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CHOREOGRAPHED ACCIDENT:

JOHN DOS PASSOS' MANHATTAN TRANSFER AS MODERNIST SATIRE

by

ROGER MORTIMER

A Thesis
submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of
English in partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at
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ABSTRACT

Choreographed Accident: John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer as
Modernist Satire

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University of Windsor, 1990

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The form of Manhattan Transfer is basically two-fold: on one level, themes and techniques of modernist art abound in the text to provide a complex admixture of montage, prose poetry, simultaneous imagery and apocalypse; on a deeper, overtonal level, exhaustive use of satirical techniques renders a sharp criticism of early twentieth century America. Baudelaire's urban poetic serves as a paradigm for the modern artists aesthetic of urban despair. Futurism and Expressionism are collided to reveal the ambiguity of modernism as it appears in Manhattan Transfer: modernization as utopian and modernization as apocalyptic. Analytical Cubism and film montage are used to explore the fragmented structure of the narrative; it is contended that the apparently anarchic structure of the novel (due to fragmentation) encourages an intuitive reading, while recurring images and precise juxtapositions encourage a more analytical reading of the fragments. In this manner, a reading process analogous to Bergson's duration is promoted. By engaging the reader intuitively and analytically the effectiveness of Manhattan Transfer as a work of social satire is enhanced. Artists cited include Rimbaud, Apollinaire, Boccioni, Braques, Meidner, Grosz and Eisenstein.

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Introduction

The major achievement of Manhattan Transfer is that it concretizes the modern urban consciousness--already the great theme of modernist painting, poetry and architecture--into the novel form, while manifesting a severe criticism of modernist society. Malcolm Cowley argues that

the literature of experimental modernism which emerged in the last years of the nineteenth century and developed into the present one was an art of cities which, for various historical reasons, had acquired high activity and great reputation as centers of intellectual and cultural exchange.¹

Manhattan Transfer is highly representative of the prevailing styles and attitudes in modernist "art of the cities," and it is in this context that this study shall proceed: comparing and contrasting modernist art and artists whose techniques, and whose vision of modernity, are consonant with those of Manhattan Transfer and John Dos Passos.

The city in modern fiction has often been portrayed as antagonistic to the traditional concept of community, and even today popular concepts of the modern city often involve the notion that the city is the great locus of the alienated:

The city is a highly developed form of social organization on a large scale; it is inescapably a community, however defined. Yet during the nineteenth century the literary city came more and more to express the isolation or exclusion of the individual from a community, and in the twentieth century to express the fragmentation of the very concept of community.²

The complex scope of Manhattan Transfer--the confusion of seemingly unrelated narratives, incidental vignettes amid the more rounded characterizations, the strange lighting and noise of the novel--reflects the size and energy of the modern city that

sparked the imaginations of Dos Passos' contemporaries. At the same time, the anemic movements of the characters, the failure of the individual to make it in this social and architectural wonderland, the indifference of the city's architectures, autonomous lives crowded together in hostels and pubs, provide a stark contrast to the ideal of progress embodied in the metropolis.

Baudelaire, the protean explorer of the modern city, demonized the metropolis in order to explore the dichotomy of desire and frustration, spleen and ideal--a dichotomy which provides a good deal of insight into the psychologies behind the relationships in Manhattan Transfer. The flaneur's quest for beauty and escape establishes the motif of the modern artist as a hero in confrontation with mass society. As a distinctly urban artist, Baudelaire reconceived Paris as an objet d'art, extending the borders of landscape art to the city with his poem "Landscape" and, later and more sweepingly, with the prose poems (a form inspired by his urban consciousness³) of Paris Spleen.

Rimbaud carried Baudelaire's experiment with the prose poem and urban consciousness to an extreme. The section of Illuminations devoted to the city is a prime example of the artist expressing the structural profusion of the city through the structure of his art. Rimbaud's prose poems depict the city as an endless freeplay of disconnected images through which he would interpret the rituals of its populations and the functions of its architectures.

Apollinaire took much of the metaphysics out of the literary cityscape of Baudelaire and Rimbaud, and it is toward the concrete

urban poetic of Apollinaire's "Zone" that Manhattan Transfer tends--focusing on the sheer physicality of the city, devoting entire scenes to the play of light on urban edifices.

Dos Passos explores the New Jerusalem optimism of the salesman for Metropolis and displaces it with a mad prophet's vision of the doomed city. These two opposing views reflect the paradox of modernism, a paradox nowhere more apparent than in the polarity between the Futurist model of urban utopia and the Expressionist vision of urban decay. To a large extent, Manhattan Transfer can be considered the playing out of a dialectic between the Futurist's blind worship of modernization, and the Expressionist's cynical view of modern progress.

Manhattan Transfer is, in part, an attempt to cross-pollinate the novel form with techniques manifest to the plastic arts: the structure of the novel has cubist effects; Dos Passos avers that montage provided a key structural principle, and several of his more associationist passages have been labelled cinematic. What is essential to Cubism, cinematic montage and Manhattan Transfer is the fragmentary method which creates a phenomenological dynamism through the collision of disparate elements. Fragmentation, in Cubist terms, disrupts the Western tradition of attempting to mimic three-dimensional space on the canvas, encouraging observers to come to terms with the work creatively, without the aid of established methods of interpretation.

Another dimension through which Dos Passos disrupts the Western tradition of representational perspective is by confusing the sequence of narrative and historical events through both

flash-forwards (the epigraph to "Ferryslip," for instance, is a flash-forward to Stan Emery's drunken vision of the ferryslip in the Roller-Coaster chapter, p. 251) and an achronological presentation of historical time. Michael Clark considers Section Two an excellent example of the presentation of historical time as asynchronic in relation to narrative sequence:

the sequence of identifiable historical dates and their page references in the novel are as follows: November 1913 (p.138), March 1913 (p.162), June 1906 (p.169), June 1914 (p.183), and July 1914 (p.222).⁴

Clark concludes that this discrepancy reveals that "Dos Passos's primary concern is with providing a historical perspective, a sociological depth to the fictional events, rather than with establishing a solid framework."⁵ The effect of distributing major events of the twenty-five year period which encompasses the narrative randomly throughout the novel is to deny any sense of social progress that might render these events historically specific to its own immediate time frame. These twenty-five years, then, are to be viewed simultaneously.

The overriding principle of Manhattan Transfer is the satiric. Urban society is ubiquitously satirized as the notion of progress is challenged: characters seem trapped in something much like Baudelaire's dichotomy of spleen and ideal, which leads to social stasis; scenes of construction are contrasted with scenes of waste; political reformers are ridiculous, silenced, or corrupted; the paragon of the modern city, metropolis, is presented in the context of apocalypse.

The form of the novel lends itself well to satire. Juxtaposing

disparate elements through fragmentation requires that the reader participate in the piecing together of the narratives and, through this process of assemblage, come to terms with the ironies inherent among the fragments. Indeed, it is the collision effect of juxtaposed elements as conceived by Eisenstein ("Step by step, by a process of comparing each new image with the common denotation, power is accumulated behind a process that can be formally identified with that of logical deduction."⁶), that acts as the major rhetorical tool of Manhattan Transfer.

Manhattan Transfer is a rich admixture of literary modernism and social satire. Aesthetically, as well as socially, it encourages an involved reading. I have approached it discursively, as I would a Cubist painting, experimenting with various perspectives to come to terms with its form(s) and function(s): it is a collision of fragments that encourages assemblage, provoking the reader to take a more involved look at his society.

Much of this study is an attempt to establish a context within the modernist tradition in which Manhattan Transfer can be investigated.

Chapter one considers Baudelaire as the initiator of the modernist conception of the artist as a hero battling against the poverty of reality and examines some of the themes and techniques in Baudelaire's work which explore this poverty (such as the dichotomy of spleen and ideal) and which transcend the generations of modernist art.

Chapter two considers the form and function of the epigraphs at the head of each chapter in Manhattan Transfer, both in relation to

the novel as a whole and in relation to the aesthetic of prose poetry begun by Baudelaire and survived by the work of Rimbaud and Apollinaire.

Chapter three is an examination of the paradox of modernism which is stylistically and thematically at the core of Manhattan Transfer. On one side of the paradox is the utopian view of modernism held by the Futurists and on the other is the apocalyptic vision of modernism held by the German Expressionists. Techniques and themes of both schools collide throughout Manhattan Transfer.

Chapter four examines the fragmentary method. To this end, principles of film montage and Cubism (styles based on fragmentation) will be applied to Manhattan Transfer. It will be shown how the apparently random fragments are juxtaposed to express social contradictions and how the fragments operate in terms of the dominant themes of the novel. The phenomenological affects of fragmentation will be considered in terms of Bergsonian theory. The reader's initial perception of the narrative as alogical (due to the fragmentation) provokes an intuitive reading, and later, as themes develop and patterns are discovered, the narrative provokes a more analytical reading. Engaging the reader both intuitively and analytically, Manhattan Transfer encourages the reader to approach the novel on a psychological level analogous to Bergson's "duration."

The fifth and concluding chapter will consider all that has been discussed in the previous chapters within the context of satire, showing that Manhattan Transfer is an intricate blend of satire and modernism. Two studies of the satiric manner (Alvin B.

Kernan's The Cankered Muse and Gilbert Highet's The Anatomy of Satire) will be used to examine satiric themes and techniques.

Charles Luddington stresses the importance of satire in Dos Passos' fiction:

To dismiss or, at best, merely skim over his abundant use of satire is to neglect a major element that gives his fiction its particular form and manner and distinguishes it from non-satiric novels.⁷

What most distinguishes Manhattan Transfer as a work of satire is the remarkably apposite contribution of modernist themes and techniques to the satiric form.

Chapter One: The Modern Artist-Hero

As a protean exploration of the modern city, Baudelaire's Paris Spleen may be considered a literary prototype of Manhattan Transfer in two major respects: it provides an excellent paradigm of the modern artist hero battling the forces of mass social nihilism, and the experiment with autonomous scenes and prose poetry initiates a tradition in urban poetics that would evolve into the cityscapes of Rimbaud, Apollinaire and Dos Passos: the urban pastoral.

The heroism of both the flaneur and Jimmy Herf rests on one major aspect of the hero's odyssey: the descent into hell. Hell is depicted in both cases as a spiritual void, resulting from chronic boredom and intensified by a movement from elation and optimism to deflation and pessimism as contemplation of an ideal leads to an apotheosis of spleen. The flaneur's as well as Jimmy Herf's heroism depends on the ability to escape from their respective hells.

Of all the demonizations one finds in Baudelaire's urban poetry, the single greatest is that of "Boredom." In the passage "To the Reader" the prime mover of the citified is the devil, whose victims treat their descent into hell with the same ennui they treat their existence: "It is the devil who holds the strings which move us! We find charms in repugnant things; every day we descend one step further toward Hell, without horror, through darkness that stinks" (LFM¹). And decadence is justifiable in that it will embroider "with pleasing designs the banal canvas of our pitiable destinies." Boredom is defined as "one more ugly, more wicked more

foul!" than all the "crawling monsters in the infamous menagerie of our vices."

In "The Wild Woman and the Fashionable Coquette," the coquette is admonished for living in so comfortable a hell: "Seeing the hells with which the world abounds, what do you expect me to think of your pretty little hell" (PS²). When the narrator of "The Generous Gambler" meets with the damned in hell, he notes "I have never seen eyes that shone so fiercely with the horror of boredom and with the immortal longing to feel themselves alive" (PS).

Having established the setting for his studies as a state of mind (hellish boredom), Baudelaire makes the place of reprieve from this state into a sanctuary. This sanctuary is found in the sense of beauty that is exercised by the flaneur's voyeurist strolls through the city. In the epilogue to Paris Spleen the city is defined as "brothel and hospital, prison, purgatory, hell;" it is also a "trull, Immense, whose hellish charm resuscitates." Resuscitation for Baudelaire results from the sense of beauty he seeks to capture in his art, as is illustrated in the passage "A Heroic Death": "the intoxication of Art is more apt than any other to veil the terrors of the eternal abyss" (PS). Thus the city adorns for Baudelaire the paradox of being home of the bored and lifeless and also the source of refuge from their boredom and lifelessness.

The greatest difference between the social hell one finds in Baudelaire's work and that informing the pages of Manhattan Transfer is the profusion of the middle-class or the unremarkable in Dos Passos' streets.

What makes Dos Passos' hell more frightening than that of Baudelaire is that Dos Passos seldom overwrites his hell with metaphysical or even poetical significance. Whereas in a poem like "The Generous Gambler" the denizens of hell come off as being somewhat more sensitive to the beauty and despair of existence--and thus their presence in hell is somewhat justified, if not commendable--in Manhattan Transfer, very ordinary characters live in a very ordinary hell:

In their appearance, manners and acts they are true types of the time, in their inner life they converge to one type: the quickly disillusioned who find life repellent and loathsome, who die inside long before they die physically.³

While alcohol may be said to provide a narcotic to the boredom of the characters in Manhattan Transfer, there is no "higher" drug such as art or religion to redeem the decadence of the characters, and the boredom they experience is not of the poetic sort one finds in the romantic hero. The mundane or decadent is often written in abrupt, unadorned prose and is often accompanied by mock lugubriousness. Life is continually referred to as hellish by characters in Manhattan Transfer: Ruth believes that life "isn't funny any more, it's just horrible" (338⁴); Tony "must run into the sincerity of black" (362); Phineas P. Blackhead realises "It's [life's] all a smutty joke" (394); Jimmy is expected to liven things up for a woman in a club who is "so horribly bored" (323); At a nightclub Jimmy encourages Ellen: "Let's be good and sick" (301); again at a nightclub Jimmy and Ellen are transfixed by liquor: Jimmy felt "paralyzed like in a nightmare; she was a porcelain figure under a bellglass" (300); Pregnant, Cassie says "I

can feel the howor of it [life] cweeping up on me, killing me" (48); Ellen is "so tired of book-talk and the proletariat" (352); Martin calls the whole group "bored, bored flies buzzing on a window pane" (361); Jimmy proclaims "Oh God Everything is hellish" (266).

Boredom (and a resulting decadence) is a common dimension of the social hell in Paris Spleen and Manhattan Transfer. The boredom is that much stronger in Manhattan Transfer because there are no artists on the scene to enhance it.

Spleen and Ideal

The dichotomy of spleen and ideal--fantasy giving way to despair--is often employed in Paris Spleen and is often manifested in the idealization of woman. In Manhattan Transfer, the social ramifications of this dichotomy are profound.

Baudelaire's spleen-and-ideal operates on two levels. There is a generic spleen to which everyone is susceptible, wherein one's several desires are tempted and frustrated; and there is a spleen-and-ideal that operates on a sexual level. Woman can either be idolized as a manifestation of unattainable beauty; or she can be used as an object of sexual release.

"The Old Woman's Despair" is a good example of universal spleen. The tale begins with the woman "gladdened at the sight of the pretty baby." Having terrified it with her affection, the episode ends with the old woman thinking "Even innocent babes cannot endure us, and we are scarecrows to little children whom we long to love" (PS).

Ideal gives way to spleen, again, in the episode "The Old Clown." The holiday atmosphere of the carnival ("nothing but light, dust, shouts, joy, tumult") gives way to the figure of the neglected old clown:

Here absolute misery, and a misery made all the more horrible by being tricked out in comic rags, whose motley contrast was due more to necessity than to art (PS).

This seems an excellent piece of metafiction, for Baudelaire's spleen (though more art than necessity) is often a misery "all the more horrible by being tricked out in comic rags."

The sexual component of the spleen/ideal dichotomy results from the flaneur's idealization of woman. In "The Double Room," the idealization of female sensuality ("a voluptuous dream in an eclipse") is interrupted by the reality of a knock at the door:

And that perfume out of another world which in my state of exquisite sensibility was so intoxicating? Alas, another odor has taken its place, of stale tobacco mixed with nauseating mustiness. The rancid smell of desolation (PS).

The narrator of "The Desire to Paint" entertains a destructive fixation on the ideal woman. She is either to be sexually dominated or idly worshipped:

There are women who inspire you with the desire to conquer them and to take your pleasure of them; but this one fills you only with the desire to die slowly beneath her gaze (PS).

The will to possess the female idol results in "moon-mad men" ("The Moon's Favours"). The narrator explains how the beautiful woman is taught by Diana to tempt, and never satisfy, man:

that is why, dear, spoilt, accursed child, I am lying at your feet searching you all over for the reflection of the dread Goddess, the fateful godmother and poison-nurse of all moon-mad men (PS).

