimetic re-creation of their personal experience in narrative. While this concern necessarily restricts development of plot and character, it also greatly limits the point of view in these early war narratives, and one aspect of the American World War I novels as a whole involves the evolution of point of view from the simple, direct perspective of the single protagonist of works such as John Dos Passos' One Man's Initiation--1917 to infinitely more complex perspectives in the works of William March and Ernest Hemingway.

John Dos Passos' second novel on the Great War, Three Soldiers, is a transitional work in the evolution of American war fiction from near-journalistic accounts of witness and testimony to the more finely

crafted works of fiction written in the late 1920's and early 1930's. In Three Soldiers, Dos Passos began to go beyond the mimetic use of experience and develop more carefully polished narrative techniques evident in his use of plot, character, and more complex point of view. By 1929, with works such as Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms, the war novel demonstrates fully polished literary craftsmanship; Hemingway's novel manages to transcend the war fiction sub-genre and become something more complex, more broad in its appeal, and more enduring. This development in the American war novel may be illustrated through an examination of the war novels written by John Dos Passos, Thomas Boyd, William March, and Ernest Hemingway.

Novels of Witness and Testimony

Writing in the introduction of his 1942 collection of war prose, Men at War, Ernest Hemingway observed of John Dos Passos' Three Soldiers that the novel, ". . . written under the influence of Barbusse, was the first attempt at a realistic book about the war written by an American," adding "in spite of its great merit . . . it did not stand up" (xvi). Hemingway was correct in his assessment of Barbusse's influence on John Dos Passos' early fiction, but the faults he believed were apparent in Three Soldiers could more properly have been ascribed to Dos Passos' first novel, One Man's Initiation--1917, which, published in 1920, a year before Three Soldiers, was the actual first attempt at a "realistic"--and Hemingway appears to use this term in the sense of a work demonstrating verisimilitude--World War I novel

by an American. For, like Barbusse's Under Fire, One Man's Initiation--1917 clearly was, in addition to a very evident publishing failure, a narrative of "witness and testimony," written by Dos Passos during his ambulance service in Europe and immediately after. As such, this first novel shares both the virtues and vices of other works of witness and testimony noted by John Cruickshank in his Variations on Catastrophe: while such works may provide a sense of "immediacy" and "conviction" and may because of their concern for describing explicit detail and inclusiveness in narrating events provide a sense of physical actuality, their degree of literary craftsmanship is limited, their mastery of the basic techniques of the novelist underdeveloped (43). The failure to endure as literature, to "stand up," that Hemingway thought he detected in Three Soldiers would seem to result from this failure in artistic craftsmanship and also would seem more properly to apply to such texts as One Man's Initiation--1917 and Thomas Boyd's World War I novel Through the Wheat.

If works of witness and testimony do not, in fact, succeed in displaying literary craftsmanship, it should be possible to first ascertain their dependence on actual experience, the source of evidence for the author-witness, and secondly how they function, or do not function, in terms of basic narrative techniques: plot, character, point of view, and thematic content.

Writing about One Man's Initiation--1917, Joseph Warren Beach in his American Fiction: 1920-1940 commented: "One suspects that the name Martin Howe is almost the only fictitious feature of the book" (29). A

comparison of the novel with Dos Passos' letters and diary in The Fourteenth Chronicle finds Beach's suspicions well-founded. In fact, the correlation between events recorded in the diary and letters and incidents in One Man's Initiation--1917 make it apparent that the former, at least at times, must have served as a resource for the latter. In Chapter I of the novel, for example, Dos Passos interpolates a song into his narrative. While the first impression on the reader is that this is a forerunner of the "newsreel" technique the author was to develop at greater length in the U.S.A. trilogy, an examination of the diary reveals the same song, recorded as an entry for June 20, 1917, when young Dos Passos was on the Atlantic steaming for France:

> La traversée--smoking room crap games. Singing. Champagne--
>
> "For we're bound for the Hamburg show to
>
> see the elephant and the wild kangaroo"
>
> "God help Kaiser Bill
>
> God help Kaiser Bill
>
> Oh old Uncle Sam,
>
> He's got the infantry
>
> He's got the cavalry
>
> He's got the artillery. . .
>
> Then by God we'll all go to Germany
>
> And God help Kaiser Bill."

(Fourteenth Chronicle 85)

This direct correspondence between the autobiographical record and

"fictional" narrative occurs frequently.

One of the more important scenes in One Man's Initiation--1917, for example, involves the narrative's protagonist Martin Howe sitting in a garden drinking wine with a schoolmaster and his wife as truckloads of French soldiers on their way to the front thunder by, bringing to Martin's mind the word "tumbrils" and causing the schoolmaster's wife to remark, "Oh the poor children! . . . they know they are going to death" (31). A letter to Rumsey Marvin, who was Dos Passos' chief correspondent during this time period, reveals precisely where this scene originated:

August 29 [1917]

> The first night we were sitting in a tiny garden--the sort of miniature garden that a stroke of a sorcerer's wand would transmute into a Versailles without changing any of its main features--talking to the schoolmaster and his wife; who were feeding us white wine and apologizing for the fact that they had no cake. The garden was just beside the road, and through the railing we began to see them pass. For some reason we were all so excited we could hardly speak--Imagine the tumbrils in the Great Revolution--The men were drunk and desperate, shouting screaming jokes, spilling wine over each other--or else asleep with ghoulish dust-powdered faces. The old schoolmaster kept saying in his precise voice--"Ah, ce n'était pas comme ça en 1916. . . . Il y avait du discipline. Il y avait du discipline."

> And his wife--a charming redfaced old lady with a kitten under her arm kept crying out:
>
> "Mais que voulez vous? Les pauvres petits, ils savent qu'ils vont à la mort"--I shall never forget that "ils savent qu'ils vont à la mort"--(Fourteenth Chronicle 97)

Obviously, John Dos Passos did not forget the phrase "they know they are going to death" when he wrote his first novel nor any part of this incident. And it seems, as Joseph Warren Beach observed, that the entire novel rests upon this re-creation of actual experience, upon mimesis. Yet the obvious question is what does this approach, this near-journalistic recording of witnessed event, do to the novel in terms of its plot, character, and theme?

One Man's Initiation--1917 has not aroused the admiration of many critics, at least as an example of the novelist's craft. It is an inexpert first novel based solely on Dos Passos' personal experience, and its mastery of some aspects of narrative technique is weak. Charles Winston Joyner, in an unpublished dissertation, says of it:

> As a novel it is virtually plotless. It lacks the conventional beginning, middle, and end of the novel of its day; rather it is unified by thematic movement from shipboard to Paris to the battlefield, from gas attacks to a Gothic abbey, from scenes of beauty to scenes of carnage to discussions of politics. (101-02)

Its plot as "thematic movement" may thus be seen as a rendition of what was the typical experience for thousands of American volunteer

ambulance drivers. Their war consisted of the voyage to France, training, a cycle of rest and movement into front-line duty, and leave--often in Paris. Beyond that, ambulance driver Martin Howe's experiences consist of a series of vignettes of chance encounters with persons demonstrating a wide range of responses to the war, with incidents which expose him to the brutality and ultimate senselessness of the Great War, and finally to a grand discussion--done very much in the same manner as that employed by Barbusse in the last chapter of Under Fire where German and French soldiers discuss the conflict and ways to end it--between individual French proponents of various ideologies: Catholicism, communism, anarchism, and an anti-intellectual fourth character, Dubois, who suggests that only the common people have the courage and the means to end the conflict. In the last chapter, these four Frenchmen, who have been portrayed as the hope of the future, are killed in battle, and the novel ends on a note of despair.

In place of plot in One Man's Initiation--1917, John Dos Passos used a series of startling contrasts, sharp juxtapositions between scenes of beauty, often pastoral beauty--the use of color and sparse description in the novel is at times reminiscent of imagist poetry--and grotesque descriptions of war's events. These juxtapositions often are extremely abrupt and result in a lack of continuity as the novel rapidly shifts from scene to scene:

> At the end of the woods the sun rises golden into a cloudless sky, and on the grassy slope of the valley sheep

and a herd of little donkeys are feeding, looking up with quietly moving jaws as the ambulance, smelling of blood and filthy sweat-soaked clothes, rattles by.

Black night. All through the woods along the road squatting mortars spit yellow flame. Constant throbbing of denotations. (90)

Of course, one of the common themes in the literature of the Great War, whether in poetry or in fiction, is that of the opposition between nature and men at war, either in terms of nature's indifference to the human condition or of technological warfare's corruption or destruction of nature, and some of Dos Passos' juxtapositions are obviously designed to stress both elements of this theme. But the author of One Man's Initiation--1917 uses this type of juxtaposition in other settings with other pairings of the light and carefree versus the dark and tragic as well. Linda Wagner comments that Dos Passos frequently sets the "physical horror of war" against the propagandistic views perpetrated in the media and popular culture as well as other themes and symbols with peaceful connotations; thus in the second chapter, flowers, representing love, being sold by an old woman, are juxtaposed with a disfigured soldier who has had his nose shot away (12-13). The irony is, of course, blatantly apparent in that the disfigured soldier is now beyond any hope of romantic love. This clash of opposites is presented in other ways in the novel as well, including its use of symbolism. Jeffrey Walsh notes that one common symbol in World War I literature is the destruction of a chateau by

enemy artillery fire (American War Literature 35). It represents the destruction of art, one of civilization's mainstays, by technology gone mad. Dos Passos employs this symbol as well, although he substitutes an abbey for the chateau, but in One Man's Initiation--1917, the German shelling is justified: the abbey functions as an observation post and has an ammunition dump in its cellar. Thus, art is the victim in this case not simply of insane technology but of the insanity of war (One Man's 48-50).

Such use of symbols and incongruous pairings in a narrative which moves with a nearly total lack of continuity from scene to scene is obviously far removed from any traditional concept of plot in narrative. However, as Scholes and Kellogg observe, it may be exactly what is to be expected from a mimetic narrative:

> The ultimate form of mimetic plot is the "slice of life," virtually an "unplot." The naturalistic novelists often aimed at this kind of form, but its achievement really carries narrative into the domain of the sociologist . . . powerful, vivid, and truer to the facts of life than any made-up narrative can hope to be. (232)

Thus, Charles Joyner's observation that One Man's Initiation--1917 is "virtually plotless" is quite accurate, but given the type of work it is, a narrative of witness and testimony, it is at least a justifiable structure for the work. For that matter, Joyner's concern with a traditional beginning, middle, and end in Dos Passos' first novel is misplaced: subsequent developments in twentieth-century fiction suggest

that in this one area, at least, Dos Passos anticipated later innovations in the novel genre's treatment of plot. Moreover, as the novel's mimetic nature dictates its "unplot," so does it restrict development of character.

One Man's Initiation--1917 has two important characters, the protagonist Martin Howe and his friend and confidant Tom Randolph. Howe provides the work's point of view: what the reader sees is what Howe sees, and the only thoughts revealed are those of Howe. But as a character, Martin Howe has limitations. Maxwell Geismar in Writers in Crisis says of him:

> Martin is not so much rebelling against the war as by his temperament he seems insulated from it. He seems hardly to participate in those basic human activities for which even a young poet, we should imagine, should feel some common desire. There is little effort on Martin's part, indeed, just to ignore the world around him. He is exempt from its demands; his natural role is that of passive remoteness. (92)

Moreover, Martin is a passive, remote observer, or a spectator, in the same manner that the young men who saw the war from the driver's seat of a Ford or Fiat ambulance were spectators, observing and recording but only incidentally involved. For these young men, the war was nearly a form of entertainment, something to be distantly observed, but not directly experienced. As Malcolm Cowley observed, ". . . ambulance service had a lesson of its own: it instilled into us what might be called a spectatorial attitude" (Exile's Return 38). Martin

Howe is very much what Cowley and Dos Passos were; he is passive and remote because that is what the Great War's ambulance men quickly became, watching the twentieth-century's greatest show like ring-side onlookers. Dos Passos' insistence on restricting his perspective to Martin severely limits the narrative's ability to introduce any elements of the Great War other than those normally observed by the ambulance drivers of the Western Front. The restricted point of view leads to a certain flatness of character in the novel, to a narrow concern with distantly observed objective data, and a limited concept of war's "truth." However, Martin also has one other limiting characteristic: he exhibits no growth, no dynamic development.

In most World War I novels, the initiation of the main character involves a movement from innocence to awareness: a growth process that takes place very much in the manner of the Bildungsroman--a young man achieves maturity after acquiring greater knowledge through exposure to war. In Howe's case, however, he exhibits no growth, for when he is first introduced in One Man's Initiation--1917, he is already nearly complete; he, in fact, possesses mature wisdom that serves to set him off. Thus, Martin can respond with a proper degree of mature incredulity to the propagandistic war-mongering of a young woman on shipboard in the first chapter:

> She beamed at him provocatively. "Oh if only I was a man, I'd have shouldered my gun the first day; indeed I would."
>
> "But the issues were hardly . . . defined then," ventured Martin.

"They didn't need to be. I hate those brutes. I've always hated the Germans, their language, their country, everything about them. And now that they've done such frightful things. . ."

"I wonder if it's all true. . ." (13)

In a sense, Martin doesn't need an initiation; his experiences throughout the novel only serve to confirm what he already suspects. Alfred Kazin in On Native Ground maintains that this quality, which he sees as a form of sophistication, is positive, that Dos Passos' early protagonists are "never taken in" (343). Yet, in the case of Martin Howe, it would seem at least equally plausible that Dos Passos had not yet learned to separate his character from himself, especially in a work so obviously mimetic and autobiographical in nature, and instead endowed his protagonist with the greater awareness that he had himself already acquired when he began to write his first novel.

Martin Howe is not the only character in One Man's Initiation--1917, however. Tom Randolph, Howe's confidant, also regularly appears and frequently adds commentary to actions as they occur. As Charles Joyner noted and as is true of Fuselli and Chrisfield in Three Soldiers, Randolph functions as a foil (96). He provides an earthy, hedonistic viewpoint which balances and opposes Howe's aesthetic personality.[1] Thus, when the abbey is destroyed, Randolph deplores the destruction but is also the first to note that the shelling has destroyed the ambulance men's food (50-51). And whoring in Paris, Tom Randolph spends the night with a French woman while Howe resists the

advances of two prostitutes, even though, "intemperate desires prowled about him like cats in the darkness" (65). (Such intemperate passages as this also point to the novel's lack of craft.[2]) However, the introduction of the secondary character Tom Randolph serves Dos Passos by allowing him to present another experience, more varied, more earthy, and quite probably more generally true to life than that of the straight-laced Martin Howe. With Tom Randolph, Dos Passos seems also to have at least sensed the need to broaden his point of view, to reach beyond his own immediate experience, but the character plays too minor a role in the text to perform this task effectively.

One Man's Initiation---1917 is a novel of witness and testimony, as is evident in its mimetic "unplot" and the lack of any clear separation between its creator and its protagonist. But it is also, like many of the early World War I novels, including that of Henri Barbusse, a protest, and it directs its censure at two principal targets: the war and society's control of its members. The Great War is a frequent target of Dos Passos throughout the novel, and it is seen as the product of lies:

> "What do you think of all this anyway?" said the wet man suddenly, lowering his voice stealthily.
>
> "I don't know. I never did expect it to be what we're taught to believe. . . . Things aren't."
>
> "But you can't have guessed that it was like this . . . like Alice in Wonderland, like an ill-intentioned Drury Lane pantomime, like all the dusty futility of Barnum and Bailey's

Circus."

"No, I thought it would be hair-raising," said Martin.

"Think, man, think of all the oceans of lies through all the ages that must have been necessary to make this possible! Think of the new particular vintage of lies that has been so industriously pumped out of the press and the pulpit. Doesn't it stagger you?" (26-27)

The war and its actions, which throughout the novel are "senseless" and simply "stupid," are thus the product of centuries of manipulation, and as Dos Passos suggests later, the ultimate and bitterly ironic final product of civilization: "For this had generations worn away their lives in mines and factories and forges. . . , screwing higher and higher the tension of their minds and muscles, polishing brighter and brighter the mirror of their intelligence" (113).

In the final Barbusse-like discussion of the war and methods of stopping it, Dos Passos' various speakers refer to themselves as dupes, choked on lies. But one of the Frenchmen, Lully, introduces another theme, one which would become the central message of protest in Three Soldiers when he says, "Of all slaveries, the slavery of war, of armies, is the bitterest, the most hopeless slavery" (134). In a sense, perhaps these separate themes are related: Dos Passos' larger protest would seem to be against the power of society to corrupt, control, and ultimately destroy its members, and that protest would become the theme of many of the novelist's later works.

If One Man's Initiation--1917 created little reaction among

ritics when it was first published in 1920, Through the Wheat by Thomas Boyd received a much warmer reception in 1923 when, as Linda Vecchi notes, ". . . it received instant acclaim for its honest depiction of the life of the American soldier abroad" (82). In May 1923, for example, F. Scott Fitzgerald, who had in fact discovered the novel and its creator, lauded Through the Wheat for its straightforward effect and avoidance of intellectualism (Bruccoli 273). Yet that straightforwardness and "honest depiction" identify the novel as one of witness and testimony, and its lack of intellectualism--and lack of polished narrative technique--resulted in Through the Wheat's decline in reputation. This work, using Hemingway's phrase, is very much one which did not "stand up," far more than Dos Passos' Three Soldiers.

There can be little doubt where Thomas Boyd acquired the raw material for his novel: the plot and the characterizations of Through the Wheat are obviously autobiographical. The mimetic representation is that of Thomas Boyd's experience in Europe as a marine with the American Expeditionary Force's Second Division from spring 1917 to fall 1918.

The plot of Through the Wheat is chronological, beginning with Boyd's protagonist William Hicks on rest in a French village, and it repeatedly follows him into support and then battle and back into rest, illustrating the tripartite sequence of the World War I soldier's life, which Paul Fussell endows with near-mystic significance in The Great War and Modern Memory (125-31). The sequence of battles, which

provides a sense of chronological movement within the text, is the same sequence that Boyd, and other soldiers with the A.E.F., fought in until fall 1918. Boyd also directly informs his reader just where each action is taking place with references to specific battles in the text. At Verdun, Hicks participates in a trench raid (19); his next major action, which Boyd describes in detail, is at Belleau Wood (93); after rest, complete with four hours of drill per day, he is sent into battle at Soissons (175); and near the end of the novel, Hicks is gassed, as was Boyd at Blanc Mont. It is only at this point that the military experiences of Boyd and Hicks diverge. As a gas victim, Boyd's military career was over on October 6, 1918; Hicks instead returns to battle, fighting on to the end of the novel where the reader discovers, "the soul of Hicks was numb" (266).

If Boyd's sign-posting of battles were not enough to inform the reader where the military actions described are taking place, near the end of the novel a major general recapitulates the progress of the A.E.F., Thomas Boyd, and William Hicks in a speech to the men:

> "I have watched you enter the lines, green and unseasoned troops, at Cantigny and Château-Thierry, and assault the enemy with such force that you threw back his most valiant troops, the Prussian Guards. You have shown your sterling mettle at Soissons and Saint Mihiel, advancing far beyond the objective given you. Jaulny and Thiaucourt and Montfaucon have fallen under your irresistible on-slaught." (221)

This plotting from actual experience points to Through the Wheat's

mimetic origins, and so closely does Boyd adhere to his own participation in the war's events that he seems incapable of deviating at all from the historical time sequence. While, with a few incidents such as William Hicks advancing against entrenched Germans at the end of the novel, which provides a sense of closure, and detailed descriptions of major military actions, which function as climactic centers in the text, Boyd did supply some general structural form in the narrative, it tends to be vague and underdeveloped. It is not, however, as underdeveloped as the novel's characterizations.

