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Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

WWI in John Dos Passos' Novels

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ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Závěrečná bakalářská práce se bude věnovat dílu amerického autora Johna Dos Passose, především jeho románům *Three Soldiers* a *One Man's Initiation*, 1917.

V úvodu práce student definuje základní pojmy, s nimiž bude ve svých analýzách pracovat (například trauma, zákopová válka, apod.), charakterizuje tzv. ztracenou generaci a literární modernismus a autora do tohoto kontextu zařadí. Zdůvodní svou volbu děl.

Jádrem práce bude analýza vybraných románů, v níž se student soustředí na způsob zobrazení válečného strádání vojáků a specifika zákopové války. Zhodnotí také použité literární techniky a jejich účinnost vzhledem k tématu románů.

Závěrem student své analýzy shrne a pokusí se vyslovit obecnější závěr o způsobu, jímž Dos Passos zobrazil tematiku první světové války.

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Prohlašuji:

Tuto práci jsem vypracoval samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využil, jsou uvedeny v seznamu literatury.

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Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně Univerzity Pardubice.

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TITLE

WWI in John Dos Passos' novels

ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis focuses on the topic of First World War in the novels *One Man's Initiation: 1917* and *Three Soldiers* by John Dos Passos. This paper provides literary context of John Dos Passos and a brief summary of the American involvement in the First World War. Then it explains several crucial terms for this thesis such as trench warfare and shell shock and subsequently analyses them in both aforementioned novels. Also, this thesis analyses the literary techniques used in both novels and tries to explain their usage.

KEYWORDS

First World War, Dos Passos, trench warfare, shell shock

NÁZEV PRÁCE

Obraz první světové války v díle Johna Dose Passose

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na první světovou válku v románech *One Man's Initiation: 1917* a *Three Soldiers* Johna Dose Passose. Práce zařazuje Dose Passose do literárního kontextu a přináší krátké shrnutí amerického účasti v první světové válce. Dále vysvětluje řadu důležitých termínů jako je například zákopová válka nebo shell shock a poté tyto témata analyzuje ve zmíněných románech. Nakonec se práce věnuje použitým literárním technikám a snaží se vysvětlit jejich použití autorem.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

první světová válka, Dos Passos, zákopová válka, shell shock

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Introduction

John Dos Passos managed to sell only about sixty copies of *One Man's Initiation: 1917* in the first half a year of release. The reason behind this is rather simple – it was too realistic, and the pacifist depiction of war was too shocking. At that time, the United States were celebrating the end of the war and the fact that they played a major role in it, so they understandably did not want to hear or read anything even remotely questioning their celebrations. But then Dos Passos released his first piece in 1920, an anti-war novel too realistic and too shocking for people to believe it was the truth and for the critics to handle and to criticize it objectively. Little did the critics know that *One Man's Initiation: 1917* would later be regarded a novel opening the gates for the Lost Generation authors.

This thesis aims to capture the way John Dos Passos depicted the war in his first two novels *One Man's Initiation: 1917* and *Three Soldiers*. To be more specific, how he depicted trench warfare, shell shock and other war topics. Moreover, this thesis tries to contribute to the research of Dos Passos' work in general because there has been very scarce research done on these particular topics.

I chose this topic because I wanted to find out why Dos Passos is overshadowed by names such as Ernest Hemingway, T. S. Elliot or F. S. Fitzgerald and why he is the less-known member of the Lost Generation. Furthermore, the fact that Dos Passos' work has not been properly researched yet was encouraging me to do my own extensive research and to form my own understanding of things into my thesis, as there is very little research to follow so far.

The first chapter introduces Dos Passos as a writer, it mentions his war experience and provides information about his literary background. Then it tries to determine the definition of Modernism as well as its features. This chapter also contains information about the Lost Generation such as the origin of the term, who popularized it and the members of it. The second part of this chapter is dedicated to the American involvement in the First World War. It discusses the reasons why the United States entered the war as well as their contribution in it.

The second chapter explains several important terms such as trench warfare, chemical warfare and shell shock. It mentions the area in which trench warfare was mainly used, and it also goes on to describe the construction of the trenches and its layout. Then the chapter proceeds to explain the term No Man's Land as it is closely connected to it. The second part of this chapter deals with chemical warfare, its history and the types of gas that were used in the First World

War. The last part of this chapter provides important information about shell shock, its origin, symptoms and consequences.

The third chapter begins with a short introduction of the novel *One Man's Initiation: 1917* as well as its main character. This chapter discusses several topics featured in this novel including trench warfare, daily life of soldiers, hatred between countries, despair of the war and finally the way people and soldiers were misinformed about the war. This paper looks at them from the point of view of John Dos Passos as well as the author of this thesis. Lastly, this chapter provides a general overview of used literary techniques in *One Man's Initiation: 1917*.

The last chapter provides a brief introduction of the novel *Three Soldiers* and its main characters. Then it proceeds to the analysis of several shell-shocked soldiers in this novel, it determines the origin of their mental issues, their symptoms, and, if provided by Dos Passos, their fate. Lastly, this chapter attempts an analysis on the literary techniques used in *Three Soldiers*.

1 Literary context and American involvement in the First World War

The single most influential thing in John Dos Passos' life was indubitably his experience in the First World War. He volunteered as an ambulance driver and was assigned to an American volunteer group in Spain, France, and Italy. Therefore, he clearly had firsthand experience of what the war was like which influenced him later in his life as well as in his writing.

Dos Passos started his writing career shortly after the First World War ended. In year 1920, he published his very first piece of work, a novel *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, which is partly based on his own experience as an ambulance driver during the First World War. Throughout his life, there were significant shifts of ideas and topics in his writing. His early works, such as *One Man's Initiation: 1917* or *Three Soldiers*, represent his war experience, later he deals with social problems and consumerism in *Manhattan Transfer*, or with disillusionment of the labour movement and radical politics in *District of Columbia* trilogy.

To explain the choice of *One Man's Initiation: 1917* and *Three Soldiers* for this thesis, they are both war novels and, to some extent, are inspired by Dos Passos' own experience in the First World War. *One Man's Initiation: 1917* was inspired by his diaries as well as his letters that he sent during the war, therefore, it is partly an autobiographical novel. *Three Soldiers*, on the other hand, is mostly a fictional novel, in which Dos Passos rarely incorporated his own experience. The only exception in *Three Soldiers* is the main protagonist John Andrews, who could be interpreted as Dos Passos' alter-ego as the character is largely based on the author himself. They are both the same in terms of their pursuit of education, love of art and in sharing the same dreams. Another reason for choosing these two novels is that Dos Passos depicted the war very authentically in them. *One Man's Initiation: 1917* contains numerous significant topics such as trench warfare or daily life of soldiers in the military. *Three Soldiers* is a more mature novel in terms of storytelling, it includes topics such as shell shock or revolt against the military. To conclude this point, both of these novels are exciting for their message and for Dos Passos' experience that he put in them.

From a literary point of view, John Dos Passos is a modernist author. Collins Dictionary defines modernism as “a movement in the arts in the first half of the twentieth century that rejected traditional values and techniques, and emphasized the importance of individual experience.”¹

¹ Collins Dictionary, s.v. “modernism”, accessed February 27, 2019, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/modernism>.

Another explanation is provided by Encyclopaedia Britannia: “Modernism as a literary movement is typically associated with the period after World War I. The enormity of the war had undermined humankind’s faith in foundation of Western society and culture, and postwar Modernist literature reflects a sense of disillusionment.”² Alternative definition is provided by Peter Child in his book *Modernism*, where he defines it as “a response by artists and writers to several things, including industrialization, urban society war, technological change and new philosophical ideas.”³

These three definitions do differ to some degree, however, generally, the significant features of modernism can be identified as: emphasis of an individual, industrialization and, the most significant one for this thesis, the First World War.

Since Dos Passos experienced the First World War firsthand, wrote about it and experienced the disillusionment of the war, he is regarded a member of the Lost Generation.

The Lost Generation is a group of writers who directly experienced the war. The generation was not lost literally, as the name of it may suggest. As Britannica suggests, the term was coined by Gertrude Stein and later popularized by Ernest Hemingway. But as Hemingway stated in his novel *A Movable Feast*, Stein only heard the term used by a French citizen who referred to the young as a “generation perdue” and later Stein used it on Hemingway and declared “You are all a lost generation.”⁴

The reason for calling all these writers “The Lost Generation” was that all of them experienced the war and once they came back home, they were not the same individuals that had entered the war. They could not get back to normal life and to society; their values were no longer relevant after the war, therefore they felt like they were not able to fit in society anymore. The “normal” people they came back to did not experience the war, thus they did not know what the war looked like and therefore, they could not understand what the soldiers went through and what memories they were living with, because the memories from the war were inexplicable and unimaginable to the normal people. Those memories haunted them, they dreamt of them and consequently, they changed many of the soldiers for good.

² “Modernism,” Encyclopaedia Britannia, last modified January 17, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Modernism-art>.

³ Peter Child, *Modernism*, (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2008), 21.

⁴ “Lost Generation,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified March 6, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lost-Generation>.

To explain what exactly happened to those authors and soldiers in general, they were experiencing shell shock (today's Post-traumatic stress disorder) from their war experience, which affects the vast majority of soldiers. The term shell shock will be further explained in the following chapter.

John Dos Passos is one of the less known Lost Generation authors. The most famous members are Ernest Hemingway (*A Farewell to Arms*, *The Old Man and the Sea*), Francis Scott Fitzgerald (*The Great Gatsby*) or Hart Crane (*White Buildings*, *The Bridge*).

Ernest Hemingway was a great friend of Dos Passos. Together, they served in the army as ambulance drivers, which is where they met and later became good friends. Despite being friends who met in the war, they both wrote for a different reason. Hemingway was more of a naturalist which he proved by his famous quote "write the truest sentence you know". He wrote for the purpose of capturing the war as best as possible, not to argue with it or to change it. Dos Passos, on the other hand, wanted the war to end - hating it with all his heart. Their friendship was ended by Hemingway because he thought the war made Dos Passos a fascist. In fact, he was no fascist but rather a socialist. The war made him such, which can be witnessed in his books.

Since the Lost Generation is tightly connected to the First World War and Dos Passos was an American author, American involvement in the First World War is significant to discuss.