Manhattan Transfer, in the manner of Paris Spleen, often

contains scenes where the tone oscillates between elation and despair; a good deal of this despair belongs to "moon-mad men" who seek to dominate or worship women, especially Ellen. The sexual attitudes throughout the novel are destructive, a much darker illustration of the spleen/ideal complex than is evident in *Paris Spleen*.

Often it is when a character catches himself dreaming that he perceives his life as banal. James Merivale, daydreaming about giving a speech as a popular bank president ("At last making himself heard above the thunderous applause James Merivale, his stately steelgray head shaking with emotion, continues his speech."), awakens to find ashes from his cigar fallen onto his trousers: "Then he settled down again and with an intent frown and began to read the article in the *Wall Street Journal*" (387).

Ellen, separated from Oglethorpe, enjoys her first night at the hotel: "She lay laughing with her legs stretched wide in the cool slippery sheets." This enjoyment, however, gives way to the spleen of desolation (re: "The Double Room"): "The bed was a raft on which she was marooned alone, always alone, afloat on a growling ocean. A shudder went down her spine" (168).

Jimmy experiences the deflation from ideal to spleen when he awakens from a reverie: "The dungeon gates opened. Outside was an Arab stallion and two trusty retainers waiting to speed him across the border to freedom." At the end of the scene, Jimmy remembers his mother's illness and "gulping a dry sob he turned out the light and slipped into bed between the shiverycold sheets" (89).

The most common agent of ideal and spleen involves sexual

relationships. The men adopt a madonna/whore attitude towards women, as is evident in "The Desire to Paint."

The epigraph to "Fire Engine" shows moon-madness to be a common symptom of the sexual malady affecting the Manhattan community:

Parlorsnakes and flappers joggle hugging downtown uptown, hug
joggling gray square after gray square, until they see the new
moon giggling over Weehawken and feel the gusty wind of a dead
Sunday blowing dust in their faces, dust of a typsy twilight.

Ellie is the embodiment of the Ideal Woman, catalyst of moon-madness, to a majority of male characters. She is the "Great Lady on A White Horse" everyone seems to be chasing on foot. George Baldwin, Harry Goldweiser, Stan and Jimmy (not to mention Larry, et al) idealize Ellen as a panacea for their spleens. George considers her "full of love and mystery and glitter (221); Harry says to Ellen: "All those ideals and beautiful things pushed down into myself when I was making my way in a man's world were like planting seeds and you're their flower" (203). Stan mumbles drunken sapphics to Ellen's beauty: "Saw the white, implacable Aphrodite, damn fine..."(152). Walking with Ellen, Jimmy is touched by moon-madness ("a mildewed scrap of moon came out from behind the clouds for a minute"), and he longs to take Ellen home: "I'd like very much to take you home" (230).

Idolatry of Ellen usually results in a crushing attack of spleen. George is rejected and pulls a gun on Ellen (229); Stan, on a binge to Canada because Ellen refuses to leave Oglethorpe, marries a stranger in Niagara Falls and finishes his three-day-drunk by setting himself on fire (253). Ellen refuses Jimmy as her escort and when she drives off in a cab "the taxi

kicked dust and a rasp of burnt gasoline in his face" (231). Jimmy finally does marry Ellen but they are soon divorced.

Ellen, too, has her ideal turn to spleen with the death of Stan. When Jimmy asks her if she still loves him, she replies: "I guess I don't love anybody for long unless they're dead" (345).

While many of the characters seek the madonna, others seek the whore. Congo says "Maybe I'll go home an visit the little girlies of bordeaux...That's the only life....Get drunk and raise cain payday and see the extreme orient" (39). Congo imparts his knowledge of the courting ritual to Emile, saying "You're too easy; got to use rough stuff with women to get anything outa them" (108). Morris is upset that Cassie's not more promiscuous. When Cassie asks Morris if he thinks she is too upstage with him, he replies: "You are kinda, that's what makes me sore. I like my little girl to pet me an love me up a little" (162). An entire vignette is devoted to a man's quest for a prostitute whose "eyes were like a knifethrust" (61).

Both men and women want to use the other sex for some personal gratification, to attain some cliched ideal or relieve some spleen. A sanitary worker who is given a promotion has his wife confess that money is the ideal bond between man and wife: "It's really goin' to be worth living now" (41). She is ashamed of having been poor and lies about her former address. The husband is one of the few decent characters in the novel, reproaching her for the lie: "Oh Bertha, it's the principle of the thing....I don't like you to be like that" (41).

In another incidental vignette, a young man gets a raise and

believes he makes enough money to marry. However, his fiancée brushes him off: "But what good's fifteen dollars a week?" and reproaches him for being "a silly boy" (19).

Anna must idealize Elmer in order to make the idea of marriage to him palatable. She begins her reverie thinking she "might as well" marry Elmer; but as the reverie gains force she idealizes him:

Elmer in a telephone central in a dinnercoat, with eartabs, tall as Valentino, strong as Doug. The Revolution is declared. The Red Guard is marching up Fifth Avenue. Anna in golden curls with a little kitten under her arm leans with him out of the tallest window. White tumbler pigeons flutter against the city below them. Fifth Avenue bleeding red flags, glittering with marching bands, hoarse voices singing Die Rote Fahne in Yiddish; far away, from the Woolworth a banner shakes into the wind. "Look Elmer darling Elmer Duskin for Mayor." And they're dancing the Charleston in all the officebuildings....Thump. Thump. That Charlestandance....Thump. Thump....Perhaps I do love him. Elmer take me. Elmer, loving as Valentino, crushing me to him with his Doug-strong arms, hot as flame, Elmer (397,8).

Anna does not feel so great an attraction to Elmer the naive revolutionary; but as a Valentino-like mayor with the strength of her other beau, Doug, Anna can see herself loving him.

Dos Passos paints a far darker view of the spleen/ideal dichotomy than Baudelaire. Sexual relationships in Manhattan Transfer are failures largely due to the idealization and objectification of the other sex, followed by despair when the ideal sours.

Strewn among the narratives are instances of a sexually destructive community. The rape and asphyxiation of a woman is recounted (347); abortions plug the drain of an apartment sink (378); Ellen and Cassie have abortions; affairs are numerous;

venereal disease is rampant: "Four Out of Every Five Get..." (293). The social decadence caused by Spleen and Ideal stresses further the hellish setting of Manhattan Transfer.

The paradigm of the modern hero, as it appears in the work of Baudelaire and Manhattan Transfer, basically requires that the hero make the traditional descent into hell and be able to escape. Three general premises must be fulfilled: modern urban life is hellish; this hellishness, however, is aesthetically boundless; salvation is in the hands of the individual.

Both Jimmy Herf and Baudelaire's flaneur make the descent into hell (the city and its spleen) and both escape. However, their respective character determines the nature of the escape. For the flaneur, escape is sought through temporary incursions into beatitude. For Jimmy Herf escape requires physical flight. The difference in the courses chosen is largely due to the settings.

Baudelaire's Paris is written as a diorama for the flaneur's muse, while Dos Passos' Manhattan is written as a vehicle for social satire. The flaneur is caught in the paradox of wanting to leave the city, yet finding the only relief from his spleen is derived from wandering the city streets and investing in the debauchery. As an artist, hell (Paris) provides Baudelaire with rich poetic material. Like Baudelaire, Dos Passos takes advantage of the artistic opportunities created by viewing the city as hell: the novel abounds with a rich poetic allegory of apocalypse, and the novel is infused with powerful images of destruction and decay. However, Dos Passos tempers his poetry with rather bleak, unadorned scenes and rather mundane, unpoeticized crises. Manhattan Transfer

often depicts a hell without poetry--a sorry hell for the artist-flaneur.

Baudelaire, like Dos Passos, has often been praised for his ability to record a scene. One critic professes that "Genius for him [Baudelaire] was not the power of production, but the power of reception, and this receptive power was only possible in total forgetfulness of self."⁵ Another critic, praising Baudelaire's empathic method, argues for the appropriateness of the flaneur's "reportage" when defining the city:

Cities are made for and live in the present. The best description of the city would be one which would integrate separate views of the city taken by a moving observer in the midst of a moving city. Such is the theater of the flaneur. Mobile locus of the observer/observed, it synthesizes the city each time by making each of the scenes it features the equal, the symbol of the whole city.⁶

Certain suppositions are made in this statement that I believe are worth remarking upon. That the number of definitions of a city is directly proportional to the number of its inhabitants seems a fair statement. That a collection of perspectives is therefore more informational than a single generic definition of the city is common-sensical. What is questionable is the separateness of these views when manifested through one viewer's empathy.

The same critic refers to the flaneur's 'slice of life' technique as "kinesthetic passivity."⁷ I would argue that the flaneur's kinesthesia is more active than passive. Although the scene upon which the flaneur arrives may be purely accidental, by the time Baudelaire has written it, the scene has undergone the embellishments of a person acutely aware of his role as manipulator of reality (artist).

The proem in Paris Spleen entitled "Windows" provides, I believe, a more accurate account of the flaneur's technique: as voyeuristic producer, rather than voyeuristic consumer:

And I go to bed proud to have lived and to have suffered in some one besides myself.

Perhaps you will say "Are you sure that your story is the real one?" But what does it matter what reality is outside myself, so long as it has helped me to live, to feel that I am, and what I am.

Streets are not wandered aimlessly, but with the purpose of self-preservation and self-definition. In a very real sense wandering the streets is the "job" of this flaneur, for it is the marketing of the vignettes he will produce from his observations that will "help him to live."

In Baudelaire's work there are two hells. Everyone is a patient in the hospital for the insufferably bored, but there is a particular ward which is most noble and allows temporary reprieve from the demon Boredom: the hell of the artist. The flaneur's is a continual escape from the artist's hell, whose confines lay in the extent to which he is tormented by Satan in the guise of Boredom. Art is his great, though only temporary, escape. He remodels the city to his own taste, with little care for the reality of a portrait if it "has helped me to live, to feel that I am, and what I am."

The flaneur is concerned exclusively with a metaphysical release from the tyranny of reality rather than with any sort of moral or physical salvation. He is able to dream away the hardness and decadence of the city. It is significant that Baudelaire refers to his compositions as "eclogues" in the poem "Landscape," for by

doing so he invokes the notion of the pastoral: the condition of the metropolis is unchanging. Thus, by making his hell eternal/pastoral, populated by those who must continually strive for, and never reach, spiritual release, salvation must be looked for elsewhere. He sets himself apart from the crowd and wishes to spend his days in contemplation:

I will close doors and shutters everywhere
To build in the night my fairy palace
.....
The Riot, banging vainly at my window,
Will not raise my face from my desk;
For I will be plunged in this euphoria
Of evoking spring by my will ("Landscape," LFM).

It matters little where this flaneur runs to, for his quest is not for something which exists in this world that he disdains, but for something beyond, and he need never leave his desk to reach his "fairy palace."

In his study of Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin makes several provocative observations concerning the operations of the flaneur. A great deal is made of the business side of the flaneur's activities--to the point where he is seen as the social equivalent of the prostitute: both producer and commodity:

The crowd is not only the newest asylum of outlaws; it is also the latest narcotic for those abandoned. The flaneur is someone abandoned in the crowd. In this he shares the situation of the commodity [....] Empathy is the nature of the intoxication to which the flaneur abandons himself in the crowd.

Benjamin's focus on the flaneur as businessman is a valid perspective, but it seems that his choice of metaphors reveals the complexities of the flaneur. One does not think of a seller as one who receives any sort of intoxication from the act of selling. Can

the prostitute be said to derive the intoxication from her customer that the flaneur derives from his customer (the crowd)? What Benjamin has determined is not that the flaneur acts principally as producer and commodity, but that the city and its crowds act principally as buyers and (not sellers, for no price is required of the flaneur to focus his gaze on the crowd) "narcotics". Benjamin then proceeds to argue plausibly that the reason the flaneur despises the crowd is that it has "abandoned" him as salesman, pointing to the poor sales of Baudelaire's work as evidence.⁹

There is obviously a split in the nature of the crowd which the flaneur is writing of. There is the bourgeoisie, which he despises, among other reasons, for their neglect as buyers; and there are the social pariahs, the poor, the decadent, the grotesque, which the flaneur eulogizes in narcotic euphoria. A good example of the flaneur's dual vision of the crowd is the "Epilogue" of Paris Spleen:

Infamous City, I adore you! Courtesans
And bandits, you offer me such joys,
The common herd can never understand.

The flaneur despises the "herd" not only because it will not buy his works, but because it is "common".

It is in this disdain for the commonplace that Baudelaire seems to echo Poe most resoundingly. In Poe's "The Man of the Crowd,"¹⁰ the flaneur, taking note of the various types that stroll the streets of London, describes those of a "business-like demeanor" as "by far the greater number of those who went by." They are also those who "did not greatly excite my attention." The flaneur continues his classification of the city crowd in a fashion

"descending the scale of what is termed gentility." As the declension in gentility is noted, the attention to specific details of the class is increased, until the flaneur is "singularly aroused, startled, fascinated" by the countenance of a "decrepid old man." And here, Poe's flaneur signifies the attraction of all flaneurs to singular countenances: "How wild a history...is written within that bosom!" And indeed the sensational was a major advertisement for the selling of a work of fiction. We have seen how the observations of the flaneur lead to self-preservation.

As to self-definition, the flaneur largely defines himself in terms of what he isn't; he is resignedly an eccentric and uses the masses as proof for his singularity. Principally concerned with that which is exotic and singular, the flaneur is described by Benjamin as one whose gaze, "whose way of living still bestowed a conciliatory gleam over the growing destitution of men in the great city."¹¹ Benjamin considers this "conciliatory gleam" to be manifested in the flaneur's aesthetic of nouveauté:

It [novelty] is the quintessence of false consciousness, of which fashion is the tireless agent. This illusion of novelty is reflected, like one mirror in another, in the illusion of infinite sameness....Art which begins to have doubts about its function...is forced to make novelty its highest value.¹²

This quote emphasizes the polemicism in Baudelaire's writings: he succumbs to the "illusion of infinite sameness," (illustrated in Baudelaire's depiction of the crowd as "the herd") and writes as a reactionary against that which breeds sameness.

As stated above, the flaneur is concerned with self-definition so that delineations of the social strata are highly subjective and self-serving. Comparing Baudelaire with Hugo, Benjamin maintains:

When Victor Hugo was celebrating the crowd as the hero in a modern epic, Baudelaire was looking for a refuge for the hero among the masses of the big city. Hugo placed himself in the crowd as a citoyen; Baudelaire sundered himself from it as a hero.¹³

Baudelaire places aesthetic sensibility above poverty. In "The Bad Glazier" the narrator thrashes the glazier for not selling colored glass and encourages him to "make life beautiful." in "Venus and the Motley Fool" the poverty of the old man is romanticized because one so pitiful cannot access the beauty that taunts him:

I am the least and loneliest of men, deprived of love and friendship, wherein I am inferior even to the lowest animals. Yet I, too, am made to understand and feel immortal Beauty! Ah! Goddess! take pity on my fever and my pain (LFM).

That one can be so miserable and still be most pained by aesthetic deficiencies examples Baudelaire's zealous devotion to art above all else. The "conciliatory gleam" for which Benjamin reprimands Baudelaire is occasioned by Baudelaire's determination that spiritual antagonisms override physical ones.

The conciliatory gleam takes on several distinct aspects in Baudelaire's work, especially in lending poetry to his decadent ennui. When Baudelaire says in "Anywhere out of the World (PS)" that "Life is a hospital where every patient is obsessed by the desire of changing beds" the metaphor of the hospital transforms the dull message that people are hopelessly bored and boring into a striking poetical image, the vehicle overrides the tenor. This will to poeticize the mundane or the decadent transforms decadence into a muse of the modern artist-hero.

The epitome of Baudelaire's aesthetic elitism is manifested in

the passages which evince, above all, his singular imagination. His "flowers" are the ultimate fascination of a will seeking total distinction from society (to be "Anywhere out of the World"), the hero seeking martyrdom in hell for his sacrifices in the name of beauty: "The study of beauty is a duel in which the artist shrieks with terror before being overcome" ("Artist's Confiteor," PS). Baudelaire is the hero of his class, those whose hell consists of the disparity between existence and beauty. He is of those who can escape, periodically into the imagination, "the fairy castles." Thus, the heroic function of the flaneur's escape is to shed his conciliatory gleam over this hell, the boring landscape of reality.

Jimmy Herf lives in the hell of the generic hospital patient. His hell is not limited to the artist, the pariah, the singular of countenance. Frightening scenes of social corruption fill the pages of Manhattan Transfer, and the spleen/ideal dichotomy is written in far darker terms. It is no wonder that Jimmy Herf's escape is much less extraordinary, or euphoric, than the flaneur's.