In an unpublished dissertation, Gerald Critoph said of Through the Wheat: "Up to 1923, this novel surpassed all others for description of battle. However, it missed being a great war novel. It did not rise to tragedy because Hicks was not interesting enough to enlist sympathy" (302). Critoph's observation is at least partly valid; Hicks engenders very little sympathy in the reader. His experience while sometimes horrifying--and Boyd's great gift was the ability to accurately depict the carnage of war--tends to be presented with a certain distant objectivity, a sense of journalistic distance, and this would seem to result from the novel's need to provide testimony, to demonstrate what the Great War was like. And if Boyd's first novel has a theme, that demonstration appears to be it. This is not to say that Hicks is a static character like Martin Howe. The protagonist of Through the Wheat does change, but the change is negative, a degeneration of a proud soldier who wishes for combat--" . . . Hicks swelled his chest a trifle, noticing the glint of the metal marksmanship badge on his tunic" (2)--to a benumbed survivor. Those critics who find positive

attributes in William Hicks point to his ability to survive and his "good soldier" qualities:

> Hicks' survival is presented strictly in terms of his ability to respond to danger and his ability to resist each of the "outs" that present themselves--suicide, self-inflicted wounds, desertion, insubordination, exposure to certain death, or insanity. He is a "good soldier" because he is able to function as a soldier must--automatically and instinctively. (Noverr 103)

Hicks, in short, has the essential quality of endurance, but by itself this is not sufficient to endow him with true interest.

One reason for Hicks' failure to create reader interest is that he exhibits a curious insularity throughout the novel. Even though friends, enemies, fellow soldiers, and commanding officers are destroyed, often in graphically unpleasant ways, Hicks remains unmoved. And the incident which finally causes him to "snap," to become completely numbed, is the treacherous and illogical death of a fellow soldier crushed by a falling tree limb (210). Readers' sympathies are unlikely to extend to a character who exhibits very little sympathy himself. Moreover, another reason that Hicks fails to elicit interest is that even though Thomas Boyd clearly modeled his protagonist on himself--they, for example, share the same Ohio background--he did not make him sufficiently complex to be truly interesting:

> [Hicks] functions as a representation of all those who underwent the same process. Boyd does not develop him fully,

> however, and he is two-dimensional, flat, and conventional--like all the other characters in the novel. For instance, little is revealed concerning his relationships with home, with women, or even the other men in his unit. (Miller, Armed America 117)

The shallowness of character evident in Hicks is directly related to the problem of point of view in the narrative of witness and testimony. The restricted focus inherent in works which rest entirely, or largely, on personal experience leads to a greatly reduced perspective: the character based on the author, a Martin Howe or a William Hicks, often it seems may only be a witness or provide testimony on events experienced by the author. His experience of others usually rests on surface description, and events are described in terms of their external features. In Thomas Boyd's case, his attempts to broaden the perspective of his text, to introduce other witnesses, fail, and the failure rests upon Boyd's inexpert handling of point of view.

While most of Through the Wheat is presented from the center of attention of William Hicks and uses the marine as the focus for a limited omniscient narrator, Thomas Boyd, at least on occasion, had problems in maintaining that center of attention. At one point, Boyd deserts Hicks entirely and abruptly shifts the focus of attention to Sergeant Carl Harriman. Receiving a taunting letter from his girl, the "loving Ellen," Harriman reacts by walking off by himself and:

> From his pack he drew a small, round can of Argentina beef, which he balanced between his instep and the toe of his

> shoe. No harm spoiling that! He wiggled his toes around in the shoe and felt squeamish. His hand felt for his pistol at his side. Yes, there it was and nicely oiled. He drew the pistol from the holster and aimed it at the small blue can. Forty-five caliber pistols kicked up in the air when they were fired, he remembered. He aimed it a bit lower--and bang. (148)

Of course, many novelists have shifted point of view between characters: John Dos Passos does so successfully in Three Soldiers, for example. However, they do not do so in the middle of a narrative where another character dominates the center of attention and in a manner which detracts from rather than reinforces the cumulative effect of their fiction, and even though Harriman's self-mutilation has been included to accent the fortitude of William Hicks, Boyd's inexpert shift between Hicks and Harriman weakens both his plot and his characterization.[3] That Boyd does, however, at least attempt to broaden the perspective within his novel, to introduce a greater range of experience, points to a dawning awareness that limiting what is reported to one character is insufficient. Later war novelists, such as Dos Passos in Three Soldiers, more concerned with and more adept at literary craft, would expand this concept far more than Boyd.

However, despite its simple plot, shallow characters, and frequently crude use of point of view, Through the Wheat was a successful novel in the early 1920s. The reasons for this would appear to be two-fold. If Thomas Boyd had one great strength it was his ability to

describe events accurately with careful and minute detail. Consider, for example, Boyd's description of the aftermath of a mustard gas attack:

> For a distance of two miles, from the ravine to the village where the supply wagons were stationed, men lay dead and dying. In the woods and particularly in the gulley that ran through the woods to the village, the thick yellow gas clung to the ground. Wherever the gas had touched the skin of the men dark, flaming blisters appeared. Like acid, the yellow gas ate into the flesh and blinded the eyes. The ground was a dump-heap of bodies, limbs of trees, legs and arms independent of bodies, and pieces of equipment. Here was a combat pack forlorn, its bulge indicating such articles as a razor, an extra shirt, the last letter from home, a box of hard bread. Another place a heavy shoe, with a wad of spiral puttee near by. Where yesterday's crosses had been erected, a shell had churned a body out of its shallow grave, separating from the torso the limbs. (158-59)

In terms of mimetic accuracy, Boyd's description is graphically correct. Mustard gas did indeed hug the ground after an attack, and its effects on the human body were precisely those described. The aftermath of an artillery attack with its dismembered victims and sense of dislocation for survivors are also accurate, as are Boyd's description of battlefield debris and the disinterred dead. In its depiction of battle and of the Great War as seen from the vantage

point of the doughboy, in its essential ability to provide witness and testimony, Through the Wheat is a powerful narrative, despite its flaws as a novel in terms of technique. Testimony, in fact, would seem to constitute the novel's theme: that war is not "romantic," that it consumes lives and personalities hellishly. But Boyd enjoyed one other attribute that made him a superior witness. While other authors such as John Dos Passos were necessarily restricted in their ability to witness the events of the First World War by their role as ambulance drivers, an essentially spectatorial role, Boyd had directly participated in the battles he describes in his novel. Therefore, his testimony is capable of producing an even greater sense of authenticity, which results from his use of detailed and accurate description.

However, novels such as Through the Wheat and One Man's Initiation---1917 remain flawed. They may add to a reader's sense of immediacy through their concern with accurately reporting events, as the author-witness perceives them, and their description of physical reality, but their lack of narrative craft ultimately limits their appeal once the event which is the focus of their testimony has ceased to be a matter of public interest. One novel which attempted to combine elements of protest against the war and factors which contributed to making war intolerable for its participants with improved, if not perfected, narrative technique was John Dos Passos' Three Soldiers, which despite Hemingway's prediction in the early 1940s did indeed "stand up."

Three Soldiers: Autobiography and Art

Although it was published very early, in 1921, and actually

precedes Thomas Boyd's Through the Wheat by two years, John Dos Passos' second novel, Three Soldiers, is a transitional work. While elements of autobiography are present in the text, Three Soldiers is a much more mature work than either Through the Wheat or One Man's Initation--1917; it is the product of a novelist who may not have perfected his craft but was at least rapidly learning it, and was already moving away from the narrative of witness and testimony. John Rohrkemper notes this difference in "Mr. Dos Passos' War":

> Three Soldiers, begun in France in 1919, completed in Spain in 1920, and published in 1921, may be seen as an attempt to retell the story of One Man's Initiation--1917 from a greater distance and on a larger canvas. Dos Passos' second novel shows him to be considerably more sophisticated as a thinker and artist. Whereas the earlier work was personal and limited in scope--a rather intimate record of a soldier's initiation into the reality of the modern world--Three Soldiers is the work of a more disciplined and expansive mind, a mind turning outward and firmly in control of its material. (42-43)

It is also a work which demonstrates continuity of plot, fairly complex characterizations, and a very explicit theme.

Although it demonstrates an improvement over One Man's Initiation--1917 in terms of developing narrative skills, Three Soldiers does not abandon the use of mimesis, despite Dos Passos' protestation that the novel was not autobiographical.[4] For Dos Passos'

ersonal experiences are employed in the novel and may be found in its heme, in some of its incidents, and in some of its characters.

In terms of theme, Three Soldiers is more than an anti-war novel: t is an anti-military novel, a protest against not only war but gainst what the Frenchman Lully in One Man's Initiation---1917 called 'the slavery of armies," or as Ellwood Johnson has observed, ". . . ilitary society, more than war, is its subject" (69). There can be ittle doubt this view reflects Dos Passos' own beliefs and personal nhappiness with the military system. After, for example, his enlistment in 1918 with the Army Medical Corps, the novelist began dating is diary according to which "day of captivity" it was, and in an ntry in that diary for November 15, 1918, he states:

> As the men troop in and out of the messhall, I notice the sheeplike look army life gives them---a dumb submissive look about the eyes. They usually submit cowedly to my shoutings to move on with the hurt look of dogs that have been ill-treated. (Fourteenth Chronicle 230)

The military machine as dehumanizing agent is the central theme of Three Soldiers, and this image of cowed animals---sheep or dogs---crushed by the system frequently reoccurs in the novel where only those who protest the military life by desertion free themselves from the mental degradation of the army's slavery and then only temporarily: "The stockade was built; not one of the sheep would escape. And those who were not sheep? They were deserters; every rifle muzzle held death for them; they would not live long" (152).

More than the slavery theme of men reduced to the docile role of estic animals is autobiographical in Three Soldiers, however. It is ious that elements of John Dos Passos' personal experience, acquired er his enlistment in the summer of 1918, are woven into the text. s, there is a direct relationship between a propaganda film shown inflame the passions of naïve doughboys in the novel and Dos sos' experience while training at Camp Crane near Allentown, nsylvania, recorded in his diary:

> But the movie had begun again, unfolding scenes of soldiers in spiked helmets marching into Belgian cities full of little milk carts drawn by dogs and old women in peasant costume. There were hisses and catcalls when a German flag was seen, and as the troops were pictured advancing, bayonetting the civilians in wide Dutch pants, the old women with starched caps, the soldiers packed into the stuffy Y.M.C.A. hut shouted oaths at them. Andrews felt blind hatred stirring like something that had a life of its own in the young men about him. (Three Soldiers 23)

Monday, October 7 [1918]

Last night a particularly inept movie was presented for the edification of young America seated in the grandstand. Yet as German soldiers marched by and were very clumsily atrocious--I could feel a wave of hatred go through the men. Muttered oaths and shouted imprecations--Goddamned bastards--cocksuckers every one of them--were sincere. The men were

furious with war--kill, kill, kill. . . .

What [the fellow beside me] saw was a village in an over-picturesque country with local color plastered on very thick, donkey carts, dog carts, milk carts with much shell fire and Germans rushing about with cans of kerosene setting things on fire--Germans whom the brave Americans chase out of towns, thereby saving crowds of young girls in peasant costume a la musical comedy--and battalions of dear old ladies in lace caps from being raped and ruined and cut up into small pieces or toasted in fires by the Horrible Huns. (Fourteenth Chronicle 219)[5]

Such small elements of factual, autobiographical detail seem to be interwoven throughout Three Soldiers, and even though, unlike One Man's Initiation--1917, they do not constitute the sole or even a large portion of the narrative, they are yet convincing and help the novel achieve a sense of authenticity. This use of mimesis, of factual material, seems to be true of characters in the novel as well.

Of the three principal characters, the three soldiers, at least two, Fuselli and Andrews, appear to be taken directly from life. John Andrews, the most important of the novel's three protagonists, bears many points of similarity with John Dos Passos himself, but Dan Fuselli, the Italian from San Francisco, may have been modeled on an actual person as well. In a diary entry for October 1918 ("The Seventh Day of Captivity") when he was at Camp Crane, Dos Passos recorded a somewhat enigmatic entry that points to an actual Fuselli:

> For a Sack of Corinth [working title of Three Soldiers]--just told me . . . by a little raucous-voiced Californian named Fuselli. Family went over on the ferry to Oakland--much weeping--In a shop window he spied a service flag with gilt stripe round it and one star embroidered with the caduceus--the emblem of the Medical Corps--"I didn't give a shit how much it cost"--bought it and as was going into the station gave it to his girl--"Here don't you forget me"--The girl produced with great promptness a large box of candy--"How the devil she got hold of it. I don't know"--
>
> Other sexual adventures of the same youngster--Girl named Mabel he got to write love-letters to but real girl found out about it and he stopped--Portugie girl, but she was a toughee--wants to marry the girl who gave the box of candy when he goes back. Tough street corner . . . crap shooting past--
>
> But why should I make a pseudo-medical diagnosis of the poor kid? (Fourteenth Chronicle 218-19)

The same incident with some modifications appears in the first chapter of Three Soldiers, but Dos Passos' diary comment raises a question as to just how factual the diary's "told me by a little raucous-voiced Californian named Fuselli" is. If an actual person, as it appears to be, then Dan Fuselli is based on someone Dos Passos met at Camp Crane, and with the qualification that Dos Passos' art has obviously transformed the character, the author's autobiographical experience has

inserted itself into the novel in a very direct mimetic manner indeed.

This mimetic use of experience in fiction is also evident in the portrayal of Three Soldiers' main protagonist, John Andrews, who, as was Martin Howe, is based on John Dos Passos himself. Like his creator, Andrews is an artist and an aesthete; like him Andrews, in his late army career, is saved from complete intellectual suffocation and intolerable ennui by a reassignment for educational purposes to the Sorbonne; and like Dos Passos, John Andrews has led an isolated childhood with an unhappy mother:

> "But my mother taught me to play the piano when I was very small," he went on seriously. "She and I lived alone in an old house belonging to her family in Virginia. How different all that was from anything you have ever lived. It would not be possible in Europe to be as isolated as we were in Virginia. . . . Mother was very unhappy. She had led a dreadfully thwarted life . . . that unrelieved hopeless misery that only a woman can suffer." (Three Soldiers 380-81)

Dos Passos' mother, Lucy Addison Sprigg Madison, was also isolated, living with her son alone much of the time and leading a "dreadfully thwarted life" as John Randolph Dos Passos' mistress, until 1910 when the death of the senior Dos Passos' first wife allowed the novelist's parents to marry.

In Three Soldiers, the mimetic elements found in character, incident, and meaning are secondary; they support rather than, as in One Man's Initiation--1917, dominate the narrative. Instead, Dos

Passos' developing skill as a novelist allows him to produce a novel with a plot that is closely linked to the development of his characters, unlike the highly mimetic "unplot" of his first novel; to create characters who at least, unlike Martin Howe, display dynamic change; and to expound and expand a theme which is more complex than the observation that war is senseless and brutal.

Three Soldiers is very much a novel of character, and what occurs within the text is the destruction of its three protagonists--Dan Fuselli, Chrisfield, and John Andrews---by the mindless, blood-thirsty military machine. The changes that occur in those three central characters and the incidents illustrating those changes constitute the plot of the novel.

Fuselli, who is initially a good soldier, is anxious to please, desperately seeking to advance by doing the right thing and avoiding any appearance of wrong doing:

> Sure he'd get private first-class as soon as they got overseas. Then in a couple of months he might be corporal. If they saw much service, he'd move along all right, once he got to be a non-com.
>
> "Oh, I mustn't get in wrong. Oh, I mustn't get in wrong," he kept saying to himself as he went down the ladder into the hold. (46)

So anxious to please is Fuselli that his behavior approaches the sycophantic: Stanley Cooperman finds him dog-like (154). But despite carrying his submissive behavior to a point that approaches pandering

when he gives up his French girlfriend, who herself understands the American military machine well enough to know the privileges and greater wealth of rank, to his sergeant, Fuselli doesn't advance. In his last appearance in the text, he is a permanent member of a labor battalion, broken and syphilitic and utterly without hope or ambition, as Cooperman noted on "the dung heap at last and . . . content" (155).

Chrisfield from Indiana, on the other hand, is a consistently immoral character, a psychopath who on first being introduced in the text tells Andrews how he had nearly killed a man in a drunken brawl (25). Ultimately, his homicidal tendencies result in his murder of an officer whom he has irrationally grown to hate, Lieutenant Anderson:

> Chrisfield walked away without answering. A cold hand was round the grenade in his pocket. He walked away slowly, looking at his feet.
>
> Suddenly he found he had pressed the spring of the grenade. He struggled to pull it out of his pocket. . . . His arm and his cold fingers that clutched the grenade seemed paralyzed. Then a warm joy went through him. He had thrown it.
>
> Anderson was standing up, swaying backwards and forwards. The explosion made the woods quake. A thick rain of yellow leaves came down. Anderson was flat on the ground. He was so flat he seemed to have sunk into the ground. (199-200)

Chrisfield's bloodthirsty, psychopathic personality at first serves him well in the military machine; he and not Fuselli is promoted to

corporal, suggesting that the machine inverts normal social values and prizes the anti-social and homicidal far more than it does unflinching loyalty and the desire to serve. Ultimately, however, Chrisfield's disintegrating personality causes him to desert out of a paranoid fear that a sergeant knows about the murder of Anderson. Thus, the mad military system can only employ its madmen briefly before destroying them as well.[6]

Fuselli and Chrisfield serve two purposes in Three Soldiers: they provide a glimpse of the United States Army's, and concurrently America's, social diversity during the Great War, and they serve as foils to the central protagonist, John Andrews. Fuselli's final defeat and acceptance of his lowly lot contrast with Andrews' will to resist. Chrisfield, who does resist, does so blindly, instinctively, and out of ignorant hostility. Andrews' resistance is intended to be seen as heroic, born out of his intellectual realization of the true, despotic nature of the military system.

John Andrews is the most important of Dos Passos' three soldiers. He occupies the majority of the novel, and of the three protagonists, his challenge--and it is a weak one--to the slavery of the system, not Fuselli's efforts to placate it nor Chrisfield's hostile spirit of revolt, comes closest to success. Moreover, it is Andrews who most closely mirrors Dos Passos' beliefs, as Maxwell Geismar observes:

> Dos Passos had already broadened the base of his social critique by including the pathetic Italian boy Fuselli and the Southerner [sic] Chrisfield along with John Andrews as

the central figures of the novel. But it is evident that while the writer's talent has gone into the social panorama, the ordinary types and facts of army life, all his sympathies still remain with the disdainful and superior musician. (94-95)

Andrews is also a dynamic character. More than either of the other protagonists, he experiences change from a desire to lose himself in the system, to a rejection of its slavery, to final defeat at its hands. When first introduced, he has enlisted because he is "sick of revolt, of thought, f carrying his individuality like a banner" and wants to "humble himself in the mud of common slavery" (22). Like Martin Howe of One Man's Initiation---1917, he is aware from the very beginning of the true nature of what he is about to experience, but what he discovers is that he must think, must revolt, and must express his individuality.

His break with the military system, his rejection of its slavery, occurs when he is wounded:

> As soon as he got out of the hospital he would desert; the determination formed suddenly in his mind, making the excited blood surge gloriously through his body. There was nothing else to do; he would desert. He pictured himself hobbling away in the dark on his lame legs, stripping his uniform off, losing himself in some out of the way corner of France, or slipping by the sentries to Spain and freedom. He was ready to endure anything, to face any sort of death, for

> the sake of a few months of liberty in which to forget the degradation of this last year. (225-26)

However, Andrews' desertion is less a planned and conscious act than a response foisted upon him when he is arrested without papers and sent to a labor battalion from which he escapes largely through the efforts of a fellow prisoner. Given the opportunity to return to active service, he simply refuses to do so, remaining a deserter until the end of the novel when he is arrested while working on his unfinished musical composition, "The Body and Soul of John Brown"--another unsuccessful revolutionary who challenged the system. Unlike Brown, however, Andrews confines his rejection of the system to discussion and commentary; he never really acts.

Compared with Martin Howe in One Man's Initiation--1917, John Andrews is a more completely drawn character. He not only experiences change, especially in his relationship with the military, but he also has some negative characteristics. This element of his character is seen most clearly in Andrews' desertion of the French working-class girl Jeanne in favor of the rich Genevive Rod. He professes to be a socialist, but in this action aligns himself with the aristocracy, which, fittingly enough, in the person of Genevive deserts him at the end of the novel (Walsh 76).