The United States officially entered the war on April 6, 1917 after series of events they could no longer overlook and tolerate. According to Albert Marrin, the first significant event that led to Americans entering the war was the sinking of a ship called Lusitania which happened on May 7, 1915 at exactly 2:27pm.⁵

Lusitania was not a pre-chosen target, it was rather a random ship worth sinking for a German U-Boat. As Marrin claims, the German U-Boat set off specifically with the goal of sinking a "good enough" ship and Lusitania happened to be the one they found first.⁶ Little did the Germans know that they would cause the biggest civilian sea disaster in the First World War. The sinking was so quick that Lusitania managed to launch only six lifeboats, causing death of 1,127 passengers out of 1,924 who died either of explosion or drowning.

⁵ Albert Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming: The United States in the First World War* (Atheneum: New York, 1986), 5.

⁶ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 4.

Laura Siggins suggests that Germany claimed that Lusitania was a valid target because it was carrying a substantial amount of weapons and ammunition for the Allied Powers.⁷ This may or may not be true. Considering the United States were a neutral country not yet participating in the war, the American government was not allowed by law to sell or trade weapons to any of the countries who were participating in it. Who was not obliged to follow this law, however, were US companies who could have possibly sold or trade weapons with the Allied Powers. The fact that Lusitania was carrying weapons was later confirmed by the divers who were exploring the wreck itself. As Laura Siggins claims, “half a century after the first serious dives to the wreck began, evidence of ammunition has been discovered.”⁸ With that being said, Lusitania truly was carrying weapons but not necessarily an amount that would make it a valid target for Germans.

One of the reasons the United States overlooked this catastrophe was their president Woodrow Wilson. He grew up during the Civil War and as Marrin suggests, Wilson absolutely hated the war and that he was haunted by the memories of it which made him very cautious.⁹ That being said, Wilson was trying to avoid the war for as long as possible. According to Marrin, after the sinking of Lusitania, Wilson sent several messages to Germany, demanding that American ships have the right to sail wherever they wanted to and that American citizens must be allowed to travel safely. Wilson also said that if his requirements were not met, he would, as Marrin claims, “severe diplomatic relations.”¹⁰ That said, Wilson was decided to declare war on Germany if they did not meet his requirements.

The second major event, or rather series of events, that made the United States enter the war were sabotages made by German spies. According to Marrin, the major sabotage happened on July 30, 1916 at Black Tom Island, when the most important depot where ships were loaded with ammunition was blown up by thirty-four freight cars of shells, TNT, and nitroglycerine.¹¹

The last straw that made Wilson declare war on Germany was, as Marrin suggests, the moment when the cities of Memphis, Illinois, and Vigilancia were torpedoed and a huge number of people died. Consequently, Wilson broke diplomatic relations with Germany and, after a

⁷ “No smoking guns: the 100-year controversy about what the ‘Lusitania’ was carrying,” The Irish Times, last modified May 2, 2015, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/no-smoking-guns-the-100-year-controversy-about-what-the-lusitania-was-carrying-1.2197203>.

⁸ The Irish Times, “No smoking guns.”

⁹ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 18.

¹⁰ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 20.

¹¹ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 24-25.

session with the Congress and the House of Representatives, finally declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917.¹²

One would expect that the United States would start fighting right after they declared the war, but that was not the case. Marrin claims that the first help the United States sent was a submarine warfare help to Britain. “The Return of Mayflower,” as Britain called this event, happened on May 4, 1917, when American destroyer harboured Queensland Navy Base.¹³ More destroyers came after that but that was not even remotely enough to secure a safe way for supply ships. Therefore, they needed to come up with a solution as there were not enough ships to control the danger zones. The person who managed to solve this issue was a US Navy captain, Captain Sims. Marrin claims that Sims came up with an idea that supply ships should be accompanied by a convoy which would protect them. Since this idea became a standard in the war, there were no more supply ships sunk and the sea war had reached its turning point.¹⁴

As for foot soldiers, according to Imperial War Museums, they did not arrive until June 26, 1917.¹⁵ Firstly, the United States needed to have soldiers to send. They had a very small army of approximately 80,000 men scattered throughout the world. Therefore, they needed to come up with a fast solution that would recruit a large number of soldiers in very short time. With that said, they introduced Selective Service Act of 1917 which enabled them to recruit hundreds of thousands of soldiers in no time. The registration was compulsory for men of age twenty-one to thirty-one and, in case anyone tried not to register, there was a penalty of one year in prison.

Soldiers underwent a basic training in the United States and then they were sent overseas to France. As Marrin states, “nearly half the men in certain divisions went overseas without ever having fired a rifle.”¹⁶ This was due to the lack of firearms in the United States. In France, however, there was plenty of them and soldiers were taught how to use them. But the biggest problem was not the lack of experience with firearms, it was the fact that the basic training did not show what the war was like in real life. Once they arrived in France, French and British camps trained them more properly for what was ahead of them in the war.

¹² Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 29.

¹³ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 49.

¹⁴ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 58.

¹⁵ “Voices of the First World War: Arrival of the American troops,” Imperial War Museums, last modified June 6, 2018, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/voices-of-the-first-world-war-arrival-of-the-american-troops>.

¹⁶ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 20.

At first, American soldiers fought side by side with others because they were still being trained and sent overseas to France and thus, there was not enough of them to start their own operations or to make a more significant impact. As University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) suggests, that changed in 1918, when American soldiers helped defending in the Champagne-Marne operation in which Germany tried to end the war with a final attack.¹⁷ Fortunately, this attack was unsuccessful and, according to KUMC, this loss “put them on the defensive and marks the first allied attack that begun the campaign that forced them out of France and Flanders and for them to ask for armistice in November 1917.”¹⁸ That said, this battle was a turning point in the First World War. Americans continued fighting with Allies and the US army grew larger, they even did their own attacks later in the war. KUMC claims that their most significant attack was during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, when they launched their own operation called St. Mihiel Operation. With the support of French soldiers, they made Germans retreat from the Ypres Salient, securing it and never letting Germany coming back.¹⁹

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive happened to be the last offensive the Allies needed to make the Central Powers sign an armistice. This armistice was signed in Versailles, France, resulting in the end of the First World War on November 11, 1918.

¹⁷ “American military operations and casualties in 1917-1918,” University of Kansas Medical Center, accessed February 25, 2019, <http://www.kumc.edu/wwi/index-of-essays/american-military-operations-and-casualties.html>.

¹⁸ University of Kansas Medical Center, “American military operations.”

¹⁹ University of Kansas Medical Center, “American military operations.”

2 Terminology

One Man's Initiation: 1917 is a novel based during fighting and living, or better surviving, both in the trenches and outside of them and only a few pages offer nothing from the war. With that being said, it is significant to explain several terms to understand the next chapters.

The first term to be explained in this chapter explains is trench warfare. To begin with, trench warfare, as the word “trench” suggests, is a type of warfare based in the trenches. The term is most commonly associated with the First World War since it was the main mean of combat then. Trench warfare was mainly used on the Western Front, which was an area stretching from France and Belgium to the Swiss border, making Allied Powers battle the Central Powers.

The construction of a trench was very similar across the whole Western Front, except for not so many local variations. A. E. Ashworth describes a trench as “either a breastwork or a long narrow ditch in the earth. If the ground was marshlike, a breastwork built above ground level was favoured. Such a construction facilitated the solution of drainage problems.”²⁰ With that said, the trenches were built with many scenarios in mind to avoid unnecessary problems. Ashworth also states that “typically, the trench was six to seven feet in depth and six feet in width.”²¹ One can assume that the constructors of the trenches took into account possible movement of multiple soldiers at once as well as necessary operation with various kinds of equipment, from periscopes to mounted machine guns. A little but important note about periscopes – they served as an essential tool to observe enemies without being directly exposed to the enemy fire.

The layout of the trenches was very complicated, several types of trenches were used, every single one built for a different reason. The “brain” of the trench network was a bunker from which the commands were received, there was also a kitchen, a first aid station, a support trench providing a second line of defence, a communication trench, machine gun nests etc.

An important part of trench warfare was an area called No Man's Land. Ashworth claims that No Man's Land can be defined as “an occupied area of disputed territory existing between the trenches of the opposing armies. The depth of No-Man's-land varied between twenty to a

²⁰ A. E. Ashworth, "The Sociology of Trench Warfare 1914-18," *The British Journal of Sociology* 19, no. 4 (1968): 407, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/588181.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A7b39ebd54d470498f3be13507495e4a3&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

²¹ Ashworth, “The Sociology,” 407.

thousand yards. Typically, however, this distance was between one hundred to three hundred yards.²² With that being said, the opposing armies were very close to each other and it was often possible to hear enemy soldiers chatting in their trenches. Also, the No Man's Land was place full of mud and dead soldiers, a place destroyed by bombardment and previous battles. Another description of No Man's Land provides Albert Marrin:

The area between the opposing trench lines was known as no-man's-land. More terrible than any natural wilderness, no-man's-land was a bombed, blasted wasteland where no human could survive for long. The earth was pockmarked by shell holes closer together than craters on the moon, with stagnant pools at the bottom. Traces of past battles littered their landscape. Wrecked planes stood on their noses, twisted masses of wire and splintered wood. The bodies of men, or pieces of bodies, lay everywhere; no one would risk his life to bring back a corpse for burial from no-man's-land.²³

This description is very detailed and needs no further comment. To conclude the No Man's Land, no one wanted to be there as being there meant an almost certain death.

What goes hand to hand with the First World War and trench warfare is chemical warfare, commonly referred to simply as gas. Chemical warfare was not as new as it might seem, the very first mention goes back to 600 BCE when the Athenian military poisoned the water supply of city of Kirrha with poisonous plants. Throughout the centuries, it was clear that such weapons should be forbidden. Therefore, later in the 17th century, a first treaty to ban chemical weapons was signed between France and Germany. The major treaty, though, was signed later during the late 19th and early 20th century, when several Western countries signed a treaty to ban any use of poison or poisonous weapons in war. Ironically, many of those countries violated this treaty a few years later in the First World War.

The very first country to use any kind of gas during the First World War was France. They used tear gas grenades on Germans, which did not have a big success since the tear gas was not very effective, it remained active only for approximately thirty minutes. Since the first usage of gas, it went downhill, making the gas very common and effective during many battles.

According to BBC, the first big gas attack was to be witnessed on January 31, 1915, when Germans sent 18,000 shells filled with xylyl bromide, an early form of tear gas, on the Russian lines. The results were disappointing though, as Hoffman, a general of German army, himself

²² Ashworth, "The Sociology," 407-408.