The streets of Manhattan are circular and the characters are caught in its revolutions: Jimmy imagines himself in the business world, being "fed in a tape in and out the revolving doors grinding out his years like sausage meat" (120). People are helplessly in flux in the city: "continuous streams" (164) and "endless bands" (199) of city traffic provide a recurring metaphor for the indistinct, unabating flow of urban life. When Ellen and Stan connect once again and go off into the sexual sunset, the vacuity of their relationship is symbolized by an abandoned phonograph: "The phonograph came to an end and the record went on playing round

and round" (216).

Jimmy's heroism, his escape from the modernist hell, lies simply in the fact that he is willing to step off the urban rollercoaster--rather than invest in it as does the flaneur. And like the traditional hero of epic (Odysseus, for instance, who journeys to hell to ask Tiresius how to get home), Jimmy acquires some critical knowledge while in hell: "I'm beginning to learn a few of things I don't want" (363). Jimmy makes the descent into hell, but, unlike the flaneur, he stays only for a season. While, compared to the flaneur, Jimmy's flight from the decadent city appears heroic, there remains something strikingly anti-heroic in the fact that he chooses not to confront the metropolis and attempt to bring forth change.

CHAPTER TWO: THE URBAN PASTORAL

The epigraphs of Manhattan Transfer share with the lyrical cities of Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Apollinaire a heightened sensuality, a cyclical sense of time and an immediacy of exchange between artist and landscape that can be considered a modernization of the pastoral tradition.

Independently, each epigraph presents a detailed study of a limited spatial construct. And still, when considered collectively and in conjunction with the narrative, the epigraphs take on larger relationships in defining the physical (urban architectures) and narrative (urban symbolisms) areas of Manhattan. In this manner, the epigraphs follow in the tradition of the eclogues of the traditional pastoral cycle, wherein each eclogue is an autonomous expression of a given month and still only part of the calendar that constitutes a year.

The epigraphs reinforce the patterns of symbolism in the novel (the epigraph to the chapter "Five Statutory Questions" is devoted to the description of a rollercoaster ride--the rollercoaster symbolizing the speed, the gratuitous movements of the citified); they reinforce the theme of Manhattan as a doomed or dying city ("Metropolis" presents Babylon and Nineveh as archetypes of Manhattan to stress its imminent demise.); and while they often carry thematic or structural significance, the one characteristic all the epigraphs have in common is a distinctly modernist urban sensuality.

A long array of modern art lay between the heightened urban

sensuality of Dos Passos' epigraphs and the basically metaphysical initial conception of the city as artist's landscape that began with Baudelaire. Examining the poetry of a few popular French poets whose work seems to describe a tradition of urban poetics to which Manhattan Transfer belongs should provide a useful paradigm for the epigraphs: "novels like Manhattan Transfer and USA, while profoundly American in language and content are, technically and artistically speaking, in the French grain."¹

Baudelaire is the primogenitor of the modernist movement toward a sensual, contemporary urban poetic. Dos Passos mentions Rimbaud as a strong influence on his early writings. Apollinaire's cinematic, Cubist style closely resembles the dynamic fragmentation and montage tendencies of Dos Passos' fiction. Examining these artists together reveals the development of certain thematic and stylistic tendencies that culminate in Manhattan Transfer: the pastoral temperament of the narrator, the opulent forms and perspectives produced by modern innovations, the focus on light and color, the sense of a coeternal urban past and present.

Paradoxically, in considering the city as objet d'art, Baudelaire invokes the pastoral, traditionally an anti-urban genre:

Writers and intellectuals have long abhorred the city: the dream of escape from its vice; its immediacy, its sprawl, its pace, its very model of man has been the basis of a profound cultural dissent, evident in that most enduring of literary modes, pastoral, which can be a critique of the city or a simple transcendence of it.²

The flaneur assumes the manner of the pastoral shepherd (archetype for the landscape artist) high on a hill contemplating his surrounding; his scene is infused with pathetic fallacy. The

flaneur's vignettes are referred to in the poem "Landscape" as eclogues, which the flaneur writes from "the height of my roof". "Epilogue," the poem which closes Paris Spleen, suggests the poems in the collection be read in the pastoral vein:

Happy of Heart I climbed the hill
To contemplate the town in its enormity.

Baudelaire's 'pastoral' is actually an inversion of the pastoral tradition. In a complete reversal of the tradition the 'town' rather than the country becomes the setting for the shepherd's eclogues, which illustrates the increasing spread of the city into previously rural territory:

Compared with the Romantic poetry of the preceding generation, Baudelaire's has redefined nature as urban.³

The urban shepherd's perspective is a wide angle view of the city infected with hellish boredom; it is a demonization of the pastoral tradition, replete with a demonization of the poet's muse. As with the traditional shepherd in pastoral poetry, the flaneur places himself above the city, and his contemplation is basically metaphysical, a brief victory over the city's decadence. As urban shepherd the flaneur sings his separation from the city:

I will be plunged in this euphoria
Of evoking spring by my will,
Of holding a sun in my heart, and of making
From my burning thoughts a temperate atmosphere
("Landscape," LFM).

In "Epilogue" the flaneur ascends the hill "seeking but rapture" (PS). The rapturous idea of poetry held by the flaneur is analogous to the traditional pastoral conception of the muse. For instance, Spenser ends his pastoral cycle The Shepherd's Calendar with Ovid's idea of the muse: "There is a god within us; it is from

his stirring that we feel warm." ⁴ That the poet derives warmth from the muse is especially appropos to Baudelaire's muse, considering that it is mentioned as "Satan, patron of my pain" in "Epilogue".

Traditionally, the physical setting in pastoral poetry complements the mood of the poet, of the poem. Thus, when Baudelaire reflects

What is pure art according to the modern conception? It is to create a suggestive magic containing at once the object and the subject, the exterior world of the artist and the artist himself.⁵

it would seem that the reflective interplay between setting and poet in the pastoral tradition satisfies his idea of the modern conception of pure art.

It is in the pastoral that the archetypal effects of the seasons are exploited (i.e. Spring representing re-birth--the tradition inverted by Eliot when April does not bring forth renewal to the Waste Land).

Pathetic fallacy abounds in pastoral poetry, and daylight is a common tool of the poet to reflect his state of mind: winter days are usually gray and dark. In the urban pastoral, there is added to the natural lighting of a scene the artificial light from the gas lamps or electricity. Thus the mood of the poet has that much more color, texture, with which to express itself. Bright light is depicted as a great transformer of what remains dull or vile in darker light; in "Le Soleil" the sun is a metaphor for the poet's ability to invigorate a scene:

When like poets, he [the sun] descends to the cities,
He ennobles the vilest sort of things (LFM).

In "The Beautiful Dorothea," "The sun overwhelms the city with its perpendicular and fulminating rays" (PS).

When the artificial lights of the city are on display in the poet's consciousness, the scene disperses to include a wider field of vision--the juxtaposition of starlight and citylights again showing the urban blending into the natural world: the style becomes more excited:

in the stony labyrinths of the metropolis, scintillation
of stars, bright bursts of city lights, you are the
fireworks of my goddess Liberty ("Evening Twilight," PS)!

Light determines the focal point of the observer's gaze. In the poem "Landscape" the focus switches from one illuminated object to the next:

It is sweet to traverse the fogs, to see the star
Born in the azure, the lamp at the window,
The carbon rivers rising to the firmament
And the moon pouring its pale enchantment.

Much the same method of jumping quickly from one essential light to the next is used in Manhattan Transfer, the best example being the cinematographic "Steamroller" epigraph:

Night crushes bright milk out of arclights, squeezes the
sullen blocks until they drip red, yellow, green into the
streets resounding with feet. All the asphalt oozes light.
Light spurts from lettering on the roofs, mills dizzily among
wheels, stains rolling tons of sky (112).

While the urban pastoral undergoes several changes in later generations, the modern urban scene is still painted through the consciousness of a highly attuned sensual observer, the city is usually endowed with abstract imagery, and lighting plays a major role in the visual tone of the city. Baudelaire's definition of the modern concept of pure art as being the creation of a

"suggestive magic containing at once the object and subject, the exterior world of the artist and the artist himself" seems to have transcended the generations of modern urban art.

Rimbaud's cities take on the trimmings of the fantastic. Whereas the labyrinthine structure of the city is only glossed over by Baudelaire, for Rimbaud it is the city as labyrinth that constitutes the basis of his urban poetics. If Baudelaire's flaneur ascends the hill to contemplate the familiar city in its entirety, Rimbaud's narrator descends the hill as a stranger to the metropolis in order to gain a closer look, stopping along the way only to taste the occasional mushroom:

I dreamed of crusades, voyages of discovery without awareness, republics without histories, stifled religious wars, moral revolutions, displacements of races and continents: I believed in all enchantments.⁶

In the end Rimbaud would consider these fantastic voyages as products of a season in hell, redolent of Baudelaire's demonization of the pastoral.

As to form, Rimbaud's fantastic urban scenes are an evolution in the genre begun by Baudelaire. The similarity in their respective conceptions of a poetic prose is striking: Baudelaire dreams of

the miracle of a poetic prose, musical, without rhythm and without rhyme, supple enough and rugged enough to adapt itself to the lyrical impulses of the soul, the undulations of reverie, the jibes of conscience.⁷

Rimbaud reflects on his style:

I ordered the form and movement of each consonant, and, with instinctive rhythms, I flattered myself with inventing a poetical verb accessible, one way or another, to all the senses. I reserve the translation.

It was at first a study. I wrote of silences, of nights, I

noted the inexpressible. I defined vertigos.³

The length (one half a page to a few pages), dense imagery and episodic nature of Rimbaud's scenes also suggest Baudelaire's influence.

Rimbaud's cityscapes are fine examples of the poet's imagination transcending the physicality of the city, a transcendence as I have already noted, characteristic of pastoral poetry. The cityscapes speak largely for themselves, and it is for this reason that I cite them rather extensively.

In "Cities" the urban landscape is described in a profusion of surreal imagery. The city undergoes a complete metamorphosis through the poet's consciousness. No image is presented without metaphor or exoticism:

They are cities! They are a people for whom these Alleghanies and dream Lebanons have risen up. Swiss chalets of crystal and wood move along invisible rails and pulleys. Old craters girdled by colossi and copper palm trees roar tunefully in the midst of fires. The sounds of love feasts ring out over the canals suspended behind the chalets. The pack of chimes clamours in the gorges. Gilds of gigantic singers come together in clothes and banners as shining as the light on mountain tops(...)And for one hour I went down into the animated Bagdad boulevard where groups sang of the joy of new work, in a sluggish breeze, moving about without eluding the fabulous phantoms of mountains where people had to find themselves again.

Visual oddities like "swiss chalets of crystal and wood," "copper palm trees," "canals suspended behind the chalets," etcetera, combine with the strange noise of these cities (craters roaring tunefully in the midst of fires, sounds of love feasts, chimes clamouring in the gorges) to present a highly sensual passage--a synaesthetic impression that without the exoticism would be similar to what one might find in the Manhattan Transfer epigraphs:

Seeping red twilight out of the Gulf stream fog, throbbing brassthroat that howls through the stiff-fingered streets, prying open glazed eyes of skyscrapers, splashing red lead on the girdered thighs of the five bridges, teasing caterwauling tugboats into heat under the toppling smoketrees of the harbor (371).

Although Dos Passos is a much more physical, as opposed to metaphysical landscape artist, there is a shared fascination between him and Rimbaud concerning light and angles that one could only find in the city. In "Metropolitan" Rimbaud perceives the city scene in exotic tones:

From the blue straits of Ossian's sea, over the rose-orange sand washed by a wine-colored sky, crystal boulevards have risen up and crossed...

"Bridges" shows the artist attempting to capture the fleetingness of a moment in the city with a skimming lateral perspective of the landscape. The passage is dense and panoramic. Again, Rimbaud infuses the scene with a combination of evocative sounds and sights, concentrating on an interweaving of light and angles--a literary prototype looking forward to such modernist techniques as Futurist simultaneity and Cubism:

Grey crystal skies. A strange pattern of bridges, some straight some arched, others going down at oblique angles to the first, and these shapes repeating themselves in other lighted circuits of the canal (...) Minor chords cross one another and diminish, ropes come up from the shores. You can see a red jacket and perhaps other costumes and musical instruments. Are they popular tunes, bits of castle concerts, remnants of public hymns? The water is grey and blue, as wide as an arm of the sea.--A white ray, falling from the top of the sky, blots out this comedy.

Strikingly, the "City" section of Illuminations ends with a straight-forward criticism of the modern, democratic nation, "Democracy". The passage is worth quoting in its entirety because many of its political criticisms are similar to those profluent in

Dos Passos' writings.

The flag moves over the bare landscape, and our jargon muffles the drum. In the important centers we shall nourish the most cynical prostitution. We shall massacre logical rebellions. In spicy and inundated lands!--in the service of the most monstrous industrial or military exploitations. Farewell here, no matter where. Conscripts of good will, we shall have a ferocious philosophy; ignorant as to science, clever as to comfort; death for the world that goes--This is the real march. Forward march!

The best example of 'jargon muffling the drum' in Manhattan Transfer is the jargon of advertising and popular ditties, especially war songs. The propagation of a national ethos of "ferocious philosophies" filling American papers is a major area of criticism in USA: William Randolph Hearst and his propagandist press are given a scathing biography in The Big Money; J. Ward Moorehouse, the most distasteful of the characters in USA, is a public relations figure.

Scientific ignorance is exemplified in the USA biographies--of Ford, who becomes a countrified antiquarian, of Samuel Insull who dies with a watch in his hand. While America is capable of increasing its practical scientific knowledge, it remains ignorant as to its long-term function: a problem addressed in the autonomous scene in Manhattan Transfer where the real-estate salesman, hyped by an awareness of modern technological advances, is unable to answer where these advances will lead, yet he reserves his enthusiasm for them: "All these mechanical inventions--telephones, electricity, steel bridges, horseless vehicles--they are all leading somewhere...My God! I can't begin to tell you what it will mean" (15).

The failure of public outcry against the execution of Sacco and

Vanzetti that crystallizes the theme of the loss of old American ideals in USA would parallel what Rimbaud calls the "massacre of logical rebellions." The figure of the abandoned political orator in the epigraph to "One More River to Jordan" symbolizes the apathy confronting any sort of logical rebellion.

"Democracy," a brief awakening of a sleeping social conscience, would justify the poet's flight from reality and into his mystical voyages--just as a sober second look at his spiritual voyages would lead him to declare they were the product of a season in hell. In contrast with Baudelaire, once the poetic occasion derived from urban decadence was considered a "season in hell," Rimbaud decided that salvation rested in the escape, rather than the pursuit, of his highly personal poetry--much in the way that Jimmy Herf, increasingly unable to cope with his season in Manhattan, eventually saw salvation in escape.

Apollinaire's poetry represents a logical development in the urban pastoral towards the use of technological innovations such as the telephone and automobile as poetic materials, which serve as recurring metaphors of modernity in Calligrammes.⁹ Although Apollinaire works with much the same material as Dos Passos, he still invests his poetry with a highly abstract syntax reminiscent of Baudelaire and, especially, Rimbaud. Graphically, the influence of the plastic arts is evident in Apollinaire's poetry, i.e. "Mirror" and "Heart" incorporate various typefaces and block lettering to present a visual complement to the literary poem, much in the way that Futurists typeset their pamphlets. The meshing of the senses attempted by Apollinaire in Calligrammes is a

continuation of Baudelaire's (and Rimbaud's) experiment with sensual imagery. Lighting is mostly surreal and movement is largely cinematic, typical of much experimental modernism.

Evidence of the survival of the urban pastoral in Apollinaire's work is best illustrated with the poem "Zone" where the Eiffel Tower is referred to as "shepherdess" overlooking her "flock of bridges" and "flocks of bellowing buses." Also typical of the pastoral tradition is Apollinaire's idea of time as cyclical, complementing the cycle of seasons.

Apollinaire's cyclical sense of time is manifested in the recurrence of images and events in memory. Therefore, the movement in Apollinaire's poetry is a movement into the self, an attempt at self-definition by re-evaluating the past through what is analogous to Bergson's idea of "duration": "Our deep selves, according to Bergson, are immersed in a kind of time he calls duration, not to be measured by hours or days, but felt as memory."¹⁰

In "Zone" "The hands of the clock in the Jewish section go backward, and you too move back slowly into your life..." At this point the traveller is transported by memory to various places he has visited in the past: "Now you are in Coblenz [...] Now you are in Rome [...] Now you are in Amsterdam [...etc.]. Thus, a city is repeated in the memory as the fall of leaves is repeated in the passage of seasons; in either case an event transcends its moment in the past, giving the illusion of necessary recurrence.