By constructing his novel around the different points of view represented by his three central characters, Dos Passos successfully overcame the limitations of a single perspective based upon one individual's experience, the problem evident in ambulance driver, Dos

Passos' alter ego, Martin Howe. Through the multiple, limited-omniscient perspectives of Fuselli, Chrisfield, and Andrews, Dos Passos introduces a range of experience and different responses to the Great War and the dehumanizing military machine. This widening of perspective demonstrates a greater concern with literary craft, and Three Soldiers serves as a bench mark in the evolutionary development from the single, autobiographical center of attention of the first war narratives of witness and testimony to novels which while still concerned with presenting the Great War with mimetic verisimilitude do so in a more complex manner by employing other approaches to the use of point of view.

The fate of the three protagonists of Three Soldiers is ultimately connected with the novel's central meaning: that the military system, the military machine, reduces its victims to slavery and indiscriminately destroys them. And Dos Passos' use of the machine metaphor is hardly accidental. As Linda Wagner observes, the six sections of the novel--"Making the Mold," "The Metal Cools," "Machines," "Rust," "The World Outside," and "Under the Wheels"--provide a sense of overall structure, are linked to the fate of the three main characters, and are obviously extensions of the machine metaphor (20-22). Moreover, it is altogether fitting that Dos Passos should have structured his novel around the symbol of the illogical, brutal machine since one of the Great War's enduring themes was that of industrial insanity.[7]

Despite its obvious improvement in terms of narrative technique over One Man's Initiation--1917 and Through the Wheat and the fact

that it has indeed, contrary to Ernest Hemingway's expectations, been able to "stand up," Three Soldiers is not an unqualified success. As Jeffrey Walsh has noted, the novel is flawed in that it separates its intellectual message from its action. John Andrews, the aesthete, does nothing and accomplishes nothing and ultimately can only provide an artist's perspective:

> Because of Andrews' limited political understanding, the radical impetus of Three Soldiers remains unrealised, latent only in the sub-text of the novel; thus the intellectual implications of the book, towards political activism, is [sic] unhelpfully divorced from its narrative action. . . . The interest of John Andrews in the context of war fiction is that he embodies an artist fable, whereby the artist at war seeks to distill creatively his growing insights into the enlisted man's humiliation at the hands of a fascist-like supervisory class. (American War 76-77)

It would remain for Ernest Hemingway and William March to expand the concept of the war novel in American fiction, to integrate more completely the demands of the novelist's craft and the experience of the Great War into polished fiction.

The Mature War Novel, and Beyond

A popular perception of World War I fiction maintains that the majority of the works based on the conflict and written by those who participated in the war did not appear until over a decade after the war had ended. In the case of American fiction, this view of the war

literature should probably be approached with some degree of caution: John Dos Passos' Three Soldiers appeared in 1921; E.E. Cummings' The Enormous Room in 1922; Thomas Boyd's Through the Wheat in 1923; Laurence Stallings' Plumes in 1924; and James Stevens' Mattock in 1927. Thus, it seems that American veteran-authors were producing fiction of various degrees of artistic merit throughout the twenties. However, it is evident that in terms of the best war fiction, best in the sense of demonstrating command of narrative technique, the year 1929 marks the beginning of a new epoch, especially when World War I literature as a whole is considered. That year saw the publication of two of the most popular and enduring war novels: Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms and Erich Maria Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front. Shortly after them, in 1930, one of the better British war novels, Her Privates We by Frederic Manning, was published. Critics have long maintained that one reason for this appearance of carefully written and lasting novels on the Great War by those like Hemingway, Remarque, and Manning who experienced the war as participants was that the intervening decade allowed them to come to terms with the psychological wounds caused by the conflict and the writing itself served a healing function. A. F. Bance, however, in a study on the publication of All Quiet on the Western Front, "'Im Westen Nichts Neues': A Bestseller in Context," argues that there was another, socio-political factor at work:

> In 1928 nearly all nations . . . renounced war through the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact. Anti-war sentiment soon reached

> its climax. At the same time, there was a tide in the psychological affairs of men that brought a renewal of interest in the Great War. The public was ready to read about it, and writers to respond. (360)

How much of the success of A Farewell to Arms and All Quiet on the Western Front may be attributed to the increase in anti-war sentiment occasioned by Kellogg-Briand is a matter of conjecture. Yet it is apparent that at least some of the initial popularity of the better World War I novels, and renewed interest in the Great War itself, must be attributed to this ill-fated attempt to end war.

The novels with which the newly interested reading public found itself faced in 1929 and soon after were far different from the narratives of witness and testimony, such as those of Barbusse, Dos Passos, and Boyd, available during and immediately after the Great War. Novels such as Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms and William March's Company K, although still employing mimetic re-creations of the Great War experience, are polished works of fiction, exhibiting control over narrative techniques and often a considerable degree of innovation. In fact, while definitely a polished work of literary craftsmanship, Company K owes much of its success to its innovative approach to the Great War and the tradition of the novel.

As with a good many other novels about the First World War, Company K is based on the military experiences of its author, but in this case, it is extremely difficult to separate what is mimetic and based on William March's personal observations and actual events from

what is purely artistic invention. While the overall structure of the novel, in a manner similar to Thomas Boyd's Through the Wheat, follows the general historic progress of the American Expeditionary Force in Europe from 1917 until after the war, specific incidents and characters are much more difficult to equate with actual events and persons, as Roy Simmonds notes:

> Inevitably, the question must be posed: to what extent is Company K based on fact? As Richard Crowder observes, although March maintained that Company K was not autobiographical, the book surely had its roots in events that March had personally experienced, witnessed, and felt. This Clint Bolton confirms. March confessed to him, "I've used people, places, and incidents in my fiction from real life." ("Unending Circle" 35)

Perhaps one reason for March's reluctance to be more explicit about the actual persons and events which serve as the mimetic basis of Company K is that when the central event of the novel, the massacre of twenty-two German prisoners-of-war by American soldiers, was published as a short story, "Nine Prisoners"--and many of the vignettes comprising the novel were first published as short stories--in the December 1931 issue of Forum, it unleashed a storm of protest. According to the view held by large numbers of the American reading public, American soldiers could not do such a thing (Simmonds, "Textual Study" 112). With such a response, and such an event--perhaps one of those "things too hard to forget" March later mentioned to his

family--it might well have been in the author's best interest to exhibit some reticence.

If its depiction of the massacre of enemy prisoners by American troops marks Company K as a different kind of war novel, its overall structure reveals it to be very different indeed. For, as Stanley Cooperman notes, Company K is a "cross-sectional narrative," a developing tale told sequentially from the perspectives of the one hundred and thirteen soldiers who make up Company K (242). Whereas John Dos Passos in Three Soldiers expanded the war novel's ability to present experience by employing three perspectives, March opens the text to a much greater extent when he provides over a hundred points of view. This approach necessarily leads to an episodic structure, and as Simmonds comments some reviewers were initially alienated by what they considered Company K's fragmentary nature ("Unending Circle" 36-37).

However, William March was a more innovative writer than objecting critics at first appreciated. For what he has done in his narrative is to interweave a number of parallel story-lines which unfold as the novel progresses and which are revealed in the course of the narrative by the one hundred thirteen eyewitnesses who narrate the novel. This approach creates multiple levels of structural complexity within the text, and it is possible to follow the progress of key characters throughout the novel as they and their destinies are revealed by other characters. For example, early in the novel Privates Ted Irvine, Walt Webster, and Rowland Geers are described, in a vignette narrated by

the latter, as frolicsome young men, floundering in the snow while in training in Virginia and, as Webster declares, anxious to "whip" the German army (5-6). However, what happens to these three as the novel unfolds emerges as an ironic anti-war statement, a protest as strong as any penned by Barbusse. Geers is killed soon after the company reaches France when an incompetent officer, Lieutenant Jewett, orders him and other men into a clump of trees in sight of German artillery which immediately shells them (84). Webster survives the war but is horribly disfigured by a facial wound; he forces the woman he was engaged to before the war to marry him, but on their wedding night she says, "If you touch me, I'll vomit" (157). Slightly wounded in action, Irvine returns home to have his wound rot and infect, forcing him to suffer a decade of unending pain while ignoring opportunities for suicide because it is "better to suffer the ultimate pains of hell than to achieve freedom in nothingness!" (166). The protest against the brutality of war through this use of multiple views and delayed revelations is probably more effective than if the novel were narrated from a more tightly constricted point of view.

Not only the treatment of the ultimate fates of March's warriors benefits from the use of multiple perspectives, however. By using more than one eyewitness to describe an event, March achieves a more varied and often ironic effect, and there are several incidents in the text which are described in this multi-dimensional manner. One of them, for example, is the murder of Lieutenant Archibald Smith by Private Edward Carter. The dual perspective in this case reveals a horrifying irony

in that Carter stabs Smith to death with his bayonet because he believes Smith "has it in for me": Smith, in fact, singles Carter out for special duty because he believes he is the "best man in my platoon" (55-58). With Lieutenant Smith, however, another, more negative, aspect of Company K as a novel is revealed, and that is since the individual vignettes are all told from a time sometime in the future and each speaker is describing an event in the past, March frequently has a dead man describe his own death. If limited in its use, this device might have been effective, but as it is, it is overdone to the point where it loses all ability to shock or surprise. Roy Simmonds comments, "It is possible that March suspected he was using the device too frequently, for when he was preparing the book version [from separate short stories], he reduced the number of these self-related deaths" ("Textual Study" 110). Unfortunately, March did not reduce their number enough.[8]

William March unifies the structure of Company K in other ways, too. One of these is the simple overall design of the novel which is tripartite in nature, consisting of vignettes on the company's training in the United States, its battle experiences in France, and finally the aftereffects of the war on those who survive. The second unifying element is the murder of the twenty-two German prisoners-of-war that so outraged readers of the original short story in December 1931. This massacre is introduced in the first of Company K's sketches, that of Private Joseph Delaney, March's alter ego, who argues with his wife about the inclusion of the incident in the book he has just written

(3). It is the longest and most detailed of the incidents in the novel and is described sequentially by the various members of the company who act as executioners. Reactions to the incident among the narrators of Company K vary greatly; Corporal Clarence Foster carries out his orders with a sense of vindication since he is revenging those acts perpetrated by the Germans according to the atrocity stories, but Private Charles Gordon has a different reaction:

> I stood there spraying bullets from side to side in accordance with instructions. . . . "Everything I was ever taught to believe about mercy, justice and virtue is a lie," I thought. . . . "But the biggest lie of all are the words 'God is Love.' That is really the most terrible lie that man ever thought of." (86)

Men like Gordon become as much victims of this incident as are the twenty-two slain German soldiers, and March achieves part of the continuity of his plot by demonstrating later in the text how its effects remain with them.

The lingering effect of the massacre is probably most evident in the character of Private William Nugent who after the war is executed for killing a "cop" and rejects the prison chaplain's offer of a chance for repentance with:

> "Say let me tell you something about a big job I pulled once when I was in the army. I was a young fellow then, and I believed all the baloney you're talking now. I believed that. . . . Well, anyway, we took a bunch of prisoners one

> day. It was too much trouble to send 'em back to the rear, so the cop of my outfit made us take 'em into a ditch, line 'em up and shoot 'em. Then a week later when we were back in rest billets, he lined the company up and made us all go to church to listen to a bird like you talk baloney. . . ." (145)

Like Gordon, Nugent has rejected the concept of "God is Love," and he has done so most emphatically. Moreover, March obviously means to suggest that both Nugent's rejection of the chaplain and murder of the cop, a substitute for his commanding officer, are the results of a psychological pathology growing out of the murder of the German soldiers.

It might be expected that the use of short sketches in Company K would present difficulties in the development of character since so little space is available to demonstrate growth, complex relationships, or change. Yet March's use of multiple narrators commenting over an extended period of time does manage to at least partly alleviate this problem. In some cases, as with William Nugent, the manner in which a character is described by others and his self-testimony combine to form a fairly full composite characterization. Perhaps the most fully drawn of the characters by March's multiple eyewitnesses in Company K is the commanding officer, Captain Terence L. Matlock. First introduced in the early, training section of the novel, Matlock is presented as a petty tyrant who reveals himself by his actions when he inspects his men's kits prior to their going on leave:

> The second man had placed his clothes on the table. I picked them up and threw them in the mud without looking at them. Then as each man came up with his clothes, I took them from his arm and threw them into the mud-puddle. After that, I took the passes from Waller, tore them into tiny pieces and scattered them on a pile of manure. . . . (16)

What most of the men of Company K think of their Captain is revealed by them throughout the text, and their widely scattered comments when drawn together create a devastating portrait. He is "Nit-wit Terry--that ribbon selling wonder"; "Fishmouth Terry"; and "that ass, Matlock." And it is, of course, Captain Matlock, Nugent's "cop of my outfit," who orders the murder of the German prisoners.

The most revealing of the scattered comments about Matlock undoubtedly occurs when Private Abraham Rickey reports him shot:

> "It was just one bullet, but went all the way through his head. When I turned him on his face, I saw a teaspoonful of brains had run out on the ground."
>
> "Wait a minute now . . . take it easy, sailor!" said Sergeant Dunning. "How much brains did you say ran out of Fishmouth Terry's head? . . ."
>
> "About a teaspoonful," I said.
>
> Everybody shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders.
>
> "Are you sure it was Captain Matlock you picked up?" the sergeant asked again.

"Why, yes," I said. "Sure it was."

Everybody began to laugh. . . . "Be reasonable!" said Vester Keith. "Be reasonable!--If that many brains ran out, it couldn't possibly have been our Terry!" (104-05)

Keith's comment is, of course, in keeping with the general view of the Captain apparent in the phrase "that ass, Matlock." However, the "death" reported by Private Rickey points to another aspect of March's use of multiple points of view. With the increase in perspectives comes an increase in ambiguity; a choice of possible "truths" is now provided. In the case of Matlock, the reader is left with two alternatives. For while Rickey, apparently with honest conviction, reports him shot through the head, an obviously fatal wound, Private Rufus Yeomans late in the novel meets a somewhat seedy Terence Matlock and invites him to dinner, apparently with equally honest conviction (180). And even the characterization of the Captain contains this ambiguity: while the majority of men in the company share Vester Keith's view of Matlock as "nearly brainless," the Captain's orderly, Private Ralph Brucker, says of him: "He's always treated me right, and he's not a bad guy, no matter what you fellows think" (65).

With its one hundred and thirteen eyewitness narrator-participants and its carefully interwoven story-lines, Company K is a highly polished literary work, a finely crafted novel, but as with other anti-war novels it is also a protest against the barbarity of technological warfare and a response to the heroic, traditional "genteel" presentation of war in earlier American fiction, and in American

culture in general. This element of protest may be seen most clearly in the testimony of Private Sylvester Wendell who, instructed to write letters of condolence to the families of those killed in action, "gags" after writing about thirty filled with lies and elects to write the truth at least once:

> Dear Madam:
>
> Your son Francis, died needlessly in Belleau Wood. You will be interested to hear that at the time of his death he was crawling with vermin and weak from diarrhea. His feet were swollen and rotten and they stank. He lived like a frightened animal, cold and hungry. Then, on June 6th, a piece of shrapnel hit him and he died in agony, slowly. You'd never believe that he could live three hours, but he did. He lived three full hours screaming and cursing by turns. He had nothing to hold on to, you see: He had learned long ago that what he had been taught to believe by you, his mother, who loved him, under the meaningless names of honor, courage, and patriotism, were all lies. . . . (63)

Wendell destroys his letter after writing it, but the indictment of the false idealism of the Genteel Tradition, with its belief in higher moral, abstract values like "honor, courage, and patriotism" is constantly present in Company K, just as it is present in other World War I novels such as Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms.

For decades, critics maintained that the experiences of Frederic Henry in A Farewell to Arms were based upon Ernest Hemingway's

experiences in Italy during the Great War, and it wasn't until critics such as Charles Fenton in his The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway (1954) revealed just how severely limited Hemingway's participation was that a more accurate understanding of how mimetic elements are employed in the novel began to appear. Closer examination of the text, such as that of Michael Reynolds in Hemingway's First War, revealed that while Hemingway did employ some autobiographical incidents and persons in A Farewell to Arms, he also researched the historic record to carefully provide accurate and often minute detail on events occurring in Italy from 1915 through 1917 in which Frederic Henry takes part.

There are, of course, still some autobiographical elements within A Farewell to Arms evident in incidents such as Frederic Henry's wounding by mortar fire and in characters such as Rinaldi, who is based on Italian captain and Hemingway friend Enrico Serena; Count Greffi, the ninety-eight year old Count Greppi, who befriended Hemingway in Italy; and most notably Catherine Barkley, who is a composite based on nurse Agnes von Kurowsky and other women Hemingway had known such as his first two wives, Hadley Richardson and Pauline Pfeiffer (Oldsey 47).[9] However, much of what Frederic Henry experiences is either the result of Hemingway's imagination or the use of historic research transposed into fiction.

Michael Reynolds has demonstrated that the details in A Farewell to Arms are accurate in terms of geography, often minute geographic details; historic events such as the placement and actions of Italian

armies; the facts of the Caporetto retreat; and even the weather (chaps. 4 and 5). Robert W. Lewis carries this examination of the novel's mimetic accuracy further when he argues that a principal source for much of the novel's accuracy of detail is British historian G. M. Trevelyan's Scenes from Italy's Wars (1919) and notes that there are parallels in place description between the novel and those provided by the historian ("Hemingway in Italy" 228). Lewis also observes parallels between the actions and observations of Frederic Henry, particularly in the Caporetto section of the novel, and those performed and observed by Trevelyan:

> While Hemingway's characters, dialogue, and some action seem to be his own invention, the general action, including the geography and timing, parallels Trevelyan's. Just as Lt. Henry is working with his ambulances at Plava when the Caporetto disaster begins, so is Trevelyan; just as Lt. Henry is among the last to leave Gorizia and wants to give his drivers a chance to rest before leaving, so does Trevelyan; just as the American is ordered to evacuate equipment (not wounded) in his ambulances, so is the Englishman. Both repeatedly mention the rain, the horribly slow-moving and disorganized crowds, the political sentiments of the war-weary Italians, some of whom were turning to socialism, the infiltration tactics of the Germans, the front-line soldiers' hatred of the war-profiteers and slackers. . . . Both mention that the hospital personnel

> left in echelons, and both later learn how they were dispersed and often had to abandon their vehicles as they, like Lt. Henry, turned off the congested main road hoping to by-pass the crowds. ("Hemingway in Italy" 232-33)

Hemingway demonstrated in A Farewell to Arms that there is more than one way to reproduce fact mimetically in fiction: that the only source for fictional verisimilitude need not be direct participation, the tradition of the eyewitness, but that historical research and the use of experience of others can effectively be employed to accomplish the same ends.

By turning to outside resources, Hemingway expanded the concept of the World War I novel beyond the narrow witness and testimony limitations of writers such as Thomas Boyd, and he also correctly sensed that by 1929 description of war's carnage and battle scenes had already been done to excess. For this reason, Hemingway intentionally muted such descriptions, understating them as he often understated the potentially garish in his fiction:

> There was always this temptation to slip into the over-written prose of the popular war novel. Consciously aware of the pitfall, Hemingway wrote a note to himself . . . and then circled it for emphasis: "Watch out for this." (Reynolds, First War 59)

Michael Reynolds also notes Ernest Hemingway rewrote sections of A Farewell to Arms to reduce the over-wrought use of physical description such as was often found in earlier war novels. It is this concern for

the novel as craft that typifies A Farewell to Arms and helps in making it more than another narrative about World War I. Thus, Hemingway successfully transcended the sub-genre of war literature with this novel in his plot, characterizations, and theme, converting the war narrative into something both better crafted and more enduring.