²³ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 82.

said: “I had expected much greater results from the employment of this ammunition – as we then imagined – such large quantities. That the chief effect of the gas was destroyed by the great cold was not known at that time.”²⁴ But this failure was not decisive in terms of gas usage in the war at all. During the same year as the failure, Germans were already testing new type of gas – chlorine. This new gas was firstly used during the Battle of Ypres, creating a cloud of chlorine and with no protection, many soldiers died from the agonies or suffocation. Albert Marrin explains how easy was to die for a soldier who had not experienced gas yet:

Soldiers who’d never been exposed to gas in combat might easily ignore it, especially at night, when it became almost invisible. Its odor was a lot better than the ordinary smells of trenches. Chlorine gas had a light green color and was like a mixture of pineapple and pepper.²⁵

Obviously, when the chlorine gas was firstly used, no one was ready for it, masks were not available at the place of attack then and thus many soldiers died. The symptoms of chlorine intoxication were burning eyes and throat, which would cause the effect of suffocating of a person, then coughing, gagging, vomiting and headache.

Chlorine was later discontinued and replaced by phosgene. American Battle Monument Commission (ABMC) describes phosgene as:

A hard-to-spot killer. During an attack, a soldier may have smelled cut hay or fresh corn and thought little of it. Soldiers might have also found it difficult to see the colorless or pale yellow cloud, and the enemy often disguised the phosgene by delivering it in high explosive shells.²⁶

That being said, this gas was far more dangerous and deadly than the chlorine gas because this one was colourless and it had almost no smell. Moreover, it was usually disguised in shells in which made phosgene difficult to recognize at first. With that said, the most effective way of knowing that the gas was coming were the actual shells that carried it. Those shells were marked with a white star and were easily recognizable later in the war. As ABMC states, this gas, even

²⁴ “How deadly was the poison gas of WW1?” BBC, last modified January 30, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31042472>.

²⁵ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 89.

²⁶ American Battle Monument Commission, *Bringing the Great War Home: Teaching with the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery* (Learn NC, 2015), 81.

though not produced and used as largely as chlorine, caused eighty percent of all gas deaths during the First World War.²⁷

The third and the most commonly used gas was the mustard gas. Science History describes it as a gas of garlic, gasoline, rubber, or dead horses-like smell with no immediate symptoms, enabling the soldiers to put up a fight.²⁸ Since this gas was the most widely used one, it caused the most casualties – up to 120,000. Science History also suggests that despite the mustard gas caused the most casualties, it caused very few deaths thanks to the open air on the battlefield, which prevented big doses of gas staying at one place.²⁹

Aforementioned terminology is very closely connected to various mental issues soldiers experienced during and after the war. Therefore, it is paramount to explain what shell shock is.

Soldiers experienced various horrible events during the First World War and the memory of them was very difficult to get rid of. According to Fiona Reid, the soldiers practically came up with a term describing their mental issues themselves, calling it shell shock.³⁰ She also claims that this term was originally used for men fighting on the Western Front, who were suffering a wide range of mental issues – mental tics, nightmares, confusion, fatigue, obsessive thought, inexplicable aches and pains or various functional disorders such as mutism, paralysis or hysterical blindness and deafness.³¹ Shell shock was mostly associated with the Western Front and trench warfare itself, yet this term was used as early as in 1914, therefore before trench warfare was widely established, and it peaked in late 1918, thus even when the war was once again a war of movement.

As Reid suggests, officially, the term shell shock was firstly used by Charles Myers, a consultant psychologist of the British Expeditionary Forces, in an article called *Lancet* in 1915. He used three study cases of people having hysterical symptoms after being exposed to shell blasts.³² Myers himself stated that even though the term made an emotional sense, the term itself was unscientific and ineffective as a medical diagnosis. He concluded shell shock as “a

²⁷ ABMC, *Bringing the Great War Home*, 82.

²⁸ “A Brief History of Chemical Warfare,” Science History, accessed February 13, 2019, <https://www.sciencehistory.org/distillations/magazine/a-brief-history-of-chemical-war>.

²⁹ Science History, “A Brief History of Chemical Warfare.”

³⁰ Fiona Reid, “‘His nerves gave way’: Shell shock, history and the memory of the First World War in Britain”, *Endeavour* 38, no. 2 (2014): 92, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160932714000210?via%3Dihub>.

³¹ Reid, “His nerves gave way,” 91-92.

³² Reid, “His nerves gave way,” 92.

singularly ill-chosen term; and in other respects, as we shall see, it has proved a singularly harmful one.”³³

The term shell shock was later used officially because there was no better expression from the past that would describe the symptoms soldiers had. Nowadays, the term used to describe such mental illness is Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This term, according to Marc-Antoine Crocq, was firstly used in early 1980s and is connected to the Vietnam War.³⁴ With that being said, today, shell shock and Post-traumatic stress disorder can be interchanged without any change of meaning. For the purpose of this thesis, the term shell shock is used.

As for the shell shock, countries were not prepared for this big of an issue, therefore not having trained people who would help shell-shocked soldiers. As a result of that, various medical centres throughout Europe were established for treating affected soldiers. First to create such medical centres were French, shortly after followed by the British army, which took advice from Myers himself, who successfully tried to convince the Director General of the Army Medical Services.

The treatment of shell-shocked soldiers was very difficult. Fiona Reid suggests that shell-shocked soldiers were divided into two groups to get the treatment they needed. First group included those who experienced anxiety states. Two-stage procedure was applied to treat these soldiers, the first stage involved bed rest, sleep, and isolation, and the second, which dealt with fear of war and the patient’s obsession with the horrors, involved a procedure that would make the patient more confident and which would make the patient busy. In other words, this stage was meant to encourage the patient that he was able to regain his mental health back.³⁵

According to Reid, the second group, those who suffered from various types of hysteria, were provided with similar treatment, although the treatment was more focused on re-education. For instance, those who were mute were given voice exercises and those who were not able to walk were given physical treatment to encourage mobility.³⁶

To demonstrate, the following extract provides a case explaining how a soldier was cured of his debilitating muscle spasms and illustrates that soldiers were often given a very specific treatment for their specific issue to properly cure their mental illness:

³³ Charles S. Myers, *Shell Shock in France 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 26.

³⁴ Marc-Antoine Crocq, “From shell shock and war neurosis to posttraumatic stress disorder: a history of psychotraumatology”, *Dialogues in clinical neuroscience* 2, 1 (2000): 47-55.

³⁵ Reid, “His nerves gave way,” 94.

³⁶ Reid, “His nerves gave way,” 95.

The treatment given was to stretch forcibly the abductors of the thighs by pulling his feet apart. This was continued until the abductor muscles were exhausted and incapable of further contraction. He was then put on his feet and, being supported, was encouraged to walk. For the first time he was able to get one leg past the other. During the four days that had elapsed he had lost the spasm in his left thigh almost completely and was able with an effort to control that in his right. The tremors too had almost entirely disappeared.³⁷

As demonstrated, this soldier was experiencing spasm in his legs as well as tremors in his body. The treatment given to him was very specific to cure exactly his mental issues. Therefore, the number of symptoms and the types of treatment was almost infinite.

³⁷ John T. MacCurdy, *War Neuroses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 104.

3 One Man's Initiation: 1917

One Man's Initiation: 1917 is the very first book written by John Dos Passos. This semi-autobiographical novel, which was released in 1920, tells a story of Martin Howe who is, as the author himself was, an ambulance driver that volunteered for ambulance corps once the United States entered the war in 1917. The story itself is not profound at all, unlike the one in *Three Soldiers*. It is mostly a collection of separate events that Martin Howe experienced during his approximately six-month long involvement in the First World War. Not many chapters are connected, making it slightly incoherent and easy to get lost in. *Three Soldiers* is quite the opposite; it has a story with a beginning and an end, with characters and story evolving with each page. John Rohrkemper suggests that *One Man's Initiation: 1917* is objectively not a great novel due to its many flaws, but it certainly is an important book when it comes to the message it is trying to, as it “captures the shock and confusion the war causes its young combatants.”³⁸

To begin with, *One Man's Initiation: 1917* discusses how soldiers were misinformed and confused about the war. The novel begins with travelling overseas to France, where a great mood full of excitement is present in the air on the boat:

Sky and sea are opal grey. Martin is stretched on the deck in the bow of the boat with an unopened book beside him. He has never been so happy in his life. The future is nothing to him, the past is nothing to him. All his life is effaced in the grey languor of the sea, in the soft surge of the water about the ship's bow as she plows through the long swell, eastward.³⁹

Martin, and not only him one can assume, had seen an opportunity in the war, to erase his past and to start over as a new person in the army. What made things easier in this matter was the fact that not many soldiers knew each other – granting the opportunity to become whoever one wanted to be. Albert Marrin explains that: “Many had never been fifty miles from their birthplace or slept away from home overnight.”⁴⁰ That being said, soldiers were excited not only for the chance to start over, but also to go places, to see what Europe was like and to meet new people. One can see that soldiers are completely misunderstanding the place they are sailing to and instead of being fearful and respectful towards the war, they are having fun which

³⁸ John Rohrkemper, “Mr. Dos Passos' War,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 41, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26280896.pdf?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

³⁹ John Dos Passos, *One Man's Initiation: 1917* (Lost Angeles: Aegypan Press, 2007), 9.

⁴⁰ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 38.

is caused by the misconception of the purpose of their travels overseas and by not being properly informed about the war they were sailing into.

Soldiers were not exactly told the truth about the war when they enlisted which is firstly discussed by an unnamed soldier Martin meets while being in an harbour:

“Hello,” said Martin, twisting his head to look at the newcomer. “You section twenty-four?”

“Yes.... Ever read *Alice in Wonderland*?” asked the wet man, sitting down abruptly at the table.

“Yes, indeed.”

“Doesn’t this remind you of it?”

“What?”

“This war business. [...]

“It surely is different than you’d pictured it, isn’t it, now?” [...]

“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 were 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 this vintage of lies that has been so industriously pumped out of the press and the pulpit. Doesn’t it stagger you?”

Martin nodded.

“Why, lies are like a sticky juice overspreading the world, a living, growing flypaper to catch and gum the wings of every human soul.... And the little helpless buzzings of honest, libera, kindly people, aren’t they like the thin little noise flies make when they’re caught?”

