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**THE ARTISTIC PECULIARITIES OF THE NOVEL
“THREE SOLDIERS” BY JOHN DOS PASSOS**

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The article analyzes the artistic peculiarities of the novel “Three Soldiers” (1921) by John Dos Passos. The novel depicts scaring life of three soldiers involved in war. The author believes that to show absurdity and inanity of war some special methods are necessary. Particular attention in this article is given to the methods by means of which military reality in the novel is depicted.

John Dos Passos is one of the American writers of the twentieth century, who belongs to the writers of the “lost generation”. His difficult fate, the mobilization to the army, his job as a volunteer driver in the sanitary division, humiliation from the authorities, attending courses at Sorbonne played a big role in his development, not only as individual, but also as a writer. In this rather difficult period he began his literary career and wrote his first works.

The artistic peculiarities of the novel are the originality of the author's style, fragmentation and discontinuity of the narrative structure. Of particular interest are the various methods the author uses to represent the reality.

The novel “Three soldiers” was published in 1921. The writer tells about the fate of three Americans involved in the First World War. Initially, the fate of these three characters is linked by the fact that they are sent overseas together, but later their paths diverge. But each of these dissimilar fates proves the cruelty, injustice and destructive war. All the three suffer the collapse of their illusions. They feel redundant and unnecessary. They are representatives of different strata and various parts of the United States.

The main writer's principle is to tell the truth, to write the only things he was the witness of. That is to write works that are based on his own experience. The writer did not use to copy the life itself. His novels are fiction based on his experience [1, c. 17]. This is the main cause of using such a method as autobiography. Andrews, one of the main heroes, is closer to the author most of all. On the one hand the writer has a very negative attitude towards civilization. The author was exposed to humiliation, threat and insult from military police officers too. He outlived the feeling of being at the very bottom of the social scale, where the human being is equal to a dog and he felt the whole oppression by the society [3, c. 284]. On the other hand Andrews is also a creative person. He tries to express his riot against the war with the help of art. It brings Andrews' positions closer to the authors'. Jh. Dos Passos as Andrews attended courses in Sorbonne.

One of his methods that he uses in his novel is contrast. The author contrasts the heroes. All of them are absolutely different and everyone treats this war in his own way. For example, Dan Fuselli said: “Gee, ...this war's a lucky thing for me. I might have been in the R.C. Vicker Company's store for five years an' never got a raise, an' here in the army I got a chance to do almost everything” [2, p. 20]. Fuselli is eager to act and to show what he can do. The war is just the marker for him that would change a lot in his life. But everything turns upside down. Dan is prosecuted and has to serve in a penal battalion. And the bride Meb, who gives a promise to wait for him, is already married.

Andrews has detestation to civilization that makes him stand up to the war more aggressively. “So was civilization nothing but a vast edifice of sham, and the war, instead of its crumbling, was its fullest and most ultimate expression – said Andrews” [2, p. 168]. He does not believe in the opportunity of changing the things. This state of infidelity, the feeling of imminent death, dissolution of personality is the result of Andrews' perplexity and the whole collapse of his former ideals. “I guess people would rather put up with things than make an effort to change them” [2, p. 296]. When he is in the hospital after a combat wound, the thoughts of desertion come to his mind very often. He believes that it is the only way to be against the war mechanism and to save him. But the protest against the war ends with a failure. He is arrested as a deserter.

Chrisfield feels completely feeble as a yoked ox. He cannot put up with the humiliation he suffers daily. “Chrisfield marched with his fists clenched; he wanted to fight somebody, to run his bayonet into a man as he ran it into the dummy in that everlasting bayonet drill, he wanted to strip himself naked, to squeeze the wrists of a girl until she screamed” [2, p. 119].

In the given novel the author contrasts wartime and peacetime. The writer idealizes the peacetime before the war. Everything is depicted as beautiful, and there is confidence that everything will be as usual. But when depicting the wartime the author talks about betrayal, humiliation, suppression of personality, destruction and devastation. The heroes are in the war, but often they recollect about the past, about that peaceful and beautiful time.

One of the main methods used in the novel is montage. Jh. Dos Passos was one of the writers of modernism. The young writers tried to wreck some out-of-date forms of art because they found them conservative, tradi-

tional and dead. This literary movement presupposed experiments with the narrative structure and reconsideration of cultural values. More than any other American writers of that generation, Jh. Dos Passos responded to and adopted new ways of telling the story. In the novel "Three Soldiers" the writer abandoned the traditional story-telling methods that trace the character and events chronologically, building to the climax and then tapering off [4, p. 7]. Montage is the main method that organizes the narrative of the novel. John Dos Passos' montage is realized by parallel and simultaneous development of storylines, which promote the unity of the story. The writer first tells about one of the main characters – Dan Fuzelli, his fate and the main goal in life. The main purpose of his life becomes military service, achievement of a high military rank.