The element that dictates most strongly the kind of novel A Farewell to Arms became was its narrator, Frederic Henry, who has experienced all that has happened in the novel and recounts those experiences from some point in the future, as Robert W. Lewis noted in Hemingway on Love:

> . . . all the events that have created his sense of loss and isolation have already occurred when he begins the presentation of his story, and each scene that he recreates for us is distorted by the climactic event of Catherine's death at the end of the novel. (40)[10]

What this narrative stance leads to is a disparity between the actions of the young Frederic Henry and the knowledge possessed by the more mature Frederic Henry who recounts them, and this disparity in turn creates the tragic sense of irony, and tragic tone, that permeates the novel, as Scholes and Kellogg observed it was likely to: "Irony is always the result of a disparity of understanding. In any situation in which one person knows or perceives more--or less--than another, irony must be either actually or potentially present" (240). This tragic irony is evident throughout the novel, but sometimes the knowledge of the mature narrator emerges directly from the text as when Frederic

Henry examines his reasons for not going to the priest's home at Abruzzi:

> I had gone to no such place but to the smoke of cafés and nights when the room whirled and you needed to look at the wall to make it stop, nights in bed, drunk, when you knew that that was all there was, and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you, and the world all unreal in the dark and so exciting that you must resume again unknowing and not caring in the night, sure that this was all and all and all and not caring. Suddenly to care very much and to sleep to wake with it sometimes morning and all that had been there gone and everything sharp and hard and clear and sometimes a dispute about the cost. . . . I tried to tell about the night and the difference between the night and the day and how the night was better unless the day was very clean and cold and I could not tell it; as I cannot tell it now. But if you have had it you know. [The priest] had not had it but he understood that I had really wanted to go to the Abruzzi but had not gone and we were still friends, with many tastes alike, but with the difference between us. He had always known what I did not know and what, when I learned it, I was always able to forget. But I did not know that then, although I learned it later. (13-14)

The priest, as Reynolds notes, represents the spiritual in opposition to Rinaldi's carnal (First War 43). The "it" of this passage would

appear to be knowledge of the human condition, an existential knowledge for Henry drunk in the night, and one which he comes to know better than even that representative of the spirit, the priest. But what is especially significant about this passage is it is the older, matured Frederic Henry who "learned it later," "who was always able to forget," and "who cannot tell it now." It is that Frederic Henry who intrudes here.

That mature narrator provides A Farewell to Arms--and the development of the American war novel--with a deceptive, complex, and fully developed point of view. Frederic Henry appears to be a direct first person narrator, but the fact that he is a reminiscing narrator creates a "dual voice," and this serves to create much of the dramatic tension, tragic irony, and ambiguity found throughout the novel.

Much of what furnishes the tragic irony of A Farewell to Arms results from the failure of love at the end of the novel since it is this event which shapes the mature narrator Frederic Henry, and for the absolute sense of anguish or angst, it is necessary that there be no possibility of any hope in the final episode. For this reason, Hemingway had Frederic and Catherine's baby born dead, after first having allowed it to live (Reynolds First War 46).[11] A living child would have presented a possibility of hope. And this also explains why Hemingway reacted with such vehemence and avoided the special showing of the film version of A Farewell to Arms, with its happy ending, in Piggott, Arkansas, when it was released (James Gray 31). Such an injudicious tampering with the story's conclusion could not help but

undermine the entire sense of hopelessness and angst upon which the entire work rests; without the defeat of love, which ends in Catherine's death, Frederic Henry's tragic irony would be meaningless.

In terms of plot, A Farewell to Arms consists of five major episodes with all the action but the first few chapters, which are set in 1915 and 1916, and the last three, which occur in the early months of 1918, taking place in 1917. Each of the five books, as Reynolds notes, functions like a short story with a separate climax: Frederic's wounding, Catherine's pregnancy, Frederic Henry's escape from the carabinieri at the Tagliamento, the couple's escape into Switzerland, and Catherine's hospitalization in childbirth (First War 42). The war and the developing love between Catherine and Frederic are the prime areas of interest throughout the first three books after which, with Frederic Henry's justifiable separate peace--the floorwalker who elected not to return for business after being threatened with shooting (232)--the focus shifts to the lovers escaping to and living in Switzerland. The plot is serviceable and in terms of its chronological movements traditional, save for the reminiscing narrator, but it is what happens to the characters, particularly to Frederic, within the plot which is more important, as well as what the fate that befalls him has to say about the twin themes of love and war.

In a sense, A Farewell to Arms, like other war novels, is a Bildungsroman with the young Frederic Henry acquiring greater awareness through his defeat in war and his defeat in love, a defeat already experienced by the time Catherine dies. But this awareness is

only obliquely evident through the mature narrator Frederic Henry. Readers who fail to see the importance of the mature narrator misread the novel. In "Shooting the Sergeant--Frederic Henry's Puzzling Action," Charles J. Nolan, Jr., for example, incorrectly states, "to make Frederic less than heroic is to undercut his character and diminish Hemingway's meaning" (273). Frederic Henry is, in fact, throughout the novel not at all heroic; at times, he comes very close to being a bungler. There are abundant clues within the text to support such a view, with that of the Italian surgeon Rinaldi evident first. Despite the fact that Frederic Henry says of Rinaldi, he "was my age," the surgeon always assumes the role of the more mature, more experienced character, referring to Lieutenant Henry frequently as "baby" and concerning the early lustful seeking after of Miss Barkley--"You have that pleasant air of a dog in heat"--as a "little puppy" (27). In action after action, Frederic Henry makes the heroic, the "manly" attempt and fails: at billiards, he loses; fishing for lake trout, he catches nothing; and shooting the sergeant--Nolan's example of "heroic duty"--he first misses then wounds the fleeing man (which one of the two sergeants is never revealed), leaving Bonello to finish off the botched job. And, of course, when Henry is wounded his actions are intentionally unheroic: he is "eating cheese"--nearly as prosaic a task as handing out cigarettes and chocolate. Thus, Michael Reynolds is a good deal more correct than Nolan when he observes of Frederic Henry:

> . . . he is allowed none of the ambulance-corps heroics

> found in so many autobiographic accounts from the western front. Even in his almost-heroic row up the lake, it is not Catherine whom Frederic is saving, but himself. Surviving is the only virtue permitted him. (First War 60)

If so many readers, critics, and Hollywood producers over the years have insisted upon seeing Lieutenant Henry as heroic, perhaps it is because he is so well disguised, so well camouflaged, like so many other element in this novel--phoney doctors; a fixed horse race; Germans disguised as Italians, but who don't exist; and a romantic love which is a game, but then is not, but becomes one--as Robert Lewis notes (Hemingway on Love 41-42). However, it is difficult to comprehend how any reader, once he or she has realized the narrative voice employed in of A Farewell to Arms, can see Frederic Henry as heroic; the greater knowledge the mature narrator brings to the novel once he has suffered the twin failures of love and war virtually requires that the adventures of the young man be cast in an anti-romantic, anti-heroic mode.

Hemingway emphasized the unheroic in A Farewell to Arms' war chapters where the important action concerns not a successful offensive, but a disastrous retreat, which in itself is an anti-heroic action and which in the novel is rendered even more so by the panicked reactions of the Italians. The only soldiers whose deaths are described in the Caporetto section of the novel, after all, are Italians shot by other Italians, or wounded by Frederic Henry and killed by Bonello. Even the retreat and its killings are not exciting or "romanticized"

in any way, but only illogical:

> There was no danger. We had walked through two armies without incident. If Aymo had not been killed there would never have seemed to be any danger. No one had bothered us when we were in plain sight along the railway. The killing came suddenly and unreasonable. (218)

The unreasonableness of the entire action continues at the bridge on the Tagliamento where the carabinieri are methodically shooting selected officers and other suspicious characters, shooting them with the passionlessness of automatons--"if they had minds and if they worked" (224). And Frederic Henry, in his prosaic metaphor of the floorwalkers knowing they would be shot after a fire if they spoke with an accent and electing not to return when the store reopens, continues the understated, anti-heroic view after his baptism and rebirth in the Tagliamento.

What follows for A Farewell to Arms' protagonist is hardly an improvement since the romantic interlude in Switzerland with the pregnant Catherine Barkley, soon reveals that romantic love, like "romantic" war, is illusory. That love's charms quickly fade into ennui, and it is defeated before Catherine's death, as is revealed in the insipid conversations between Miss Barkley and Lieutenant Henry:

> "I'm glad you haven't [got syphilis]. Did you ever have anything like that?" [Catherine]
>
> "I had gonorrhea."
>
> "I don't want to hear about it. Was it very painful,

darling?"

"Very."

"I wish I'd had it."

"No you don't."

"I do. I wish I'd had it to be like you. I wish I'd stayed with all your girls so I could make fun of them to you."

"That's a pretty picture."

"It's not a pretty picture you having gonorrhea."

"I know it. Look at it snow now."

"I'd rather look at you. Darling, why don't you let your hair grow?"

"How grow?"

"Just grow it a little longer." (299)

This is no description of erotic passion, or of any other type of love; it is instead a portrayal of domestic banality combined with some chilling domestic infighting. Frederic Henry may have fled to Switzerland to save his life, but what he has saved it for seems entirely insignificant. Thus, there seems to be more than frivolity involved when Catherine in response to Frederic's question states, "Yes, I want to ruin you" (305). She, in fact, is doing so, and Frederic Henry acquiesces: his reply to her stated desire is after all, ". . . that's what I want too" (305). John Beversluis notes, when commenting on Catherine's inability to understand Frederic Henry's regret over his lost war, that the relationship degenerates in

Switzerland to a level where it is essentially meaningless:

> To Catherine, however, he is a "silly boy" for brooding over such trivialities. She infallibly fails to comprehend his inner turmoil, and he slowly realizes that it is pointless to talk about such things wit [sic] her. These are not the normal manifestations of a man at peace with himself. . . . As the novel runs its course, one palpably senses the hollowness of the separate peace, the erosion of the idyllic life. (23)

Thus, critic Edmund Wilson, who, in describing Catherine and Frederic speaks of "an idealized relationship, the abstractions of a lyric emotion," has completely missed the point (Wound 181). The emotion here is not lyric; it is moribund. The romantic love between Catherine and Frederic is dead before she is.

However, even in the last scenes of the novel set in Switzerland, Hemingway's reminiscing narrator creates an undercurrent of ambiguity. The question becomes, was the underlying friction between Catherine and Frederic always present, or is it something carried into the narrative by the tragic irony inherent in the mature narrator who like Elict's Tiersias has "foresuffered all"? Catherine herself reflects a similar dualism. At times throughout A Farewell to Arms she reveals a certain hard core. For example, when describing the death of her first lover, she can do so with unblinking, anti-romantic candor: "They blew him all to bits" (20). During their first "romantic" jousting, it is Catherine who recognizes and identifies the activity: "This is a

rotten game we play, isn't it?" (31). And pregnant in Switzerland, she can describe herself bluntly: "I'm like a big flour-barrel" (309). At other times, however, this candor and strength are replaced by a desire to comply, as at Stresa when she tells Frederic Henry: "I'll go any place any time you wish" (252). Catherine, like so much else in the novel, is ambiguous, as Robert W. Lewis has noted: "Perhaps the only safe conclusion one may reach about Hemingway's depiction of women in general and of Catherine Barkley in particular is that it is complex and ambivalent. . ." ("Inception" 94).

Ambivalence plays a part in both the novel and twentieth-century life, and what emerges from A Farewell to Arms in terms of its theme is a sense of the angst of the twentieth century, growing out of the failure of both war and romantic love. Frederic Henry has retreated twice: with the Italian Second Army at Caporetto and with Catherine into Switzerland in his separate peace. Neither retreat has resulted in anything salvaged, and it is that realization which the matured Frederic Henry carries with him when he narrates the novel. For him, absolutely nothing is heroic or "romantic," in any sense.

Conclusion

From John Dos Passos' One Man's Initation--1917 in 1920 to Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms in 1929, the American World War I novel developed from narratives of witness and testimony to more polished, more carefully crafted forms. In terms of structure this evolution involved a shift from highly mimetic "slice of life" plots, or

"unplots," such as that employed by Dos Passos in *One Man's Initiation--1917*, and rigid chronological design based on experience, such as that used by Thomas Boyd in *Through the Wheat*, to more intricate, complex plot-structures, best exemplified by William March's multi-leveled approach in *Company K*.

The development of character mirrors the evolution of plot within the war novel. Early protagonists such as Martin Howe and William Hicks are often autobiographical creations and frequently lack depth, motivation, and true complexity; in short, they exhibit a "flatness." With first Dos Passos in *Three Soldiers* and later William March in *Company K*, this element of the novels begins to change, although much of the complexity of March's characters is more a result of his approach to the narrative than a case of carefully drawn dynamic portraits of protagonists. However, Ernest Hemingway's Frederic Henry represents a psycholcgically complex development, rendered doubly so by the reminiscing narrator, who, of course, lends much of what occurs in *A Farewell to Arms* its underlying irony.

Closely connected with characterization is the problem of point of view. The earliest war novels such as *One Man's Initiation--1917* and *Through the Wheat* are told from the perspective of their chief characters, and those characters are based upon the experiences of the authors themselves. The "truth" revealed from the perspectives of these simply developed characters is often one-dimensional; the experience conveyed is simply that of the author-witness. With *Three Soldiers*, however, Dos Passos expanded the range of experience by

employing three separate points of view, and "truth" began to be multi-faceted. With William March and his one hundred and thirteen narrator-witnesses, multiple experiences, multiple "truths," and multiple ambiguities became possible. March's narrators, a few of whom are only of peripheral importance to the narrative, sometimes offer differing and at times conflicting accounts of events and other persons. Thus, Captain Matlock is usually described by his men as a blustering, petty tyrant, but Private Brucker finds him "not a bad guy" (65). And no ambiguity is more profound than the description of Matlock's death since evidence in the text, found in Private Yeoman's testimony, suggests that he hasn't died at all. These intentionally obscured and partially revealed truths abound in Company K and are given emphasis by the multiple structure and delayed revelation method employed in the novel. In the most finely crafted narrative voice, that of the mature Frederic Henry, point of view helps to create a sustained level of ambiguity throughout A Farewell to Arms: characters, events, and themes are all filtered through that voice, constantly restructuring the past.

However, with the movement away from narratives of witness and testimony, the use of physical description of actions and events, which provided a sense of immediate authenticity, was reduced. As novelists like Hemingway and March, and the improving Dos Passos, become concerned with the more literary aspects of the war novel, the journalistic quality is diminished. Truth is no longer, as it was with Henri Barbusse, something to be observed and recorded by an author-

witness, a mere matter of reporting external, atomistic realities. Beginning in the late 1920s, thanks to the ambiguity created by multiple narrators and narrators who are not what they first appear to be, truth becomes highly individualized and itself terribly ambiguous. Surface details, the physical description of conflict and carnage, are reduced in scope and detail. The emphasis within the war novels shifts from reporting external physical facts to revealing the multiple psychological effects caused by warfare. In doing so, the idea of "truth" itself undergoes a fundamental change.

Yet themes may and do remain the same: war is an inhumane business, and insane technological warfare is more inhumane than other forms. Moreover, later novelists such as Hemingway continue the note of protest, first sounded by writers such as La Motte and Barbusse, with passages such as ". . . the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it." The protest itself springs from an awareness of the inherently ironic nature of the Great War.

That irony is perhaps the one factor that remains constant throughout these novels. For, in addition to their themes of war as hellish experience, war as industrial insanity, and the poverty of the moral codes and beliefs of the Genteel Tradition, each novel encompasses a terrible irony, and that irony springs from the disparity between youthful idealism and mature knowledge born out of war experience--or in the case of Frederic Henry, mature knowledge born of war and romantic love experience. Each of the five novels demonstrates

what Paul Fussell found to be the prime legacy of the First World War: ". . . there seems to be one dominating form of modern understanding; that it is essentially ironic and that it originates largely in the application of mind and memory to the events of the Great War" (35).

In recreating the conditions of the Great War, the war novel necessarily restated its essential irony, but these novels also provided mimetic recreations of the war as it existed for those who experienced it. And the problem of mimetic accuracy--the relationship between description and event--within these novels is one which must be examined.

NOTES

[1] Joseph H. Wrenn in his John Dos Passos suggests a possible source for Tom Randolph and his "intellectual hedonism" in the person of the novelist's father John Randolph Dos Passos, who apparently did exhibit the same type of personality (51).

[2] In another example of the mimetic nature of One Man's Initiation--1917's protagonist, Martin and his creator seem to have shared the same view of prostitution, with Dos Passos then in Italy writing in his diary on December 7, 1917: "The people I'm with want to go whoring, I wish I did. It is such a simple, naive way of amusing oneself--why people think it worth the trouble I can't imagine" (Fourteenth Chronicle 103).

[3] This is not to suggest that Thomas Boyd was always so inexpert in his handling of character and plot. Several of his short stories, published in Points of Honor, are well written and demonstrate a mastery of technique. "The Long Shot," for example, concerns the experiences of one Duncan Milner, who hesitates to shoot a German artillery observer. Moments later Milner is gassed and as a result begins a physical decline that, at home in the United States, destroys his marriage and ends with him shooting and killing his wife's lover; thus, the delayed shot becomes a very long shot indeed. Boyd handles the irony in the story well, and Milner's character as well as the

structure of the story are carefully drawn (Points of Honor 250).

[4] John Dos Passos in a letter written in April 1922 to Theodore Stanton protested ". . . Three Soldiers is not, as people have tried to make out, autobiography" (Fourteenth Chronicle 350). While primarily a creative work, the novel does have some autobiographical elements.

[5] There were several such Hollywood patriotic productions in 1917-1918, and after. Four possibilities for the film watched by Dos Passos, all of them 1918 productions, are The Claws of the Hun; To Hell with the Kaiser; The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin; and My Four Years in Germany. The latter, based on a memoir by James W. Gerard, appears to be especially promising:

> After the brutal conquest of Belgium, German troops are shown slaughtering innocent refugees and tormenting prisoners-of-war. Near the end of the film, one of the German officials boasts that "America Won't Fight," a title which dissolves into newsreel footage of President Wilson and marching American soldiers. Soon American troops are seen fighting their way across the European battlefields. As he bayonets another German soldier, a young American doughboy turns to his companions and says, "I promised Dad I'd get six." (Ward 55-56)

[6] Linda Wagner finds Chrisfield's murder of Anderson without sufficient motivation, saying if Dos Passos had provided such a demonstration of motivation, ". . . perhaps Chrisfield's character as an innocent gone astray or an Indiana Ahab mindful only of revenge

would be interesting" (20). This seems to miss the point. Chrisfield is never an innocent and doesn't go astray. He is a psychopath when he first appears in the text and remains one until the very end; he is "astray" from the very beginning.

[7] Wayne Miller in An Armed America: Its Face in Fiction argues persuasively that Dos Passos in his two First World War novels ". . . establish[ed] the form most of the novels occasioned by World War II and the Korean War would take." Miller observes that Dos Passos' use of a single military unit and the introduction of individuals from different social and ethnic groups set a standard for later war novelists (108-09).

[8] There is a disturbing element here, and it is one which runs counter to the concept that the novels of the First World War are mimetic and thus represent a growth, an additional development, in the realistic literary tradition. Obviously, dead men don't "tell tales," and March's insistence on having them do so may be one result of the use of multiple narrators, a problem Scholes and Kellogg also note: "The tendency of modern writers to multiply narrators or to circumvent the restrictions of empirical eye-witness narrators are signs of the decline of 'realism' as an esthetic force in narrative" (262-63).

[9] Hemingway's short fiction written during the 1920s, of course, at times relates, and often directly, to A Farewell to Arms. Thus, "A Very Short Story"'s two characters, the unnamed "he" and Luz, are reminiscent of Frederic and Catherine in terms of the military hospital

setting and the couple's feeling "as though they were married," but they are also much more closely related to Hemingway and Agnes von Kurowsky. The story's denouement is solidly autobiographical, save for the gonorrhea contacted in a taxicab which would seem to owe a debt to Flaubert and his good Madame. The danger of romantic love is also evident in "In Another Country" where the major notes that "a man must not marry" and his young wife almost immediately dies. As in the case of Frederic Henry, the loss of "it" in this short story would seem to point not to a loss of the loved one, but something more fundamentally masculine, perhaps masculinity itself: a dangerous loss for a hunting hawk--and even a non-hunting hawk--on the Piave during the Great War. (And also a very old theme.)

[10] In "Frederick [sic] Henry: The Hemingway Hero as Storyteller," Forrest Robinson makes the same observation. In response to the questions of who is the protagonist and what is the agon, or struggle, he finds the protagonist is Frederic Henry as narrator, whose re-enactment of the story constitutes the agon (13).