“I agree with you that the little this noise is very silly,” said Martin.⁴¹

This long but shortened extract discusses the lies soldiers were told while enlisting and being trained. Not only soldiers were told lies though, all people were. Little to no newly recruited soldiers or civilians knew what the war was like – excluding those civilians in the countries

⁴¹ Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 23-24.

where they experienced the war firsthand, of course. This was partly due to the excessive propaganda in the United States. As Khan Academy suggests, the propaganda in the United States was enforcing fear and hatred in people, describing Germans as “The Mad Brute.”⁴² Martin, though, did not believe what the propaganda and the army told them. Martin said that he knew it would be hair-raising, which proves he knew beforehand about the lies they were trying to put in their heads and therefore he knew that the war was different, too. The unnamed soldier compares the soldiers to a book *Alice in Wonderland*, because they were as lost in the war as Alice in the book. Moreover, the unnamed soldier compares all the people who were aware of the lies to the noise flies make when they are caught, meaning that they are completely harmless.

Another example of this issue can be found towards the end of this novel, when Martin, his friend, and several French civilians are discussing the war together. Later in the discussion, a French civilian raises a question:

“And in America – they like the war?”

“They don’t know what it is. They are like children. They believe everything they are told, you see; they have had no experience in international affairs, like you Europeans. To me, our entrance into the war is a tragedy.”⁴³

This extract beautifully depicts how misinformed people were about the war. As Dos Passos states here, people believed what they were told to believe. With that said, the government was fundamentally creating people’s opinion and consequently, once it came to war, people were truly misinformed. The same happened to soldiers, resulting in their confusion once they arrived in France.

The previous discussion continues, and later Martin mentions very important detail not everyone thinks of:

“What terrifies me rather is their power to enslave our minds,” Martin went on, his voice growing louder and surer as his idea carried him along. “I shall never forget the flags, the menacing, exultant flags along all the streets before we went to war, the gradual unbarring of teeth, gradual lulling to sleep of people’ humanity and sense by the phrases, the phrases.... America, as you know, is ruled by the press. And the press is ruled by whom? Who shall ever know what dark forces bought until we should be ready to go blinded and gagged to war...? People seem to so

⁴² “The United States in World War I,” Khan Academy, accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/rise-to-world-power/us-in-wwi/a/the-united-states-in-world-war-i>.

⁴³ Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 106.

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.”⁴⁴

Martin sounds very disturbed in this extract, stating that America is ruled by press and therefore it directly creates the opinions of people. Moreover, press, even though not as fast as nowadays, could release news anytime they wanted, thus when they wanted to shift people’s opinions to whatever direction, they were able to do it in no time. Dos Passos compares media to “darkness” and people’s intellect to “light” and states that “the darkness is using the light for its own purpose,” therefore, the press was using intellect to control people. He concludes this matter by saying that “we are slaves of bough intellect, willing slaves.” That said, people became slaves willingly by buying newspaper or listening to the radio and by believing whatever was written or broadcasted.

Moving to the second topic that is discussed in this chapter – trench warfare. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, there was a sense of excitement during the voyage to France, which is questioned shortly after in the novel, when an unnamed soldier starts speaking about the new gas that is being used in the war:

One the settee a sallow young man is shaking the ice in a whiskey-and-soda into a nervous tinkle as he talks: “There’s nothing they can do against this new gas.... It just corrodes the lungs as if they were rotten in a dead body. In the hospitals they just stand the poor devils up against a wall and let them die. They say their skin turn green and that it takes from five to seven days to die – five to seven days of slow choking.”⁴⁵

From this paragraph, one can easily imagine the fear and the respect soldiers had just by talking about the gas. The unnamed soldier describes the gas with the mentioned fear and respect in mind and therefore is not saying all the facts about the gas. It did kill many people, but not as much as this paragraph may suggest. In fact, the gas was rarely the cause of death because only big doses of it were lethal. The gas was rather a cause of serious wounds or blindness and according to James Patton, a military historian, the gas was not nearly as lethal as one might think, it was mostly used as a tool of so called psy-war or, in other words, as a fear factor to influence or even destroy people psychologically. Even though the gas itself caused less than one percent of the total deaths in the First World War, the damage caused to one’s psyche was

⁴⁴ Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 108.

⁴⁵ Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 10.

massive.⁴⁶ That said, despite the gas was not as lethal as everyone thought it was at that time, it was very effective in increasing soldiers' fear.

Dos Passos mentions the gas multiple times in *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, the most disturbing one is found in the following extract in which another unnamed soldier randomly mentions the gas during the voyage to France:

“Did you hear what those fellows were saying about that new gas? Sounds frightful, don't it? I don't care a thing about bullets, but that kind o' gives me cold feet.... I don't give a damn about bullets, but that gas....”

“That's why so many shoot their friends when they're gassed....”⁴⁷

Again, the fear of gas is massive among soldiers. In this extract, one can even see a lack of fear towards bullets, which is perfectly justifiable if one takes into account the fact that bullets were not flying around in the trenches as much. Moreover, bullets very often killed in a second whereas a death caused by gas was extremely slow and painful. Therefore, it was mostly the bombarding and shelling (gas was usually distributed in shells) that soldiers were afraid of – not bullets. Furthermore, the unnamed soldier mentions in this extract that soldiers often killed their own friends if they were contaminated. That very much describes how painful dying of gas contamination was.

But trench warfare was not only about gas; Dos Passos also provides several paragraphs about daily life of soldiers which is equally important to discuss. The following extract contains the very first war experience Martin Howe lived through in France:

That night the wail of a siren woke Martin suddenly and made him sit up in his bunk trembling, wondering where he was. Like the shriek of a woman in a nightmare, the wail of the siren rose and rose and then dropped in pitch and faded throbbingly out.

“Don't flash a light here. It's Boche planes.”

Outside the night was cold, with a little light from a waned moon.

“See the shrapnel!” someone cried.

“The Boche has a Mercedes motor,” said someone else. “You can tell it by the sound of it.”

⁴⁶ “Gas in The Great War,” University of Kansas Medical Center, accessed January 24, 2019, <http://www.kumc.edu/wwi/essays-on-first-world-war-medicine/index-of-essays/medicine/gas-in-the-great-war.html>.

⁴⁷ Dos Passos, *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, 12.

“They say one of their planes chased an ambulance driver ten miles along a straight road the other day, trying to get it with a machinegun. The man who was driving got away, but he had shell-shock afterwards.”⁴⁸

This extract shows one of the struggles soldiers were experiencing during the war – generally not having much sleep and being woken up at random during nights. Lack of sleep always means being tired, which is closely connected with being unfocused and sleepy. As a result of that, soldiers were not as prepared for fighting as they could if they had a better sleep. The second part of this extract tells a short story of an ambulance driver who is pursued by a German plane and after fleeing, the driver is shell-shocked. Shell shock is a condition of soldiers who experienced horrible events during the war and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Lack of sleep was not the only problem soldiers were experiencing. The following lines contains more information about the daily life of soldiers:

“Martin rolled up in his bedroll on the floor of the empty hayloft, woke with a start.

“Say, Howe!” Tom Randolph, who lay next him, was pressing his hand. “I think I heard a shell go over.”

As he spoke, there came a shrill, loudening whine and an explosion that shook the barn. A little dirt fell down on Martin’s face.

“Say, fellers, that was damn near,” came a voice from the floor of the barn. [...]

A vicious shriek overhead and a shaking snort of explosion.

“Gee, that was in the house behind us...”

“I smell gas.”

“Ye, damn fool, it’s carbide.”

“One of the Frenchmen said it was gas.”

“All right, fellers, put on your masks.”⁴⁹

The soldier’s life was not easy at all, one can certainly say. If they were not in the barracks, dugouts or in the trenches, they slept wherever possible, preferably somewhere at least a little safe – for instance in a hayloft. Soldiers were very often “accommodated” in such places to simulate the life in the trenches – dirt, no real beds, no comfort, no walls that would help with sound insulation etc. Soldiers had to be constantly on guard due to the constant bombardment

⁴⁸ Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 22.

⁴⁹ Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 31.

and shelling. A slight suspicion of the gas made all of them scared, instantly putting masks on and leaving the area, if possible.

The previous extract continues with Tom Randolph expressing his despair towards Germans not letting them go to sleep: “Damn foolishness,” muttered Tom Randolph in his Southern voice. “Why don’t those damn gunners go to sleep and let us go to sleep...? They must be tired like we are.”⁵⁰ As highlighted in the previous paragraph, lack of sleep was an every-day issue for soldiers. This extract suggests that the enemy gunners were active all night very often, therefore many soldiers could not sleep at all and consequently, they were prone to develop extensive mental and physical issues, from sleep disorder to shell shock.

Dos Passos provides more information about trench warfare in the following extract:

“We are exactly four hundred meters from the Boche.... Five hundred meters from here they are drinking beer and saying, ‘Hoch der Kaiser.’”

“About as much as we’re saying ‘Vive la République,’ I should say.”

“Who knows? But it is quiet here, isn’t it? It’s quieter here than in Paris.”⁵¹

These lines suggest that the life in the trenches was very quiet, which sounds very disturbing at least. If one hears nothing, he cannot prepare for anything. Arguably, it was much better to hear shooting, bombarding, shelling, or anything war related because one would act accordingly and therefore, one would be prepared for what was coming. As for the calm in the trenches, Dos Passos provides another line that supports it: “We are well of here,” said the doctor again. “I have not had a serious case all day.”⁵² Even though it might seem that the trenches were calm, quiet and safe, it was not entirely the truth. The following extract depicts a soldier being shot by the enemy:

Suddenly from the lines came a splutter of machine-guns.

“Evensong!” cried the little doctor. “Ah, but here’s business. You’d better get your car ready, my friend.”⁵³

These lines explicitly say that soldiers must have been as careful as possible while moving in the trenches. Evensong probably showed a part of his body above the trench so that the machine

⁵⁰ Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 32.

⁵¹ Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 33.

⁵² Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 33.

⁵³ Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 33.

gunner was able to directly hit him. Machine gunners were peaking at the enemy trenches to see if there was an enemy soldier, if there was, they tried to kill him. Therefore, being cautious was of paramount significance for all soldiers.