In the same fashion, Babylon and Nineveh are used as a foreshadowing of the fall of Manhattan. The temporal setting of Manhattan Transfer is largely one of the past, spending much of the

narrative in the pre-1920s. If the most intense recognition of the self comes from a self-conscious immersion into Bergson's "duration," then Dos Passos' immersion of Manhattan into the past can be read as him dealing with the ambiguity of the modern city, an ambiguity expressed throughout the novel whereby a nation of heretofore unheard of wealth breeds a shallow and nihilistic bourgeoisie, where a city of skyscrapers is also a city of shanties and ruin. One critic defines the use of a historically past setting in a novel as follows:

The result of this procedure is not the evocation of a historically past city but a palimpsestic impression, which results in a tension between the city as past and city as present.¹¹

Perhaps it is the ambiguous nature of Manhattan which inspired the recurring images of the doomed city:

The fascination people have always felt at the destruction of a city may be partly an expression of satisfaction at the destruction of an emblem of irresolvable conflict.¹²

Again in the vein of Baudelaire's--and especially Rimbaud's--modern conception of pure art, Apollinaire syncretizes the objective with the subjective world:

With the emergence of Apollinaire's new way of looking at new things, there is a direct dwindling in the deliberate separation of artistic creation from the raw materials of human existence.¹³

Apollinaire goes so far as to exclude any notion of division between his poetic consciousness and the real world. In a very Whitmanesque passage Apollinaire writes "I speak of the deepest truths of life, and I alone can sing them" ("Phantom of the Clouds," Calligrammes).

The affinity of Apollinaire's aesthetic with Baudelaire's and

Rimbaud's is further illustrated in his use of synaesthetic imagery and the general focus on the sensual. In "Cords" one encounters "Ropes made of cries" and the poet's confession that "I write only to exalt you, O senses."

In a remarkable extension of Baudelaire's and Rimbaud's sense of mythic time, Apollinaire expresses a sense of lingering history, a spatio-temporal connectedness of places and events. In "Cords" centuries are still hanging, rails are binding the nations; the telephone connects people by "undersea cables." The archetype of the tower of Babel as a severance of peoples is inverted to represent an adjunct for them: "Towers of Babel changed into bridges." Apollinaire's historicized view of modernity is much more optimistic than that of Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Dos Passos.

A good example of Apollinaire's abstractness is the poem "Windows." One gets a sense of the cinematic, or perhaps dramaturgical from it: the quick change in scenes, the use of the present tense, and the highly visual compactness of the imagery:

You will raise the curtain, and now the window opens. Spiders when hands were weaving light, beauty, pallor, unfathomable violets, we shall try in vain to take some rest. We shall begin at midnight. When one has time, one has freedom. Periwinkles, Burbot, multiple Suns and sea-urchins of the setting sun, an old pair of yellow shoes in front of the window. Towers: the towers are the streets. Well: the wells are the squares. Wells: hollow trees that shelter the wandering spirits. The octoroons sing airs that make one swoon to their maroon girls, and the goose "honk-honk" blaers in the north where the racoon hunters scrape the pelts. Sparkling diamond, Vancouver where the train white with snow and nocturnal lights flees the winter. O Paris, from red to green all the yellow dies. Paris, Vancouver, Hyeres, Maintenon, New York and the Antilles; the window opens like an orange, the beautiful fruit of light.

The window is used as a framing device for the observer's visionary

interpretation of the landscape, the window becoming much like a non-representational movie screen, juxtaposing fantastic images of independent shots. In this way, Apollinaire is able to present a contemporaneity of images in various locations as a sort of shooting script for the reader's imagination, each sentence forming an independent shot, a process approximating Eisenstein's phenomenological conception of montage:

The spectator not only sees the represented elements of the finished work, but also experiences the dynamic process of the emergence and assembly of the image just as it was experienced by the author.¹⁴

This packaging of images into definite parts is what appealed to Eisenstein's sense of 'literary montage'. Eisenstein notes that "The formal outline of a poem usually observes the form of stanzas internally distributed according to metrical articulation--in lines."¹⁵

In the case of Dos Passos' epigraphs, the formal outline would be the proemic paragraph, itself, and the metrical articulation would be the sentence. Thus the co-ordination of the images would be best accomplished where each grammatical fragment provides a single shot within the whole shooting script. To borrow from Eisenstein's model, the shooting-script of Apollinaire's "Windows" would appear as follows: exemplifying the co-ordination of images sought in montage:

- I. Curtain rises and window opens.
- II. Swirling colours.
- III. Periwinkles burbot, suns, etc. in background, yellow tennis shoes in foreground.
- IV. Towers (city streets).
- V. Well (city squares).
- VI. Wells (hollow trees).
- VII. Montage of octoroons singing and raccoon hunters scraping

- pelts.
- VIII. Train arriving in Vancouver.
- IX. Paris.
- X. Montage of Paris, Hyeres, etc. and window opening to orange light.

The co-ordination of images into single shots is a major structural element in the Manhattan Transfer epigraphs. "Tracks" is one of many epigraphs which can be transcribed into a shooting-script according to its grammatical divisions:

His feet could barely stumble through the long gleaming v's and crisscrossed lines of tracks, he tripped and fell over a bundle of signal rods. At last he was sitting on the edge of a wharf with his head in his hands. The water made a soothing noise against the piles like the lapping of a dog. He took a newspaper out of his pocket and unwrapped a hunk of bread and a slice of gristly meat. He ate them dry, chewing and chewing before he could get any moisture in his mouth. Then he got unsteadily to his feet, brushed the crumbs off his knees, and looked about him. Southward beyond the tracks the murky sky was drenched with orange flow (78).

Translated into a shooting script the paragraph becomes:

- I. Stumbles on tracks.
- II. Sits on wharf, head in hands.
- III. Water laps against piles.
- IV. Unwraps bread and meat.
- V. Chews.
- VI. Stands up and looks about him.
- VII. Orange sky.

The poetics of sensual imagery, exotic lighting and contemporary invention that pre-occupied Baudelaire and Rimbaud are carried further by Apollinaire's sense of the cinematographic. The poet still plays the role of the shepherd through the interplay between the objectified city and his subjective imagination, and he shares with the shepherd a cyclical sense of time.

A direct manifestation of the pastoral tradition whereby the city is viewed as antithetical to the shepherd's spiritual contentment, Dos Passos' Manhattan is portrayed as a doomed city,

following the archetype of Babylon, in the epigraph to the "Metropolis" chapter:

There were Babylon and Nineveh: they were built of brick. Athens was gold marble columns. Rome was held up on broad arches of rubble. In Constantinople the minarets flame like great candles round the Golden Horn...Steel, glass, tile, concrete will be the materials of the skyscrapers. Crammed on the narrow island the millionwindowed buildings will jut glittering, pyramid on pyramid like the white cloudhead above a thunderstorm (12).

Like the pastoral shepherd, Dos Passos portrays history as recurrent, an inevitable cycle of growth and decay without progress. That Manhattan is forecast as the locus of destruction, the nexus of evil according to the archetype of Babylon, may have been derived from its very physicality. Robert Hughes writes

What city represents modernity? Most people would say Manhattan: and for all its defects, they would be right--not because New York contains a higher proportion of the canonical buildings of the modern movement than other great cities, but because of its Promethean verticality, its metal and glass severity, and its incredible power as a transformer of information and desire.¹⁶

The key phrase in this passage is "Promethean verticality." In one study of urban fiction, the perspectives available to the artist are described as threefold: to see the city from above (which would be to place it in the realm of contemplation); to see the city from street level (which is to participate in its labyrinthine structure); and to see the city from below (which is to demonize it).¹⁷ Given the "Promethean verticality" of New York, a great deal of the city exists above street level, meaning that one is seeing much of the city from below. Thus, the sheer height of the city leaves itself open to demonization, to analogies with the tower of Babel. It is the sort of Promethean challenge to the celestial

domain (a modernist challenge nowhere more apparent than in the choice of the Eiffel Tower as the architectural representative of the theme of progress and technology for the Paris World's Fair of 1889¹⁸) that should disturb the pious shepherd.

A significant attribute of the modernist literature I have discussed is the poet's will to escape the dynamics of history. For Baudelaire, it was an escape into his flaneurism while the riot bangs at his window. For Rimbaud, escape consisted of imaginary voyages into his senses. Apollinaire followed much the same course as Rimbaud. Dos Passos escaped history by making it recurrent and essentially unchanging, and his hero is a hero because he is able to separate himself from the recurring destruction of the city by fleeing it. In any case, the passage of human history is the individual's nemesis, requiring escape into the imagination or exile.

Dos Passos' epigraphs illustrate the "marked dwindling in the deliberate separation of artistic creation from the raw material of human existence" that his French predecessors only half demonstrated. In Manhattan Transfer a scene, however seemingly inconsequential, is often expressed without being mythologized or demonized (as would be the case with Baudelaire); neither does Dos Passos mysticize his landscape with the alogical metaphors of Rimbaud or the esoteric imagery of Apollinaire. This does not mean to say that Dos Passos does not poeticize his landscape, merely that his poetry is less subject to metaphysical underpinnings; his imagery is more concrete.

The epigraph to "Ferryslip" is a good example of how Dos Passos

is able to express the sensuality of a scene through a suggestiveness of sound, smell, sight and metaphor, while foregoing the esoteric or narcotic effects of our three French sensualists:

Three gulls wheel above the broken boxes, orangerinds, spoiled cabbage heads that heave between the splintered plank walls, the green waves spume under the round bow as the ferry, skidding on the tide, crashes, gulps the broken water, slides, settles slowly into the slip. Handwinches whirl with jingle of chains. Gates fold upwards, feet step out across the crack, men and women press through the manuresmelling wooden tunnel of the ferryhouse, crushed and jostling like apples fed down a chute into a press.

Or "Went to the Animals' Fair":

Red light. Bell.

A block deep four ranks of cars wait at the grade crossing, fenders in taillights, mudguards scraping mudguards, motors purring hot, exhausts reeking...

Even when Dos Passos does get a little more abstract with his images the tenor of the metaphors never stray far from the vehicle. For instance the circus metaphor of the "Went to the Animals' Fair" epigraph is logically supported by the carnivalesque lighting of the city scene:

The cars space out, flow in a long ribbon along the ghostly cement road, between blackwindowed blocks of concrete factories, between bright slabbed colors of signboards towards the glow over the city that stands up incredibly into the night sky like the glow of a great lit tent, like the yellow tall bulk of a tentshow.

The "Steamroller" epigraph is Dos Passos' attempt to define what is unique about the urban setting. The pressurization of the concrete by the synaestheticized lighting is a complementary image for the pressures of urban living on the characters in the novel:

dusk gently smooths crispangled streets...dark presses...night crushes...light spurts...under the rolling heavier heavier pressure windows blurt light.

The dynamic light and color in Manhattan Transfer also

contribute to the cinematic dimension of the novel. One critic writes that "The refraction of light and the simultaneity of color gives Manhattan Transfer a pictorial dimension."¹⁹ Since the light and color are often moving in Manhattan Transfer, the pictorial dimension is often that of the moving picture.

Rimbaud's "Cities I" is a stark contrast to the sort of concrete imagery in Manhattan Transfer. For example, one would be hard pressed to determine the tenor of the line: "The collapse of apotheoses joins the fields with the highlands where seraphic centauresses move about in avalanches." One would not fare much better in trying to determine the tenor of the "pihi birds" in Apollinaire's "Windows": "From red to green all the yellow dies when the parrots sing in the native forests, heap of bagged imaginary pihi birds."

Actually, Dos Passos is closest to Baudelaire in his use of metaphors for the urban scene, because Baudelaire's metaphor is traceable to a definite object. For instance, Baudelaire's metaphor for smoking chimneys in "Landscape" is the visually appropos image of "carbon rivers rising to the firmament".

Dos Passos is able to capture the vertiguous atmosphere of a scene that is inherently vertiguous, making a nebulous prose paradoxically realistic. The description of a rollercoaster ride in the epigraph to "Five Statutory Questions" evokes the confusion of senses that one would experience from the ride itself:

The wind of their falling has snatched their yells, they jerk rattling upwards through the tangled girders' structure. Swoop. Soar. Bubbling lights in a sandwich of darkness and sea.

The metaphor of the aquarium in the epigraph to "One More River

to Jordan" is an excellent description of the amorphous atmosphere caused by the mix of smoke and inchoate lighting one finds in cafes; Dos Passos takes the metaphor further by peopling the murky aquarium with illassorted fish to suggest the alienation effected upon the observer of such a scene:

Through the plate glass the Cosmopolitan Cafe full of blue and green opal rifts of smoke looks like a muddy aquarium; faces blob whitely round the tables like illassorted fishes.

The metaphors of the cafe-as-aquarium and the Roller-coaster, along with revolving doors, nickelodeons, bands of traffic, etc., are urban symbols for the socio-sensual vertigo of Dos Passos' Manhattan, supporting Blanche Gelfant's contention that "urban symbolism equates physical elements in the setting with social or psychological characteristics of city life."

Dos Passos manages to capture, better than his precursors, the vertigo of the city's physicality, speed, lighting. While, the epigraphs serve as layering for the fundamental allegory of the doomed city, the greater success of the epigraphs rests in the concrete portrayal of what is especially urban: the sheer sensual size of the city, what Rimbaud recognized as the labyrinthine nature of the city. Where Rimbaud used the labyrinth of the city as an intricate framework for his labyrinthine imagination, a far less biased relationship between the poet's consciousness and the physical setting informs the urban scenes of Manhattan Transfer. The shepherd's vision, in the Blakean sense of the word, has learned to survive in a less rarefied air.

Chapter Three: A Collage of Modernisms (Futurism/Expressionism)

Direct snapshots of life. Rapportage was a great slogan. The artist must record the fleeting world the way a motion picture film recorded it. By contrast, juxtaposition, montage he could build drama into his narrative...Fragmentation. Contrast. Montage. The result was Manhattan Transfer.

--John Dos Passos¹

The Futurists, Ungaretti in Italy, in particular...Rimbaud of course. --John Dos Passos on early influences.²

Looking at Grosz's drawings you are more inclined to feel a grin of pain than to burst out laughing. Instead of letting you be the superior bystander laughing in an Olympian way at somebody absurd, Grosz makes you identify yourself with the sordid and pitiful object. His satire hurts.³

--John Dos Passos

Violent, skillful, accurate.

--John Dos Passos in praise of Leger⁴

Themes and techniques of modernist art provide the thematic and stylistic foundation of Manhattan Transfer. Like the Italian Futurists, Dos Passos portrays a simultaneous vision of the landscape, the concentration on frenetic--ofttimes violent--movement; thematically, he borrows from them the notion of the mechanistic society, man as machine. From the Expressionists, he borrows the apocalyptic landscape and the portrait of the prophet; an especial affinity lay between the biting satirical scenes of George Grosz and those often found in Manhattan Transfer. Structurally, the influence of Cubism and Cinema is at the core of his fragmentary method.

Commenting on the objectives of the artistic movements of the early twentieth century, Malcolm Bradley contends that "One of their experimental aims was to capture the new consciousness, the

new pace, the new relationships,"⁵ and he cites Dos Passos as "one whose novels are novels of the contingent city and the collage of modern times."⁶ Indeed, the idea of a "new consciousness" of the continuous flow of life is at the heart of Cubism and cinema, and it has much in common with the philosophies of Bergson.

Still, Bradley's statement is somewhat misleading, for while Dos Passos' novels can be said to be about "the collage of modern times," it must be recognized that this collage is not just a "capture" of a moment in the history of a city-scape but a cutting and pasting of a moment onto a well considered backdrop. In fact, Jimmy Herf's selection of striking passages from the encyclopedia is much like Dos Passos' method of collage, whereby passages are entirely distorted, ignored, or misread (89). The dissemination of fragments is not random but designed to produce ironic juxtapositions and to establish thematic patterns. In this chapter, Manhattan Transfer will be considered as a collage of modernisms.