[11] The usual source for the Caesarean section in A Farewell to Arms is thought to be Pauline Pfeiffer, Hemingway's second wife, who delivered a child through Caesarean at the time the novel's conclusion was being written--and being rewritten several times. But Robert McIlvaine in a 1971 "Note" in American Literature points to another possible source, arguing that this episode in Hemingway's novel and one in Dreiser's The Genius are virtually identical, right down to the

description of the baby as a "skinned rabbit" (446-47). However, James Brasch and Joseph Sigman do not list The Genius as being among the books in Hemingway's library in their examination of that collection. In fact, Hemingway does not appear to have owned any of Theodore Dreiser's novels.

CHAPTER IV. MIMETIC FEATURES OF THE WAR NOVELS

Works such as John Dos Passos' One Man's Initiation--1917 and Thomas Boyd's Through the Wheat were obvious attempts to create fictional works based upon the authors' experiences, and while Dos Passos in Three Soldiers and March and Hemingway in their World War I novels never completely abandoned the use of personal experience, they did become concerned with the literary craftsmanship of their novels and abandoned the single perspective of the autobiographical narrator evident in the earliest war novels. However, as a group, the five war novels demonstrate something beyond a pattern of evolution from novel as autobiography to novel as literary art. They also provide a broad view of the war itself, from its trench life and battles to its less violent, but no less disjunctive, effects on the soldiers and volunteers who experienced it away from the front.

Paul Fussell has noted the actions of military units during World War I frequently assumed a tripartite structure, with individual soldiers spending roughly equal amounts of time at the front and in support and reserve positions (125). However, it is also possible to consider the Great War in terms of a broader triadic structure: military existence in the trenches and on the battlefield, the after-effects of battle, and military life away from the front. This three-fold pattern, which is evident in historical accounts of the conflict and in memoirs, is often painstakingly duplicated in the fiction of the Great War, and certain socio-historic elements of each of these stages are recreated as well, although because of its

intrinsically dramatic nature, trench warfare, not surprisingly, is the most immediately apparent element in these novels. Trench warfare itself was a multifaceted experience, consisting of a surprisingly dull day-to-day existence, the paradox of no man's land, artillery bombardment, poison gas, and combat. Shared by many soldiers, these experiences were factual elements recreated in many World War I novels, both those of witness and testimony and those concerned with fiction as craft.

The Front: Fictional Re-creations of Hell

No war since November 1918 has duplicated the conditions found in northern France and Belgium during much of the Great War where millions of French, British, Belgian, Colonial, German, and later American soldiers huddled in foul trenches beset by discomfort, cold, disease, a penetrating stench, and hordes of vermin--from clouds of flies and packs of rats, which fed on the dead, to lice, which feasted on the living. This feature of the war is most prevalent in the works of European novelist-soldiers such as Barbusse and Remarque since Europeans experienced the static trench warfare of late 1914 to March 1918 to a much greater extent than did Americans. Yet this aspect of the Great War is not lacking in the works of the American novelists; it is, however, more evident in the novels of front-line combatants such as March and Boyd than it is among the works of ambulance drivers and support personnel such as Dos Passos, who observed the war as distant, strangely detatched spectators.

One of the most disagreeable aspects of the Great War's trenches undoubtedly was the smell associated with them; odors originated not just in the common daily tasks of infantrymen in front-line positions, but from the rotting dead as well, as John Ellis has noted in his Eye-deep in Hell:

> [The stench] is alluded to in almost every contemporary account, yet it is almost impossible to convey accurately. It was compounded of a score of things: the chloride of lime that was liberally scattered to minimize the risk of infection, the creosol that was sprayed around to get rid of the flies, the contents of the latrines, the smoke from the braziers, and the sweat of the men. . . . But predominantly it was a smell of putrefaction. One British private said that his "overriding memory of all his time on the Western Front was the smell." Another in his diary spoke of "a penetrating and filthy stench . . . a combination of mildew, rotting vegetation and the stink which rises from the decomposing bodies of men and animals. This smell seems a permanent feature of the firing line." The odour was almost unbearable in the great charnel houses of the front, Ypres, the Somme, Verdun. . . . A Frenchman who fought in [the Verdun] sector wrote, "We all had on us the stench of dead bodies. The bread we ate, the stagnant water we drank, everything we touched had a rotten smell, owing to the fact that the earth around us was literally stuffed with corpses." (58-59)

The most evident attempt to depict this aspect of the World War I battlefield among the American war novelists may be found in Thomas Boyd's Through the Wheat. Boyd, after all, excelled at description and his purpose in his narrative of witness and testimony was to present the war, or at least its physical realities, with verisimilitude:

> As the sun rose, the heat growing more intense, the nauseating smell from the corpses in the field seemed to coat all objects in one's line of vision with a sticky green. Even the tops of wheat, standing stiffly in the field, looked as if they were covered with a fetid substance.
>
> Occasionally, as the day advanced, a man would labor over the opening of a can of Argentina beef with the point of his bayonet. And then the contents would be exposed, green and sepulchrally white, the odor mingling and not quite immersed in the odor of decaying human flesh. (133)

Of course, one problem that Boyd had in this passage is the difficulty in describing a "nauseating smell." Ultimately, he employs synesthesia and uses visual imagery--"sticky green," "fetid substance," and in a juxtaposition in reference to the Argentina beef, that is, another dead body, "sepulchrally white"--to suggest the smell of the decaying dead. Perhaps, as Ellis observed, it is almost impossible to convey that stench accurately, and Boyd's combination of olfactory and visual imagery represents all that might be expected of such an attempt. However, Boyd's attempt does manage somehow to convey a sense of the revolting nature of the battlefield's odors. He also manages to

suggest an even greater horror when he juxtaposes the smell of the rotting dead with the smell of the opened can of beef, that is, the suggestion of the eating of human flesh.

Beyond its odors, however, much of trench-life, at least in quiet sectors--and there were sectors of the Great War's trench system that were inactive from 1914 to November 1918 (Ashworth 21)--frequently involved a great deal of boredom and little activity. What danger that did exist normally came not from, as might be expected, artillery, poison gas, or machine gun bullets, which were to be feared primarily at the time of an enemy advance or an Allied offensive, but from sniper fire:

> Whizz bangs [i.e., artillery] might creep forward to the support line, but they did so rarely. . . . Machine guns swept the parapet accurately, but the machine gun was basically a defensive weapon reluctant to give away its position needlessly. The fixed rifle worked on exposed places . . . , but fixed rifles could be easily evaded by alert men. The real killer was the sniper.
>
> Snipers worked in nests behind the front line, though a few were in camouflaged suits in no-man's-land. The mechanic might be of any age. . . . The accuracy that snipers achieved was impressive. Jack recalled Lieutenant Fenton of the Cameronians looking twice over a parapet at the same spot and being hit the second time by two snipers at the same time. (Winter 90)

Such a potent representative of the Great War's trench warfare and its senseless slaughter could not be overlooked by the novelists, and William March seems to have been particularly impressed with the image of the hidden rifleman, methodically mowing down his victims. His Company K features two references to snipers: one a portrayal of an American "mechanic" and the second an intended victim's response to sniper fire. Sergeant Wilbur Tietjen, who emphasizes the need for patience as well as accuracy in his rifle-craft, "scores" nine kills out of a possible twelve in July and comments on the emotionless nature of his task: "You see, the men were so far away, it didn't seem like killing anybody, really. In fact, I never thought of them as men, but as dolls, and it was hard to believe anything as small as that could feel pain or sorrow" (24-25). Private Leo Hastings, on the other hand, adds a bit of macabre humor when he tantalizes a German sniper by repeatedly offering himself as a target and forcing the rifleman to miss: "I'd shot with telescopic sights myself and I knew no sniper in the world could hit a man who varied his stride. . ." (99).

Part of the reason for the sniper's effectiveness, of course, was that he was unseen, and one common observation about the Great War's battlefields, in fictional and non-fictional accounts, is precisely that; the war's inherent, impersonal mayhem was underscored by the invisibility of the enemy:

> Day or night the enemy was hardly ever seen. Greenwell was in the front line for seventy-one days before he fleetingly saw a German. Each side therefore built up a picture of

> the enemy just like blinded men. Patrol habits, working-party routes, machine-gun positions were all known. Sometimes men heard sneezes or a sergeant-major bawling out a man. Each morning they saw the blue smoke of breakfast fires. Shells would come over for ten minutes every three hours or a dozen at midday as much as to say "we've got your range, so no monkey business." All these pieces of the jigsaw would be assembled until a reasonably complete mental map had been built up from the sounds of physical movement. (Winter 88-89)

The invisible quality of the enemy in the opposing trenches and the general inactivity this mode of warfare produced are also recorded by Thomas Boyd and William March. For Boyd's protagonist Hicks, "After the first few days, life in the trenches became inordinately dull, so dull that an occasional shell fired from the artillery of either side was a signal for the members of the platoon to step into the trench and speculate where it struck" (Through the Wheat 23). March's Private Roger Jones says of the trenches near Verdun, "There wasn't a square-head in sight, and except for the fact that they fired a machine gun every once in a while, and sent up a rocket, you wouldn't have known there was anybody ahead of us at all" (Company K 17). Hemingway's Frederic Henry, for that matter, catches only fleeting glimpses of enemy bicycle troops and a staff officer's car as he retreats toward the Tagliamento, and the true danger arises not from Germans or Austrians but from panicked Italians, who fittingly enough also often remain unseen. The deceptive inactivity of trench life with only its

occasional artillery shell or sniper's bullet to shatter the calm constitutes the paradox of no man's land. What Isaac Rosenberg referred to as "the sleeping green between" might appear peaceful, vacant, and unthreatening, but at any moment an artillery or gas bombardment, an enemy advance, or an Allied offensive could turn the deceptive calm into something quite different.

Despite the fact that dull, daily trench life no doubt made up the majority of the front-line experience of the World War I soldier--and even then among the British produced some seven thousand casualties daily (Fussell 41)--it was active warfare with its bombardments, advances, gas, grenades, and machine guns which attracted the attention of commentators on the Great War, historians and novelists alike. The most distinctive feature of the First World War was its extensive use of artillery, and after April 22, 1915, artillery with poison gas, which reached a level unparalleled anytime since in the twentieth century, save perhaps by the Russians during the Battle of Berlin in 1945. Henry Ellis comments on this aspect of the Great War's battle fields:

> In quantitative terms alone the artillery war staggers the imagination. During the war the British fired off over 170 million rounds of all types--more than five million tons. The expenditure on ammunition was particularly awesome. In one day in September 1917 almost a million rounds were fired. During the first two weeks of the Third Battle of Ypres, 4,283,500 rounds were fired at a cost of £22,211,398

14 s. 4 d.

> Barrages were not always so intensive. In a light barrage, usually in the afternoon, one could expect about a half a dozen shells to land in the immediate vicinity every ten minutes. In a big bombardment, often the prelude to an enemy assault, howitzers supplemented the ordinary field guns, and twenty to thirty shells would be landing in a company sector every minute. For every three to four heavy explosive howitzer shells there would be one shrapnel to make sure the troops kept their heads down. . . .
>
> To experience this type of bombardment was a physical and mental torture. (62)

Since exposure to the effects of artillery was both so far outside the normal range of human experience and such a "physical and mental torture," it is little wonder that descriptions of the barrage play an extensive role in virtually all accounts of the Great War, from fictional to non-fictional and from poetry to prose.

The four American war novelists all at least touch upon artillery bombardment, and March and Boyd provide elaborate, detailed descriptions of its effects. In Company K, Private Jeremiah Easton describes a barrage in terms of its effects from the offensive viewpoint:

> Instantly a thousand guns were firing in a roaring, flashing semi-circle, and a thousand shells were flying through the air and exploding in the German lines. The barrage lasted

> for three hours and then, just at daybreak, it lifted. From where I was, I could see our men going over, the early light gleaming against fixed bayonets. But there was little for them to do, for there was nothing left of the German trenches or the surrounding terrain: Not a tree, not a blade of grass. Nothing living. Nothing at all. The dead lay thick in the trenches, in strange and twisted groups. . . . (77-78)

However, the more common version of artillery bombardment isn't related from the offensive viewpoint, as in March's case, but rather from that of the defense, from the vantage point of helpless and hapless soldiers exposed to tons of exploding shells, as with Thomas Boyd:

> The platoon had been subjected to heavy bombardment since, two weeks earlier, they had occupied the ravine, but upon this particular afternoon there was a force, a spitefulness, an overwhelming, dull, sickening insistence to the dropping, exploding shells that made each one of the men feel that, as any of them would have expressed it, "one of them seabags has got my name marked on it in big letters." The shells hammered over, shaking the sides of the ravine as they broke and sending particles of flying steel through the air, to land with a "zip" on the ground. Men called for stretcher bearers until there were no more stretcher bearers, and as it seemed, as if there were no more men to call. And meanwhile the thick, pungent smoke from the exploding shells was filling up the ravine and seeking out the throats and

> eyes of the men, to blind and choke them. Before it was over there were men, ostrich-like, with their heads in their burrows as far as they could get them. Many of them were blubbering, not so much from fright as from nerves that had broken under the insistent battering of the shells. (Through the Wheat 136-37)

Perhaps one of the most surprising facts about the Great War's massive artillery bombardments, with their choking fumes and flying shell fragments, as Boyd accurately describes, is that men did survive them, often in deep, reinforced dug-outs, and emerge to repulse enemy attacks.

The non-combatant, ambulance-driving volunteers Dos Passos and Hemingway also touch upon artillery fire and its effects. In Dos Passos' case, his Martin Howe exhibits the same, curiously detached observer's stance that typifies his every response:

> Now and then, like some ungainly bird, a high calibre shell trundled through the air overhead; after its noise had completely died away would come the thud of the explosion. It was like battledore and shuttlecock, these huge masses whirling through the evening far above his head, now from one side, now from the other. It gave him somehow a cosy feeling of safety, as if he were under some sort of a bridge over which freight-cars were shunted madly to and fro. (One Man's Initiation--1917 34-35)

Martin's ability to experience "a cosy feeling of safety" as tons of high explosive thunder overhead is directly opposed to the response of

almost every other commentator on the Great War's artillery bombardments. Only someone far removed, safely out of harm's way, and uninvolved with military action could display such an attitude. Ernest Hemingway's use of this war motif is more typical, but as with other potentially graphic elements of the Great War, the author of A Farewell to Arms carefully avoids repeating descriptions which by 1929 had become commonplace. Instead the final result of artillery warfare is rendered concisely and chillingly in the description of the death of Catherine Barkley's first lover. Its purpose is to deflate the heroic and "romantic" view of warfare:

> ". . . I started when he did. I remember having a silly idea he might come to the hospital where I was. With a sabre cut, I suppose, and a bandage around his head. Or shot through the shoulder. Something picturesque."
>
> "This is the picturesque front," I said.
>
> "Yes," she said. "People can't realize what France is like. If they did, it couldn't all go on. He didn't have a sabre cut. They blew him all to bits." (20)

Understated and anti-heroic, Hemingway's six words--"They blew him all to bits"--summarize the end of many of the Great War's artillery victims, and they do so without fanfare.[1]

Closely connected with artillery bombardment was the use of poison gas, at least after the warring nations had developed shells which would release the gas on impact. Originally designed as a "humane" weapon which would incapacitate rather than kill, poison gas

technology soon advanced from chlorine to other types: the extremely lethal phosgene and extremely painful mustard (Ellis 65-67). No effective antidote was ever found for mustard gas, which, although not particularly deadly since only two percent of its victims actually died (Winter 123), was intensely effective as an incapacitating agent:

> The effects of the gas would be felt only two or three hours after exposure. Sneezing and copious mucus would develop as if a dose of flu were on the way. Then the eyelids would swell and close, with an accompanying sensation of burning in the throat. Where bare skin had been exposed, moist red patches just as in scarlet fever grew, the patches becoming massive blisters within twenty-four hours. Thereafter there would arrive severe headaches, rise in pulse rate and temperature, pneumonia. All this would follow from exposure to just one part of the gas in ten million parts of air. In more severe exposures men might cough up a cast of their mucous membranes, lose their genitals or be burnt right through to the bone. (Winter 122)

Dos Passos, in One Man's Initiation--1917, mentions the "new" gas that "corrodes the lungs as if they were rotten in a dead body" (13), and Corporal Loyd Somerville in March's Company K is a patient in a ward where all the patients are gas victims waiting to die (41). But it is Thomas Boyd in Through the Wheat who provides the most detailed description of the effects of a gas attack, no doubt because he had personally experienced one, and his autobiographical protagonist

William Hicks shares his misfortune:

> Until he was hoarse and the gas had burned his eyes so that they were coals of fire, Hicks called for help. But none came. His eyes smarting dreadfully, Hicks wrapped his coat around his head and took up his night's vigil beside the wounded man. The bombardment continued most of the night. . . .
>
> In the gray light of early morning Hicks felt the fury of impotence as he tried to rise. He unwound the coat that covered his head, forgetful, unmindful for the moment of the man whom he had guarded during the night. He seemed fastened to the surface of the stone. Dimly he knew that his legs burned with an awful pain. (158-59)

Boyd, as is usually the case in his war descriptions, sketches the gas's effects accurately--the damaged eyes, the burns on exposed skin, and the general incapacity. Later, his protagonist Hicks returns to his company, the sores on his legs not completely healed.

However, in most war accounts, fictional and non-fictional, the climactic moment wasn't experienced by soldiers suffering through gas or artillery attacks, but rather occurred during the advance: the charge toward an entrenched enemy, who had usually been exposed to an artillery barrage, by troops going "over the top" and across no man's land. One of the most frequently reported phenomena associated with the attack was its unreal, dream-like quality; men moved forward mechanically, responded automatically, and after a battle could rarely

describe the actions they had undertaken with any continuity or detail:

> To those going forward everything around them seemed strangely unreal, and they saw it, if at all, only as indifferent observers. Having come to terms with their fears and forced themselves over the top, the men gladly immersed themselves in the collective activity of their unit, and completely abandoned their powers of independent observation and assessment. Once the dread of the future became an ongoing reality the soldiers felt as though what they did was done independently of their own volition. (Ellis 101)

Of the four war novelists, it is Thomas Boyd who manages best to recreate this aspect of the Great War's battlefield.[2] His protagonist William Hicks moves through battle in a dream-like state:

> Whizzing past, the machine-gun bullets were annoying little insects. Hicks struck at his face, trying to shoo the bothering little creatures away. How damned persistent they were! He reached the strands of barbed wire which lay between him and the enemy and calmly picked out a place where the wire had been broken, and walked through. Now he had entered the fringe of the forest. Dimly he recognized a face before him to be that of a German. There was the oddly shaped helmet covering his head, the utilitarian gray of the German uniform. The face did not at all appear barbaric. It was quite youthful, the chin covered with a white down. He veered the muzzle of his rifle toward the face, and without

raising his rifle to his shoulder, pulled the trigger. The face disappeared.

Gray uniforms, with helmets like distorted flower-pots, fled through the woods, in front of the mass of men that now surged forward. Hicks followed after them, not particularly desirous of stopping them, but wanting to overtake them before they reached the crest of the hill. (Through the Wheat 246-47)

Hicks, in short, walks through battle like an automaton, reacting "calmly," functioning mechanically, unthinkingly, and yet effectively. The description of his actions, which might at first appear fantastic, is nevertheless psychologically valid, historically accurate, and in keeping with the normal "unreal" actions of soldiers in combat.[3]

The war novels of Hemingway, Boyd, Dos Passos, and March, therefore, demonstrate a mimetic re-creation of the Great War's battlefields, from their oppressive ennui, to their artillery horrors, to their nightmarish attacks. But these novels, too, provide a mimetic re-creation in their treatment of the aftermath of battle, the residue remaining after the artillery, poison gas, and machine gun bullets had done their work.

After the Battle: War Dead, War Wounded, and War Psychosis

Warfare has always left its debris of wounded and dead in its wake, but during the Great War with its concentrated battle zones, the destruction remaining after an attack or bombardment reached new

levels of revolting horror, even greater perhaps than World War II which usually scattered its dead over a wider geographic area. The aftermath of battle with its war dead, wounded, and psychologically shattered survivors constituted as large a part of the Great War experience as actual combat itself, and as such it is portrayed with mimetic fidelity to fact in World War I's "realistic" literature.