To move towards the actual trenches, Dos Passos provides a description of them in the following paragraph:

Next beyond the abris was the latrine from which a puff of wind brought now and then a nauseous stench. Then there was the tin roof, crumpled as if by a hand, that had been a cook shack. That was just behind the second line trenches that zigzagged in and out of great abscesses of wet, upturned clay along the crest of a little hill. The other day he had been there, and had clambered up the only clay where the boyau had caved in, and from the level of the ground had looked for an anxious minute or two at the tangle of trenches and pitted gangrened soil in the direction of the German outposts. And all along these random gashes in the mucky clay were men, feet and legs huge from clotting after clay, men with greyish-green face scarred by lines of strain and gear and boredom as the hillside was scarred out of all semblance by the trenches and the shell-holes.⁵⁴

One can imagine the scarce equipment that was available in the trenches. As Dos Passos suggests, cook shack was just a modified tin roof, then there was a latrine very close to all soldiers so that everyone could smell it. Also, he describes how the war changed the landscape in the following like: "... as the hillside was scarred out of all semblance by the trenches and the shell-holes." That said, the area around the trenches was destroyed, creating one huge warzone.

The last topic of *One Man's Initiation: 1917* this thesis discusses is the artificial hatred between opposing sides and the despair of soldiers. Throughout this novel, one can find numerous paragraphs that question the war from various reasons. One can encounter this phenomenon during an ordinary day in the trenches, when Martin and a field doctor are discussing the war. Martin says:

"God, it's so stupid! Why can't we go over and talk to them? Nobody's fighting about anything.... God, it's so hideously stupid!" cried Martin, suddenly carried away, helpless in the flood of passionate revolt.

"Life is stupid," said the little doctor sententiously."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Dos Passos, *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, 33.

⁵⁵ Dos Passos, *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, 34.

In this extract, the first two sentences are pointed at Germans who are just several hundred yards across the No Man's Land. There is a relative calm in the air, and Martin sees no reason for fighting. Instead, he desperately wants to end the war and finally go and talk to them. Then he proceeds to call that situation "hideously stupid" together with the doctor who calls life "stupid". That is because both Martin and the doctor know that the war is not caused by them, soldiers, but rather by people who are sitting in a warm place and therefore, who know nothing about being a soldier in the trenches or fighting the enemy.

More specific criticism of war can be found in the following extract, in which Martin is sitting in a church near a hayloft he and other soldiers were sleeping in. Martin goes through the church's rooms and finds himself in a library and suddenly, he starts questioning the war again, but in this extract, he adds a more specific reasoning:

"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..." he would say to himself, and see himself working in the fields, copying parchment in quaint letterings, drowsing his feverish desires to calm in the deep-throated passionate chanting of endless offices of the Church."⁵⁶

One can observe Martin being more specific about who is to blame for the war and the hatred between the opposing sides. It is the government who he blames for both the war and the artificial hatred. Hatred is not natural between random nations throughout the world which Dos Passos himself mentions in this novel: "But it isn't. It isn't natural for people to hate that way, it can't be."⁵⁷ That said, people are not supposed to hate each other for no reason. Also, it suggests that it is the government who creates this hatred on the basis of something people have nothing to do with and the horrible things countries have done to the others.

The hatred is not created only among the soldiers, but among civilians as well. At the beginning of the book, a French woman expresses her hatred towards Germans during a conversation with Martin:

"I hate those brutes. I've always hated the Germans, their language, their country, everything about them. And now they've done such frightful things..." [...]

"They've gone pretty far," said Martin, laughing.

"If there are any left and alive after the war they ought to be chloroformed..."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Dos Passos, *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, 42.

⁵⁷ Dos Passos, *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, 35.

⁵⁸ Dos Passos, *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, 11.

This extract shows a French woman who hates the Germans so much that she would kill them all after the war is over in case any of them survived. That is not natural at all. Her hatred was certainly created artificially, for no one can hate so much for reasons such as the language. But the hatred was most definitely mutual, Germans must have hated them, too. The reason is rather simple, probably all soldiers think that they are fighting for the good cause and not really thinking that their country is “the bad country.”

The hatred was finally over once the war ended. Albert Marrin claims that Eddie Rickenbacker, an American fighter ace, “flew up to the French sector around Verdun. He could barely believe his eyes. After four years of butchery and hatred, Frenchmen and Germans were not only hugging each other but also kissing on both cheeks. The war was over.”⁵⁹

So far, this chapter has focused on the topics in *One Man's Initiation: 1917*. The following section will discuss the literary techniques that are used in this novel. To begin with, it is important to mention that *One Man's Initiation: 1917* lacks not only a proper story, but also literary techniques that would carry a larger meaning. The only real exception is a juxtaposition that is widely used throughout the novel. As John Rohrkemper suggests, the strategy of *One Man's Initiation: 1917* is to “contrast the past – representing beauty, art, order, and humanism – which is symbolically and literally blown from the face of the earth by the war, and the present – characterized by chaos, destruction, death, and barbarity.”⁶⁰

There are multiple examples of juxtaposition, but the very best ones are very close together at the beginning of the novel:

Opposite in the last topaz-clear rays of the sun, the foliage of the Jardin du Luxembourg shone bright green above deep alleys of bluish shadow. From the pavements in front of the mauve-colored houses rose little kiosks with advertisements in bright orange and vermillion and blue. In the middle of the triangle formed by the streets and the garden was a round pool of jade water. Martin leaned back in his chair looking dreamily out through half-closed eyes, breathing deep now and then of the musty scent of Paris, that mingled with the melting freshness of the wild strawberries on the plate before him.⁶¹

In this juxtaposition, Dos Passos describes the surroundings of Martin who is breathing the air of the musty scent of Paris together with the melting freshness of the wild strawberries. As

⁵⁹ Marrin, *The Yanks are Coming*, 238.

⁶⁰ Rohrkemper, “Mr. Dos Passos' War,” 40.

⁶¹ Dos Passos, *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, 17.

Rohrkemper suggests, Dos Passos, via this juxtaposition, expresses “both the splendor of the past and the eternal splendor of nature.”⁶²

Arguably the very best juxtaposition Dos Passos used in *One Man’s Initiation: 1917* follows shortly after the previous one:

He found himself staring at a face, a face that still had some of the chubbiness of boyhood. Between the pale-brown frightened eyes, where the nose should have been, was a triangular black patch that ended in some mechanical contrivance with shiny little black metal rods that took place of the jaw.⁶³

This extract contains a juxtaposition containing the contrast of both the past and the present, the past being “the chubbiness of boyhood”, and the present being “a triangular black patch that ended in some mechanical contrivance with shiny little black metal rods that took place of the jaw.”

Rohrkemper also suggests that juxtapositions “allow Dos Passos to comment implicitly on the dramatic break with the past brought by the war.”⁶⁴ Moreover, juxtapositions serve as a way of showing how the nature is pure and beautiful outside of the war, because in the war, the nature is destroyed by man.

⁶² Rohrkemper, “Mr. Dos Passos’ War,” 40.

⁶³ Dos Passos, *One Man’s Initiation: 1917*, 17-18.

⁶⁴ Rohrkemper, “Mr. Dos Passos’ War,” 40.

4 Three Soldiers

This chapter discusses the effects and consequences the war has on soldiers as well as used literary techniques. *Three Soldiers* is a second Dos Passos' novel, shortly following the release of *One Man's Initiation: 1917* in 1921. Unlike *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, *Three Soldiers* is mostly an off-the-battlefield novel based in France that is focusing more on the army life of soldiers rather than on the fighting on the Western Front itself. As the name of the novel suggests, it is a story of three soldiers who are sent to France to fight in the First World War – Andrews, Chrisfield, and Fuselli. Despite this novel having three protagonists, Andrews is the one who gets the most attention from John Dos Passos and the reason is rather simple – Andrews is, according to John Rohrkemper, “the character closest to Dos Passos in background, education, and outlook.”⁶⁵

To briefly introduce the main characters, Fuselli is an ambitious person who enlisted to pursue a military career and he is ready to do anything it takes to be successful in that matter. Even though the first promotion comes shortly after his arrival to France, he ends up in a boring kitchen job, never to be promoted again. Chrisfield is rather different from Fuselli, meaning he does not care about a military career – the only thing he wants is to get to the front as soon as possible and get over with the fighting, but once he gets there, it changes him for good and makes him a revengeful and bloodthirsty killing machine.

John Andrews is a twenty-two-year-old boy from New York who is a Harvard graduate and a talented musician. But despite all that, he is not very content with his life. Therefore, he decides to enlist and enter the war to help in a greater cause. But instead of finding the expected happiness in the war, he finds boredom and slavery. After the end of the war, he is close to being discharged but he can no longer handle any more of the army life and decides to “go awol” and to live his life to the fullest. He rents a flat in a house of a French woman and tries to compose his own music. But the lady turns him in and as a result of that, he is taken by the officers for desertion.

Up to this point, this chapter has discussed the characters and the story of *Three Soldiers*. The following section will focus on the trauma and its consequences on soldiers in this novel. To begin with, it must be stressed that there is almost an infinite number of symptoms and causes of trauma and that every single person deals with a traumatic experience differently. According

⁶⁵ Rohrkemper, “Mr. Dos Passos' War,” 40.

to Stefanie Linde and Edgar Jones, the variety of symptoms includes, for instance, not being able to move legs, severe anxieties, fatigue, loss of appetite or nervousness.⁶⁶ Therefore, it was very hard to diagnose a person with shell shock for an experienced doctor, let alone for a military doctor who had no experience in that matter at that time.

Even though there is very little fighting present in *Three Soldiers*, the book does include backstories of soldiers who experienced the front and every now and then, they reveal what happened to them. There are multiple shell-shocked soldiers in this novel, but the best example is probably this unnamed soldier whose story is gradually revealed throughout several pages. This is his first appearance in the novel:

“I’ll be goddamned,” the man said, “was you there too? Where d’you get yours?”

“In the leg; it’s about all right, though.”

“I ain’t. I won’t never be all right. The doctor says I’m all right now, but I know I’m not, the lyin’ fool.”

“Some time, wasn’t it?”

“I’ll be damned to hell if I do it again. I can’t sleep at night thinkin’ of the shape of the Fritzies’ helmets. Have you ever thought that there was somethin’ about the shape of them goddamn helmets...?”

“Ain’t they just or’nary shapes?” asked Fuselli, half turning round.

