In the process of initiation the hero encounters significant and meaningful experiences of life through family disorganization, a lack of conducive education, sexual laxity and war. Having experienced the hazards of life closely and acquired a special awareness he enters the adult world where the powerful social system -- an organization, or an institution or some particular organized body -- threatens and endangers his liberty. Depending upon the nature, the effect of initiation, and the corresponding sensitiveness of the individual, the subsequent stage of involvement begins. The present chapter, therefore, will study the hero's response to the system as manifested in war, capitalism and party politics. Each form can further be split into two subdivisions. War can be studied in its two aspects; the atrocities of war and the bureaucratic behaviour of the officers; capitalism as seen in industry with the monopolising tendency of the rich and the malpractices in labour organizations; party politics exposing the intrigues and the betrayal of the
Communist Party and the red-tapism and bureaucracy of the New Deal.

Each form evokes a triple response through three different types of characters. These three varieties of response of the protagonist may be (1) a compromise with the evils of the system resulting in material and social success with a corresponding spiritual bankruptcy (Social Climbers), (2) or an aggressive rejection of the dictates of the system resulting in material loss but in moral victory (Social Rebels), (3) or a passive detached spectators' stance, the outcome of a realisation of the futile and fallacious working of the system (Commentators). Through this triple involvement, Dos Passos provides a pluralistic view of the gruesomeness of World War I, the economic affluence of the Twenties with its corresponding cultural and spiritual malaise, and the corrupt communism and polluted politics of the Thirties.

Dos Passos believes that the cycle of the struggle between the individual and the institution which he has himself created has been an eternal one. Man builds institutions as ants build hills. This institution-building activity has been accentuated in recent times. In his chequered history, man has paradoxically been crushed under the imperial weight of these institutions. Somehow or the other, he has survived the terror and despotism, and the
eternal spirit survives and resurrects in the form of new institutions. Consequently, the relationship between the individual and the system is the leitmotif of all Dos Passos novels. His constant endeavour is to define his hero's identity and rescue his sanctity and dignity from the encroaching system. According to Dos Passos, the organized power exerts a corrupting and dehumanizing effect on the individual. To protect the sovereign will of the individual, to use his own words on Pio Baroja, Dos Passos aims to "put the acid test to the existing institutions, and to strip the veils off them." On Dos Passos's humanistic idealism, R.T. Horchler makes an apt and profound observation, "He [Dos Passos] is an idealist who finds the human condition intolerable, who demands the millennium now. The imperfections he sees in the social organization arouse in him an instant, violent opposition to the status quo."3

Regarding the place of the organizational power in the Dos Passos world and its effect on the novelist's art, readers have expressed different opinions. Mark Schorer considers the recurrence of the organizational theme in his later novels an impediment in the artistic achievement of his novels. He observes that with Dos Passos "'organization is death' became an obsession, and it turned his imagination rigid and his once mobile fluid art to wood. The last four
novels are a protracted, monomaniacal sadness. Diagonally opposed to Mark Schorer's is the view expressed by Alfred Kazin. Lavishly praising Dos Passos's sociological propensity, he says:

For what is so significant about Dos Passos is that though he is a direct link between the postwar decade and the crisis novel of the depression period, the defeatism of the lost generation has been slowly and subtly transferred by him from persons to society itself. It is society that becomes the hero of his work, society that suffers the impending sense of damnation that the lost-generation individualists had suffered alone before.

Regardless of the diversity in opinions, in Dos Passos's fictional pantheon, man and organization achieve a potent position. Impelled by a strong sense of humanitarianism, the involvement of the individual in the system becomes a pervasive theme in his fiction. Man is the architect of institutions which in turn become so insurmountable and corrupt that they entrap and crush their creator.

II

WAR AND THE HERO

Since the American Civil War, America had had no major foreign war experience and the declaration of war in August, 1914 became a matter of grave concern for Americans. In America the War meant not only an end to a period of peace,
prosperity and progress but also a debacle of the Western Civilization. The War aroused polemic reactions from the Republicans and the Democrats. The Republicans demanded America's entry into the War and in the 1916 election, campaigned for Charles Evans Hughes. The Democrats re-nominated Woodrow Wilson and made "he kept us out of war" their rallying cry. Woodrow Wilson was largely supported by the leaders of the organized labour and the independent progressives. Dos Passos shared the general enthusiasm of the socialists in the 1916 election, supporting Wilson against Hughes. But the developments of early 1917 incited war hysteria and America's entry into war became imminent. Despite opposition from ardent socialists Wilson sent a message on April 2, 1917 to the Congress declaring that the submarine campaign, the sabotage plots of German agents in the United States, and the Zimmermann note had made war unavoidable. He was convinced that for the United States neutrality was no longer possible. Germany became a symbol of autocracy and tyranny which threatened the individual's honour and sovereignty so dear to the Americans. People felt that the German government was militaristic and hostile to democracy and with its barbaric drive was destroying art and civilization and perpetrating all kinds of atrocities. Tyranny, they passionately believed, must be overthrown, and the world be made safe and secure against war. War was
considered a holy crusade by the young men who volunteered themselves for various services. They shared with Woodrow Wilson the view that America's entry into the War was to "make the world safe for democracy," and possibly to create a new world order out of the chaos of the war and thereby to abolish future wars. To understand the mind and mood of the young men of World War I it might be appropriate to compare the temper of the two World Wars. The young men who joined World War I had been nurtured in an atmosphere of peace and prosperity, whereas the generation which witnessed World War II was "heir to the disillusionments not only of the first war but of the depression and the second war." Working on a similar train of thought Dos Passos himself draws the difference between the reactions that were experienced by the men of his generation and the men who fought in World War II.