FUTURISM

Futurism (which Dos Passos claimed as an early influence) was the most aggressive of the many artistic movements to emerge at the birth of the century. An extravagant devotion to movement, to the city, to the violent interplay of lines and colors, and a worship of all that this attitude engenders, formed the dynamism of an art that cheered the dissolve of the human into the background of its environment. "The Foundation Manifesto" of Fillipo Marinetti epitomizes the more vehement wing of the Futurists:

We will sing of great crowds excited by work, by pleasure and by riot; we will sing of the multicolored polyphonic tide of revolution in the modern capitals; we will sing of the vibrant nightly fervor of the arsenals and shipyards blazing with violent electric moons; greedy railway stations that devour smoke-plumed serpents; factories hung on clouds by the crooked lines of their smoke; bridges that stride the river like gymnasts, flashing in the sun with a glitter of knives; adventurous steamers that sniff the horizon; deep chested locomotives whose wheels paw the track like the hooves of enormous steel horses bridled by tubing; and the sleek flight of planes whose propellers chatter in the wind like banners and seem to cheer like an enthusiastic crowd.⁷

This passage illustrates the Futurist's zealous appreciation of the new geometries, the new lighting and the new industrialism of the city. One can sense the identification of this new urban excitement with violence: bridges "flashing in the sun with a glitter of knives." The continual obfuscation of the human with the inanimate is the unifying trope of the manifesto: railway stations are "greedy;" propellers "cheer like an enthusiastic crowd;" bridges "stride the river like gymnasts;" so that the whole scene forms a picture of the city mimicking the great crowds of people "excited by work, by pleasure and by riot." Futurism is an art of process: a call for violent upheaval, not as a means of achieving a goal but, paradoxically, as the constant state of society.

In keeping with the Futurist blurring of mechanism with person and the personification of mechanisms, The Mechanical Ballet, a Futurist theater production, demonstrates their aesthetic fascination with automatism, having characters dress in metal costumes and perform a robotic dance to experimental orchestrations.

In the field of drawing, Kasimir Malevic's "Simultaneous Death

of a man by plane and railroad (sic)" highlights two basic themes of Futurism: death and simultaneity. The destruction of the plane is not expressed in the expected explosion of parts of the plane, but by an explosion of geometrical planes, emanating from and refracting toward the implied point of collision. The ugliness, wastefulness of vehicular accident is stripped clean and presented as a burst of energy; the interruption of one visual field/plane by another draws one's attention away from the first and on to the interrupting section, which is then, in turn, itself interrupted--so that one is left with the sense of simultaneity, a perpetually changing focal point.

A work representative of the Futurist aesthetic of dynamism and simultaneity is the painting "Simultaneous Vision" by Umberto Boccioni, exemplifying the fascination of the Futurist with the immediacy and competition for the eye among varying phenomena. The buildings suggest movement, spreading out and folding into one another like an oriental fan. The movement of the overall scene is towards the narrowing street: people walking behind the coach and horses at the fore of the scene and heading toward the congested background, the center of things. The two women who hover, god-like, above the cityscape represent a division in consciousness as to what, of all the city has to offer, should be most closely observed. Typically Futurist, the direction of their glances forms a counter-movement to the attraction of the narrowing street; they are looking at something that has yet to come into view.

Extracting the following elements from this discussion of Futurism, I believe one can better recognize and evaluate some of

the essential elements of Dos Passos' art: dehumanization, frenetic movement, broken movement and simultaneity.

As with the city of the Futurist, Dos Passos' metropolis abounds with the animation of objects and the mechanization or objectification of people. During a typical bar scene "a red accordion-plaited dress swirled past" (32); the effect of Ellen's voice is metallic: "her voice cut the quick coldly like a tiny flexible, sharp metalsaw" (228); Jimmy Herf is described as "crumbling plaster" (217); Ellen is again defined in mechanical metaphor as "an intricate machine of sawtooth steel" and her nerves are "sharp steel jangled wires cutting her (373); towards the end of the novel Ellen senses the automatism of her life: "I've been like a tiny mechanical toy, all hollow inside" (400). The most prolific manifestation of dehumanization in the novel is the continual use of animal imagery to symbolize facets of a character's personality--for instance, Phineas P. Blackhead, the stereotypical shady businessman, is described as "hawkfaced" (95).

The settings in Manhattan Transfer are often fragmented planes of light, and one can sense the simultaneity in the cityscape which had so great an aesthetic appeal to the Futurists. The Futurist painting "Dynamic Hieroglyph of the Bal Tabarin" has been regarded as "a pictorial description of the shattering glare of artificial light, the syncopated music of the dance hall, the hurried lives of those who went there."⁸

The same sort of frenetic depiction of the popular nightclub (sharp lighting, dancehall tunes and hurried patrons) is found in Manhattan Transfer. As George Baldwin is walking along Broadway

the scene is set in motion: "Everything was a confusion of bright intersecting planes of color, faces, legs, shop windows, trolley cars, automobiles" (333). The stream of objects created by the mobile perspective forms a simultaneity of consciousness which emphasizes the key word in the description, "confusion"; the passerby is unable to focus on any single object, so that the human blurs with the background: "faces, legs, shop windows." Another example of a fragmentary scene occurs when Stan and Ellen are riding in a cab: "They were jolting through the crisscross planes of red light, green light, yellow light beaded with the lettering of Broadway" (215). The criss-crossing of the planes of light serves to fragment Ellen's and Stan's perspectives, and the driving rhythm of the sentence mirrors the jolting motion of the cab: "red light, green light, yellow light." These scenes are microcosms of the larger plane of Manhattan Transfer, where narratives crisscross in varying perspectives, and one's conscious reading is fragmented by a song or incidental narrative, a flash-forward or a flashback.

While much of the dynamic imagery in Manhattan Transfer is fragmentary, resulting from the staggered mobile perspective of someone walking or riding in a cab, there remain dynamic images of uninterrupted flow as a result of lighting. Boccioni's understanding of Futurist dynamism:

Instead of the old-fashioned concept of sharp differentiation of bodies, instead of the modern concept of the Impressionists with their subdivision, their repetition, their rough indications of images, we would substitute a concept of dynamic continuity as unique form.⁹

In Manhattan Transfer, light provides the "dynamic continuity" of

several settings, creating overtones with moving color.

Yellow light off mirrors and brass and rails and gilt frames round pictures of pink naked women was looped and slopped into whiskyglasses...(94)

...great rosy and purple and pistachio-green bubbles of twilight that swell out of the grass and trees and ponds, bulge against the tall houses...(202)

...sky of crushing indigo...(289)

Dusk gently smooths crispangled streets...dark presses, crushes...windows blurt light. Night crushes, squeezes...asphalt oozes light. Light spurts, mills dizzily, stains rolling tons of sky. (112)

Throughout *Manhattan Transfer* appear images of fluid motion, the continual appearance of elevated trains, the recurring image of bands of traffic, moving crowds, gulls whirling overhead, roller-coasters, train tracks, ships: images of well co-ordinated movement. The Futurist nature of this urban dynamism can be summarized by Ed Thatcher's musings after he has read that New York has been declared the world's second metropolis:

In the brick houses and the dingy lamplight and the voices of a group of boys kidding and quarreling on the steps of a house opposite, in the regular firm tread of a policeman, he felt a marching like soldiers, like a sidewheeler going up the Hudson under the Palisades, like an election parade, through long streets towards something tall white full of colonnades and stately. Metropolis. (13)

The intensity with which the Futurist tried to merge his art with the atmosphere of the metropolis sheds a good deal of light on the narrative strategy of Dos Passos; in his use of prose poem epigraphs that resound a tonal current or attitude throughout the novel; in his fragmentation of the narrative into vignettes to suggest the complexity of the city rising to the complexity of human consciousness, simultaneity; in his manipulation of Futurist

automatism and dehumanization to express the overwhelming, disturbing influence of the new pace of society on the individual.

EXPRESSIONISM

While the Futurist influence is evident in the dynamic prose, frenetic settings, and mechanical motions of the characters in Manhattan Transfer, it is off-set by the Expressionist over-tones of stasis and malfunction. Characters most often described in mechanical terms (Ellen, for instance) are dynamic but destructively so. Images of speed, efficiency and dynamism, the well-oiled machine of modernity, become symbols of the indifference of the new society toward those who experience difficulty keeping pace. The sterilized picture of modernity provided by the Futurists is invaded by stench of waste, piercing shrieks of both man and machine, visions of ugly destruction--an apocalyptic landscape similar to those common to the Expressionist works of the early century. Vladimir Kandinsky wrote of the Expressionist "method":

The strife of colours, the sense of balance we have lost, tottering principles, unexpected assaults, great questions, apparently useless strivings, storm and tempest, broken chains, oppositions and contradictions--these make up our harmony.¹⁰

Describing the emotional climate in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, when Expressionism there took root, Herman Bahr contends:

Never was any period so shaken by horror, by such dread. Never had the world been so deathly silent, never had man felt so small. Never had he been so afraid. His misery cries out to heaven: man cries for his soul, the whole period becomes one long cry for help. Art cries too, cries in the depth of darkness, cries out for help, cries out for the spirit: that

is Expressionism.¹¹

The motif of the prophet and the city of sin (the thematic framework of Manhattan Transfer) is prevalent among Expressionist artists. The group of Expressionist artists known as the Nabis took its name from the Hebrew word for prophet. The prophet becomes a favourite synonym for artist. Emile Nolde's drawing "Prophet" portrays a haggard, despondent and introspective vision of the artist. Ludwig Meidner's "The Prophet" shows the prophet of doom as a flying madman. "Self-Portrait or Prometheus" by Otto Dix is a good example of the impassioned response of the Expressionist to the human condition. One critic defines the Expressionist approach in terms of its non-representational idiom: "Their aims were for a direct expression of personal subjectivity, a new means of representation unhampered by "truth" in the old sense (naturalness in color and shape.)"¹²

The inward stare of the Expressionist artist is largely due to his loathing of the society that oppresses his self: "Not only was Expressionism anarchic in the eyes of conservatives but several of its practitioners were bitterly critical of modern society and the state."¹³ This confrontational attitude of the Expressionist artist toward society is engendered in the eschatological tradition of the just man, the prophet of doom:

Various signs point to the fact the apocalyptic prophet is living in the "end time", above all in its evil and corruption. Towards the present aeon, his attitude is radically pessimistic and without hope; he places all hope in a future aeon divinely created beyond history. Man is incapable of setting the world right.¹⁴

While the Expressionists exalted the primal rebellion of man

against life, flaunting their subjectivity, Dos Passos seems to deny, or at least obscure his. Describing the conception of Manhattan Transfer Dos Passos explains his method:

Direct snapshots of life. Rapportage was a great slogan. The artist must record the fleeting world the way a motion picture film recorded it. By contrast, juxtaposition, montage he could build drama into his narrative...Fragmentation. Contrast. Montage. The result was Manhattan Transfer.¹⁵

With words like record, snapshot and rapportage, it seems that Dos Passos is slipping the noose of criticism around his own neck. These rather unfortunate remarks reflect the source of most negative response to Manhattan Transfer: that Dos Passos' recording, his snapshot, his rapportage is entirely biased and therefore not a useful representation of society. It is when Manhattan Transfer is viewed as a well defined and deliberate shout that it can avert charges of being a nihilistic warping of the metropolis.

That the Expressionists embraced and flaunted their critical subjectivity is shown in the film Das Cabinet des Caligari. Using diverse, harsh lighting and limp obscure sets the Expressionist filmmakers satirized the hard lines of Futurism, condemning the mechanization and resulting alienation of modern society. One critic, describing the methods of the filmmakers, says something I believe holds true for Dos Passos also: "their conception finds expression not only in the violent lighting, and in the abstract sets, but also in the caricatural make-up and the disturbing acting of the players."¹⁶

The Expressionists adopted the pastoral shepherd's attitude toward the city; it is seen as a nemesis to humanity, the new

natural enemy:

They searched for a new understanding of man in his relation to nature and therefore often expressed in their work a conflict between nature and culture. Yet there is a strong urban feeling in their work.¹⁷

Nowhere is the conflict between nature and culture more evident than in the disturbing Expressionist cityscapes. "The Burning City" (which, together with the portrait of the prophet, forms the theme of the prophet and the city of sin) by Ludwig Meidner, shows people's faces twisted in screams, general disorder, people falling from burning buildings--scenes often found in Manhattan Transfer. Jakob Steinhardt's "The City" details buildings that blend into one another indiscriminately, faces on the streets averted from each other, green figures in the foreground windows of the houses averting their faces from each other. This attitude of indifference toward each other, the ghoulish distortion of the features is a more emphasized presentation of the carelessness of the characters in Manhattan. Heinrich Vogler's "Inferno" again invokes the theme of an Expressionist sermon on the corruption of modern times.

Closest to the overtone of the cityscapes in Manhattan Transfer are the cityscapes of George Grosz, whose "Metropolis" is a city painted in fragmenting planes of red with caricatures floating against the fragments: the dandy, the prostitute, the slick businessman, the fat cat. "Germany, a Winter's Tale" has been described in terms not inappropriate to Manhattan Transfer: "The city of Berlin forms a kaleidoscopic--and chaotic--background for several large figures, which are superimposed on it as in a

collage." ¹⁸

George Knox demonstrates the similarity between the work of Grosz and the work of Dos Passos, citing a critic of Grosz and considering his comments equally applicable to Dos Passos:

Perspectives are distorted as lines cross and recross in superimposed scenes. There is no apparent attempt to relate figures who appear disjunctly in crazy perspectives. Interiors and exteriors intermingle. And yet, in spite of the jumble, one always detects some principle of coherence or composition, a feeling or a mood of distress, violence or chaos which unites the disparate facets. ¹⁹

Indeed, the fragmentation of narratives, the highly visual technique and the epigraphs, along with the infusion of ditties and newspaper clippings, create a sense of bewilderment in Manhattan Transfer, but it is the feeling or mood that binds the whole: the recurring clatter of the Elevated, the sirens, the seagulls, the general frustration of the characters. What Dos Passos himself has to say about the work of Grosz further enlightens the tonal similarities between their respective works:

Looking at Grosz's drawings you are more inclined to feel a grin of pain than to burst out laughing. Instead of letting you be the superior bystander laughing in an Olympian way at somebody absurd, Grosz makes you identify yourself with the sordid and pitiful object. His satire hurts. ²⁰

The gloom surrounding the human condition, the conflict between nature and culture, the theme of apocalypse, are elements of Expressionism that form the anxious, apparently nihilistic tone of Manhattan Transfer.

In counterbalance to the dynamic and at times violent movement of the Futurist elements in Manhattan Transfer are movements that are largely anemic, though frenetic, and representative of Expressionism. James B. Lane describes the paradox: "Even though

Dos Passos portrayed urban life as constantly in perpetual motion, he saw the dynamism as circular and the progress as illusory as if life were sterile and empty of meaning."²¹ This sense of illusory progress is well illustrated in the metropolitan flow that subsumes the characters in Manhattan Transfer. Cassie and Morris, riding in a cab after Cassie has told him that she doesn't care about "making it" anymore, view a scene which suggests a feeling of anonymity and alienation is induced by the city's flux: "Behind them limousines, roadsters, touringcars, sedans, slithered along the roadway with snaky glints of lights running in two continuous streams" (164).²²

The circular movement of the city's life is demonstrated in the scene where Jimmy is faced with the prospect of becoming caught in revolving doors should he take the position with his uncle's firm: "Jimmy fed in a tape in and out the revolving doors grinding out his years like sausage meat" (120).

Relationships move in much the same anemic fashion as the individual. When Ellen and Stan are reunited, the vacuity of their relationship is symbolized by the abandoned phonograph: "The phonograph came to an end and the record went on playing round and round" (216). Another instance of the static flow of the city is the scene which greets Ed Thatcher when he turns from Ellen, having been told of her intended divorce, to "look out the window at the two endless bands of automobiles that passed along the road in front of the station" (199). The endless repetition of patterned movement is summarized by Congo's recurring ditty "J'ai fait trois fois le tour du monde."

While the carousel flow of the city is generally direct and

continuous, the movement of the person in Manhattan Transfer is often broken, as he is unwilling or unable to jump on. This staggered motion is best instanced in the carriage and accompanying emotional states of the people who move out of synch with the city.

The indifference, if not antipathy of the city towards the individual is manifest in the deliberate, hard-paced city traffic which carries on while people are often seen limping or dragging themselves onward in despair: Bud arrives in the city with blistered feet; Anna's shoes are too small for her; Bud has a "long slow stride, limping a little"; Cassie, broken-up with Roy, "walked doggedly on in tears"; "Jimmy walked doggedly on"; Jimmy "stumbles and tumbles along" in a bar; Jimmy, separated from Ellen "desperately walked on"; Emile loses a leg in the war; the accidents of Gus and Phil result in limps.

Evident in the characters themselves is an awareness of their problem functioning in society, and their resulting fantasies of dehumanization. Jimmy wants to be a seal (81); Stan Emery wants to be a skyscraper (252). The skyscraper is the paragon realised of architectural functionality. In an early review of the Futurists in America, one enthusiastic critic writes concerning the recurrence of towers in Futurist artworks: "A skyscraper is great because it is functionally suited to the specific needs of a metropolis: It is hygienic, attractive, an economizer of effort and time--a perfect machine." It is also a perfect reminder to the out-of-work Stan Emery of his lack of purpose, his wastefulness of energy in sloth.