The most obvious result of the First World War's battles was the dead, and the sight of a corpse, a reminder to those who saw it of their own mortality, had a deep and lasting effect on many of World War I's participants. In his socio-historic study of the Great War, Death's Men, Denis Winter notes N. Gladden's reaction to the sight of a newly dead soldier:

> The dead man lay amidst earth and broken timber. It seemed like a sacrilege to step over him but there was no evading the issue. Never before had I seen a man who had just been killed. A glance was enough. His face and body were terribly gashed as though some terrific force had pressed him down, and blood flowed from a dozen fearful wounds. The smell of blood mixed with the fumes of the shell filled me with nausea. Only a great effort saved my limbs from giving way beneath me. I could see from the sick grey faces of the file that these feelings were generally shared. A voice seemed to whisper with unchallengeable logic, "Why shouldn't you be the next?" (133)

The dead, and sometimes the reaction of the living to them, play a

role in most of the war fiction, but it is Thomas Boyd, whose near-journalistic narrative recreates front-line experience with minute and often graphic detail, who provides the most complete description among the American novelists of the First World War:

> Bodies were carried to the clearing marked off for the temporary burial-place, rolled in a blanket, and dropped into shallow holes. Before they were dumped into their temporary graves, their pockets were searched and the contents placed in little piles on the ground. Some of the bodies were unrecognizable, although the men at work had seen them and talked with them the day before. One or two of the bodies looked as if life had fled them peacefully. The uniforms were unspotted with blood, the faces were calm. But some of the faces were distorted. The lips rose from the teeth and made them look like fangs. One body, on which the skin looked like liver, had been struck lifeless a few days earlier. It stunk terrifically, and when Lepere's hands sought out the neck for the identification tag, his fingers sank into the flesh. But he went stoidly on about his work. Hicks turned his body and engaged in a paroxysm of gagging. He turned again, his face the color of a piece of paper. The work went on. (Through the Wheat 152-53)

Hicks' physical reaction to this charnel scene is nothing if not probable, and Boyd's careful and detailed description of the burial process and the appearance of the dead reflect his concern with

offering accurate testimony on the external reality of the war. However, after this episode, and other similar events within Through the Wheat, Hicks immediately dines and apparently with undiminished appetite. This at first appears incongruous, but as Denis Winter reveals, it, too, may be a factual representation of the war's actuality: "Confronted with so many visible witnesses [of its own mortality], the mind tried to defend itself by a steadfast refusal to think beyond the concrete and immediate" (132). Better to dwell only on immediate needs than to think of Gladden's question, "Why shouldn't you be the next?"

Boyd, Dos Passos, and March each provide descriptions of the dead and dying, and each manages to at least suggest the macabre grotesqueness of the newly slain: ". . . twisted in grotesque knots like angleworms in a can" comments Private Richard Mundy in Company K (90). But Ernest Hemingway's dead in A Farewell to Arms are described with the same understated, intentionally muted tone which is typical of most war descriptions in the novel. The body of the sergeant of engineers, gunned down by Lieutenant Henry and finished off by Bonello, is more noted than described, and that of the dying Aymo merits only a brief sketch, given with what is nearly clinical detachment:

> We pulled him down on the other side and turned him over. "His head ought to be uphill," I said. Piani moved him around. He lay in the mud on the side of the embankment, his feet pointing downhill, breathing blood irregularly. The three of us squatted over him in the rain. He was hit low in

> the back of the neck and the bullet had ranged upward and come out under the right eye. He died while I was stopping up the two holes. (213)

With Hemingway in A Farewell to Arms, there are no distorted faces or grotesque positions; the deaths in the novel merit only brief mention and produce no concern in Frederic Henry about his own mortality, save perhaps for the ironic comment made by the mature narrator that the world ". . . kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry" (249).

Those whom the Great War didn't kill or spare, it wounded. And within the American novels of the First World War, wounds and their treatment receive a good deal of attention. There were, of course, several categories of those injured in battle from the lightly, or walking, wounded to men who suffered horrendous wounds that killed them slowly. This simple and essential fact was not lost on military authorities, and as a result guidelines were established on whom to save: "[Stretcher bearers'] orders were to take the less badly wounded. In the same spirit, priority of movement in the trenches went first to ammunition, second to reinforcements, and third to the wounded" (Winter 196). Ambulance driver Martin Howe in One Man's Initiation---1917 learns this lesson in the Great War's priorities, as well as one in futility, when he helps a badly wounded soldier to a military hospital: "'Needn't have troubled to have brought him,' said the hospital orderly, as blood dripped fast from the stretcher, black in the light

of the lantern. 'He's pretty near dead now. He won't last long'" (91). Such a callous response to the suffering of the dying, wasn't the only effect of the military's ranking of the wounded according to the severity of their injuries. Those whose wounds were such that they would recover and return to the front were rescued first; those who would recover and be invalided out of the armed services were rescued next, if at all.

Perhaps at least in part because of this highly utilitarian approach to the practice of medicine, military hospitals, and military medical personnel are frequently portrayed in an unfavorable manner in many of the war novels. William March, for example, in Company K had little good to say about the army's medical establishment. When March's Private William Anderson is wounded, he must complain and threaten in order to receive morphine from his doctors, who are reserving their small supply for officers (37-38). And when Private Lucien Janoff develops blisters under the calluses on his heels, he has Roy Winters "split" his heels and "get the pus out," responding to Winters' first suggestion that he go to a dressing station: "I know well enough what those babies will do to me: They'll give me chloroform, and when I wake up my feet will be cut off at the ankles. . . . 'What the hell you kicking about?' they'll say to me; 'your heels don't hurt you no more, do they?'" (20). This general view of the military medical establishment occurs in other war novels as well. In Thomas Boyd's Through the Wheat, after being gassed, Hicks complains about the terrible food; lazy, thieving orderlies; and a first aid

officer whose bed-side manner consists of: "Goddamn it, get up, you coward. . . . What the hell do you mean by taking a wounded man's place?" (169). And Frederic Henry in A Farewell to Arms must suffer under the care of doctors whose treatment for his wounded legs consists of a "sun cure" until he is rescued by the competent Doctor Valentini (97-99).

Although Boyd, March, and Hemingway negatively portray American and Italian medical personnel, a passage by A. West quoted in Denis Winter's Death's Men on the British military hospitals suggests the novelists' complaints may have been based on fact, applicable to the medical establishments of all the Great War's armies:

> Brutal injections. Regulation quantity given to every man regardless of his condition. Eye wash for inspections. Dying men made to sit up and smile. Doctors looked on every man as a skrimshanker. Brutality in treatment of patients when they were unwilling to undergo a particular cure. . . . Lack of men entailed suffering to those confined in bed. Couldn't relieve themselves without bed pans but no one to bring them. People nearly crying with pain. Gloomy buildings with bathroom taps all loose and tied to the wall with string. . . . Meals never hot, worse than ordinary camp food and only served at strictly regulated times. If men arrived at night, no meal until brekker at eight next morning. (202)

The treatment, in short, in many military medical facilities appears to have been terrible, and March's Private Janoff's reluctance to

subject himself to it is completely understandable.

Yet, not all wounds suffered during the Great War were physical; the psychologically wounded, the "shell shocked," also figured among those incapacitated by battle.[4] Although it can safely be assumed that there were cases of men psychologically damaged by battle in earlier wars, the First World War with its intense artillery bombardments, static trench warfare, and unnerving dashes across no man's land seems to have brought the phenomenon into public, and literary, view for the first time, although the initial response to cases of psychological collapse among their soldiers by some military authorities consisted of treating them as instances of cowardice and ordering such corrective measures as tying those exhibiting symptoms to barbed wire in front of the trenches (Spiller 83-85).[5] John Ellis in Eye-Deep in Hell comments on the condition of the worst shell-shock victims:

> The ordinary soldier usually had to endure until his breakdown actually occurred, and even then he might be merely shunted off into some carefully partitioned Bedlam. Jeffrey Farnol was once being shown around a Base Hospital when they came across what the doctor blithely referred to as the "mad ward." Farnol described a room full of men with a "vagueness of gaze, a loose-lipped, too-ready smile, a vacancy of expression. Some were there who scowled sullenly enough, others who crouched apart, solitary souls, who, I learned, felt themselves outcast: others who crouched in corners haunted by the dread of the pursuing vengeance always at

hand." (118)

And Ellis also notes that shell shock was not an easily defined state, but ". . . an extreme point along a steady progression of emotional torment" (119). In other words, it could be found among the Great War's combatants in various degrees, and this aspect of it is evident in American First World War fiction.

Thomas Boyd's protagonist William Hicks may, for example, be seen as a victim of shell shock, at least of a milder form of it, at the end of Through the Wheat: "No longer did anything matter--neither the bayonets, the bullets, the barbed wire, the dead, nor the living. The soul of Hicks was numb" (266). But William March describes a worse case in Private Leslie Westmore, who, to escape the war and its possibility of death, is stricken with psychosomatic blindness (60--62). The best description of shell shock, however, is that by Ernest Hemingway, not in A Farewell to Arms, where the condition does not occur, but in the short story, "A Way You'll Never Be," where a once-wounded Nick Adams has returned to light duty as an American morale booster for Italian troops. In response to a question on his health by Paravicini, Nick replies:

> "I'm fine. I'm perfectly all right."
>
> "No. I mean really."
>
> "I'm all right. I can't sleep without a light of some sort. That's all I have now."
>
> "I said it should have been trepanned. I'm no doctor but I know that."

"Well, they thought it was better to have it absorb, and that's what I got. What's the matter? I don't seem crazy to you, do I?"

"You seem in top-hole shape."

"It's a hell of a nuisance once they've had you certified as nutty," Nick said. "No one ever has any confidence in you again." (Short Stories 407)

Later in the story Nick's mental state deteriorates, and it is obvious that he is not "all right." His psychological health has been affected both by a wound---". . . the man with the beard who looked at him over the sights of the rifle, quite calmly before squeezing off, the white flash and clublike impact. . ." (Short Stories 414)--and by what he's witnessed---". . . I've seen [helmets] full of brains too many times" (Short Stories 413). "Big Two-Hearted River" also takes up this same theme with a somewhat improved Nick.

The aftermath of battle in American war fiction, however, did not deal exclusively with the dead and the psychologically and physically wounded. One other event, which occurs frequently in the First World War novels of Dos Passos, Boyd, and March, was the treatment of prisoners-of-war, a treatment which these novelists suggest was neither particularly pleasant nor particularly moral. Robert Graves in Good-bye to All That provides some non-fictional insight into what was occasionally a prisoner's lot:

For true atrocities, meaning personal rather than military violations of the code of war, few opportunities occurred---

except in the interval between the surrender of prisoners and their arrival (or non-arrival) at Headquarters. Advantage was only too often taken of this opportunity. Nearly every instructor in the Mess could quote specific instances of prisoners having been murdered on the way back. The commonest motives were, it seems, revenge for the death of friends or relatives, jealousy of the prisoner's trip to a comfortable prison camp in England, military enthusiasm, fear of being suddenly overpowered by the prisoners, or, more simply, impatience with the escorting job. In any of these cases the conductors would report on arrival at Headquarters that a German shell had killed the prisoners; and no questions would be asked. We had every reason to believe that the same thing happened on the German side, where prisoners, as useless mouths to feed in a country already short of rations, would be even less welcome. (183-84)

Whether or not such incidents were common on both sides during the Great War, the inescapable fact is that they are frequently depicted in American war literature. Even John Dos Passos in his first, generally subdued novel, <u>One Man's Initiation--1917</u>, reports, through the muddled conversation of a drunken British officer, the murder of a German prisoner: "Before I left the front I saw a man tuck a hand-grenade under the pillow of a poor devil of a German prisoner. The prisoner said, 'Thank you.' The grenade blew him to hell!" (58). A similar incident occurs in Thomas Boyd's <u>Through the Wheat</u>:

> They were nearing a clump of bushes when a young German stepped out. His face was the color of putty and his eyes brought to Hicks the picture of an escaped convict hunted by bloodhounds in a Southern swamp. His hands were high above his head, as high as their frightened nerves would permit them to be. At the sight of him an uncouth, illiterate tatterdemalion from the south of Illinois snarled half-animal like, raised his rifle to his shoulder and fired directly at the prisoner. A look of surprise, utter disbelief, came over the man's face as he dropped heavily to the ground. "Damn ye, that'll larn ye ta stay hum." The fellow, his thin evil face grimaced with hatred, walked over and spat expertly a stream of tobacco juice at the already dead body. The rest of the platoon looked on nonplussed, not knowing whether their comrade had done the ethical thing or not. (179-80)

Boyd, of course, is not above inserting a bid of editorial commentary in his narrative: the illiterate "tatterdemalion"--itself a suggestive term--has an "evil face," and his "Damn ye, that'll larn ye to stay hum" is more than a little ironic, coming as it does from someone several thousand miles from his own home. For that matter, the fact that the rest of the platoon is uncertain whether the "tatterdemalion" has committed an unethical act is disturbing in what it suggests about their lack of clear ethical standards as well.

However, the war novelist who treats the murder of unarmed prisoners most thoroughly is William March. His description of the

massacre of twenty-two prisoners-of-war, of course, is one of the integral structural elements in Company K, serving as the climactic episode of the novel and one of its central narrative story lines. But March includes other similar incidents as well. One of these, the murder of a wounded German soldier by Sergeant Marvin Mooney, is especially important because of what it reveals about Mooney's motivation:

> "When he saw me, he begged for a drink of water. I said: 'It was different when you were raping Red Cross Nurses and cutting off the legs of children in Belgium, wasn't it? The shoe's on the other foot, now. Here's some of your own medicine!' Then I straightened out his head with my foot and pounded his face with the butt of my rifle until it was like jelly." (116)

Mooney kills in cold blood because his attitudes have been formed by the atrocity tales spun first by Northcliffe's British propaganda machine and circulated throughout the United States by the Creel Commission. Some soldiers may have been astute enough to recognize the inherent falsity of the atrocity stories, as Graves claims (183), but others obviously were influenced by the fabrications, as Denis Winter makes clear in quoting an unnamed British soldier: "We killed in cold blood because it was our duty to kill as much as we could. I thought many a time of the Lusitania. I had actually prayed for that day, and when I got it, I killed as much as I had hoped fate would allow me to kill" (210). And Winter adds that the army would have taken pleasure

n finding "that their propaganda had sustained the killing wish even fter the physical justification had gone" (210).

Exposure to the boredom of the front; the dangers of trench arfare, as well as those of the military hospitals; and government ropaganda obviously created intense personality changes in the soldiers who endured them, and one of the most striking elements of erisimilitude in the war novels of Thomas Boyd, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, and William March is how accurately their characters reflect the changes that the Great War's murderous technological warfare produced in its participants. Eric Leed in his No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I comments that there were three possible types found among the men exposed to the hellish experiences of the Great War:

> . . . one finds . . . a sequence of types that fix the realities of war throughout its various phases: the volunteer of 1914, the essence of idealistic expectations; the closed, unapproachable, "defensive" soldier, passively shaped by the tyranny of material; the stormtrooper (in Italy, the arditi), the master of the technological offensive. Each of these types embodies a different set, a different imprint of the events of war. The volunteer is the embodiment of war as a national and communal project. The exhausted, waiting, forever-enduring survivor of Materialkrieg is immediately recognizable as the product of industrialized warfare in its enormous scale and power. The stormtrooper is both a reality

> and a fantasy of aggression rooted in the massive frustration of aggressive impulses by the actualities of trench warfare. (37)

It would appear that most volunteers became enduring survivors, but the stormtrooper does not represent a change so much as a re-direction of hostility. Frustrated by the war's circumstances, he either channeled his aggressions in different directions or bid his time until circumstances were more favorable to exercise them. In Three Soldiers, Through the Wheat, Company K, and A Farewell to Arms, several characters are recognizable as volunteers, enduring survivors, and stormtroopers. For example, John Dos Passos' two supporting characters in Three Soldiers, Fuselli and Chrisfield, may easily be identified.

When first introduced, Fuselli, with his dreams of appeasing the military machine, dreams of advancing in rank, and dreams of warfare based on Hollywood's cinematic propaganda of 1917-18--"Men in spiked helmets who looked like firemen kept charging through, like the Ku Klux Klan in the movies, jumping from their horses and setting fire to buildings with strange outlandish gestures, spitting babies on their long swords" (34)--is very much a volunteer in the spirit of 1914, or in the American case--the spirit of 1917. Less from exposure to brutal technological warfare than dehumanizing military machine, Fuselli ends up a "closed, unapproachable, 'defensive' soldier," when he last appears with the labor battalion. The psychopath Chrisfield, on the other hand, who is consistently aggressive, approximates a type much

more rare in American war fiction, the stormtrooper. Frustrated on the battlefield, his aggressions are directed not only at the unfortunate Lieutenant Anderson whom he murders with a grenade, but both women and the enemy, particularly the helpless enemy. For example, capturing a prisoner immediately after the death of Anderson, Chrisfield reacts with barbaric cruelty: "[He] kicked him again, feeling the point of the man's spine and the soft flesh of his rump against his toes with each kick, laughing so hard all the while that he could hardly see where he was going" (200). Chrisfield's relationships with women are carried out with the same direct, sadistic method:

> He stood in front of the woman, staring in her face. She looked at him in a stupid, frightened way. He felt in his pockets for some money. As he had just been paid, he had a fifty-franc note. He spread it out carefully before her. Her eyes glistened. The pupils seemed to grow smaller as they fastened on the bit of daintily colored paper. He crumpled it up suddenly in his fist and shoved it down between her breasts. (176-77)

As Eric Leed noted, an aggressive soldier's hostile tendencies were frustrated to some extent by the Great War; Chrisfield redirects his aggressions toward fellow soldiers, defenseless prisoners, and women. A few of William March's slightly drawn characters, such as Corporal Clarence Foster who oversees the execution of the twenty-two German prisoners--"'Christ Almighty! This is war! . . . What did you think it was? A Sunday-school picnic?'" (Company K 82)--share the same

aggressive stormtrooper personality, but Chrisfield is the most completely developed representative of this type found in these novels.

By far the most common of Eric Leed's types of soldiers in the American war narratives is the forever-enduring survivor. Both Thomas Boyd's William Hicks and Ernest Hemingway's Frederic Henry belong to this group, although there are differences between them. Hicks is closer to being a true representative of the type since he is "passively shaped by the tyranny of material" and degenerates from proud soldier to benumbed survivor. Perhaps in part because of mature knowledge inherent in the reminiscing narrator, Frederic Henry demonstrates a consistent anti-heroic, anti-romantic endurance throughout A Farewell to Arms, as when he tells Catherine Barkley his reasons for joining the Italian forces:

> "What an odd thing--to be in the Italian army."
>
> "It's not really the army. It's only the ambulance."
>
> "It's very odd though. Why did you do it?"
>
> "I don't know," I said. "There isn't always an explanation for everything." (18)

Thus, Frederic Henry is always a survivor, never deluded by anything resembling the spirit of 1914 and aware that in an age of angst there isn't necessarily a reason or an explanation for everything.

In the responses of their characters to the carnage of the Great War and in their descriptions of battle and its aftermath, the American war novelists sought to capture with verisimilitude the frequently horrendous details of the conflict. They also attempted to

depict its other great aspect, the war behind the front lines where American soldiers spent their time when out of range of shells, gas, bullets, and personal fury.

Out of the Trenches

The life of the World War I soldier away from the battle zone, on rest or on leave, plays a large part in most American First World War fiction, larger than it does in that of the European war novelists. No doubt at least part of the reason for this concern with the American soldier's, and American volunteer's, life away from the front lines lies in the fact that for the American writers, as for common doughboys, what they experienced in France and Italy was far removed from their naïve, "genteel" American experience and demanded an accounting, especially for writers attempting to depict the experience of the Great War with accuracy. What the young American experienced in Europe in 1914-18 was also highly instructive--in a worldly sense--and it changed them, as Malcolm Cowley has observed of the ambulance drivers, permanently:

> . . . the ambulance corps and the French military transport were college-extension courses for a generation of writers. But what did these courses teach?
>
> They carried us to a foreign country, the first that most of us had seen; they taught us to make love, stammer love, in a foreign language. . . . They made us more irresponsible than before: livelihood was not problem; we had a minimum

> of choices to make; we could let the future take care of itself, feeling certain that it would bear us into new adventures. They taught us courage, extravagance, fatalism, these being the virtues of men at war; they taught us to regard as vices the civilian virtues of thrift, caution, and sobriety; they made us fear boredom more than death. (Exile's Return 38)

What the young Americans who participated in World War I learned in France and Italy was, of course, brought back to the United States and served to set the tone of the Jazz Age. And it is, therefore, not surprising that the total learning experience, including the non-combat portion of that experience, should play a large part in novels written to mimetically recreate the Great War.