For one thing I think the brutalities of war and oppression came as less of a shock to people who grew up in the thirties than they did to Americans of my generation, raised as we were during the quiet afterglow of the nineteenth century, among comfortably situated people who were confident that industrial progress meant an improved civilization, more of the good things of life all around, more freedom, a more humane and peaceful society. To us, the European War of 1914 -- 1918 seemed a horrible monstrosity, something outside of the normal order of things like an epidemic of yellow fever in some place where yellow fever had never been heard of before. The boys who are fighting these present wars got their first ideas of the world during the depression years. From the time they first read the newspapers they drank in the brutalities of European politics with their breakfast coffee.
The outbreak of the World War I ushered in a new trend in American fiction. After Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage* (1895) the war novel erupted into prominence. Most of the American novels written in the postwar era directly or indirectly deal with the subject of war. Such writers, as Mrs. Edith Wharton, Dorothy Canfield, Willa Cather, Ernest Hemingway, E.E. Cummings, Ernest Boyd, Dos Passos, Lawrence Stallings and to some extent William Faulkner, directly depict the impact of war on an individual or a segment of society. But more frequently the American response was sporadic and oblique. Mrs. Edith Wharton's *A Son at the Front* (1923), Dorothy Canfield's *The Deepening Stream* (1930) and Willa Cather's *One of Ours* (1922) are expressions of the writer's contempt for and shock against the unscrupulous aggression of the Germans menacing Western Civilization. Yet, Hoffman points out, these writers "felt the fight was a necessary perhaps even a vital challenge" to America's devotion to the cause of democracy. The reaction of the older generation of novelists such as Edith Wharton, Dorothy Canfield and Willa Cather differs from that of the younger generation of John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, and E.E. Cummings, who actually participated in the war and felt the shock from very close quarters. For Mrs. Wharton and her contemporaries, the war was a "cultural and not a physical or psychological trauma," but for the younger generation it
was a stupendous waste with all sorts of ramifications of dehumanization, deracination etc. Describing the impact of the War on the young men "just out of college" and who were crazy to see what the War was like," Dos Passos writes:

We experienced to the full the intoxication of the great conflagration, though those of us who served as enlisted men could hardly be expected to take kindly to soldiering, to the caste system which made officers a superior breed or to the stagnation and opportunism of military bureaucracy. Waste of time, waste of money, waste of lives, waste of youth. We came with the horrors. We had to blame somebody. 10

Officially, America declared war in 1917, but enthusiasts like Hemingway, E.E. Cummings, Dos Passos were already on the war fronts. In the close proximity of war, they experienced or met with violence and disseminated their war experiences in their works. Hemingway was wounded in the thigh from a shell burst on the northern Italian front. E.E. Cummings was falsely arrested in 1917 for antiwar comments in a personal letter, judged treasonable and sent to La Ferte Mace, a prison-camp and was detained there for four months. Fictionalizing his war experience, Hemingway the ingenious artist, individualizes and romanticizes his wound in the character of Lieutenant Frederic Henry in A Farewell to Arms (1929). The physical, mental and psychical agony that Cummings experienced at the detention camp finds an expression in The Enormous Room (1922), It is, in a way, a memoir of his personal war
experiences. The enormous room where Cummings is imprisoned with his friend Mr. 'B' is a vaultlike chamber with windows on one side containing more than thirty male prisoners. Giving a shocking account of the prison life, Cummings articulates the bestiality, filth, homosexuality, and vulgarity pervasive in the war-afflicted prisoners. Metaphorically, the enormous room is the monster war in miniature and by extension one can imagine the detrimental effects of war. The bureaucratic bearing of the war officials is manifested in Mr. 'A', the leader of the American Red Cross Unit and the director of the La Ferte Mace, a masochist whom Cummings calls Apollyon. In *Soldier's Pay* (1926), Faulkner projects his plane crash experience while he was under training in Canada with the RCAF. The novel is a blending of the war theme with the postwar environment of a Georgia town.

Like Hemingway and Cummings, Dos Passos had the major traumatic experience of his life in World War I. He too volunteered himself for Norton-Harjes ambulance service in France, where he did not have to wait long to witness action on the war front. Recording the impact of the gory horrors of war on Dos Passos on his arrival in France, Ludington writes:
these days of actual combat had more effect on him than would any other single experience. Certainly it was one of the two or three pivotal moments in his eventful life. The war destroyed what vestiges of romantic aestheticism remained from his Harvard days; it heightened his belief in the importance of individual liberties and his respect for the common man, and it deepened his hatred for the cant, even the inhumanity, of officialdom. When Dos Passos, the Norton-Harjes ambulance driver, ended his temporary duty with the Medical Corps, he left for Italy with the American Red Cross. In 1918 he drove ambulance for the Red Cross in Italy. Just before his return from the war, where his job involved carrying "buckets full of amputated arms and hands and legs from an operating room," Dos Passos had another significant experience of war.

