

J. DOS PASSOS AND HIS TRILOGY 'U.S.A.'. ("THE 42ND PARALLEL", 'NINETEEN NINETEEN', "THE BIG MONEY")

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Abstract: *John Dos Passos was an American writer known for his groundbreaking trilogy titled "U.S.A." The trilogy consists of three novels: "The 42nd Parallel," "Nineteen Nineteen," and "The Big Money." Published between 1930 and 1936, the trilogy is a major work of American modernist literature.*

Dos Passos employed a unique narrative style in the trilogy, incorporating different narrative techniques such as newsreels, biographies, stream-of-consciousness, and newspaper clippings to create a complex and multilayered portrayal of American society during the early 20th century. He used this fragmented and experimental approach to capture the fast-paced, chaotic, and often dehumanizing aspects of modern American life.

Throughout the trilogy, Dos Passos addresses various social, political, and economic issues, including the impact of industrialization, labor struggles, the effects of World War I, and the rise of corporate capitalism.

Key words: *John Dos Passos, U.S.A. trilogy, The 42nd Parallel, Nineteen Nineteen, The Big Money, American modernist literature, narrative style, fragmented, experimental, social issues, political issues, economic issues, industrialization, labor struggles, World War I*

Born in Chicago, Dos Passos graduated from Harvard College in 1916. He traveled widely as a young man, visiting Europe and southwest Asia, where he learned about literature, art, and architecture. During World War I, he was an ambulance driver for the American Volunteer Motor Ambulance Corps in Paris and Italy, before joining the United States Army Medical Corps as a private.

In 1920, his first novel, *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, was published, and in 1925, his novel *Manhattan Transfer* became a commercial success. His U.S.A. trilogy, which consists of the novels *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *Nineteen Nineteen* (1932), and *The Big Money* (1936), was ranked by the Modern Library in 1998 as 23rd of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century. Written in experimental, non-linear form, the trilogy blends elements of biography and news reports to paint a landscape of early 20th-century American culture.

Beyond his writing, Dos Passos is known for his shift in political views. Following his experiences in World War I, he became interested in socialism and pacifism, which also influenced his early work. In 1928, he traveled to the Soviet Union, curious about its social and political experiment, though he left with mixed impressions.

John Dos Passos was an American novelist and artist known for his groundbreaking trilogy of novels titled "U.S.A." The trilogy consists of three books: "The 42nd Parallel" (1930), "Nineteen Nineteen" (1932), and "The Big Money" (1936).

Dos Passos' "U.S.A." trilogy is considered a landmark of American modernist literature due to its innovative narrative style and themes. The novels are characterized by a fragmented and experimental narrative structure that includes a mix of different literary forms such as newspaper clippings, advertisements, biographies, and stream-of-consciousness passages.

The trilogy explores a wide range of social, political, and economic issues during the early 20th century in America, including industrialization, labor struggles, World War I, corporate capitalism, and the impact of these forces on American society. Dos Passos' writing is often critical and cynical, portraying a society marked by exploitation, corruption, and moral decay.

Dos Passos' "U.S.A." trilogy is considered a significant work in American literature for its ambitious scope, innovative narrative techniques, and its portrayal of the American experience during a period of great social and political change.

One interesting aspect of Dos Passos' "U.S.A." trilogy is the innovative use of narrative techniques, such as the use of multiple narrative forms including biographies, fictional newspaper articles, song lyrics, and stream-of-consciousness passages. Dos Passos also incorporated real-life historical figures and events into the narrative, creating a stark portrayal of American society during the early 20th century.

Additionally, Dos Passos' trilogy explores themes such as class struggle, the impact of industrialization on American society, the struggle for social justice, and the disillusionment caused by World War I. The trilogy provides a sweeping and complex portrait of America during a tumultuous time in its history.

Dos Passos' writing style is characterized by its modernist influences, including experimentation with form and structure, fragmented narrative techniques, and a focus on the individual's place within a larger social and historical context. His work has been praised for its bold and ambitious scope, as well as its keen social commentary and vivid characterizations.

Dos Passos' "U.S.A." trilogy remains a significant and influential work in American literature, offering a multi-faceted and critical exploration of the American experience in the early 20th century.

In addition to his acclaimed "U.S.A." trilogy, John Dos Passos also wrote a number of other novels, plays, and essays throughout his career. One of his notable works is "Manhattan Transfer" (1925), a novel that explores the hustle and bustle of New York City and the lives of its diverse inhabitants. This novel showcases Dos Passos' keen observation of urban life and his experimental narrative techniques.