Next we meet Chrisfield and John Andrews, whose views on life, in particular on the war, are fundamentally different. Chrisfield is a youth humiliated by the military officer Anderson, who incarnated absurdity of war and the whole war mechanism. Killing the officer he goes against the law. "Chrisfield marched with his fists clenched; he wanted to fight somebody, to run his bayonet into a man as he ran it into the dummy in that everlasting bayonet drill, he wanted to strip himself naked, to squeeze the wrists of a girl until she screamed" [2, p. 119]. We see how difficult the psychological state of the hero is.

John Andrews seeks for any ways, which will help him to return home and to avoid action. Andrews is a zealous war opponent. Violence and murder are not in his nature. He tries to avoid the war with all his might. The military hospital is one of the ways of salvation: "He found himself giggling softly, notwithstanding the twinges of pain from his legs. He felt suddenly as if his spirit had awakened from a long torpor. He was free. The thought came to him gleefully, that as long as he stayed in that cot in the hospital no one would shout orders at him" [2, p. 157-158].

The writer breaks off the narration about one main character and moves to another. Each literary portrait is like an independent piece of literature. Only at the end of the novel we meet the hero, whose narration is at the beginning. Story lines connected with the main heroes begin in different time. Such a number of characters and correlated with them story lines make a contribution to the subdivision of the novel.

Sudden and unmotivated conversion from current moments of heroes' life to former ones, "anticipating things" to the future are typical for montage. Thus while describing the barracks and feelings of the main hero, the writer moves dramatically to his childhood description: "When he had been a child he had lived in a dilapidated mansion that stood among old oaks and chestnuts, beside a road where buggies passed rarely <...>He had had so many dreams; lying under the crepe-myrtle bush at the end of the overgrown garden he had passed the long Virginia afternoons, thinking, while the dry flies whizzed sleepily in the sunlight, of the world he would live in when he grew up" [2, p. 22]. These recollections underline disillusionment with the present situation of the hero, his unrealized dreams and happy life by the sea.

Discrepancy and fragmenterization are used to reveal the temper of the protagonists. The author omits the events that are secondary to the hero. Jh. Dos Passos describes what allows us to know and feel the protagonist. "Spurs jingled as the three officers went out. A fierce disgust took possession of John Andrews. In the deserted tea room, among the dismal upturned chairs, his crassened fingers moved stiffly over the keys. He forgot everything else. Locked doors in his mind were swinging wide, revealing forgotten sumptuous halls of his imagination. The Queen of Sheba, grotesque as a satyr, white and flaming with worlds of desire, stood with her hand on his shoulder sending shivers of warm sweetness rippling through his body, while her voice intoned in his ears all the inexhaustible voluptuousness of life" [2, p. 180]. Once again the author points out that John Andrews is a person of an exalted nature, a man with sophisticated spiritual organization. The manner of his thinking is different from the worldview of an average soldier. Music allows him to move away from thinking about the war, death, and all that makes him disgusted.

Describing peacetime, Jh. Dos Passos weaves songs into the narrative. In our opinion, he wants to show the serenity of people at times when they escaped from the clutches of the military machine, because freedom and leisure bring people the beauty.

Montage lets Jh. D. Passos attach absolutely separate elements of narration, bringing in elements of documentary chronicle, spirit of credibility and verisimilitude. The destiny of the three different people interweaves to show that the First World War is absurdity, total and senseless death. Such novel composition portrays subdivision of worldview, which is typical for youths of that period.

Therefore having learnt the literary specifics of Jh. D. Passos' novel, we are persuaded that this writer-experimentalist has got his own style. In order to depict the contemporary reality he uses different methods: incidence, montage, subdivision of the plot, documentary (his own written diary). One of the most impressive methods is contrast (the prose writer contrast peacetime to wartime, the heroes, their acts and thoughts). After carrying out the research we came to the conclusion, that montage is the main method of forming the work. To our mind, such composition of the novel lets the writer show subdivision of youth' worldview of that period. By means of montage the author portrays figuratively unobserved, essential interrelations between phenomena; comprehend deeply the world in its irregularity and resplendence, discrepancy and unity. Owing to the authors' experimental methods we can clear see the burning reality that the writer portrays in his novels.

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