Where Hemingway dilates on the emotional response of the "code" hero to the horrors of war and Cummings exposes the bastions of army bureaucracy and banalities of war, Dos Passos humanises and socialises his war experiences. Dos Passos lived through both the wars, but his attitude to war remained consistent and tenacious. For him war has always been a symbol of destruction and annihilation of "what had been considered permanent in art, thought, human pretension." Stanley Cooperman contends that the theme of war and violence for American writers has been "almost a cultural inevitability" and
"war in various forms has been the Real, the True, the Noble, the antidote for moral flatulence, for spiritual flab, for weekend ___7 manhood."\textsuperscript{15} Dos Passos's thesis is very simple but sound. "War," Dos Passos writes, "whether in a good cause or bad, lets loose all the basic antisocial passions that it's the business of civilized society to keep chained up, and once it starts it follows its own laws that have little to do with progress or democracy."\textsuperscript{16}

III

Anthony Winner perceptively observes that Dan Fuselli is a "pusillanimous toady who will do almost anything to get ahead." Fuselli represents that class of cowardly soldiers who seek advancement without showing any intrinsic worth of their own. Hailing from Frisco, Fuselli shows the urban impact of a strong desire for material success. He lacks individuality and deems it necessary to give a mechanical smile to please his officers. His coveted wish is to be a corporal to impress his girl, Mabe, in his home town in Frisco. Considering war to be a godsent boon, Fuselli is careful not to do anything that may antagonize his officers, and spoil his chances for corporalcy. The novel opens with him and he is shown as one grounded in the mould of the army machine. Lying in his bed he muses, "Somebody had said there'd be promotions soon. Oh, he wanted so hard to be promoted. It'd be so swell if he could write back to Mabe and tell her to address her letters Corporal Dan Fuselli" (p. 11).

Lacking intelligence and aggressiveness, he obeys the orders of his superiors as a dog dances to the tune of his master. One day after the mess hours, the corporal asks him to wash his kit for the pack inspection and he gladly agrees, taking it to be an opportunity to make good impression. When, at another time the corporal orders him
to clean the lieutenant's room, he boils up with impotent rage, as it is for the first time that he has been asked to do a menial's job. It is in fact a blow to his self-styled corporalship. There is a futile fretting in the words, "He hadn't joined the army to be slavey to any damned first loot. It was against army regulations anyway. He'd go and kick" (p. 63). But the stifling resentment soon subsides when he notices the corporal coughing into his handkerchief with an expression of pain on his face. Deriving malicious pleasure in the tubercular corporal's ailing condition he suggests to his own self, "It would get him in wrong if he started kicking like that. Much better shut his mouth and put up with it. The poor old corp couldn't last long at this rate. No, it wouldn't do to get in wrong" (p. 63). The next morning when Fuselli knocks at the Lieutenant's apartment to clean the room, he is directed to come again after twenty minutes. Waiting for the time to pass, he introspects his gullibility:

Despair seized hold of him. He was so far from anyone who cared about him, so lost in the vast machine. He was telling himself that he'd never get on, would never get up where he could show what he was good for. He felt as if he were in a treadmill. Day after day it would be like this -- the same routine, the same helplessness. (p. 64)

He cleans the room and when he returns to the tents, finds himself fascinated by the lieutenant's way of putting 'j-' on the gloves and pictures to himself drawing on a pair of
gloves in the lieutenant's manner. Fuselli understands the deadening and dessicating effects of war but lacks the courage to reject or revolt against it.

Fuselli is restive at not getting promoted and in frustration feels "lost in the machine, of being as helpless as a sheep in a flock" (p. 72). There are reports about the obnoxious atrocities of the German soldiers and he wants to be in combat service not to save the crumbling civilization or dying humanity, but to win public recognition and material glory. Nevertheless, his hopes of becoming a corporal are not totally belied. He is appointed 1st class private acting corporal when the regular corporal goes on medical leave. At the announcement of his rise in rank he feels like "shouting and dancing with joy" (p. 103). He is vainglorious, and just at the appearance of this ephemeral glory his earlier sense of tension, pain and indignation dissolves into oblivion. Fuselli's conformity to the dictates of war reaches its climax when his sergeant takes away his girl, Yvonne, and he nonchalantly accepts defeat. The situation shows what a coward he is and how his ever-swelling desire for higher rank has clouded and warped his judgement.

Fuselli stood still with his fists clenched. The blood flamed through his head, making his scalp tingle. Still the top sergeant was the top sergeant, came the thought. It would never do to get in wrong with him. (pp. 114-115)
In one of his letters to his friend Walter Rumsey Marvin, Dos Passos laments the loss of courage and intelligence in persons like Fuselli. "If people could only realize the inanity of it -- or if they had the courage to stop being dupes...I am convinced that it is through pure cowardice that war continues."18

Richard Ellsworth Savage (Dick Savage), a protagonist in 1919, surrenders his high ideals before the system for the sake of a secure career and a rise in social position. He is introduced as an idealist with pacifistic beliefs. Yet, he enlists himself in the volunteer ambulance service and sails for France. His ambulance section moves up to the front and is kept busy around the clock. The horrors of war make Dick Savage ashamed to be a member of the human race and he reacts violently:

It's a hell of a note when you have to be ashamed of belonging to your own race. But I swear I am, I swear I'm ashamed of being a man...it will take some huge wave of hope like a revolution to make me feel any selfrespect ever again....God, we're a lousy cruel vicious dumb type of tailless ape. (p. 203)

Dick Savage's ambulance section is disbanded when the U.S. army takes over the ambulance service and he joins the American Red Cross ambulance section in Italy. After a few months, behind the Italian lines, Dick and three others are ordered back to the States. In Rome, Dick is
told that some of his letters are considered unpatriotic by the censor board. He pleads his case in Paris, but the officials there are unsympathetic to his pacifistic views. He returns to the States.