“I seen ‘em in the movies.” He laughed apologetically.⁶⁷

This unnamed soldier is, according to his doctor, fully healed, but the soldier himself knows that that is not the case and that he will never be alright. He is not able to get rid of what he has experienced on the front and one of the consequences is that he is not able to sleep. Sleep difficulty is one of many symptoms of shell shock. According to Beata Piatek, a professor of literature of the Jagiellonian University, shell shock was caused by a “traumatic stressor” which she describes as an event “generally outside the range of usual human experience” and also mentions one of the symptoms being “sleep disturbances”⁶⁸ which perfectly fits for the aforementioned soldier.

⁶⁶ Stefanie C. Linden and Edgar Jones, “‘Shell shock’ Revisited: An Examination of the Care Records of the National Hospital in London,” *Medical History* 58, no. 4 (October 2014): 519-545. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4176276/>.

⁶⁷ John Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers* (London, United Kingdom: Penguin Books Ltd., 1999), 47-48.

⁶⁸ Beata Piatek, *History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction* (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2015), 39.

His story continues later, when there is a discussion on why there is no chocolate for the soldiers. The unnamed soldier insists on getting some of the chocolate, but the man giving it is sending the soldier out and threatens him to report him for being rude and disrespectful, the response of the unnamed soldier is: “Go ahead, you can’t do nothin’. I can’t never have nothing done worse than what’s been done to me already.”⁶⁹ These lines indicate that the unnamed soldier stopped caring about his life. He thinks that there is nothing worse that he could possibly experience that would top the experience from the front. Furthermore, he does not even care about being reported which pretty much describes his desperation and resignation.

Later on, he explains what happened to him, giving us an explanation of why he has gone shell-shocked, giving us the knowledge of the “traumatic stressor” he has experienced, and which has influenced him. For the context of the following extract, he and his fellow soldiers attacked German trenches and they managed to capture a bunch of German soldiers who were not aware of being capture because they were playing cards and not paying attention. The unnamed soldier refused to take prisoners and decided to kill them:

“I lay there lookin’ at ‘em for a hell of a time, an’ then I clicked a grenade an’ tossed it gently down the steps. An’ all those funny helmets like toadstool popped up in the air an’ somebody gave a yell an’ the light went out an’ the damn grenade went off. Then I let ‘em have the rest of ‘em an’ went away ‘cause one o’ ‘em was still moanin’-like. It was about time they let their barrage down on us and I got mine.”
[...]

“An’ the first thing I thought of when I woke up was how those goddam helmets looked. It upsets a feller to think of a think like that.” His voice ended in a whine like the broken voice of a child that has been beaten.⁷⁰

These two paragraphs provide necessary information for understanding what happened to the unnamed soldier and what caused his mental issues. This “outside-the-range-of-human-experience” influenced him greatly and from now on, the only thing he could dream and think of are the silly helmets Germans were wearing – “I can’t find no way of forgettin’ how funny those guy’s helmets looked all round the lamp ... I can’t find no way ...”⁷¹ Consequently, his experience caused not only his sleep difficulty, but also his state of mind in general, for he is unable to get rid of the thoughts of the helmets.

⁶⁹ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 47-48.

⁷⁰ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 51.

⁷¹ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 52.

The aforementioned soldier's fate is not mentioned in the novel so one can hardly assume what happened to him later in the war or after it. There is another soldier, Stockton, whose backstory is riddled and has to be deciphered from the information Dos Passos provides. He is a minor character mentioned only briefly. Firstly, he is mentioned by a soldier called Eisenstein, in the middle of a discussion with Fuselli:

“Say, d’ye know that little kid Stockton?”

“The white-faced little kid who’s clerk in that outfit that has the other end of the barracks?”

“That’s him,” said Eisenstein. “I wish I could do something to help the kid. He just can’t stand the discipline.... You ought to see him wince when the red-haired sergeant over there yells at him.... The kid looks sicker every day.”

“Well, he’s got a good soft job: clerk,” said Fuselli.

“Ye think it’s soft? I worked twelve hours day before yesterday getting out reports,” said Eisenstein, indignantly. “But the kid’s lost it and they keep ridin’ him for some reason or other. It hurts a feller to see that. He ought to be home at school.”⁷²

Even though Stockton is not present himself, one can assume that he has been influenced by his experience in the army according to what Eisenstein says. Knowing that he is scared of the ‘red-haired sergeant’, the cause of his mental issues is probably that he is being mistreated or even bullied by the sergeant. This is a matter people usually do not talk about. The causes of shell shock are usually connected directly with the war experience on the front, not with the military itself. Furthermore, Eisenstein mentions that Stockton also cannot stand the discipline, meaning that any order from the sergeant is as horrifying for him as the sergeant himself is.

Dos Passos provides more information about Stockton when he is in a restaurant with Eisenstein who asks him:

“How are they treatin’ you down in your outfit?” asked Eisenstein of Stockton, after a silence.

“Same as ever,” said Stockton in his thin voice, stuttering a little....

“Sometimes I wish I was dead.”

“Hum,” said Eisenstein, a curious expression of understanding on his flabby face. “We’ll be civilians some day.”

“I won’t,” said Stockton.⁷³

⁷² Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 82.

⁷³ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 89.

Now one can get an idea of what it is that Stockton is experiencing. He says that he is treated “same as ever” and that he wishes he “was dead”. It is very straightforward that he is being treated poorly by, as learnt from the previous cited extract, the red-haired sergeant. He is giving him a very hard time and Stockton is unable to deal with it and is getting worse every day. Moreover, Stockton says that he will not ever be a civilian again, he likely thinks he will either “go awol” or simply die in the war.

Unlike to the unnamed soldier, Dos Passos provides a conclusion to Stockton’s life. Fuselli is sitting on his bunk when he hears Stockton’s thin voice talking with the sergeant, the one who is bullying him. Stockton is lying in his bed, allegedly sick from terror, while everyone is calling him crazy. The sergeant proceeds to ask him to get up but he refuses, so the sergeant goes for the lieutenant to report him. The lieutenant comes and asks him:

“Look here, are you sick? If you are, report sick call at once,” said the lieutenant in an elaborately kind voice.

The boy looked at him dully and did not answer.

“You should get up and stand at attention when an officer speaks to you.”

“I ain’t goin’ to get up,” came the thin voice. [...]

“Sergeant, what’s the matter with the man?” he asked in a furious tone.

“I can’t do anything with him, lieutenant. I think he’s gone crazy.”

“Rubbish.... Mere insubordination.... You’re under arrest, d’ye hear?” he shouted towards the bed.

There was no answer.⁷⁴

The sergeant is once again the catalyst of his terror. Stockton decides not to obey any of the higher ranks, staying in his bed and not paying attention to anything they say or order. As one learnt from the previous information about Stockton, he is terrified of the discipline and cannot stand it anymore. This extract shows his complete breakdown caused mainly by the sergeant but also by the military life in general. The sergeant calls him crazy, but the lieutenant does not believe it, calling it “mere insubordination”. The lieutenant simply does not calculate with the possibility of Stockton being shell-shocked, or maybe, and that would make it ever more serious, is not aware of shell shock at all. Dos Passos essentially criticizes the doctors and other

⁷⁴ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 102.

people at that time for not taking into account shell shock enough, or at all, which was a huge problem during the First World War in and outside of the army. The lieutenant calling Stockton insubordinate is not nearly as bad as calling another shell-shocked soldiers cowards, though. Lincoln Riddle suggests that many victims of shell shock were viewed as cowards and thousands of them were even put on trial for cowardice or desertion.⁷⁵

The real conclusion of Stockton's life is written in the following lines of the last extract, he allegedly dies in front of everyone in his bed. At first, the lieutenant orders soldiers to get him up and put him into jail, but Stockton does not move at all. The soldiers examine his body and say that he is dead. But what is interesting is the penultimate sentence in this chapter, written right after he is declared dead: "The eyes had opened."⁷⁶ This sentence may suggest that he and his friends faked his death to get him out of the army. There is nothing more written about Stockton, though, so the fate of him is up to everyone's interpretation.

Even though shell shock was explained enough in the second chapter of this thesis, Dos Passos provides additional information about it in *Three Soldiers*. For the context, Fuselli and his friends are discussing a hospital that was shelled by Germans:

"Hell, yes.... A funny thing happened there. The hospital was in a big rambling house, looked like an Atlantic City hotel.... We used to run our car in back and sleep in it. It was where we took the shell-shock cases, fellows who were roarin' mad, and tremblin' all over, and some of 'em paralysed like...."⁷⁷

From the provided information, one can assume that there were wings in hospitals and one of them was dedicated to those who were diagnosed with shell shock. Dos Passos also suggests symptoms of shell shock – trembling and paralysis. The extract continues with yet another shell-shocked soldier:

There was a man in the wing opposite where we slept who kept laughin'. Bill Rees was on the car with me, and we laid in our blankets in the bottom of the car and every now and then one of us'd turn over and whisper: 'Ain't this hell, kid?' 'cause that feller kept laughin' like a man who just heard a joke that was so funny he couldn't stop laughin'. It wasn't like a crazy man's laugh usually is. When I first heard it I thought it was a man really laughin', and I guess I laughed too. But it didn't stop.... Bill Rees an' me laid in our car shiverin', listenin' to the barrage in the distance with now and then the big noise of an aëroplane bomb, an' that feller laughin', laughin', like he'd just heard a joke, like something had struck him

⁷⁵ "Shell Shock: A Horrifying Side-Effect of the First World War", *War History Online*, last modified July 26, 2017, <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/instant-articles/shell-shock-sad-side-effect-wwi-m.html>.

⁷⁶ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 103.

⁷⁷ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 75.

funny.” Cohn took a gulp of champagne and jerked his head to one side. “An’ that damn laughin’ kept up until about noon the next day when the orderlies strangled the feller.... Got their goat, I guess.”⁷⁸

This time, one does not know what happened to this soldier to find out why he is shell-shocked. His symptom is also very peculiar, for there is very little evidence that a constant laughter is a symptom of shell shock. Though as written earlier in chapter two, there is almost an infinite number of symptoms and every soldier could have had different ones. The only real evidence of laughter being a symptom of shell shock is hidden in one of the most famous photographs taken during the First World War directly in the trenches. According to Vanilla Magazine, this photo, commonly called “Smile of Madness” or “The Eyes of Madness,” captured a soldier sitting in a trench in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette during the Somme Offensive, laughing very strangely even though there was nothing to laugh at.⁷⁹ The laughing soldier in the hospital ends up being strangled by the orderlies which is alarming to say the least, killing a shell-shocked soldier just because his symptoms are annoying for the others.