The pathos generated by scenes of the individual unable to keep

pace with the city's flux is best exemplified in the epigraph to the "Skyscraper" chapter:

The young man without legs stops still propped on his arms in the middle of the south sidewalk of Fourteenth street. Among the striding legs, lean legs, waddling legs, legs in skirts and pants and knickerbockers, he stops perfectly still, propped on his arms, looking up at the dirigible.

It is significant that this scene appears in the "Skyscraper" chapter as the legless man's fascination with the easy movement of the dirigible is analogous to the dysfunctional Stan Emery's fascination with the skyscraper.

The running motif in Manhattan Transfer is that of the doomed city. Images of the apocalyptic landscape are interspersed throughout the novel. The poverty of the human condition is rampant. Among its skyscrapers, its elevated trains, its bustling crowds are the sights, sounds and odors of ghettos, garbage dumps, fires, death--as though Dos Passos were transcribing an Expressionist cityscape. Indeed, Dos Passos plays the role of the prophet of doom.

There is no voice in the novel more representative of Manhattan Transfer on the whole than that of the tramp, Jonah, whose vision of Metropolis is companion to the narrator's: a model of the Expressionist prophet railing against the corrupt city:

There's more wickedness in one block of New York City than there was in a square mile in Nineveh, and how long do you think the Lord God of Sabboath will take to destroy New York City and Brooklyn and the Bronx? (381)

The Chapter titles "Rejoicing City that Dwelt Dangerously" and "Burthen of Nineveh" are the most obvious instances of the narrator's apocalyptic vision. Signs of destruction and decay are

spread throughout the cityscapes. It is a city that smells, sounds and looks as though it were on the brink of ruin.

The epigraph which opens the novel presents New York Harbor as a waste disposal sight, with "orangerinds, spoiled cabbage heads" and the "manuresmelling wooden funnel of the ferryhouse." Jimmy is lying in bed when "There came on the air through the window a sourness of garbage, a smell of burnt gasoline and traffic and dusty pavements..." (194). Jimmy riding in a cab: "The cab smells musty, goes rumbling and lurching up a wide avenue swirling with dust, through brick streets sour-smelling full of grimy yelling children..." (70). Ellen walking down Fifth Avenue: "Under all the nickelplated, goldplated streets enameled with May, uneasily she could feel the huddling smell, spreading in dark slow crouching masses like corruption oozing from broken sewers, like a mob" (395).

Shrieks and alarms constitute a large part of the disturbing aural environment in Manhattan: As Jimmy sits in his apartment, thinking of Ellen, "two black cats were chasing each other. Everywhere was full of their crazy yowling" (345). Strains of "The International" are replaced by the cries of gulls that "wheeled above the dark dingy dressed crowd that stood silently looking down the bay" (290). When Stan gains consciousness after having been assaulted he surveys the scene while "Three gulls wheeled complaining" (251). The novel opens with three gulls wheeling above the polluted ferryslip. Again in his apartment, Jimmy is annoyed at an alarm whose wires cross periodically: "What drives me crazy is that paranoiac alarm across the street" (173).

Sirens continually wail an ominous tone through the streets: Ed Thatcher, lying in bed: "Down the street he heard the splattering hoofbeats and the frenzied bell of a fire engine" (14). Emile is walking down the street when "A fire engine, a hosewagon and a hookandladder passed him, shattering the street with a clattering roar" (114). Ellen has an internal fire alarm that responds to the stares of men: "in deep pitblackness inside something clangs like a fire engine" (182). Ellen hears a "siren throbbing in an upward shriek that burst and trailed in a dull wail down the street, a fire engine went by red and gleaming, then a hookandladder with bell clanging" (216). Stan looks out the window to the street: "A hookandladder and a fire engine were climbing it licketysplit trailing a droning sirens shriek" (252,3). Jimmy is at a cafe when "Outside a fire engine moan throbbed roared down the street" (362).

Adding to the cacophony of the metropolis is the roar of the Elevated. The noise of L trains is described as "the annihilating clatter of the L trains overhead" when the Jew is mesmerized by the billboard of King C. Gillette and shaves off his beard (10). When Congo and Emile part ways "An L train roars above their heads leaving a humming rattle to fade among the girders after it had passed" (39). When Jimmy is warned of Oglethorpe's eccentricity "An elevated train shattered the barred sunlight overhead" and produced a "diminishing clatter" (134). When Joe Harland is evicted from his apartment "Jagged oblongs of harsh sound broke one after another over his head as an elevated passed over" (158).

Many of the sights in the city are those of destruction. For every alarm mentioned above (and those I have not mentioned) there

is a fire, fire being the key image of the apocalypse.

Often the landscape itself is an image of waste and rot. I have mentioned the polluted ferryslip that greets new arrivals. Jimmy walking out of the city:

Sunrise finds him walking along a cement road between dumping grounds full of smoking rubbishpiles. The sun shines redly through the mist on rusty donkeyengines, skeleton trucks, wishbones of Fords, shapeless masses of corroding metal. Jimmy walks fast to get out of the smell. (404)

Bud entering the city experiences much the same polluted landscape:

past empty lots where tin cans glittered among grass and sumach bushes and ragweed, between ranks of billboards and Bull Durham signs, past shanties and abandoned squatters' shacks, past gulches heaped with wheelscarred rubbishpiles where dumpcarts were dumping ashes...(23).

The pyramid (grave) is a recurring analogy for the city:

Lower New York is described as "a pink and white tapering pyramid cut slenderly out of cardboard" (276). Mr. Densch sees "the steaming towering city that gathered itself into a pyramid and began to sink mistily into the browngreen water of the bay" (371).

Indeed, the number of deaths that occur in the novel support the image of the city as pyramid. One critic goes so far as to invest the city with a Leviathanic appetite: "As soon as one submits oneself to it [the city], the struggle has ended; the city emerges as judge, jury and executioner, and man's fate is sealed."²⁴ Scenes of death (burning, murder, abortion, suicide) are dispersed through the novel. At a fire, Ed Thatcher observes

people hanging in a kicking cluster, hanging by their hands from a windowledge. The flame in the center of the house flared brighter. Something black had dropped from a window and lay on the pavement shrieking (14).

Bud reads a story about a fourteen year old who kills his crippled

mother (16). Bud explains how he killed his father: "I mashed his head in with the grubbinhoe, mashed it in like when you kick a rotten punkin" (123). Bud jumps from a bridge and lets out a scream in a scene that is worthy of the most distraught Expressionist (125). When a man shoots himself in the mouth, he is taken "out on the curbstone vomiting blood, head hanging limp over his checked vest" (61). Rose tells Anna of a scene she encountered: "while they was fightin up in Goldstein's a rivet flew out the winder an fell nine stories an killed a fireman passin on a truck so's he dropped dead in the street" (356). In one scene a young woman has an abortion and "A fire engine roars past, a hosewagon with sweatyfaced men pulling on rubber coats, a clanging hookandladder" (268). Another character recounts how "There was a woman upstairs who did illegal operations, abortions...that was what stopped up the plumbing" (378).

Besides death, other images of the striking poverty of the human condition appear consistently. Often characters will see something nefarious in the natural landscape: Bud, having been slighted by the violinist "turned away to look at the expanse of river bright as knifeblades." Mr. Densch, "a ruined man," sees "a sky of inconceivable bitterness" (371).

Characters are reduced to the status of insects. The first scene in the novel is on a maternity ward where a nurse carries Ellen like a bedpan, and the baby is squirming like a "knot of earthworms" (3). A fly in Jimmy's room is personified: "He cleaned himself all over, twisting and untwisting his forelegs like a person soaping his hands" (96). Ellen in a moment of reflection

sits like a lighthouse and considers the men around her as men whose "hands crawl like bugs on the unbreakable glass. Men's looks blunder and flutter against it helpless as moths" (182). Jimmy considers "Life was upside down, he was a fly walking on the ceiling of a topsy-turvy city" (351). In a routine bar scene, Roy says "You are all bored, bored flies buzzing on the windowpane" (361).

Any attempts made by these characters to improve their condition seem token efforts: Ellen, speaking of her frustration with the substance of theater, says "Sometimes I want to run down to the foots and tell them Go home you damn fools" (213). The lugubrious Martin flirts with suicide: "I must run into the sincerity of black" (362). Jimmy Herf's frustration at city life results in his wanting to "run along yelling sons of bitches at the top of his lungs" (235). One of the most striking images of the human condition in the novel is when Ellen's baby, (significantly, hearing the wail of a fire engine) is given a brief part in the city's drama, exemplifying the disharmony between life and contentment, existence in general: "pyramids of dark piles above him fall crumpling on top of him. He yells, gagging between yells" (372).

Four hundred pages of despair and destruction, decadence:

apocalypse creates a mood of world negation, fatalism, retreat from earthly chores, and sometimes even a virulent antiworldliness. The apocalyptic vision often designates an elect company who will be saved out of the catastrophic ruination of the world in the coming holocaust and can therefore become an ideology of various types of elitism...No earthly goals are worth holding since all are equally corrupt or illusory. One cannot think rationally about means since life is determined by irrational powers and malevolent forces.

Rational action is useless because powers outside history and beyond human control will quickly bring the whole thing to a blazing end.²⁵

The characters in Manhattan Transfer adopt the apocalyptic perspective. Only for them, there is no elect company to be spared. They are already living in hell, hellish boredom, hell of bored, bored flies, Baudelaire's hell--they give themselves up to "irrational powers and malevolent forces."²⁶ But it is not even Baudelaire's hell, because there is no sense of beauty for the characters' reprieve. The grotesquerie of the human condition is made that much more distinct by the sharp images of Futurism. And there is no satisfaction for the prophet of doom who foresees the city's destruction, for Manhattan is compared to Nineveh--which was spared--so that readers and prophets are left raging like Jonah because the promise of apocalypse goes unfulfilled.

Chapter Four: A Collage of Modernisms (Montage/Cubism)

The fragmentary method of *Manhattan Transfer* provides a structural principle analogous to montage and Cubism. By fragmenting the narrative into apparently disharmonious pieces, the reader is forced into the awkward position of having to divine a contextual foundation for the fragments, to piece together a broken puzzle. A close look at the fragments reveals that they are not randomly dispersed, but are often carefully juxtaposed to present striking ironies; they universally carry thematic importance in relation to the novel on the whole.

MONTAGE

Montage is the dominant structural principle of *Manhattan Transfer*. Eisenstein's ready definition of the montage principle is collision, "the conflict of two pieces in opposition to each other." *Manhattan Transfer* is largely a book of narrative pieces colliding, at once, in independent and collective frameworks. Eisenstein postulates four levels of montage: rhythmic (collision within a frame), metric (collision among frames), tonal ("the characteristic emotional sound of the piece"), and overtonal ("the emotional sound of all pieces"). For the purpose of this study, only rhythmic and metric montage will be considered since tonal and overtonal montage are at the core of the collision that was discussed in the previous chapter, the collision between Futurism and Expressionism.

Montage occurs in its simplest form when two images collide

within a given segment of a chapter (rhythmic). Metric montage is the same principle working on the inter-relations of larger structures. Metric montage will be used to explore the relationships among the chapter segments, the chapters and, finally, the three sections, of Manhattan Transfer.

Manhattan Transfer lends itself particularly well to montage analysis because of its fragmentation and the use of chapter headings to generate the equivalent of what Eisenstein calls the montage "thesis":

Conflict within a thesis (an abstract idea)--formulates itself in the dialectics of the sub-title--forms itself spatially in the conflict within the shot--and explodes with increasing intensity in montage--conflict among separate shots.⁴

Eisenstein ascribes to the organic nature of montage the dynamic basis of film:

If montage is to be compared with something, then a phalanx of montage pieces, of shots, should be compared to the series of explosions of an internal combustion engine, driving forward its automobile or tractor; for similarly, the dynamics of montage serve as impulses driving forward the total film.⁵

This chapter will examine the "series of explosions" which drive the structural cranes of Manhattan Transfer.

Montage occurs regularly within the narrative segments that make up the chapters of Manhattan Transfer. I have chosen what I consider to be one of the more illustrative examples from each section to demonstrate this level of the montage principle.

More often than not the conflict that arises from the collision of images in Dos Passos' rhythmic montage is a collision of class distinctions (what Eisenstein calls "the unifying principle"⁶). In the first section, for instance, when Bud is making his sojourn

from the ferryslip to Broadway, he encounters two very different examples of Manhattan neighbourhoods. Here is the first example:

With a long slow stride, limping a little from his blistered feet, Bud walked down Broadway, past empty lots where tin cans glittered among grass and sumach bushes and ragweed, between ranks of billboards and Bull Durham signs, past shanties and abandoned squatters' shacks, past gulches heaped with wheelscarred rubbishpiles where dumpcarts were dumping ashes and clinkers, past knobs of gray outcrop where steamdrills continually tapped and nibbled past excavations out of which wagons full of rock and clay toiled up plank roads to the street... (23,4),

and here is the second:

...until he was walking on new sidewalks along a row of yellow brick apartment houses, looking in the windows of grocery stores, Chinese laundries, lunchrooms, flower and vegetable shops, tailors', delicatessens. Passing under a scaffolding in front of a new building, he caught the eye of an old man who sat on the edge of the sidewalk trimming oil lamps. (24)

Shanties collide with yellow brick apartment houses, abandoned squatters' shacks collide with the scaffolding of a new building. The first neighbourhood is surrounded by the waste of the second, threatened by excavations and steamdrills and rubbishpiles, while the other provides services representative of decent living: grocery stores, lunchrooms, tailors, decent housing.

In Section Two Ellie's vision of her success as the "nine days' wonder" is dissolved by the reality of her neighbourhood:

Ellen smiled happily. Greatest hit of Broadway. The words were an elevator carrying her up dizzily, up into some stately height where electric light signs crackled scarlet and gold and green, where were bright roofgardens that smelled of orchids, and the slow throb of a tango danced in a goldgreen dress with Stan while handclapping of millions beat in gusts like a hailstorm about them. Greatest hit on Broadway.

She was walking up the scaling white stairs. Before the door marked Sunderland a feeling of sick disgust suddenly choked her.

By the end of the novel Ellen has become an image of high

society (ironically, as editor of the magazine Manners). Her mannerly behaviour is often affronted by the appearance of the unwashed. In the third section, Ellen buys a bunch of arbutus from a skinny foreigner, causing a collision between the fragrance of the flowers and the odor of the vendor, the sterile streets and the offending masses:

Through the smell of the arbutus she caught for a second the unwashed smell of his body, the smell of immigrants, of Ellis Island, of crowded tenements. Under all the nickelplated, goldplated streets enameled with May, uneasily she could feel the huddling smell, spreading in dark slow crouching masses like corruption oozing from broken sewers, like a mob.

Metric montage occurs among the various segments that make up a chapter. I have chosen one chapter from each section to illustrate the montage principle.

The first chapter of the novel, "Ferryslip," is an excellent example of how metric montage works among the scenes in a chapter. The title is representative of the general theme in the chapter of people arriving at the city. It is not a very flattering view of the metropolis. There are five scenes; each is set in a harsh environment and each segment involves a new beginning for a character. The settings themselves are tonally similar: the polluted ferryslip, the hospital, the cheap diner down the street from the ferryslip, the hospital again, and finally, a ghetto. None of the settings seem very promising in terms of making a new beginning.

At the ferryslip immigrants "press through the manuresmelling wooden tunnel of the ferryhouse, crushed and jostling like apples fed down a chute into a press" (3). At the hospital, Ellen's

arrival is similarly disquieting:

The nurse, holding the basket at arm's length as if it were a bedpan, opened the door to a big dry hot room with greenish distempered walls where in the air tinctured with smells of alcohol and iodoform hung writhing a faint sourish squalling from other baskets along the wall. (3)

Bud arriving at the ferryslip perceives "the expanse of river bright as knifeblades" (4). The scene switches back to the hospital where Mrs. Thatcher becomes hysterical when the nurse taunts her with the possibility that her baby has been switched (7).

Ed is determined to make a new beginning in order to provide Ellen with the good life. In keeping with the pessimistic beginnings of the novel, Ed's new-found determination to become successful is curbed when Zucher runs out on the bar-tab and Ed is forced to pay (10).

The chapter finishes with the Jew who sees the "dollarproud eyes" of King C. Gillette on a billboard and decides to make a new beginning by shaving his beard, supporting the cook's advice to Bud: "It's looks that count in this city" (5).