On arrival in the States, Savage is willing to compromise his pacifistic convictions with the system. With the help of Hiram Hasley Cooper, a Major in the purchase department of ordnance, formerly a wealthy lawyer, Dick is commissioned as second lieutenant and sent back to France. On the ship he writes a letter in doggerel to his friend Black (Ned) Wigglesworth. One day, in the toilet, he rereads the unposted letter, tears it into small bits and drops them in the can and then flushes it carefully. In Dick's act of flushing the letter in the toilet, John D. Brantley perceives the symbolic significance of Dick's submission to the pressure of the "machine." According to Brantley, Dick "flushes the letter down the toilet, and with it the last shreds of his independence." On his arrival in France there is an immediate rise in his military rank. His fluency in French gets him an assignment in the Post Dispatch Service and he is promoted to the rank of a Captain. After the Armistice he becomes a courier for the Peace Conference. His conformity to the system is reflected in his dialogue with his older brother Henry, who is in Paris:
"The trouble with you, Henry," he said, yawning, "is that you're just an old Puritan...you ought to be more Continental."

"I notice you didn't go with any of those bitches yourself."

"I haven't got any morals, but I'm finicky, my dear, Epicurus owne sonne," Dick drawled sleepily. (p. 381)

IV

THE REBELS

Dos Passos delineates the glory and gruesome aspect of war in the form of the sustained metaphor of "machine." "Machine" does not only manifest the inhuman and heinous aspect of industry but also the sadistic attitude of the governments, non-combatant civilians and capitalists who help in the aggravation and promotion of War. In his diary for July 31st, 1917, Dos Passos records his bitterness for the politicians and the capitalists who, in fact, promote war:

My God what a time — All the cant and hypocrisy, all the damnable survivals, all the vestiges of old truths now putrid and false infect the air, choke you worse than German gas -- The ministers from their damn smug pulpits, the business men -- the heroics about war -- my country right or wrong -- oh infinities of them! Oh the tragic farce of the world. Hardy's Arch satirist is more a bungling clown than an astute and sinister humorist.
and he concludes the entry with the words:

oh what a God-damned mess they have made of
organized society, the bankers and brokers
and meat-packers — and business men. Better
any tyranny than theirs. Down with the
middle aged!22

Martin Howe, John Andrews and Chrisfield rebel against the
mechanized (monotony, material glory) and inhuman (barbarities,
slavery) aspects of war. Commenting on Dos Passos's war
experiences and their treatment in his war novels, Granville
Hicks writes, "It was not blood and death that he wrote
about in One Man's Initiation and Three Soldiers, but
tyrranny, exploitation, and purposelessness,"23 and adds
that for Dos Passos "the destruction of the spirit was worse
than the destruction of the flesh."24 /Machine, therefore,
aptly becomes a constant and dominating symbol of suppression
and dull mechanical life in Three Soldiers. The chapters
are given metaphorical "machine" titles. Machine which
becomes titular head of the novel "reduces to nothing all
his individual's pretensions and hopes."25 "Making the
Mould," "The Metal Cools," "Machines" "Rust" "The World
Outside" and "Under the Wheels" express the machine-like
quality of the army and the mechanical uniformity required
of men in it. The first two sections cover the training
camp incidents with Fuselli at the centre. The chapter
"Machines" gives a picture of Chrisfield and war. In the
remaining three sections Andrews becomes more prominent,
and with him we have the hospital scene, his social outlook, and final desertion and capture. Clutched in the grip of the big army machine, Andrews reacts against its industrialized aspects: "if he could only express these thwarted lives, the miserable dullness of industrialized slaughter, it might have been almost worth while -- for him; and for the others" (p. 290). In his reveries, while passing before a park he sees the tremendous change wrought by the industrialized war. He compares the past centuries of Renaissance and Italy with the diminishing stature of the modern man:

In contrast, the world today seemed pitifully arid. Men seemed to have shrunk in stature before the vastness of the mechanical contrivances they had invented. Michael Angelo, da Vinci, Aretino, Cellini; would the strong figures of men ever so dominate the world again? Today everything was congestion, the scurrying of crowds; men had become ant-like. Perhaps it was inevitable that the crowds should sink deeper and deeper in slavery. Whichever won, tyranny from above, or spontaneous organization from below, there could be no individuals. (p. 373)