Certainly, two of the greatest differences between the America of the Genteel Tradition and World War I Europe existed in the areas of sexual mores and consumption of alcohol. Laurence Stallings in his The Doughboys describes the typical experience of World War I's American soldier:

> [In Saint-Nazaire] Private John Doe, having been ferried three thousand miles across the Atlantic, stepped upon French soil and went with his buddies to the nearest bar, where he had his first taste of alcohol, other than the bite of sherry in a Christmas syllabub, or the port wine his father poured down the hole in the center of the holiday fruitcake. After four two-ounce shots of Rhum Negrito, topped off with

two fizzes made with a concoction the French labeled Niger Gin, he was drunk, and a steerer took him and his friends to one of the six major league brothels on the waterfront, where the girls worked forty to forty-five tricks each twenty-four hours before they were relegated after four weeks to the many minor leagues. Even here, they were too burned out to remain very long, being soon banished to the sand lots of the streetwalkers. (213)[6]

t surprisingly such encounters, so different from the staid perience of Ohio, Alabama, Michigan, Missouri, or Massachusetts, ve their place in the fiction of the Great War's American novelists. the case of John Dos Passos, France's prostitutes and sexually berated women received a good deal of attention. For example, the raightlaced Martin Howe, a model of virginal restraint himself, tnesses a scene not far-removed from that described by Stallings:

One of the Australians had gone away with a little woman in a pink negligée. The other Australian and the Englishman were standing unsteadily near the table, each supported by a sleepy-looking girl. . . .

The girls had two rooms on the fourth floor. As soon as they got there the Englishman tumbled into the bed and went to sleep, snoring loudly.

The Australian took off his coat and opened his shirt. The girls began getting undressed, trying to turn their yawns into little seductive faces.

"Say, old man, have you got a. . . ." the Australian whispered into Martin's ear.

"No, I haven't. . . . I'm awfully sorry."

"Never mind. . . . Come along, Janey." He picked his girl up under the arms and, pressing her to him, carried her into the other room. (One Man's Initiation--1917 64)

)s Passos' description, in keeping with the reticence of book ıblishers in the 1920s, is, of course, only suggestive, but he has at ɛast introduced the subject of the war's liberated sexual mores into .s text. However, he also avoids having an American as one of his :incipals in this scene, and Tom Randolph, Howe's American confidant, ıo does spend the evening with a French woman, apparently not a :ostitute, does not have his actions described.

However, William March in Company K does not hesitate to depict ıe activities of his American soldiers with French prostitutes, and ı the case of Private Philip Wadsworth, March manages to illustrate ıth American loss of innocence and one of the frequent results of ıch encounters:

She asked me to go with her to her room, but I refused as politely as I could. I explained about Lucy Walters and how we had promised to remain pure, for each other, until we were married. The woman sat listening to me sympathetically. She said I was right. She said a girl rarely met a man with such a fine viewpoint. . . .

As she talked, I kept thinking: 'My morals are absurd. I

> may be killed next week. I may never see Lucy again.' The girl took my hand, and tears came into her eyes. 'Everything is sad and a little mixed-up,' I thought. 'What difference can it make, one way or the other, if I go with this woman?'
>
> Afterward I was ashamed of myself. I offered her twenty francs . . . , but she refused it. . . . And all the time she knew that she had diseased me.
>
> Later I became alarmed and went to the dressing station. The doctor looked me over, laughed, and beckoned to the hospital corpsmen. I was courtmartialed for failing to report for a prophylactic and sent to this labor battalion.
>
> . . . . The woman in the café got two hundred francs from my friends for seducing me. She re-enacted the entire scene for them when she returned to the café: I was very clumsy and funny, I understand. (67-68)

Wadsworth's experience, suggesting both loss of innocence and American military displeasure over such activities, no doubt recreates the experience of many Americans in Europe during the First World War.

While other armies tolerated, to various degrees, sexual activity between their soldiers and French, Belgian, and other women---the French in 1915 licensed brothels and inspected men for venereal disease twice monthly (Winter 152)---the American Expeditionary Force under Black Jack Pershing would have nothing to do with such immorality. When the French offered to provide licensed prostitutes for American servicemen, United States military officials responded with

horror (Stallings 216). Instead, under the direction of Major Hugh Hampton Young, Pershing's genitourinary officer, prostitutes were driven from American training areas and, with a fair degree of success, declared "off-limits" for American Army personnel: there was even a "U.S. Military Society for the Prevention of Fornication" (Stallings 213-16). And soldiers, like the fictional Wadsworth and Dan Fusellì in Three Soldiers, who defied military authority and contacted venereal disease, were in fact punished for their sins, chief among which was having weakened themselves for military action. Such disciplinary actions for American troops were, however, comparatively rare, for by late 1918, the incidents of venereal infection among American troops amounted to eleven cases per thousand; in comparison, the Canadians, apparently the Great War's most active and least well-protected sexual combatants, registered a rate of 209.4 cases per thousand (Ellis 153). Clearly, Major Young's efforts had met with some success, despite the cost to real-life Fusellis and Wadsworths.

As a substitute for the illicit pleasures of sex and alcohol, the United States Army offered such sanitized amusements as the Y.M.C.A.[7] That particular substitution, it seems, was not a popular one, for among American novelists of the Great War, the "Y" appears to have been held in great contempt. Its policies and practices are portrayed as amounting to little less than thievery, and its staff as composed of dullards, hypocrites, and worse. William March in Company K includes a Y.M.C.A. secretary who in protecting American soldiers from the temptations of local French women at a "Y" sponsored dance--"I am glad

to say that idea was overruled" (134)--announces that the "women" present are all, save for two, actually female impersonators. But March saves his most scathing attack for the "Y's" unfair profiteering when his Private Albert Hayes, who reports the charitable organization sells chocolate and cigarettes for "three times their regular value," buys a sweater from a "Y" canteen for ten dollars. Inside the sweater is a note from seventy-two year old Mrs. Mary L. Samford who intends that it be given to "some soldier who takes cold easily" and who has knitted the garment out of love: ". . . I have put my love in every stitch and that's something that cannot be bought or sold" (139).

One of the more repulsive characters in the American World War I novels is a "Y" man in John Dos Passos' Three Soldiers who spouts platitudes and exemplifies the official "slave" mentality which is attacked throughout the novel:

> [Andrews] reached for his shirt and drew it on him.
>
> "God, I can't make up my mind to put the damn thing on again," said Andrews in a low voice, almost as if he were talking to himself; "I feel so clean and free. It's like voluntarily taking up filth and slavery again. . . . I think I'll just walk off naked across the fields."
>
> "D'you call serving your country slavery, my friend?" The "Y" man, who had been roaming among the bathers, his neat uniform and well-polished boots and puttees contrasting strangely with the mud-clotted, sweat-soaked clothing of the men about him, sat down on the grass beside Andrews.

"You're goddam right I do."

"You'll get into trouble, my boy, if you talk that way," said the "Y" man in a cautious voice.

"Well, what is your definition of slavery?"

"You must remember that you are a volunteer worker in the cause of democracy. . . . You're doing this so that your children will be able to live peaceful. . . ."

"Ever shot a man?"

"No. . . . No, of course not, but I'd have enlisted, really I would. Only my eyes are weak."

"I guess so," said Andrews under his breath.

"Remember that your women folks, your sisters and sweethearts and mothers, are praying for you at this instant."

"I wish somebody'd pray me into a clean shirt," said Andrews starting to get into his clothes. "How long have you been over here?"

"Just three months." The man's sallow face, with its pinched nose and chin lit up. "But, boys, those three months have been worth all the other years of my min--"he caught himself--"life. . . . I've heard the great heart of America beat. O boys, never forget that you are in a great Christian undertaking." (165-66)

One of what Stanley Cooperman termed the ministers promoting "Jesus in Kahki," Dos Passos' "Y" man misses few platitudes and little of the jingoism of American idealism's drive to make the "world safe for

democracy" and "the war to end war": "so that your children will be able to live peaceful." For him, as for the Creel Commission's "four minute speakers," the Great War is a holy war, and with his references to "women folks, your sisters, and sweethearts and mothers," obviously a believer in the more lurid British propaganda stories of the enemy's rapes and mutilations. However, he with his "weak eyes" is an embusqué, a slacker, and Andrews' last comment on him is especially fitting: "And that's what'll survive you and me" (166).

Beyond sex, alcohol and the tedious amusements and arguments of the Y.M.C.A., each of the World War I novels provides numerous small details of life away from the front during the Great War. These include descriptions of the estaminets where doughboys and ambulance drivers spent francs on omelettes and pinard; descriptions of rest billets in French barns and homes where soldiers trained and waited to be sent back to the front; and descriptions of a thousand small details on equipment, transportation, the French landscape of 1914-18, and more. Separately these elements mean very little, but taken as a whole they provide an accurate re-creation, which is broader and more detailed than any of the Great War's military histories, of what the war was like. And from battle to aftermath to leave in Paris that depiction is what many of these novels, both those of witness and testimony and those seeking to achieve more carefully crafted narrative form, sought to portray.

Conclusion

One accomplishment of these American World War I novels was to ccurately depict the physical actualities of the conflict. However, n doing so, the authors were limited by both their own experiences uring the war and their intentions in writing their novels. Thomas oyd, in terms of graphic description and a sense of authenticity, oes the most thorough job of "reporting" the war, but he obviously id not wish to do, or was not capable of doing, any more than that. et Boyd's superior testimony on the carnage of the Great War is ompelling and "life-like" because his own experience made him a uperior witness. William March, who at least in a general sense hared much of that experience, also provides authentic testimony, but is desire to produce a work which was something more than journalistic eporting and his multiple points of view result in a work which while eemingly authentic lacks the overwhelming descriptive force found in oyd.

John Dos Passos in his two novels obviously tried to accomplish wo different things. One Man's Initiation--1917 is a narrative of itness and testimony, done very much in the manner of Barbusse. But os Passos' own experience in the Great War was limited to the pectatorial perspective of the ambulance service. Thus, his Martin owe provides frequent descriptions of the wounded and even more requent descriptions of prostitutes and enlisted men in Paris, but ery little in the way of re-creation of conditions at the front. When e attempts to furnish an account of battle, or proximity to battle,

as in Martin Howe's reaction to artillery bombardment, the sense of being an onlooker, a spectator, casts the experience into a very narrow, an atypical, mode. In Three Soldiers where Dos Passos' intent was more inclusive, in effect an examination of and protest against the United States Army as it existed in 1918-19, the descriptions of battle and conditions at the front are present, yet lack the sense of authenticity found in Boyd and March. But Dos Passos, wisely, reduced the importance of combat conditions in his novel and concentrated on life away from the front, on what he through his own experience in 1918-19 knew best. He did, however, in his psychological examination of his two main supporting characters, successfully portray the effects of the war, and the American Army, on typical soldiers.

Ernest Hemingway in A Farewell to Arms sought to produce something more than another war novel and instead focused his narrative on the development of his protagonist, Frederic Henry. He intentionally muted what were common descriptions in other war novels and downplayed what could have been merely sensational. His perspective during the Great War was also severely limited, but Hemingway understood, far better than the other war novelists, the significance of research. When it was necessary to recreate the war's physical realities, he turned to other witnesses for information; yet even the testimony of these secondary witnesses is intentionally subdued in terms of potentially graphic descriptions. For more detailed, more explicit, accounts of World War I combat in Hemingway's work, it is necessary to turn to his earlier fiction, the short stories written in the 1920s prior to A

Farewell to Arms.

However, despite the differences caused by the authors' experiences during the Great War and by the authors' different intentions, these novels collectively provide a general mimetically accurate portrayal of the Great War's physical realities. They demonstrate the frequent ennui and the impersonal violence of the trenches and battlefield; they recreate the terrors of artillery and gas bombardment and dreamlike attacks across no man's land; and they demonstrate the loss of American innocence in the Great War. They, in short, provide a fairly comprehensive view of what the First World War was like for the more than two million Americans who witnessed it.

NOTES

[1] It is instructive to compare accounts of battle action by ters such as Thomas Boyd who frequently provides graphic, detailed criptions, complete with sound effects, and Ernest Hemingway.

> Rifle bullets fled past the advancing men with an infuriating zing. The Maxim machine guns kept up a rolling rat-t-t-tat, coldly objective.
>
> The platoon had reached the first machine-gun nest, almost without knowing it. There were three Germans, their heavy helmets sunk over their heads, each performing a definite part in the firing. They, too, were surprised. Pugh, a little in the lead, drew a hand-grenade from his pocket, pulled out the pin, and threw it in their faces. It burst loudly and distinctly. (Through the Wheat 176)
>
> The wind rose in the night and at three o'clock in the morning with the rain coming in sheets there was a bombardment and the Croatians came over across the mountain meadows and through patches of woods and into the front line. They fought in the dark in the rain and a counter-attack of scared men from the second line drove them back. There was much shelling and many rockets in the rain and machine-gun and rifle fire all along the line. They did not come again

and it was quieter and between the gusts of wind and rain we could hear the sound of a great bombardment far to the north. (A Farewell to Arms 186)

[2] Thomas Boyd's journalistic accuracy and powers of observation e sometimes remarkable. Compare, for example, his description of ar misses by rifle bullets with that of Denis Winter:

He was near enough to the bullets for them to sound like breaking violin strings, as they whizzed past. (Through the Wheat 261)

From the longest range [bullets] made a buzzing sound as if someone had thrown a spinning safety match. In the open a bullet made a steady phrew-phew-phew sound. If the bullet flicked foliage, men would gasp at the sensation of speed and wonder what it would be like to be in the bullet's path. Swishing meant crossfire; whining a spinning ricochet. The most dangerous was the brief roar of a near miss. It was just like a violin string breaking, followed by the report of the rifle firing it, like a popping champagne cork. (Death's Men 109)

[3] J. Glenn Gray comments on this phenomenon in combat as well:

In mortal danger, numerous soldiers enter into a dazed condition in which all sharpness of consciousness is lost. When in this state, they can be caught up into the fire of communal ecstasy and forget about death by losing their individuality, or they can function like cells in a military

> organization, doing what is expected of them because it has become automatic. It is astonishing how much of the business of warfare can still be carried on by men who act as automatons, behaving almost as mechanically as the machines they operate. (102)

[4] John Ellis notes that there were two kinds of shell shock. Most cases were of men who had simply endured too much in the form of fatigue, violence, and exposure to war's horrors. The second type involved actual physiological brain or nerve damage:

> On one hand there were those who were caught in a shell-burst and either blown in the air or buried alive. . . . A bursting shell creates a vacuum, and when the air rushes into this vacuum it disturbs the cerebo-spinal fluid and this in turn can upset the working of the brain. (116)

Denis Winter observes that only three percent of shell shock victims fell into this category and speaks of "brain lesions" (130).

[5] Roger Spiller finds evidence for shell shock, or battle fatigue (World War II), or Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (Vietnam) among American Civil War soldiers--the cure was a good dose of combat--and notes that "before this century, Russian medical scholars were discussing 'diseases of the soul' among their soldiery" (76).

[6] One curious thing about this passage from Stallings is the baseball metaphor that underlies it. The six whorehouses in Saint-Nazaire are "major league." Worn-out prostitutes are "relegated . . . to the many minor leagues." And since they are "burned out" they soon

are "banished to the sand lots." I wonder what a feminist critic would make of this co-mingling of prostitution and sport.

[7] American military authorities displayed the same intolerant attitude toward alcohol--Prohibition, after all, loomed in America's immediate future--as they did to sex. British troops going "over the top" were fortified by a stiff shot of rum; French and Germans employed a "kind of rough brandy," known to the French as gnôle. "An American Executive Order, on the other hand, forbade the supplying of alcohol to the troops" (Ellis 133). There was, it seems, to be nothing even remotely suggestive of amusement--or "Dutch courage"--in this army.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

The Great War has remained a subject for literary and non-literary examination long after November 11, 1918. In fiction, it continued to command attention into the late 1930s when, for example, Dalton Trumbo published his powerful and ill-timed anti-war novel, Johnny Got His Gun, and even into the 1970s when Alexander Solzhenitsyn re-examined the Russian World War I experience with August 1914. It is altogether fitting that one of the twentieth century's primary formative events should command such on-going attention. Yet in the more than seven decades that have elapsed since the guns fell silent on the Western Front, debate has intermittently been waged over the Great War and its literature.

That debate has often focused upon two basic concerns. The first of these involves the accuracy of the events and actions, that is, the physical realities, found in World War I literature, and the question raised is whether or not the mimetic re-creation in these works is in fact truly mimetic, truly a re-creation. Those critics who have argued that it is not, however, usually do so because of their own political biases; to admit that the depiction of war in these works possesses verisimilitude, that the anti-war novels mimetically recreate the physical actualities of the Great War, is to accept the validity of their protest against war. The second concern probes the relationship between fiction and non-fiction; here the question is what distinguishes fiction from non-fiction in the earlier war literature. An examination of many of the early war narratives demonstrates that

no definitive classification can be assigned to works such as those of Barbusse and La Motte or Dos Passos' One Man's Initiation--1917. These narratives possess features of both non-fiction, or journalistic reporting, and fiction. Their concern, however, is always with depicting with verisimilitude what their authors believed was the actuality of the Great War. Thus, the two concerns voiced in the last seventy years of intermittent debate really center on the overriding question of the validity of these texts as accounts of the Great War.

Concerning the accuracy of the mimetic re-creation of the war's physical realities within war novels such as those of Barbusse, Remarque, Dos Passos, Boyd, March, Hemingway, and others, the argument has been made that, because of their greater intelligence, greater perception, and, for the most part, better education, the writers who came out of the war presented an atypical response to it. Correlli Barnett in "A Military Historian's View of the Great War" (1970) argues that, far from being the scene of slaughter, graphic horror, and psychological and physical hell-on-earth presented in much of the war fiction, the trenches, at least for the majority of the British soldiers, provided security and contentment which the average Tommy could not find elsewhere:

> Now whereas the British industrial population had to cope with their squalor and hardships on their own scant and precarious resources, the troops in the trenches had the support--moral and material--of an immense organization, comradeship, regular food, medical care, canteens, sport,

and even entertainment.

> Thus, it is hardly surprising that the rank and file did not take things so hard as the war writers. Many of them were in fact better off in the trenches than at home. (10)

Considering the widely documented, charnel house horrors of the Somme, Ypres, Verdun, and elsewhere, it is difficult to imagine how anyone, regardless of social class, could be better off among them, and Barnett's contented soldiers bear more than a little semblance to sheep. Nowhere does Barnett provide any direct testimony, in the form of letters, conversations, or anything else, demonstrating how his industrial workers-turned-soldiers preferred the "support" of the trenches to squalor and hardships at home. The rank and file are curiously mute in his argument, and even the testimony on industrial slum conditions detailed by the military historian is provided by social workers and other middle-class observers. In fact, Barnett's entire argument seems to be politically based and rests on assumptions about social class, beginning with the premise that the lower classes suffered less than others because they were used to suffering. However, the military historian is not the only commentator who has questioned the mimetic accuracy of the Great War's fiction.