"Ferryslip" presents the inauspicious beginnings of typical candidates for the American Dream: the immigrant, the farmboy, the young lower class couple, the religious dissenter. As each has his desire, so each has his obstacles: the immigrants must make their dream exist in a land of pollution; Bud must deal with the hostile landscape and the general hostility towards the down-trodden; Ellen must deal with a hysterical mother and an unnurturing society, represented by the cruel nurse. Ed must deal with a hysterical wife and a dishonest business community (represented by Zucher, the

tailor); The Jew must weigh his desire of being orthodox (symbolized by his beard) against his desire of becoming a successful American (symbolized by the clean shaven face of King C. Gillette).

By presenting within the same chapter a series of scenes which have in common a similar motif (in this case, the collision of desires and obstacles to them), the theme gains power as each scene is digested: Eisenstein characterizes the dynamic:

Step by step, by a process of comparing each new image with the common denotation, power is accumulated behind a process that can be formally identified with that of logical deduction.

"One More River to Jordan" is an ironic title for a chapter which basically deals with vacuous relationships and ends in abortion. The first scene shows George Baldwin asking Phil Sandbourne to be discreet about his affair with Ellen because he does not want to face a divorce scandal (257); In scene two Ellen announces her divorce to Oglethorpe; in scene three, Ellen asks Harry Goldweiser: "Can you understand a woman who wants to be a harlot, a common tact, sometimes" (262)? Further down the page, we find out she is pregnant with Stan's child; and the scene ends with a melancholy Ellen transformed by the promise of a social engagement: "Suddenly something recklessly gay goes through her." (263); Scene four has Ellen and Jimmy having an intimate conversation in which Ellen tells him that she is going to have Stan's baby. Ellen leaves, however, before Jimmy can make his proposition:

"Oh Ellie I want to say something to you..."

The door closed behind her.

In scene five Ellen avoids another relationship, this time with

Larry, from out of town. Larry asks her to move to Lima with him, but Ellen replies that she is "just numb" (267).

"One More River to Jordan" recounts the failures of Ellen's relationships, the collision of men and women: Stan dies, she divorces Oglethorp; Jimmy wants more than Ellen can give; Larry too wants more from Ellen than she can give, and to her credit she doesn't offer it. Unfortunately, Ellen's promiscuity leads to abortion, the final scene of the chapter and the second section, the abortion signifying the wastefulness of the relationships in the chapter.

The "Nickelodeon" chapter is made up of scenes in which various couples are faced with being broke. The epigraph recounts various ways one might spend a nickel, and many of them are used in the chapter: cup of coffee (Ruth Prynne has tea), dance tickets (the last scene is in a dancehall), a ride to Woodlawn (Ruth Prynne spends her last nickel on the trolley; Jimmy on cabfare). Ruth Prynne is down to her last thirty-two cents in the first scene. In the second scene Dutch has a quarter and Francie a dollar. Likewise, Jimmy is down to his his last dollar in the third scene.

In each scene, due to lack of funds, characters are forced to find cheap thrills. Ruth buys a cup of tea; Dutch and Cassie go to her place for sex; Jimmy drinks up his money and spends the last of it on cabfare. The final scene shows Anna making a living in small change at a dancehall.

The chapter explores the relationship between money and enjoyment: even the last nickel affords some distraction. The only non-monetary form of entertainment in the chapter is Dutch and

Francie's, sex--which beats stereopticons, but should perhaps be more than a form of entertainment.

On a larger scale, metric montage occurs among chapters within a section. In the first section the chapters are logically devoted to the arrivals of characters to the Metropolis. The second section seems to revolve around the motif of the fire and fire engine. The third section represents the returns of the characters following the war.

In Section I, arrivals to the metropolis are dispersed throughout the chapters: "Ferryslip" introduces immigrants by ship, Bud by foot, Ellen by umbilical cord; in "Metropolis", Congo and Emile arrive by ship; in "Dollars" the epigraph returns the setting to the ferryslip with more arrivals and the chapter ends back at the ferryslip. A hobo arrives by rail in the epigraph to "Tracks". The sense of influx into the city is stressed by the continual shifting of the scene to the ferryslip, and the montage effect is based on the differences among those who arrive: immigrants, newborns (Ellen), hobos, upper-middleclass (Jimmy and mother).

In the second section, the dominant motif is that of the roller-coaster, signifying the carnivalesque attitude of the characters much in the way of the "Nickelodeon" chapter. The epigraph to the chapter "Five Statutory Questions" (which deals largely with failed relationships) details a roller-coaster ride, suggesting that characters treat their relationships much like an amusement ride from which they will always have the option to disembark. The chapter entitled "Rollercoaster" depicts the demise

of the decadent Stan Emery who sets himself on fire in a drunken stupor. In "Long-legged Jack of the Isthmus" the roller-coaster is used to darken the farcical tone of the scene where Ellen and Stan go out to celebrate their gamesmanship and the ineptitude of the western union thief. Drunk, Ellie "had started to drop with a lurching drop like a rollercoaster's into shuddering pits of misery" (153).

The collision in Section Two is that between the immediate gratification of the carnival environment ("Went to the Animals' Fair" also appears in the second section) and the hangover (overdose in the case of Stan) effect of too many rides: closely resembling the spleen/ideal effect.

Section Three brings together the two 'main' characters of the novel, Ellen and Jimmy. Their differences are immediately apparent. Jimmy wants to show the harbour to their son but Ellen is afraid that he will start "yelling like a tugboat" (276). Before landing Jimmy says "I hate getting home" to which Ellen replies "I don't hate it" ("Rejoicing City that Dwelt Carelessly" 277).

Ellen is obviously the better adjusted to make a go of New York. When they arrive home after a disturbing drunk, Ellie, employed as editor of Manners, is able to go directly to sleep, while the unemployed Jimmy "kept walking nervously about the front room" ("Nickelodeon" 303). Ellen asks Jimmy to move out of the apartment without emotion, while Jimmy is reduced to "pitying tears" ("Revolving Doors," 331). Divorced, Ellen gets on swimmingly in her work and the one scene of her in the "Skyscraper"

chapter is having dinner with a pleased editor at the Brevoort (368). Jimmy, on the other hand, becomes more and more alienated from the metropolis, perceiving two options: go away in a dirty soft shirt or stay in a clean Arrow collar." (366) The last scene with Ellen shows her engaged to George Baldwin, shopping at a fancy clothier and acting very nonchalant in the midst of a fire (399).

In a moment of self-realization she says

There are lives to be lived if only you didn't care. Care for what, for what; the opinion of mankind, money, success, hotel lobbies, health; umbrellas, Uneeda biscuits...? it's like a busted mechanical toy the way my mind goes brrr all the time ("Burthen of Nineveh" 400).

Our last view of Ellen is particularly striking as she goes through revolving doors, the same revolving doors Jimmy turned down when asked to join his uncle's firm. Jimmy, on the other hand, leaves the city a failure--though one wonders at this point whether the act of leaving makes him a success. Certainly when his escapism is contrasted with the nihilism of Ellen, it would seem so.

In its broadest structural terms, metric montage occurs between sections. The first section presents the arrivals of the characters to Manhattan and introduces the major themes of the novel. Section Two develops further the major themes of Manhattan Transfer, and Section Three recounts the returns of the characters from the war. The second arrival of the characters to Manhattan makes one anticipate a new beginning for the characters, but the same ideals, or lack thereof, are rampant in the third section and we see that the war has only accelerated the social chaos.

It is in overtone montage that the recurring motifs come together to form the overall emotional sound of the novel. These

recurring motifs are evident in the chapter headings themselves:

TRANSCIENCE: Ferryslip, 9 Days' Wonder, Tracks, Revolving Doors.

MONEY: Dollars, Nickelodeon.

MODERNITY: Metropolis, Skyscraper.

DECADENCE: Went to the Animals' Fair, Rollercoaster, Nickelodeon, Great Lady on a White Horse.

DESTRUCTION: Steamroller, Fire Engine, Rejoicing City that Dwelt Carelessly, Burthen of Nineveh.

ESCAPE: Long Legged Jack of the Isthmus, Tracks.

The tonal relationships among these themes are worked out in the previous sections of this chapter, where episodes are divided into Futurist and Expressionist tones, culminating in the overtone of Apocalypse.

CUBISM

The structures of Manhattan Transfer and Cubist painting share the fragmentary method much in the way that the cityscapes of Manhattan Transfer and Rimbaud's "Cities" share a sensual vision of the urban landscape. In both cases Dos Passos' work is more inclined to be representational. Rimbaud's alogical metaphors render an esoteric syntactical study of language much in the way that Cubist volumes explore the syntax of spatial representation.^o What is important is that Rimbaud's syntax and Cubist fragmentation provide extreme, and therefore more easily demonstrable, examples of the techniques which create the crucial phenomenological affect in Manhattan Transfer: one's sense of perspective becomes confused. Why this confusion is essential will be the subject of the next

chapter.

Manhattan Transfer has in common with Cubism the fragmentary method. In terms of comparison, this would mean that the narrative segments of the novel would be analogous to the geometrical volumes of Cubist painting. The problem of form and meaning then arises from the fact that, whereas the narrative fragments of Manhattan Transfer are loaded with meaning, the shapes and volumes of Cubist painting carry no theme in themselves but are purely formal guideposts. As one critic avers:

Even today, 70 years after they were painted, the key Cubist paintings can be obscure. They seem hard to grasp; in some ways they are almost literally illegible.⁹

The narrative segments of Manhattan Transfer, on the other hand, are loaded with thematic importance which unify the overall work in readily identifiable thematic patterns (montage), thereby transcending the, at times, confusing narrative clusters. The best example of one such cluster occurs in the "Rollercoaster" chapter. Here we find several references to scenes and motifs that appear elsewhere in the novel: a jukebox plays catches of "One more River to Jordan" and "Went to the Animals' Fair" (249); Stan wanders to the ferryslip where he records what is the epigraph to the "Ferryslip" chapter (251); the epigraph to "Metropolis" is repeated (252); there is a reference to Long Legged Jack of the Isthmus, and a skyscraper becomes a frame of reference (252); Stan sets fire to his apartment, and the siren of a fire engine is heard (253); a reference is made to a "great lady on a white horse" (253). Each of these apparently autonomous, acontextual fragments is invested with meaning accumulated from other parts of the novel.

For instance, we know from the chapter "Great Lady on a White Horse" that the name refers to Ellen.

The fragmentation of narratives in Manhattan Transfer serves to suspend one's overview of a scene due to the lack of information provided by the fragment: "Dos Passos' realism consists in striking essential details abstracted from their total context."¹⁰ The total context is imbedded in the work itself, where motifs become apparent as the work develops and more of the fragments appear. In much the same manner, the total context of a Cubist painting is limited to the painting itself:

By carrying its history along with it, by aspiring to represent nothing but the material circumstances of its own coming into being, a Cubist painting denies the need of exegesis from without.¹¹

While the history a Cubist painting carries along with it is part of the history of painting and is therefore in need of exegesis from without, the statement does get across the idea that there is no formal method of investigation that will invest the form with meaning.

Because of the loss of a reference point with which to interpret the paintings, confusion results. In the case of non-representational painting we are left to play, in strictly formal terms, in the hermeneutic circle of trying to ascribe meaning to signs that carry none:

As long as iconography is a semantics, it requires "feedback" and a circularity of method. But when the very meaning of the signs and the level of significance at which one stops depend on a key that is no longer a clearly definable sign or operator, we enter the properly hermeneutic circle which precedes comprehension.¹²

In Manhattan Transfer the "feedback," the key to understanding

a fragment, is provided by the progression of images in the novel. In Cubist painting, the feedback may be provided by the overall arrangement of volumes. In either case, the work is to be treated as anamorphosis, an immediately unrecognizable code, wherein we seek to discover the right angle of observation, or the right pattern of structure, that will drop the veil from the context of the painting. Thus, the onus of meaning is placed in the eyes and mind of the observer, reader. Just as the rules of structure are non-formal in the painting, so the painting requires a non-formal exegesis. The spectator must interpret for him or herself:

they [early Cubists] were intent on finding how they could contrive planes at apparently different distances in space into a non-representational order. The whole previous Western tradition had been to make order out of planes which, at definite distances, had remained constant relative to one another and to the viewer.¹³

This quote brings us to the crux of the Cubist revolution--the transgression of the Western tradition of ordering. Cubists discovered their world was flat, depicting space on the canvas as it cannot be experienced in the real world:

They re-examined the possibilities of structure and found that the eye's normal perspective, systematized for art during the Renaissance, was neither an exclusive nor an ideal mode of vision; that any three-dimensional form, be it a human head, a wineglass, or hat, might be seen from two or more angles simultaneously, and that once analyzed in terms of pure volumes, of structural dynamics, its potentialities surpassed the accidents of vision.¹⁴

Various perspectives of the object could be rendered at once in a limited spatial arrangement, so that we might get the body of a violin as viewed from the left and strings viewed from above, and more of the body floating high above the strings. Obviously, this is not the way a violin would appear "in nature." A conflict

arises in the perceptual orientation of the viewer:

To apprehend space qualitatively, the artist must become acutely aware of his or her instinctual and emotive response to sensations, which Gleizes and Metzinger relate to the artist's faculty of discernment or taste. The resulting dichotomy sets scientific, quantitative space--identified with traditional perspective--against an artistic, qualitative treatment of space, which the Cubists associate with the ordering of space in a nonquantifiable manner.¹⁵

The packaging of images into orderly arrangements is the nemesis to Bergson's psychological time, "duration", where perception involves a "qualitative plurality" of states of consciousness. Bergson distinguishes between two levels of consciousness, what may be called the organizing principle which seeks to freeze, juxtapose images in order to analyze, and a deeper consciousness which is purely intuitive and experiential:

The interior self, the one that feels and is passionate, the one that deliberates and decides, is a force that the emotional states and phenomena penetrate intimately, and effects a profound alteration as soon as one separates them in order to unfold them in space.¹⁶

In Bergsonian theory, then, for a work of art to appeal to the interior self, it must appear chaotic:

Our translation of words into images, and images into an original artistic intuition, can only occur if such verbal imagery provokes an alogical and dynamic state in the reader's mind.¹⁷

The expression of confusion in Manhattan Transfer derives from the fragmentation of narratives, the dynamic flow of the Futurist aesthetic and from the conflict created by montage--a disguising of the novel's structures. Eisenstein stresses the importance of involving the spectator in the creative process of the work, in participating in the reassemblage of the fragments:

It is precisely the montage principle, as distinguished from

that of representation which obliges spectators to create and the montage principle, by this means, achieves the great power of inner creative excitement in the spectator which distinguishes an emotionally exciting work from one that stops without going further than giving information or recording events.¹⁸

Dos Passos prepares the reader with a task of assemblage. The novel is written to involve the reader in Bergson's qualitative plurality of consciousness. The fragmentation serves to suspend one's judgmental faculties and encourage an intuitive reading of the text, while the recurring motifs, and the montage principle, collision, serve to arouse the analytical faculties.

CONCLUSION: SATIRE

The satirist in words or in visual images is the doctor who comes in with his sharp and sterile instruments to lance the focusses of dead matter that continually impede the growth of intelligence. Without intelligence it is impossible to cope with the intricacy of nature or with the madhouse everyman carries with him.--John Dos Passos¹

Manhattan Transfer is an experiment in fusing modernist art to social and political satire. A striking affinity between modernist art and traditional satire is that both require a focus on contemporary society, and both express a dissatisfaction with it. The modernist may be a romantic like Baudelaire who wishes to be "Anywhere out of the World" or a political revolutionary like Eisenstein who wishes to reform the world; but in either case the one in which these modernists exist is in need of serious adjustment. Much like Baudelaire, Rimbaud, George Grosz and Eisenstein, the traditional satirist

talks of this moment and this city, and this special, very recent, very fresh deposit of corruption whose stench is still in the satirist's curling nostrils [...] To write good satire, he must describe, decry, denounce the here and now.²

Gilbert Highet's The Anatomy of Satire and Alvin B. Kernan's The Cankered Muse provide models of the satirist's formula which, in the context of Manhattan Transfer, reveal the satirical bent of the narrative.

Looking at Manhattan Transfer as a work of satire will explain the function of its form: to insight the public to "feelings of protest."³ Manhattan Transfer does this through emphasizing the poverty of the social conditions at large, and by employing the fragmentary form which requires that the reader involve himself in

the satire as an assembler of fragments. E.D. Lowry, defending the misanthropic tone of Manhattan Transfer, says: "Put on the defensive and forced to make a case for the prevailing social order, one must reinterpret his society."⁴ Sartre contends that the reader of Dos Passos' fiction must become "a reluctant accomplice creating and rejecting social taboos."⁵

The three features of satire which I believe most salient to the study of Manhattan Transfer rely heavily on distortion: the satirist's vision of social chaos, the satiric plot and characterization (caricature).