The aforementioned soldier might represent Dos Passos’ disapproval of the 306 British soldiers who were wrongly executed for alleged desertion or cowardice during the First World War. As BBC suggests, the fact is, those soldiers were also shell-shocked from all the terrors they had seen or had experienced.⁸⁰ Thus, the 306 British soldiers were executed due to the misunderstanding of the soldiers’ mental issues and instead of admitting they were shell-shocked, they were called deserters or cowards and were executed as such.

As for literary techniques used in *Three Soldiers*, it is important to mention the fact that Dos Passos did not use techniques that were common in his time, for *Three Soldiers* is a chronological novel with no shifts in time, stream of consciousness etc. Therefore, *Three Soldiers* is rather a classic novel with no experiments or innovations that were typical for modernism at that time. In *Three Soldiers*, Dos Passos uses many very accurate metaphors, similes, colloquialisms and other literary techniques to best capture the environment of the military.

⁷⁸ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 75.

⁷⁹ “Smile of Madness”: The Story behind the most famous ‘Shell shocked’ Soldier”, *Vanilla Magazine*, last modified February 2, 2018, <http://www.vanillamagazine.org/smile-of-madness-the-story-behind-the-most-famous-shell-shocked-soldier/>.

⁸⁰ “Shot at Dawn: Cowards, Traitors or Victims?” BBC, last modified March 3, 2011, https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/britain_wwone/shot_at_dawn_01.shtml.

Dos Passos wanted to add more authenticity to his novel by using hundreds of colloquialisms and slang expressions, including words such as “gonna”, “dunno” or “gimme”. As an example of slang, Dos Passos uses slang expressions to describe nationalities. For instance a German person is a “Hun” as in: “Gee, it makes ye hate the Huns.”⁸¹ French people are “frawgs” as in: “Who’s the frawg?” he asked in a startled way, with one hand on the door knob.”⁸² Italian people are “Eyetalians” as in: “I dunno. He’s an Eyetalian.”⁸³ Another word for an Italian person or a southern European is a “wop” as in: “Ah didn’t git in this army to be ordered around by a goddam wop,” he muttered.”⁸⁴

Moreover, Dos Passos tries to capture particular dialects in direct speeches in *Three Soldiers* to add more authenticity as well. For instance, Chrisfield is from southern Indiana and he speaks like this: “Ah’d lahk te capture a German officer an’ make him shine ma boots an’ then shoot him dead.”⁸⁵ If one were to translate this sentence, it would be: “I would like to capture a German officer, make him shine my boots, and then shoot him dead.” It is hard to capture a dialect in a book, but one can agree that Dos Passos did a good job in this matter and it indeed adds authenticity to his novels.

Three Soldiers also contains metaphors for military and war and an example of one can be found in the following extract: “And he had not thought of anything yet. Soon, as Applebaum said, they’d be putting him in Class A and sending him back to the treadmill, and he would not have reconquered his courage, his dominion over himself.”⁸⁶ These lines contain a metaphor for the military – treadmill – used in rather pejorative sense. Andrews is sick of being a soldier and is now in a hospital, recovering from being injured. He desperately does not want to go back to the “treadmill” and once again live the military life again.

⁸¹ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 21.

⁸² Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 339.

⁸³ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 22.

⁸⁴ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 19.

⁸⁵ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 23.

⁸⁶ Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*, 172.

5 Conclusion

This thesis discussed the way John Dos Passos depicted the First World War in his novels *One Man's Initiation: 1917* and *Three Soldiers*, more specifically trench warfare, shell shock, and other important topics.

The first chapter classified Dos Passos as a modernist author. It also provided a comparison of definitions of Modernism to best capture its distinctive features. It was determined that one of those features is the war experience, which is the most influential and most visible in Dos Passos writing and in his life. Having said that, Dos Passos is also regarded a member of the Lost Generation. Considering the connectedness of the First World War, the Lost Generation and America, this chapter also provided information about American involvement in the First World War. It explained the major reasons of America entering the war, which were the sinking of Lusitania, series of sabotages in America made by German spies, and the torpedoing of the cities of Memphis, Illionis, and Vigilancia. It also mentioned their contribution to the war, which was helping with defence in Champagne-Marne Offensive and their own operation St. Mihiel.

The second chapter discussed relevant terminology for the further use in the practical part of this thesis. Firstly, it determined the area of trench warfare in the First World War. The area is called the Western Front and it stretched from northern France to the Swiss border. The chapter then looked into the layout and the construction of the trenches and concluded that both were very thoughtfully built because the builders kept in mind many problems such as drainage or movement of several soldiers at once. What was very closely connected to the trenches was an area called No Man's Land, which is an area between the opposing trenches and that it was very dangerous for soldiers to go to. The second discussed term was the chemical warfare. It was explained that poison in war was nothing to, as it was firstly used in 600 BCE. Moreover, this chapter found out that there were several types of gas used in the First World War and that the most lethal one was arguably phosgene. The last term introduced in this chapter was shell shock. The term itself was created by soldiers who tried to describe their mental issues. The term was firstly used unofficially, it was even questioned by a renowned psychologist at that time, Charles Myers, who claimed that the term was not scientific. Despite that, it was later used officially, and the reason why was that there was no better term that would describe it better. This section also compared both PTSD and shell shock and determined that they have the same meaning and therefore, can be interchanged. The symptoms of shell shock were found to be

almost infinite and therefore, every soldier could theoretically experience different ones. As for the treatment, it was very complicated and, considering the number of symptoms, individual.

The third chapter briefly introduced the novel *One Man's Initiation: 1917* and classified its story as not very deep and very easy to get lost in due to its incoherence. It analysed several topics in the novel. The first one was soldiers being misinformed about the war. This thesis found out that soldiers were excited to get to the war even though there was literally nothing to be excited about. The soldiers were not aware of the horrors of the war because no one told them how the war looked like and furthermore, the training they undergone was nothing like the war itself and it did not prepare them enough for it. This led to a huge confusion once they got to the front and many of them even deserted. Dos Passos wrote several discussions between soldiers in this novel that discussed the lies people were told about the war, ultimately explaining that people were misinformed by the government and the propaganda and that most people believed only to the things they were told to believe, therefore, they usually did not have their own opinion.

Next, this chapter discussed trench warfare, chemical warfare, and the every-day life of soldiers. Throughout *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, the soldiers were accommodated either in the trenches or in places that would simulate them, such as haylofts. The life in both is depicted as a horror containing the worst nightmares imaginable. Those nightmares include constant bombarding and shelling of not only the trenches or haylofts, but essentially of everything else, too. The one issue that stems from the way Dos Passos depicted the life in the trenches is sleep deprivation. This issue is mentioned several times in *One Man's Initiation: 1917*, therefore, one can assume that it was one of the more serious issues soldiers were experiencing. Moreover, soldiers had to be constantly focused because any second, a shell with gas could have been dropped on them. Gas was a major weapon in the First World War which caused hundreds of thousands of injuries as well as thousands of deaths. Dos Passos also suggests that soldiers were much more afraid of gas than of bullets, which is understandable since the gas was very often colorless and odourless, making it hard to spot and to defend against. It was found out that gas usually came from a shell marked with a symbol, giving the soldiers time to put a mask on if spotted early. This paper also found out that the trenches were usually quiet, as there was nothing happening most of the time. Despite that, soldiers had to be very careful because there were machine gunners and snipers on the opposite side constantly scouting them.

The last topic of this chapter discussed the artificial hatred between countries and soldiers as well as the despair of soldiers. This thesis found out that soldiers and civilians of the opposing

countries hated each other very much. Essentially, people hated each other only because of those people who were never fighting a minute in the war, making the hatred awfully stupid. The despair of the soldiers and consequent disillusionment of the war in this novel is caused by the awareness of soldiers not being the reasons of the war as well as their own experience in it. They just wanted the war to end, to end the hatred between everyone and to have peace once again. The end of this chapter belonged to the literary techniques used in *One Man's Initiation: 1917*. This thesis found out that Dos Passos, unlike the other modernist authors, did not experiment in this novel, and that the most distinctive literary techniques used in this novel are juxtapositions and metaphors.

The last chapter analysed the way Dos Passos depicted shell-shocked soldiers in *Three Soldiers*. It briefly introduced the novel and its main characters, one of them being John Andrews, which is a character very close to Dos Passos himself due to their similarities in life, education and other aspects. Then it proceeded to analyse three soldiers experiencing shell shock as a result of their war and military experience. The first shell-shocked soldier is experiencing sleep deprivation as a symptom of shell shock. He is dreaming the same nightmare all over again because he refused to take prisoners and killed German soldiers with a grenade. This experience caused his shell shock and now he cannot forget it. Dos Passos did not provide a conclusion of this soldier's story, leaving one puzzled about his fate. The second shell-shocked soldier is called Stockton and his story shows us the other side of the coin. One would assume that shell shock was possible to get only from the war experience, but as this thesis found out, that is not entirely true. It was the whole army that was traumatizing for soldiers. This soldier is shell-shocked because a sergeant is bullying him, resulting in his allegedly faked death that is up for everyone's interpretation as Dos Passos provided only a vague ending to his story. The last soldier analysed is a soldier whose symptom of shell shock is a constant laughter. Dos Passos provided no more information about him but his murder by orderlies who could no longer stand his laughter. By this soldier, Dos Passos might be criticizing the execution of 306 shell-shocked British soldiers, who were sentenced to death for alleged cowardice or desertion. The last part of this chapter discussed the literary techniques used in *Three Soldiers*. This paper found out that this is a chronological novel without the usual modernist techniques such as shifts in time or stream of consciousness. With that said, *Three Soldiers* is rather a classic novel with no experiments that were usual for other modernist authors. Moreover, this thesis found out that Dos Passos is more of a realist because he used hundreds of colloquialisms and slang terms to add more authenticity to his novels.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá první světovou válkou v románech *One Man's Initiation: 1917* a *Three Soldiers* autora Johna Dose Passose, zejména tedy zákopovou válkou a traumatem vojáků. Dále se tato práce věnuje literárním technikám, které Dos Passos v těchto románech použil.

První kapitola zmiňuje hlavní důvod, proč se Dos Passos stal spisovatelem, kterým je jeho zkušenost v první světové válce, do které narukoval jako řidič sanitky. Díky této zkušenosti zažil spoustu hrůzostrašností, které ho ovlivnily po celý jeho život. S psaním začal již velmi krátce po válce v roce 1920, kdy vydal svoji prvotinu, román *One Man's Initiation: 1917*.