The machine has become insurmountable and man is reduced to a non-entity. John Andrews understands the annihilating tendency of the machine and the relatively insignificant existence of man. He "felt for a moment that he was the only living thing in a world of dead machines; the toad hopping across the road in front of a steam roller" (p. 462).
Dos Passos's war heroes feel that the power drunkenness of nations leads to war. Martin Howe and Tom Randolph, his assistant driver, in One Man's Initiation-1917, contend that America has betrayed its heritage in plunging into war. America seems to have become a "military nation" "an organized pirate nation" like the other war-mongering nations. And American idealism is simply a camouflage, and "the best camouflage is always sincere" (p.158). So, what terrifies Martin Howe is the power of the war-mongering nations to enslave the mind of a soldier who is a mere puppet in the hands of the governments. Disillusioned, he tells his radical friends:

I shall never forget the flags, the menacing, exultant flags along all the streets before we went to war, the gradual unbaring of teeth, gradual lulling to sleep of people's humanity and sense by the phrases, the phrases.... America...is ruled by the press. And the press is ruled by whom?.... People seems to so love to be fooled. Intellect used to mean freedom, a light struggling against darkness. Now the darkness is using the light for its own purposes....We are slaves of bought intellect, willing slaves." (p. 159)

Dos Passos astutely depicts certain situations in which the barbarous and detrimental effects of war are shown. In One Man's Initiation-1917 a series of events reveal the stupidity and brutality of war. Martin Howe's initiation is complete in chapter IV of the novel, and the chain of gruesome events starts from chapter V. In
Paris Martin Howe and Tom Randolph encounter an Englishman from the war front who tries to drown in wine the painful memory of a particular horrible incident tantamount to homicide. He narrates how before he left the front he saw a man hide a hand-grenade under the pillow of a German prisoner. The prisoner who had a broken shoulder and was not more than eighteen years old, said "Thank you," "And the grenade blew him to hell" (p. 94). In Chapter VI Dos Passos describes a scene of religious sacrilege in the devastation of a wooden crucifix. At the crossroads near the front, Martin sees an old wooden crucifix that someone had propped up. The crucifix "tilted its dark despairing arms against the sunset sky where the sun gleamed... The rain made bright yellowish stripes across the sky and dripped from the cracked feet of the old wooden Christ" (p. 110). Howe has stopped there to change the wheel of the car. Suddenly he finds that one of the soldiers has kicked away the support of the crucifix. Martin Howe gives a spiteful smile and in his mind asks the "swaying figure," "What do You think of it, old boy? How do You like Your followers?" (p. 111). This is the second shock to Martin's religious sentiments. Earlier too, he has witnessed the cataclysmic destruction of the abbey that had a deep significance both for Howe and his assistant-driver, Tom Randolph. Stressing the abbey's great consoling
and sustaining influence on Martin Howe, Hoffman points out, "A church seemed to him the most enduring monument to man's civilized history; yet it could not stand in the way of military need." Lying in its lap, Martin could forget the inane trivialities and follies of mankind. "God! if there were somewhere nowadays where you could flee from all this stupidity, from all this cant of governments, and this hideous reiteration of hatred, this strangling hatred" (p. 81). And the Church had inspired him with a wish for renunciation, "If there were monasteries nowadays," said Martin, "I think I'd go into one" (p. 82).

In chapter VII Martin Howe and two French soldiers drink wine together in the doorway of a deserted house. One soldier tells how often he had been kept in reserve and the solitary incident where he used his bayonet, seems to have changed his life course. It was near Mont Cornelien that he put a German soldier to death with his bayonet, and "I heard my bayonet grind as it went through his chest" (p. 139). He describes the incident:

I was trembling all over like an old dog in a thunderstorm. When I got up, he was lying on his side with his mouth open and blood running out, my bayonet still sticking into him. You know you have to put your foot against a man and pull hard to get the bayonet out. (p. 139) Remorse overtakes him as he broods over the incident. He shows Martin Howe a leather purse containing the family photograph of the dead soldier. Now he is ashamed to be a
man and says, "It's strange, but I have two children, too, only one's a boy. I lay down on the ground beside him -- I was all in -- and listened to the machine-guns tapping put, put, put, put, put, all around. I wished I'd let him kill me instead" (p. 139). In the same chapter Dos Passos describes the death of a German prisoner who had been helping the stretcher bearers and is killed by an exploding artillery shells. Dos Passos draws an image of the drooping and dying soldier, "The slender figure of the prisoner bent suddenly double, like a pocket knife closing, and lay still" (p. 147). Martin Howe hurries to help him and feels an emotional affinity for the victim:

Sweat dripped from Martin's face, on the man's face, and he felt the arm-muscles and the ribe pressed against his body as he clutched the wounded man tightly to him in the effort of carrying him towards the dugout. The effort gave Martin a strange contentment. It was as if his body were taking part in the agony of this man's body. At last they were washed out, all the hatreds, all the lies, in blood and sweat. Nothing was left but the quiet friendliness of beings alike in every part, eternally alike. (p. 148)

In *Three Soldiers* the barbarity and bureaucracy of army life has been highlighted chiefly in three acts -- Chrisfield kicking the dead soldier; the murder of Sergeant Anderson and John Andrews's desertion of war. Chrisfield, a farm boy from Indiana, represents the agricultural midlands. He loathes the regimentation of army life. There is a sadistic streak in his character which makes him a rash, reckless and violent young man. He perceives the gulf of
bureaucracy that exists between him and army officers, localized in the person of sergeant Anderson. Chrisfield bears resentment and hatred for Sergeant Anderson as he tells Andrews that he threatened Anderson with a knife because "He seems to think that just because Ah'm littler than him he can do anything he likes with me" (p. 24). The higher rank of Anderson always irks Chrisfield and on another occasion "a bit of the devil" in him is let loose, when Anderson during duty hours finds Chrisfield in the barracks. The dialogue reveals Chrisfield's defiant attitude:

"Orders was all the companies was to go out an' not leave any guard."