Jean Norton Cru in an analysis of European, and particularly French, World War I novels (1931), attacked both Henri Barbusse and Erich Maria Remarque for their portrayal of war events and for being writers whose reputations depend on their having been witnesses to the war: "All this proves that the sale of best sellers depends on the

ollowing assurance which it is essential to impress on the public ind: the author has lived through the war and his novel is inspired y his personal experience" (51). Cru found the lack of a clear istinction between fiction and non-fiction in many of the war novels nsettling and did not recognize that there are fundamental differences n terms of intent and literary craftsmanship between narratives of itness and testimony and more polished literary works, as there are ifferences between Barbusse and Remarque. He did not consider these wo novelists "true artists" and found their narratives similar to travel books." However, the French critic's quarrel with these war ovelists involves a more fundamental concern than arguments over hether their works have literary merit. Cru, himself one of Eric eed's "stormtroopers" who had served during World War I, directed his riticisms not at all the French war novels, but at those written by riters he considered pacifists, such as Barbusse, attacking what he onsidered distortion and exaggeration. And while attempting to lisparage descriptions of massed war dead in some of the French war ovels, Cru furnishes a very odd argument:

> Let us suppose that the total number of killed who died on the spot, on the front between Switzerland and the sea, amounts to two millions and a half; that for fifty-one months they have accumulated on the ground without being buried, without decomposing, without disappearing; that they all fell within 2,000 yards of a centerline passing through the middle of no man's land. While in reality, they are

> scattered from the frontiers to the Seine, and later over all the extent of the battlefields of Champagne, of Verdun, and of the Somme, we will suppose that all the dead, friends and enemies, are concentrated on a strip of land two miles wide, for which we shall assume a length of 500 miles counting all its bends and curves. The area of the strip is 1,000 square miles. On an average there will be a dead body for every 1,239 yards, or for each rectangle of 100 by 12.39 yards, or 35.2 by 35.2 yards. Someone will say that the dead were more numerous about Verdun than Reims . . . ; besides, Verdun was passive until 1916, then after the summer of 1917, while Reims became active in 1918. The difference in dead between the different sectors is therefore less than is supposed. (25)

Cru's logic, of course, mystifies. His figure for the war dead, "two millions and a half," is one of the lowest ever provided, even counting only those who died on the field of battle. And his strange assignment of war dead to their individual "squares" or "rectangles" would make sense only if the entire front from Switzerland to the sea had been active. In fact, large segments of the trench system, including the segment from Nancy to the Swiss border, saw very little activity throughout the war (Ashworth 21), and in sectors where massive battles were fought, such as Verdun or the Somme, the dead, or parts of them, did indeed lie thick on the ground, a good deal thicker than one for every 1,239 square yards. Cru's attitudes toward the

graphic accounts of witness and testimony by writers such as Barbusse reflect a debate over the verisimilitude in these novels that has surfaced with frequency since 1918 and that demonstrates the manner in which readers have responded to them during different periods, and accepted or rejected their descriptions of the war according to the needs of their own political agendas.

In the 1920s when many of the war novels reflecting a negative attitude toward the Great War and graphically describing its horrors were published, Americans and Europeans alike possessed a general disenchantment with the entire affair. The Europeans, as has been noted, had been bled white; the Americans believed they had been misled. In 1928 with the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact, which renounced war as a means of resolving international disputes, anti-war sentiment was at high tide, and works such as Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms, Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front, and Manning's Her Privates We received favorable receptions.

In the 1930s, however, militarism again made itself apparent in world and American affairs, and as a result the anti-war attitudes evident in works such as those of Boyd, Dos Passos, and others were re-examined. This re-examination was evident in the United States as early as 1933 when Malcolm Cowley and Archibald MacLeish clashed in the New Republic over the just published The First World War by Laurence Stallings. MacLeish charged that writers such as Stallings, and the war novelists, had over-emphasized the horrors of the Great War and that there had been positive elements in the experience which

contained "speeches, brass-bands, bistros, boredom, terror, anguish, heroism, endurance, humor, death. It matched great cruelty with great courage. It had its fine sights and its unspeakable sights. It was a human war" (159). Cowley's counter-argument was that, unlike previous American conflicts, this war had been especially brutal and essentially a mistake. American soldiers, he said, had been used, their lives wasted on the false ideals of the Genteel Tradition:

> If they fought purely for adventure, they found it and found that it wasn't as advertised. If they fought, as Americans were urged to for Liberty, Democracy, and the Fourteen Points, they fought for abstractions now more deeply buried than all the dead of the Argonne. (161)

And Cowley suggested an honest, public recognition of the American sacrifice in the Great War: "It is time to inscribe at the entrance to every veteran's graveyard and over the tombs of all the unknown soldiers, <u>They died bravely, they died in vain</u>" (161).

As the 1930s progressed and militarism increased, the anti-war message of the war novels became increasingly unpopular, and when <u>Johnny Got His Gun</u> was published on September 3, 1939, just two days after Adolph Hitler's armies invaded Poland to start World War II, the themes of technological warfare as twentieth-century horror and the idea of vain sacrifice in war were decidedly out of fashion. So unfashionable, in fact, Dalton Trumbo voluntarily suppressed his novel during the Second World War (Trumbo i-iii).

The debate over the mimetic accuracy of the war novels and their

effects upon readers has continued to be waged since the 1930s as well. During periods of active international hostility, they have been accused of somehow weakening national resolve, their cumulative effect portrayed as somehow emasculating. This accusation seems to rest on a fear that some of these works are so accurate in their depiction of the Great War's carnage, it might lead to revulsion on the part of the public directed at all war. Correlli Barnett, himself writing in 1969 during one of the frostier periods of the Cold War, charged they had weakened British resolve and so helped cause the Second World War:

> Now, in any period, in regard to any human problem, emotional revulsion is hardly a constructive approach. As it happened, the decade after the war books appeared turned out to be the decade of Hitler; and the British public's emotional revulsion against war made timely rearmament and resistance to Hitler's demands impossible--opened the way therefore to the eventual necessity of stopping him not by peaceful pressure, but actual force--i.e., another war. (16)

Of course, it is at least debatable that Hitler could have been stopped by "peaceful pressure," just as it seems debatable that a nation's resolve can be undermined by a book or by a series of books. However, Barnett's argument is important for two reasons: it reflects the cyclical reception accorded the novels of the Great War at different times, and it reveals an underlying anxiety. Much of this anxiety rests upon a concern that the descriptions of warfare in texts such as those of Manning, Remarque, Dos Passos, and others are so

horrible they will cause a reaction against the possibility of warfare.

The problem for Barnett, Cru, and others who for their own purposes have attempted to disparage the accuracy of the World War I novels written by participants, is that the physical realities recreated in works such as those by Barbusse, Dos Passos, Boyd, and March, are mimetically depicted with fidelity to actual events. For, although Cru and similar critics have attempted to denigrate the verisimilitude of these accounts, there is no way in which the filth, odors, vermin, and violence of the Great War can be easily dismissed, as countless first-hand accounts testify. Consider the British experience on the second day of the battle of Loos in 1915, just one example among thousands of similar events during the Great War:

> [The wire entanglement in front of the German position] consisted of hard steel barbed wire, too thick to be cut with the hand-clippers that had been issued to some sections, braced and criss-crossed among pine stakes and pit-props driven thirty-five centimetres into the earth. Its height was over four feet and its depth across five metres, or nearly nineteen feet.
>
> Desperate, the men hurled themselves at it in frenzy; some tried to scramble over it as one might a thick yew hedge, others pulled at it with their bare hands; still more ran up and down its edge in the hopes of finding a gap that might have been cut by shellfire, until they were cut down. The German diary continues: "Confronted by this hopeless

> impenetrable obstacle and faced by continuous machine-gun and rifle fire the survivors began to turn and retire in confusion, though scarcely one in ten that had come forward seemed to go back again. . . ."
>
> There had been twelve battalions making the attack, a strength of just under ten thousand, and in the three and a half hours of the actual battle their casualties were 385 officers and 7,861 men. The Germans suffered no casualties at all. (Clark 172-73)

It is doubtful that those Britons advancing to the barbed wire at Loos congratulated themselves on being better off than they had been at home or that the dead fell neatly one for every 1,239 square yards.

What transpired at Loos, at Verdun, at the Meuse-Argonne, at Caporetto, on the Somme, and elsewhere was a revelation of an essentially horrible new type of warfare that employed technological advances to a degree never before experienced in human history, with corresponding results on human beings never before experienced as well. It was this new warfare and its effects that those writers who participated in the Great War sought to describe. In doing so, authors such as La Motte, Barbusse, and others gave rise to the second element of the debate about the war's literature that has been waged since 1918. Their narratives cannot be easily defined as works of fiction or non-fiction, for the revelation of this new "twentieth-century reality" created problems for writers attempting to depict it, as Paul Fussell has noted:

> The point is this: finding the war "indescribable" in any but the available language of traditional literature, those who recalled it had to do so in known literary terms. Joyce, Eliot, Lawrence, Pound, Yeats were not present at the front to induct them into new idioms which might have done the job better. Inhibited by scruples of decency and believing in the historical continuity of styles, writers about the war had to appeal to the sympathy of readers by invoking the familiar and suggesting its resemblance to what many of them suspected was an unprecedented and (in their terms) an all-but-incommunicable reality. Very often, the new reality had no resemblance whatever to the familiar, and the absence of a plausible style placed some writers in what they thought was an impossible position. (174)

The writers such as Hemingway and Remarque who later depicted the Great War in works demonstrating literary craftsmanship and whose works have endured as literature did so at a time when Joyce, Eliot, Lawrence, Pound, and Yeats had already "shown new idioms," enabling them to create better fictions. And significantly, among American novelists, both Hemingway and March created novels in which war's reality is multifaceted and often ambiguous, bearing "no resemblance . . . to the familiar."

For other writers, however, during the Great War and immediately after it, the disparity between the conventional treatment of war in the literary tradition and the war's terrible new realities caused the

literary crisis Fussell has noted, and one manifestation of that crisis appears to be a loss of clear definition between fiction and non-fiction. Suddenly, "non-fiction" narratives were available which read as if they were nineteenth century romances, and "fictional" accounts, such as those of Barbusse and Boyd, soon appeared which read a great deal more like pieces of journalistic reporting. For example, writers during the war such as Arthur Guy Empey in Over the Top, produced works that, appearing to be factual accounts, actually reveal a great deal of Genteel Romanticism. Empey's soldiers, for example, die quickly with little detailed suffering, and yet he strives to evoke pathos through other means:

> A company man on our right was too slow in getting on his helmet; he sank to the ground, clutching at his throat, and after a few spasmodic twistings, went West (died). It was horrible to see him die, but we were powerless to help him. In the corner of a traverse, a little, muddy cur dog, one of the company's pets, was lying dead, with his two paws over his nose. (189)

It is difficult in reading Empey's account to determine which of its two deaths is more terrible, although that of the dog may create a stronger emotional response: its purpose here is obviously designed to elicit pathos. In this passage and elsewhere, Empey's deaths lack either the clinical detachment of those of Hemingway's characters in A Farewell to Arms or the carefully detailed, graphic descriptions used by Thomas Boyd in Through the Wheat. Empey wrote his narrative so as

ıot to offend, but as a result, it also fails to inform, which as 'journalism" was its supposed purpose. What he and other such writers ›f "non-fictional" war narratives did, as Charles Genthe has observed, ⁄as to describe the war in terms of the Genteel Tradition: "America ⁄as sending her boys off on the 'Great Adventure,' and wanted to read, ınd was given, 'platitudes' from her age of innocence, not 'twentieth-:entury reality'" (53).

A few writers such as Ellen N. La Motte attempted to give America 'twentieth-century reality" and not "platitudes" from the age of .nnocence. But La Motte also employed fictive techniques in her Backwash of War. Anxious to do what Empey and others like him had not lone, to inform, to present a re-creation of the Great War's new ·ealities as she perceived them, she intentionally turned to fictive levices such as the use of an omniscient narrator to provide a broader ›erspective than would have been possible from her autobiographical ·antage point as a nurse.

Both Empey and La Motte were providing what purported to be :ccounts of actual events, but their handling of their narratives, ·hich were written for distinctly opposing purposes in terms of the ype of information provided to the reading public, points to a eveloping indistinctness, a blurring, between non-fiction and fiction. owever, in the case of "realistic" literature the boundaries between iction and non-fiction are often indistinct since any recording of xperience necessarily involves a selection, a re-ordering, a structuring" of the experience and is to a degree "fictional." And

the perspective an author chooses in developing his or her structure can and does determine the nature of the re-creation that unfolds within the text. Using a multiple or omniscient narrator will provide a wider and more inclusive structure, although no writing recreates the whole of an experience, particularly a complex and multifaceted experience. This realization on the part of the war novelists led to the development of more complex structures in the war literature sub-genre itself, as writers such as first Dos Passos in Three Soldiers and then William March in Company K opened the text with more complex points of view and created more inclusive works than the single perspective narratives of witness and testimony such as Through the Wheat or One Man's Initiation--1917. In doing so, however, and particularly in the case of March, they also introduced a large degree of ambiguity into their novels, which is in itself "realistic" since the Great War's new realities were themselves ambiguous.

The Great War, as Fussell noted, with its "all-but-incommunicable reality," in a sense disjoined existing literary tradition. Writers such as Arthur Guy Empey who tried to give the new reality expression in terms of the already existing literary conventions failed miserably. Authors such as Ellen N. La Motte, Henri Barbusse, and later John Dos Passos and Thomas Boyd developed a new form of narrative, one combining journalistic reporting of empirical events with fictive techniques, works of witness and testimony, which anticipated by decades the development of the "non-fictional novel." These narratives of witness and testimony reflect a loss of definition, a blurring of the

boundaries, between the fictional and non-fictional. And as Scholes and Kellogg suggest, this loss of definition results from the World War I novel's need to recreate external, empirical realities, and this concern itself virtually dictates such a loss of clear definition:

> One effect of modern empiricism has been to blur the distinction between the pure historical and mimetic forms of narrative on one hand and the novel on the other. After the final, powerful impact of the autobiography, for example, on the novels of Proust, Joyce, Lawrence, Wolfe, and Fitzgerald--to mention only a few obvious instances--a clear distinction between the confession and the novel can no longer be sustained. The convergence of the novel with the history, biography, and autobiography has resulted not so much from impatience with the story-teller's fantasy as from a modern skepticism of knowing anything about human affairs in an entirely objective (non-fictional) way. (151)

With the first war novels of witness and testimony, those of Barbusse, Dos Passos, and Boyd, for example, the impact of autobiography on the novel is also apparent, and in the case of Under Fire, One Man's Initiation--1917, and Through the Wheat, no clear distinction "can be sustained" between autobiography and novel. While works that seek to recreate empirical events are necessarily closer to historic and mimetic narratives than the traditional novel form, they remove themselves from traditional journalism as well if they attempt to open themselves up to encompass more than the single perspective of an

eyewitness observer or first person narrator. For many of the war novelists, the limitations of journalistic reporting may well have been a reason for classifying their works as fiction, but, as Scholes and Kellogg suggest, an inherent distrust of the non-fictional and of the possibility of true objectivity, too, may have played a role. During the war, science, hard fact, and the supposedly non-fictional, as in Empey's work or the ludicrous atrocity stories, had held sway, but in the war's aftermath, they had been found to be false or simply horrifying in their final effects. If the Great War were to be presented accurately, if the new realities it had revealed were to be made known, then perhaps literature with its greater flexibility and its ability to provide multiple views and different perspectives of events was the means through which it should be presented. Concerning events associated with another war a half-century later, Norman Mailer was to find that the fictional provided opportunities to arrive at a greater understanding of the significance of events than the non-fictional:

> . . . which is to admit that an explanation of the mystery of . . . events . . . cannot be developed by the methods of history--only by the instincts of the novelist. The reasons are several, but reduce to one. Forget that the journalistic information available from both sides is so incoherent, inaccurate, contradictory, malicious, even based on error that no accurate history is conceivable. More than one historian has found a way through chains of false fact. No,

> the difficulty is that the history is interior---no documents can give sufficient intimation: the novel must replace history at precisely that point where experience is sufficiently emotional, spiritual, psychical, moral, existential, or supernatural to expose the fact that the historian in pursuing the experience would be obliged to quit the clearly demarcated limits of historic inquiry. (284)

Thus, the historical, the non-fictional, is limited to external events, which may be difficult to depict because of confusing and often contradictory evidence, but fiction provides a method of delineating events beyond the merely physical. And, too, those writers who had not participated in the war, Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Lawrence, and Joyce, had already, before 1914 in many cases, begun to challenge and change existing literary conventions, and their innovations after the mid-1920s were available to writers, such as Hemingway, who demonstrated new methods of revealing the Great War's new realities.

The effect of the World War I novels written to mimetically recreate empirical realities has been far-reaching. Since the earliest novels of witness and testimony were limited in perspective and craft, their appeal faded as public interest in the Great War itself diminished. Later novels which emphasized fictional techniques and limited their objective reporting, especially A Farewell to Arms, transcended the war novel sub-genre and became both more enduring and more broad in their appeal than the earliest narratives of witness and testimony. And within the sub-genre of war literature, this development

had a continuing and long lasting effect. Dos Passos with Three Soldiers and Hemingway with A Farewell to Arms, and his other war fiction, influenced the next generation of war writers, those of World War II, who could look to Dos Passos for an approach to dealing with the heterogeneous makeup of military units and to Hemingway for much more:

> The principal model for most of the younger war-writers was neither Sherwood Anderson nor Henry James. . . . This [World War II] was a different war, and they went to it in a different, un-Wilsonian way, but the attitudes and responses had been formed for them by a writer whose combat had been in Italian trenches near Fossalto in July 1918. Later the best of them were emancipated from Hemingway. But in their first stories, the inflections, sentence structure, and tones were absolutely unmistakable.
>
> Their characters talked about "the Hemingway country" as they rode the troop trains, and a "real Hemingway meal" as they drank their wine. The prose itself is little less than eerie in its reproductions of the Hemingway rhythms. (Fenton, "Writers Who Came Out of the War" 6)

Thus, the on-going development of the "realistic" twentieth-century war novel, which began with writers such as Barbusse during the Great War, did not end in 1929 with A Farewell to Arms, nor in 1933 with Company K, but instead has continued through successive wars in the twentieth century.

Nor, for that matter, did the narrative of witness and testimony, the form growing out of the mimetic re-creation of physical realities combining journalistic reporting and fictive techniques, cease with the evolution of the war novel. For, once the emphasis within the novel's genre had been shifted from the romantic and, to a lesser degree, the didactic, toward the historic and the mimetic, the process could not easily be reversed, nor the established precedents ignored. Hemingway himself in works such as Green Hills of Africa and Death in the Afternoon, James Agee in Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, John Hersey in Hiroshima, and others wrote non-fictional works based on the empirical that were presented through the use of fictional techniques. Although William Wiegand would observe that none of these authors would claim these works were novels, it is difficult to see what distinguishes them from Truman Capote's In Cold Blood. Wiegand claims that Capote's work "suggests" and "extends" and defines those capabilities as being unique to literature:

> The important quality of literature is the capacity to universalize the implication of an isolated real happening, and while remaining loyal to "facts," yet to put these facts in some distinctly larger context by the way the various elements are deployed rather than by discursive examination of the elements. (255-56)

Yet Hemingway in his non-fiction and Hersey and Agee in theirs "universalize the implication" of real happenings and put facts in larger contexts as well. Moreover, as Walker Gibson has demonstrated,

the combining of journalistic reporting and fictional techniques has not necessarily been limited to book-length narratives, but in a curious and not always positive fashion has come to determine the approach, the tone, and the substance of contemporary journalism itself where Ernest Hemingway's influence has continued as pervasively as it has in the sub-genre of war fiction (Gibson, Chaps. 3 and 4).

Thus, as in many other areas of human endeavor, World War I's influence in literature has continued through the twentieth century. The war gave rise to a new form of literature which combined elements of the fictional and non-fictional in an effort to recreate the new realities revealed from 1914 to 1918. Authors attempting to depict those new realities, as they perceived them, soon found the single perspective of the journalistic, eyewitness narrator too restrictive to encompass the war's new "truths," and responded by employing multiple narrators in an effort to provide a more accurate, mimetic re-creation. Yet those multiple perspectives themselves created ambiguity, and that ambiguity underscores the irony inherent in both the war and subsequent twentieth-century life. Moreover, much of the response to the novels of the Great War has been dependent on the ideological perspectives of readers during different periods, and the reputations of writers such as Thomas Boyd and William March have fluctuated according to the ascendancy or decline of militarism. For in mimetically recreating the unpleasant new realities revealed by the Great War, the war novelists furnished literature and readers with a protest against war itself, and that protest, while at times muted by events, has never been completely silenced.

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