Z literárního hlediska je Dos Passos modernistou, a to zejména díky době, ve které psal, a díky tématům, kterým se ve svých dílech věnoval. První kapitola se dále věnuje definicím modernismu, které představily jeho různé charakteristiky. Modernismus se tedy vyznačuje důrazem na jednotlivce, ovlivněním industrializace a také, což je nejdůležitější prvek pro tuto bakalářskou práci, válečnou zkušeností autorů.

Posledním bodem rozboru literárního kontextu je takzvaná Ztracená generace, tedy skupina autorů, kteří na svoji vlastní kůži zažili první světovou válku a o které následně dále psali ve svých dílech. Hlavními představiteli Ztracené generace, mimo Dose Passose, jsou například Ernest Hemingway, Francis Scott Fitzgerald nebo Hart Crane.

Druhá část první kapitoly se zabývá vstupem Spojených států amerických do první světové války společně s vybranými bitvami a operacemi, kterých se zúčastnily. Důvodů, kvůli kterým se USA rozhodly vstoupit do války, bylo vícero. Prvním takovým bylo potopení lodi Lusitania, které se stalo 7. května 1917. Toto potopení vyvolalo vlnu nevole zejména díky tomu, že se jednalo o civilní loď, která ale údajně měla převážet výzbroj pro státy Dohody, což bylo Němci později uvedeno jako důvod potopení. Dalším důvodem byla řada sabotáží na americkém území způsobená německými špiony. Nejzávažnější sabotáž se stala 30. července 1915, kdy byl do vzduchu vyhozen sklad vojenských zásob. Poslední kapkou, kterou prezident Woodrow Wilson potřeboval k vyhlášení války, byly výbuchy ve městech Memphis, Illinois a Vigilancia. Po této události se Wilson rozhodl předstoupit před Kongres a Sněmovnu reprezentantů, se kterými dohodl vyhlášení války centrálním mocnostem dne 6. dubna 1917.

Konec první kapitoly se zabývá významnými bitvami, ve kterých USA participovaly. Velké zásluhy jsou Američanům dávány za pomoc s obranou v operaci Champagne-Marne, ve které

se Němci snažili ukončit válku posledním velkým útokem, který se jim ovšem nepodařil. Od této výhry se válka začala obracet proti centrálním mocnostem. Jednou z nejvýznamnějších operací vedenou Američany byla operace St. Mihiel, která byla součástí velkého útoku Meuse-Argonne, ve které dokázali vytlačit Němce z Ypres Salient. Obrovský úspěch tohoto útoku nakonec přinesl i konec války a s ním spojený mír, který byl podepsán 11. listopadu 1918 ve Versailles.

Druhá kapitola se zabývá důležitou terminologií spojenou s tématy analyzovanými ve třetí a čtvrté kapitole této bakalářské práce. Začátek kapitoly se věnuje zákopové válce, která byla nejvíce používána právě v období první světové války na tzv. západní frontě, tedy na území rozléhající se od severní Francie až po Švýcarsko. Dále tato kapitola vysvětluje konstrukci a rozvržení zákopů, které bylo velmi komplikované. Mozkem celé sítě zákopů byl bunkr, který vydával a přijímal rozkazy, a ve kterém operovali vyšší šarže. Dále zde byla ošetrovna, kuchyně nebo například kulometná hnízda.

Téma, které je úzce spojeno se zákopovou válkou, je válka chemická, která je používána již od nepaměti. První zmínka se datuje již do roku 600 př. n. l., kdy staří Atéňané použili toxické byliny k otrávení vodního zdroje jejich nepřítele. V novověku se státy snažily chemické válce zabránit, a to hned několika dohodami. První takovou podepsalo již v 17. století Německo s Francií, jinou pak koncem 19. a začátkem 20. století další západní státy. První použití plynu v první světové válce měla na starost Francie, která použila slzný plyn na Němce. Od té doby se plyn začal používat velmi běžně a stal se významnou součástí první světové války, ve které způsobil obrovské množství smrtí a zranění.

Konec této kapitoly patří tzv. shell shocku, tedy předchůdci dnes používaného termínu posttraumatická stresová porucha. Tato kapitola vysvětluje, že oba tyto termíny vlastně znamenají jedno a to samé, takže je tedy možné používat oba. Shell shock je označení, které vojáci vymysleli sami, aby pojmenovali svoji psychickou nemoc. Symptomy shell shocku jsou například noční můry, zmatenost, únava, nevysvětlitelné bolesti apod. Vzhledem ke všem skutečnostem se dá říct, že shell shock má téměř nekonečné množství příznaků. Léčba byla velmi složitá, na základě zkušeností existovala jakási všeobecná léčba, která ovšem nezabírala na každého, a proto musela být léčba velmi často přizpůsobena jednotlivci a jeho vlastním symptomům.

Předposlední kapitola se věnuje analýze vybraných témat z románu *One Man's Initiation: 1917*. Prvním takovým tématem jsou lži, které byly vojákům a ostatním lidem napovídány o tom, jak

válka ve skutečnosti vypadá. Z těchto nepravd poté pramenilo zmatení vojáků, které bylo patrné již při plavbě z Ameriky do Francie, kdy vojáci oslavovali fakt, že zrovna plují do války. Cesta do války ale rozhodně neměla být oslavována, spíše to měl být začátek strachu a respektu k ní. Nicméně pro některé byla válka opravdu dobrou věcí, jelikož si mnozí vojáci od ní slibovali nový život, nové přátele nebo možnost podívat se do zahraničí. Tato bakalářská práce také zjistila, že nejen vojáci neměli tušení, jak válka ve skutečnosti vypadá, ale i většina normálních lidí. Lidé si povětšinou mysleli pouze to, co jim bylo řečeno státem, který v podstatě formoval jejich názor na věc.

Druhým analyzovaným tématem této kapitoly je zákopová válka, s ní spojené použití plynu ve válce a život vojáků. Již zkraje tohoto románu je zmíněn strach vojáků z plynu. Jeden voják dokonce vyjádřil svou absenci strachu vůči kulkám v porovnání s plynem. Tato absence strachu pramení z toho, že smrt plynem byla velmi bolestivá a obvykle pomalá, kdežto kulky, které se v zákopové válce tolik nepoužívaly, často způsobily smrt ve vteřině. Co se týče života vojáků ve válce, ti byli často ubytováni v seníku nebo na podobných místech pro simulaci nepohodlného života v zákopech. Takový život byl plný nepřetržitého soustředění a hlavně strachu, protože kdykoli odkudkoli mohla přilétnout nálož s plynem nebo se objevit nepřátelská kulometná palba. Dos Passos velmi často zmiňuje nespavost vojáků, který byla způsobena věčným hlukem a strachem o vlastní život. Dalším zajímavým faktem je, že zákopy byly zpravidla velmi tiché, takže vojáci mohli například slyšet protější stranu mluvit ve svých zákopech. Nicméně život v zákopech nebyla žádná hračka, zákopy byly nepohodlné, špinavé, všude byl cítit silný smrad z latrín, vojáci museli být neustále schovaní, aby se zbytečně neukazovali nepřátelským snajprům apod.

Dalším tématem této kapitoly je rozčarování vojáků z války a také nenávist mezi nepřátelskými zeměmi. V tomto románu bylo mnohokrát napsáno, jak moc hloupá válka vlastně je, z čehož pramení obrovská touha vojáků válku ihned ukončit a jít si promluvit s nepřáteli jako se sobě rovnými lidmi. Dalším takovým důvodem této touhy je fakt, že vojáci ani civilisté nemají v podstatě žádný podíl na tom, že je válka, kterou mají na svědomí lidé, kteří vůbec netuší, jaké je to bojovat a být na frontě. Uměle vytvořenou nenávist mezi nepřátelskými státy byla také způsobena vysoce postavenými lidmi. Taková nenávist ale není pro lidi přirozená, lidé by neměli nenávidět jeden druhého na základě jejich národnosti. Jak ale bylo zjištěno, jakmile válka skončila, velké množství vojáků obou stran se dokonce i objímalo jako důkaz radosti z konce války, takže ta nenávist byla vlastně ihned rozpuštěna, jakmile již nebyla potřeba.

Konec třetí kapitoly se věnuje použitým literárním technikám v tomto románu. Nejvíce používanou technikou je juxtapozice, která se především zaměřuje na kontrast mezi minulostí a přítomností. Další čteně užívanou technikou jsou metafory, které jsou zde zaměřené především na válku.

Závěrečná kapitola se věnuje shell shocku v románu *Three Soldiers*. Začátek patří krátkému představení románu a jeho hlavním postavám, kterými jsou Fuselli, Chrisfield a John Andrews, který je postavou nejbližší právě Dosu Passosovi. Shell shock je zde analyzován na základě několika příkladů vojáků z tohoto románu. Prvním příkladem je voják, který nemůže zapomenout na to, jak směšně vypadají německé helmy. Tuto skutečnost, kvůli které nemůže spát, stále a dokola opakuje. Situace, která mu jeho trauma způsobila, je vysvětlena později. Když se svoji rotou zaútočil na nepřátelské zákopy, podařilo se jim zajmout nic netušící německé vojáky, ke kterým se potichu přiblížil a zabil všechny granátem. Jediné, co od této chvíle před sebou vidí, jsou ty německé helmy, které po výbuchu dopadly na zem. Druhým příkladem je Stockton, který je dlouhodobě šikanován seržantem. Jeho psychický stav je natolik špatný, že každým dnem vypadá hůř a hůř. Je ale záhadou, jak to s tímto vojákem skončilo, jelikož zakončení jeho příběhu je velmi vágní a záleží tedy na tom, jak si jeho konec čtenář vyloží. Posledním příkladem je voják, který již leží v nemocnici kvůli jeho psychickému stavu, který mu nedovoluje ani komunikaci. Jeho symptomem je jeho nepřetržitý smích, který nakonec zaměstnance nemocnice donutí jej uškrtit, aby konečně přestal.

Konec této kapitoly patří literárním technikám, které jsou zde zastoupeny hlavně četným použitím kolokvialismů a slangových výrazů, ale také občasnými metaforami. Tyto kolokvialismy obsahují řadu výrazů, jako jsou například výrazy pro různé národnosti.

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