"Ah!"

"We'll see about that when Sergeant Higgins comes in. Is this place tidy?"

"You say Ah'm goddamned liar, do ye?" Chrisfield felt suddenly cool and joyous. He felt anger taking possession of him. He seemed to be standing somewhere away from himself watching himself get angry.

"This place has got to be cleaned up....That damn General may come back to look over quarters," went on Anderson coolly.

"You call me a goddam liar," said Chrisfield again, putting as much insolence as he could summon into his voice. "Ah guess you doan' remember me."

"Yes, I know, you're the guy tried to run a knife into me once," said Anderson coolly, squaring his shoulders. "I guess you've learned a little discipline by this time. Anyhow you've got to clean this place up. God, they haven't even brushed the bird's nests down! Must be some company!" said Anderson with a half laugh.

"Ah ain't agoin' to neither, fur you." (pp. 168-169)
Despite warnings and disciplinary actions taken against him, Chrisfield remains adamant in his defiant attitude and shows his mettle during action. Separated from his outfit, wandering about in the Oregon forest, he comes across wounded sergeant Anderson risen to the rank of lieutenant. Anderson demands water from Chrisfield which he readily provides from his "canteen." Chrisfield notices Anderson's rise in rank and is overpowered by anti-bureaucratic feelings. "First you was a corporal, then you was a sergeant, and now you're a lieutenant," said Chrisfield slowly (p. 199). Spurred by the uncontrollable gush of feelings, Chrisfield throws the hand-grenade at the wounded Anderson and destroys the symbol of bureaucracy. "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" (p. 200). In the same American attack in which he finally kills Anderson, he repeatedly kicks a dead German soldier and Dos Passos depicts the scene with all its repugnance and revulsion. Symbolically, Chrisfield's act of kicking the dead soldier divulges his hatred for war.
He could feel the ribs against his toes through the leather of his boot. He kicked again and again with all his might. The German rolled over heavily. He had no face. Chrisfield felt the hatred suddenly ebb out of him. Where the face had been was a spongy mass of purple and yellow and red, half of which stuck to the russet leaves when the body rolled over. Large flies with bright shiny green bodies circled about it. In a brown clay-grimed hand was a revolver. (p. 157)

Drawing a detailed comparison of the death of a soldier in the woods with an exactly a similar one in Stephen Crane's Red Badge of Courage, J.H. Wrenn derives the symbolic significance in both the novels.

Another instance of an alive man becoming a heap of sod and clay is the death of soldier Stockton. Meaningfully, the section "The Metal Cools" ends with his death. The brief scene is an ingenious ironic commentary on the inhuman attitude of the officers and the vehement defiance of the helpless soldiers. Stockton lies dead in his bed, while the sergeant and the guards in vain yell at him to get out of the bed. The sergeant orders the guards to "yank him out of bed" (p. 129). When they roll him over, "the frail form in khaki shirt and whitish drawers was held up for a moment between the two men. Then it fell a limp heap on the floor" (p. 129).

The dehumanizing and enslaving aspect of war is a reiterative theme in Dos Passos's war novels. Of all the characters in One Man's Initiation-1917 and Three Soldiers,
Martin Hove and John Andrews react at the slightest idea of slavery embodied in the army life. In the soldiers on the parade ground, John Andrews sees the image of galley slaves working at the commands of persons at the helm of army affairs. Watching the moving pictures in a hall crowded with soldiers, he philosophises over his own existence vis-à-vis the other soldiers present there:

They were all so alike, they seemed at moments to be but one organism. This was what he had sought when he had enlisted, he said to himself. It was in this that he would take refuge from the horror of the world that had fallen upon him. He was sick of revolt, of thought of carrying his individuality like a banner above the turmoil. This was much better, to let everything go, to stamp out his maddening desire for music, to humble himself into the mud of common slavery. He was still tingling with sudden anger from the officers voice that morning: 'Sergeant, who is this man?' The officer had stared in his face as a man might stare at a piece of furniture. (p. 22)

All the time John Andrews is afraid of losing his individuality in the vast abyss of war. He realizes that he has been "tamed" and desertion is the only way to escape the monotony and slavery inherent in army life. The idea takes deep roots while he lies rusting in the army hospital and feels like a "slave among slaves" and broods over the enslaving capacity, futility and stupidity of war:

How these people enjoyed hating! At that rate it was better to be at the front. Men were more humane when they were killing each other than when they were talking about it. So was civilization nothing but a vast edifice of sham, and the war, instead of its crumbling, was its fullest and most ultimate expression. Oh, but there must be something more in the world than greed and hatred and cruelty. (p. 225)
Desertion from the army, however, implies a gesture of defiance against the monstrous manifestation of war and also a final farewell to arms. Prohock appropriately comments that for John Andrews, "army is one great conspiracy to take away his liberty." 29

V

COMMENTATORS

Joe Williams makes a vitriolic attack on the fraudulent and crooked nature of war, Jay Pignatelli exposes the ruthless behaviour of the censor board, and Roland Lancaster acts as a chorus to the malicious activities of the fighting nations.