Dos Passos was also known for his political activism and his commitment to social justice. Throughout his life, he was involved in various political causes, including opposition to fascism and support for labor rights. His experiences during World War I and disillusionment with American society influenced his political beliefs and informed much of his writing.

In addition to his fiction writing, Dos Passos also worked as a journalist and war correspondent, reporting on events such as the Spanish Civil War and World War II. His

experiences as a journalist provided him with firsthand knowledge of the social and political issues of his time, which he often incorporated into his fiction.

John Dos Passos was a prolific and versatile writer whose works continue to be studied and appreciated for their social commentary, innovative narrative techniques, and vivid portrayals of American life. His impact on American literature and his commitment to social justice have solidified his legacy as an important literary figure.

After the publication of his "U.S.A." trilogy, John Dos Passos continued to write and publish both fiction and non-fiction works. Some of his notable later works include "The Big Money" (1936), which is the final book in his trilogy and continues to explore themes of capitalism and the American dream.

In the 1940s and beyond, Dos Passos turned his attention to writing plays, essays, and biographical works. He wrote plays such as "Airways, Inc." (1940) and "The Garbage Man" (1962), which showcase his continued interest in issues of social justice and politics.

Dos Passos also wrote a memoir titled "The Best Times: An Informal Memoir" (1966), in which he reflects on his experiences as a writer and his involvement in political activism. In this memoir, he offers insights into his personal life, his writing process, and his beliefs about literature and society.

Despite his prolific writing career, Dos Passos' later works did not achieve the same level of critical and commercial success as his "U.S.A." trilogy. However, his contributions to American literature and his commitment to social justice continued to be recognized and celebrated by readers and scholars.

In later years, Dos Passos lived in Virginia and continued to write until his death in 1970. His legacy as a writer dedicated to capturing the complexities of American society and advocating for social change lives on through his works and remains influential in the world of literature.

In the years following Dos Passos' death in 1970, his works have continued to be studied and appreciated by scholars and readers alike. His "U.S.A." trilogy is still considered a landmark of American literature, known for its innovative narrative techniques and its powerful critique of American society.

Dos Passos' writings have inspired generations of writers and thinkers who are interested in exploring the intersections of politics, society, and literature. His commitment to social justice and his willingness to engage with the complexities of American life have cemented his reputation as a writer who was ahead of his time.

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in Dos Passos' works, with new editions of his novels being published and scholarly studies examining his contributions to literature and political activism. His explorations of inequality, capitalism, and the American dream continue to resonate with contemporary audiences and offer valuable insights into the challenges and contradictions of the modern world.

John Dos Passos' legacy as a writer who challenged conventional narrative forms and sought to shed light on the social and political issues of his time remains an important part of American literary history. His works serve as a reminder of the power of literature to provoke thought, inspire change, and illuminate the complexities of the human experience.

John Dos Passos was a prominent American writer known for his groundbreaking "U.S.A." trilogy, which critiqued American society and politics through innovative narrative techniques. His commitment to social justice and exploration of inequality, capitalism, and the American dream continue to resonate with readers and scholars. In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in Dos Passos' works, highlighting his contributions to literature and political activism. His legacy as a writer who challenged conventional forms and shed light on social issues remains an important part of American literary history.

John Dos Passos was born in 1896 in Chicago and studied at Harvard before serving in World War I. He began his writing career as a journalist in the 1920s and gained recognition for his novels and social commentary. His "U.S.A." trilogy, consisting of *The 42nd Parallel*, 1919, and *The Big Money*, was published in the 1930s and remains one of Dos Passos' most enduring works. The trilogy uses a mix of fictional narratives, newsreels, biographies, and essays to depict America's changing landscape and societal issues. Dos Passos' writing style was influential in the development of modernist literature and his critiques of capitalism, industrialism, and political corruption are still relevant today. Dos Passos continued to write novels, essays, and plays throughout his career, and his work continues to be studied and appreciated for its complexity and depth. He passed away in 1970, leaving behind a rich literary legacy.

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4. Carr, Virginia Spencer (1984). *Dos Passos: A Life*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. ISBN 978-0-8101-2200-0. pages 114–117. The acknowledgement was never full or warm, nor were relations between the half-brothers Louis and John.
5. See, e.g., John R. Dos Passos, "The Negro Question", Vol. 12, No. 8, *Yale Law Journal* 467 (1903) (arguing for returning power to states governing African American voting).