Joe Williams is a wild, rudderless seaman who travels extensively during the war period but seldom becomes an active participant. During his genuine and forged voyages he has different experiences. He beats the petty officers, refuses to work on menial jobs, is arrested as a German spy and his ship is torpedoed. His journeys provide an insight into war-hit Europe. His early denunciation of war is shown in The 42nd Parallel in his conversations with his sister, Janey. She is keen to know Joe's experiences of desertion from the army, his joining the merchant marine and the torpedoing of
Joe lashes out against war:

The whole damn war's crooked from start to finish. Why don't they torpedo any French Line boats? Because the Frogs have it all set with the Jerries, see, that if the Jerries leave their boats alone they won't shell the German factories back of the front...I'm tellin' ye, Janey, this war's crooked, like every other goddam thing. (pp. 388-389)

His discussion with two I.W.W. men from Chicago in 1919 shows his bitterness against war and his interest in American socialism. They suggest that the way to prevent war is that the workers should stop making munitions:

Joe said they were goddam right but look at the big money you made. The guys from Chicago said ... that if the working stiffs made a few easy dollars it meant that the war profiteers were making easy millions. They said the Russians had the right idea, make a revolution and shoot the goddam profiteers.... They drank another round and Joe said it was all true but what the hell could you do about it? The guys said what you could do about it was join the I.W.W. and carry a red card and be a classconscious worker. Joe said that stuff was only for foreigners, but if somebody started a white man's party to fight the profiteers and the goddam bankers he'd be with 'em. (pp. 185-186)

Jay Pignatelli in Chosen Country gives a glimpse of the activities of the censor board during World War I. After finishing his law course at Harvard, he joins the ambulance service and is sent to France. There he experiences the same trouble from the censor board that Richard Ellsworth faced and which becomes a sustained theme in E.E. Cummings's war novel The Enormous Room. On the war front in France, the trio of Jed Morris, Tad Skinner and Jay Pignatelli is
popularly known as the “three omeleteers.” Jed the vociferous anarchist lands into “a cush job” doing publicity for the Red Cross, and Tad is promoted as an army courier with a first lieutenant’s bar. Jay Pignatelli falls a prey to the censor board for reasons never communicated to him. He approaches Major Henley, the Red Cross Major, also a Harvard man about his troubles, but on his cold and indifferent attitude Jay feels:

It wasn’t one Harvard man to another, no not at all; the statement the major was groping for, that Jay could read, like print lit from behind, on his fat face, was that not everybody who went to Harvard belonged to Harvard really, some were illegitimate bastards with foreign names who had no social standing...It took more than a few years' residence in Cambridge to make a Harvard man. (p. 339)

When Jay challenges the validity of the unknown allegation, the major replies, "Nobody is accusing anybody of anything," and he adds, "It is just felt that some people are unsuitable for further service under the Red Cross" (p. 340). He, however, suggests that Jay should contact the Army Intelligence. Schuyler Vandam, the Army Intelligence officer turns out to be Jay’s old class fellow. Instead of investigating the authenticity of the accusation, he, in an indifferent bureaucratic tone tells Jay:

"...We are going to eliminate people with ideas like yours. We don't want such people in the A.E.F."

"What kind of ideas?" (Jay asks)

"Pacifists and slackers." (p. 341)
Dos Passos unfolds the World War II scenes in *The Great Days* through the reminiscences of Roland Lancaster, a celebrated journalist. As a war correspondent, he tells us "how the outsiders feel." There are five sketches of World War II and its aftermath. When World War II begins, he undertakes series of trips to the war-affected areas from the blitzed-London to the Pacific, to the Nuremberg trials.

To Ro Lancaster and his friend Roger Thurloe, a high official in the government administration, the postwar United States seems a crumbling nation. In England, Ro Lancaster gets an assignment with Parkman Magazine to write some articles about England under the bombings. He draws a vignette of war-hit London:

> The poetry of the London blackout. The beauty of the dim crowded streets where you walked with all your senses sharpened by the knowledge that a ton of bricks might drop on your head any moment. The tiny blue crosses of the traffic lights. The way faces bloomed out at the striking of a match. (p. 44)

And the blank look of one of the most populous cities of the world is described in the words, "The humdrum look of London but empty. Not a soul to be seen. Not a sound of traffic. A few sleepy swallows twittering. Nobody to ask his way." (p.48). He reports to Roger Thurloe of his meeting with the celebrated author H.G. Wells, who was of the opinion that war was fought to protect the crumbling civilization. The efforts made by the English and Russians were proving inadequate and "They [the Germans] were
ruining everything by the abysmal barabrism of their methods. But, now who would carry on? Civilization had to be led. The Battle for the English skies was won, but it was Britain's last effort..." (p. 50). To Roger Thurloe's inquisitive question about H.G. Wells's reaction, Ro replies, "If you Americans can't find some way of carrying the burden of empire we are sunk, all of us, sunk!' (p. 50).

In a way, H.G. Wells, entrusts the future of European civilization to the people of America. Ro Lancaster's trip to Pearl Harbor is arranged by Roger Thurloe with a view to "tell the story, as much as it can be told, as it goes along. The American people are going to need some independent observers..." (p. 60). As a foil to him are the practical correspondents, Mortimer Price and George Elbert Warner, who colour their reports with the opinion of the masses, Ro, however, ponders over the responsibilities of the persons at the helm of the affairs, "This was something different. This was the gambler's delight in hazarding fleets and cities full of tiny crawling men and sorefooted armies on the march. An island here. A continent there. The whole wide world at stake" (p. 81). He holds the leaders and politicians responsible for the propagation and continuation of war. During his visit to the Pacific Islands he observes the hideous manifestations of war, "...a tropical island churned
by bombardment. What remained of wrecked thatched huts and mangled groves of papayas and bananas and pitted cornfields was being levelled by the bulldozers and the draglines and the sheepfoot rollers of the Seabees laying out airfields" (p. 121). He visits a camp in Manila, where the American civilians have been imprisoned and records their wretched condition, "Never had I felt such admiring love for my fellow countrymen as before the uncom plaint of these starved skeletons of men and women. They had kept their children well and starved themselves" (p. 149). At the Nuremberg trials the "refrain" of the discussions and arguments was: "...shooting starvation and torture... tortured and killed...shooting, beating and hanging... shooting starvation and torture..." (p. 230).

World War I presented a crucial test for the young American writers and Dos Passos emerges as the pioneer as he establishes the idea of war as a literary subject. He makes adequate use of his war experiences diversified through three different kinds of characters. Dos Passos's protagonists go to war out of boyish idealism of either public recognition and material glory or to save the crumbling civilization or simply to observe the futility and stupidity involved in a war. Yet, all the three categories
of soldiers find disillusionment and defeat which leads us to the next stage of alienation. Thus, Dos Passos provides us with a view of the disastrous and dessicating effects of war from three different angles.
REFERENCES

1 Dos Passoa gives a graphic and trenchant account of the relationship of an individual and the institution in Adventures of a Young Man, in his peculiar grammatical, orthographical and typographical style which shows the author’s own angularities.

WHEN INSTITUTIONS decay
new institutions grow in the rot of the old.
(Man is an animal that builds institutions the way ants build hills, birds nexts, or muddaubers their rows of hollow chambers under the eaves.)

The capitalist corporations, which took advantage of the leverage massed money afforded to contrive the exploitation of the manufacture and marketing of goods...

The Communist Party grew out of the meetings of disinherited men exiled in cheap boardinghouses, driven by a throbbing faith that history had chosen them and them alone to become the architects of change....

The boards of directors of corporations had harnessed the means of exchange to the levers of power. The new regimenters of men harnessed envy and hunger and want and the abnegation of young men and women
crazy to throw their lives away if only for a moment
they could feel themselves the architects;
dictatorship introduced a different board of directors into the hierarchical corporate structure, new insiders exercising power (total power this time; the moneymasters could only take your livelihood)
to kill, to starve, to torture, to work without pay the suffering masses of men. In Russia among the carrion of battlefields, from the bloody cellars where they had killed the autocrat, from the blotters of the secret police they salvaged the tools of absolute rule

From the Kremlin to California they broke men’s wills to obedience. (pp. 179-181)
2 Cited from J.H. Wrenn, John Dos Passos

3 R.T. Horchler, "Significant Tract for the Time,"

4 Mark Schorer, "John Dos Passos: A stranded American,"

5 Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds (New York: Doubleday &

6 Chester E. Bisinger, Fiction of the Forties, (Chicago

7 John Dos Passos, "A Preface Twenty Five Years Later,"
One Man's Initiation-1917 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ.

8 Frederick J. Hoffman, The Twenties (New York: Collier Books,

9 Ibid., p. 70.

10 John Dos Passos, The Theme is Freedom (New York: Dodd,


12 Cited from The Fourteenth Chronicle, p. 84.

13 In one of his letters to Rumsey Marvin with whom his
 correspondence lasted till the end of his life, Dos Passos
 shows his utter disgust and hatred for war. He writes, "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." The Fourteenth Chronicle, p. 92.

14 Hoffman, op. cit. p. 78.

15 Stanley Cooperman, "American War Novels: Yesterday, Today
and Tomorrow," Yale Review, LIX, Number 4 (Summer, 1972),
p. 517.

17 Anthony Winner, "The Characters of John Dos Passos" Wissenschaft Und Unterricht, (Printed Courtesy copy) p. 13.


20 To the socialists "the republic was something more than a painted dropcurtain hiding the babyeating Moloch of monopoly capital." Occasions and Protests, p. 37.

21 The Fourteenth Chronicle, p. 90.

22 Ibid., p. 91.


24 Ibid., p. 17.


26 Ibid., p. 78.

27 The theme of status consciousness is delineated at length by Norman Mailer in The Naked and the Dead, a war novel, which exhibits Dos Passos's influence both in technique and subject matter. General Edmund Cummings, the Division Commander, a fascist-minded despot, enters into a discussion with Lt. Hearn, his aide, a liberal minded Harvard aesthete. The general believes in the absolute power of the army officials and in a discussion tells Hearn that "the individual soldier in that army is a more effective soldier the poor his standard of living has been in the past." (p. 183) In the course of the same discussion he argues: "The machine techniques of this century demand consolidation, and with that you've got to have fear, because the majority of men
must be subservient to the machine, and it's not a business they instinctively enjoy."