The characters in Manhattan Transfer are distorted representations of the human figure and the human psyche; together with the apocalyptic landscape, they illustrate the deformity of the society at large. Highet explains why this distortion is central to the work of satire and why this distortion must be presented as truth:

A satirical picture of our world, which shows only human beings as its inhabitants, must pretend to be a photograph, and in fact be a caricature. It must display their more ridiculous and repellent qualities in full flower, minimize their ability for healthy normal living, mock their virtue and exaggerate their vices, disparage their greatest human gifts, the gift for co-operation and the gift for inventive adaptation, treat their religions as hypocrisy, their art as trash, their literature as opium, their love as lust, their virtue as hypocrisy, and their happiness as an absurd illusion. And it must do all this while protesting that it is a truthful, unbiased, as nearly as possible dispassionate witness.⁶

Manhattan Transfer is a superlative testimony to Highet's remarks. Dos Passos presented Manhattan Transfer as "Direct snapshots of life," saying that the artist "must record the fleeting world the way a motion picture film recorded it." This satisfies the first

half of Highet's contention: satire "must pretend to be a photograph." The second half of Highet's argument, that the photograph must "in fact be a caricature," is fulfilled by the ubiquitous distortion of both the human figure (the staggered movements, social diseases, sexual frustrations, animal-like features), and its environs (apocalyptic landscape). As Blanche Gelfant observes, Dos Passos' *Manhattan* "is not a faithful reproduction of complementary and balancing details: it is an expression of a historical trend."⁷ The narrative fragmentation of the novel is an element crucial to the distortive configuration of Manhattan Transfer.

CHAOS

Now flam'd the Dog-star's unpropitious ray
 Smote ev'ry brain, and wither'd ev'ry Bay;
 Sick was the Sun, the Owl forsook his bow'r,
 The moon-struck prophet felt the madding hour:
 Then rose the Seed of Chaos, and of Night,
 To blot out Order, and extinguish Light,
 Of dull and venal a new World to mold,
 And bring Saturnian days of Lead and Gold. --Dunciad (IV.9-16)⁸

The place to live is out there, where no cry of FIRE!
 Sounds the alarm of the night...--Juvenal's third satire
 ("Against the City of Rome" 194,5).⁹

Manhattan Transfer belongs to the tradition of modernist art (a tradition which includes Rimbaud and Baudelaire, German Expressionists and Eisenstein) that looked upon the march of progress with wary eyes, that saw amid the booming expansion of the modern city a tendency towards social chaos.

The most direct illustration of chaos in Manhattan Transfer is the vision of apocalypse: continual references to the corrupt city

and the fire-infested cityscape. Social chaos is demonstrated by the ineptitude of the characters to make any positive contribution toward the society. Sexually, they are caught up in the spleen/ideal dichotomy which spawns the madonna/whore complex. The end result is a collectivity of adultery, divorce, abortion, suicide and despair.

There is definitely something of the satirist in Baudelaire and Rimbaud. Baudelaire's Paris Spleen expresses the moral chaos created through the dichotomy of spleen and ideal:

The moral lesson which Baudelaire draws in the prose poems is predominantly pessimistic, and the world he evokes is one in which order and reason have been replaced by anarchy in both the moral and the physical spheres....¹⁰

Rimbaud's vision of the city in Illuminations is also pessimistic. Peter Broome describes the tonal movement within the prose poems as tending "from vision to catastrophe,"¹¹ the best example of this movement being the "Bridges" vignette in which the abstract, enchanted vision of the city is shattered when a "white ray, falling from the top of the sky, blots out this comedy."

As his example of Parisian wit Baudelaire sketches a man who bows to a donkey and wishes him a happy new year to the delight of his companions: "As for me, I was suddenly seized by an incomprehensible rage against this bedizened imbecile, for it seemed to me that in him was concentrated all the wit of France" ("A Wag").

Parisian sensibilities are again the target of Baudelaire's satire when he compares Parisian tastes to that of a dog who prefers the odor of excrement to that of perfume ("The Dog and the

Scent-Bottle"). In "The Generous Gambler" the narrator chastises the intellectual community by presuming that the devil must often be present at the gatherings of academics. In "The Rope" amor matris is spoofed: neighbours are fascinated at the death of a boy who hangs himself, and the mother asks for the rope, that she may sell pieces as souvenirs. Marriage is decried as the husband's bondage to "unfaithful ill-tempered wives and noisy off-spring" ("Already").

Rimbaud's chaotic vision is expressed through an apocalyptic rendering of the city. The modern city is frowned upon as tasteless and conforming: the narrator of "Cities" speaks as

an ephemeral and a not-too-discontented citizen of a metropolis obviously modern because every known taste has been avoided in the furnishing and in the outsides of the houses as well as in the lay-out of the city.

The citizenry of this town are depicted in a manner that fulfills Hight's promise that a satire of one's society "disparage the greatest human gifts, the gift for co-operation and the gift for inventive adaptation:"¹²

These millions of people who have no need of knowing one another conduct their education, their trade and their old age, with such similarity that the duration of their lives must be several times less long than, according to some insane statistics, is the case with the people on the continent.

"Metropolitan" depicts an ominous vision of the city at war:

From the asphalt desert flee in a straight line helmets, wheels, barges, rumps,--in confusion with the sheets of fog spaced in horrible bands in the sky which bends back, withdraws and comes down, formed by the most treacherous black smoke which the Ocean in mourning can make.

"Democracy" expresses the sort of cynicism that is typical of the satirist, questioning the goals of modernization and the nature

of progress:

The flag moves over the bare landscape, and our jargon muffles the drum. In the important centers we shall nourish the most cynical prostitution. We shall massacre logical rebellions. In spicy and inundated lands!--in the service of the most monstrous industrial or military exploitations. Farewell here, no matter where. Conscripts of good will, we shall have a ferocious philosophy; ignorant as to science, clever as to comfort; death for the world that goes--This is the real march. Forward march!

Manhattan Transfer belongs to the strain of modernism which takes a pessimistic view of the direction--or lack thereof--modern society was taking. By building an elaborate allegory of Manhattan as the doomed, chaotic city, Dos Passos stresses its lack of control over its expansion. The chaotic perspective is an excellent example of how the satirist compels his audience "to look at a sight they had missed or shunned...."¹³

SATIRIC PLOT: Engaging the Reader

Manhattan Transfer has a satiric plot that along with the use of the objective correlative, encourages the reader to participate in the criticism of his society. Kernan affirms that "If we take plot to mean a series of events which constitute a change, then the most striking quality of satire is the absence of plot: We seem at the conclusion of satire to be always at very nearly the same point where we began."¹⁴ In Manhattan Transfer the end is much like the beginning. Bud's long slow walk into New York is replaced with Jimmy's long slow walk out of it; neither have a very good idea where they are headed, and the city, with all its problems, remains intact to replay the inconsequential dramas of its populace.

The structure of the novel stresses America's inability to

progress in its social attitudes by spanning the years immediately before and immediately after the war and showing that even the war had little effect in changing what Bradley calls "an unheeding social hedonism."¹⁵

Dos Passos' use of fragmented narrative seems to satisfy Kernan's theory that satire is particularly disjointed in plotlines: "Pick up any major satiric work and the immediate effect is of disorderly profusion."¹⁶ Highet explains why this profusion occurs: "for the satirist the narrative is not the end: it is the means."¹⁷ The satirist is not concerned with developing complex psychological characterizations, or telling a good tale, but in guiding his audience through a house of mirrors that distorts and magnifies the grotesqueries of its society.

Fragmenting the narrative, results in "the immediate effect of disorderly profusion," the reader finds himself in much the same situation as the viewer of the difficult work of Cubism, trying to derive some sort of general picture of the work. He is forced to engage the work creatively and instinctively. Fragmentation serves as a veil of "disorderly profusion" which covers the propagandist intentions inherent in satire: "satire--although it pretends to be telling the complete truth about life--in fact presents a propagandist distortion."¹⁸

Fragments do not appear inconsequentially in Manhattan Transfer: often the fragments collide to reveal a contradiction in social values or economic classes, montage. All the fragments, whether through recurring motifs such as the siren or the roller-coaster, or through scenes of social corruption, contribute

to the general theme of the doomed city.

Through fragmentation, Dos Passos creates a twofold impression of the narrative structure: broken, apparently unrelated narratives create an immediate impression of "disorderly profusion" while the dialectal coupling of montage along with recurring motifs create an ensuing impression of sense and order. This seems an excellent narrative approach to satire, satire being a propagandist literature, since it elicits a more involved reading from its audience; it is an appeal to what Bergson refers to as the "qualitative plurality" of states of consciousness.

Bergson distinguishes between two levels of consciousness which work simultaneously: what may be called the "organizing principle" which seeks to freeze, juxtapose images in order to analyze (the appeal of montage), and an instinctive consciousness which is purely emotional and experiential (the appeal of an immediate sense of "disorderly profusion" due to the fragmentary method):

The interior self, the one that feels and is passionate, the one that deliberates and decides, is a force that the emotional states and phenomena penetrate intimately, and effects a profound alteration as soon as one separates them in order to unfold them in space.¹⁹

Often Dos Passos uses the pastoral shepherd's technique of pathetic fallacy to create a greater sense of immediacy in the narrative, encouraging the reader to engage the tone of a given scene. Jean-Paul Sartre, addressing the affect Dos Passos' work has on the reader, avers: "In order to understand the words, in order to make sense of the paragraphs, I first have to adopt his point of view."²⁰ The reader becomes much like the poet in Swift's "A Description of a City Shower," who finds himself surrounded by

the decrepitude of the city, where the corruption of society is captured in the flow of garbage through an open sewer.

When Jimmy Herf is walking with Tony, who has just confessed his suicidal tendencies, the setting impacts the stark mood:

They walked without speaking. It has started to rain. Down the street behind the low greenback houses there was an occasional mothpink flutter of lightning. A wet dusty smell came up from the asphalt beaten by the big plunking drops (234).

Another instance of the emotional pressure created by the immediacy of the objective correlative is the scene where Bud (who has killed his own father) is heading into the city, having read of the boy who killed his mother. The tone is of emptiness and disposal. Bud arrives in a neighbourhood that, like himself, is making a new beginning. Ominously, he views the first stage of landscaping, that requiring destruction and excavation. Bud is like the old landscape, full of weeds and garbage that Metropolis must dispose of. The blisters on his feet imply a parallel between him and the landscape that is being dug out.

With a long, slow stride, limping a little from his blistered feet, bud walked down Broadway, past empty lots where tin cans glittered among the grass and sumach bushes and ragweed, between ranks of billboard signs, past shanties and abandoned squatters' shacks, where dumpcarts were dumping ashes and clinkers, past knobs of gray outcrops where steamdrills continually tapped and nibbled, past excavations out of which wagons full of rock and clay toiled up plankroads to streets.

The fragmentary plot of Manhattan Transfer, complemented by the use of the objective correlative, encourages the audience to engage the novel in a personal (emotional) and active (piecing together the narrative strains) way.

Like the traditional city of sin one finds in satire, Manhattan is threatened from within, by people who stand idly by, watching the city burn, whose political tendencies are driven underground by a preoccupation with their spleens, whose social relationships compound the destruction around them: it is a city whose dynamic physical expansion is doomed (as is the London of The Dunciad) by the social and political dullness of its public, aided by the demon Boredom and the stasis invoked by the dichotomy of spleen and ideal.

Malcolm Bradley describes the nineteen-twenties as

an era in which the political impulse was driven underground and a dangerous ideal of free enterprise America ran unchecked, leading to business expansion and unheeding social hedonism, and it suffered the comeuppance [The Great Depression] of a society which fails to invigilate its economics, adjust to the human interest, question its illusions.²¹

This is the society informing the pages of Manhattan Transfer.

In one of the vignettes that introduces a seemingly unrelated scene, a real-estate agent expresses the sense of confusion over where the new America is tending: "All these mechanical inventions--telephones, electricity, steel bridges, horseless vehicles--they are all leading somewhere...My God! I can't begin to tell you what it will mean" (16).

By the end of the novel, Dos Passos has presented the darker side of the possible directions Manhattan could take. Few of the characters show interest in America's future, and those who do are generally ostracized. When the political impulse is apparent it appears in a rather ineffectual manner. Congo and Marco deliver an entirely naive and utopian polemic against democracy and in favor

of anarchy that would lead to a Futurist utopia of riots, while bankers empty their vaults in an endless flow of money and happiness (39).

When Ellen and Jimmy Herf walk into a restaurant, a young man is holding forth on the trouble with the times: "But good God hasn't a man some rights? No, this industrial civilization forces us to seek a complete readjustment of government and social life" (264). Ellen's response is to avoid the issue: "I hate arguments anyway."

Anna Cohen's friend Elmer is able to sustain his beliefs in the workers' cause, which makes him a veritable exception to the general rule of ephemeral conviction in Manhattan Transfer. Elmer tells Anna, who is scabbing for a clothing manufacturer: "Can't you see Anna I want you to think of the worker's plight" (333). Elmer also attacks the laissez-faire attitude Anna has affected from her boyfriend: "He made you a fatalist. Somebody who don't think there's no use strugglin, somebody who don't believe in human progress" (330).

The general ineptitude of the characters in dealing with social conditions expresses itself in their unwillingness to take responsibility for their own lives, often pawning off their guilt on the chance factor. George Baldwin justifies his affairs to his wife: "My dear these things aren't anybody's fault" (185). Joe Harland exonerates himself from any responsibility for his financial collapse: "Things aren't always a man's fault...circumstances...er circumstances" (108). Ellen sees the burned body of a fire victim at Madam Soubrine's and says "Just

somebody's bad luck" (399); she is unable to consider that the employee may have died because of poor working conditions at the plant. Joe O'Keefe, in the hospital for VD treatment, says "After this I got to have some luck" (287). Jimmy Herf is also guilty of reducing issues to a matter of chance, explaining to the suicidal homosexual, Tony: "All this hushdope about sex...it's just luck, hellish bad luck" (235).

A good instance of the satiric portrayal of character is the scene at the restarurant where Emile has found employment waiting tables: food is the major topic of discussion for the fat colonel; his sycophants endlessly spout pat humor as he continues to gorge himself; a dancer misses a man's hat and kicks out his eye, and then she leaves with the colonel, passing her date--vomiting into a fire bucket--on the way out (26-40).

Many of the portraits are overtly satirical, Cassie is the personification of the cartoon character Betty Boop, a virginal (Her pregnancy is no fault of her own.) flapper. Cassie even shares with Betty the same pwoblem pwonouncincing her 'r's. Oglethorpe is a caricature of the Harvard aesthete, replete with the broad 'a' and effeminate gestures. His artistic coup is a duet with Cassie, who is to dance to Oglethorpe's recital of the "Songs of Solomon." Phineas P. Blackhead, as the name suggests, is an obvious type of the unscrupulous businessman.

Often the characters are described in terms of animal imagery, a technique often used by the satirist to expose the corrupt sensibilities of his society: "The faces peering out at us from the crowded satiric scene seldom have normal features but are

grotesquely distorted by the vices they mirror." Dispersed through the pages are a llama-faced woman (132), hawk-faced waiters (155), a monkey-faced man (124), a pigeon-breasted woman (242), a monkey-eyed man (370), a hawk-nosed businessman (390); and three references to characters as fish in an aquarium (255, 264, 360). The unifying trope behind the animal imagery is the theme of the animals' fair. Depicting people as animals is a popular technique of the satirist to reveal the baseness of the society, the descent of man in the chain-of-being. Referring to the use of animal imagery in *The Dunciad* one critic explains: "The remarkably profuse animal imagery elaborately relates the world of the Dunces to the lower orders of creation."

Even the hero of *Manhattan Transfer* is satiric. As is the case with many heroes of modernist fiction, being the hero of *Manhattan Transfer* requires some type of escape: that the hero save himself, that he at least set his lands in order. He is an anti-hero like Frederick Henry who leaves the war, Stephen Dedalus who leaves Dublin, Baudelaire who leaves reality in search of art, Rimbaud who leaves what Baudelaire escapes to.

Augmenting the anti-heroism in *Manhattan Transfer* is the anticlimax so familiar to satire. The apocalypse, ominous throughout the novel, is never realised. Although Jimmy is saved, Manhattan, true to its Nineveh archetype, remains standing, unchanged. And in this respect Dos Passos maintains a consistency in his satiric characterization. Jimmy comes across as being as incapable of social commitment as the other characters in the novel, as other heroes of modernist art. William H. Gilman avers

that "the innocent individual in space may assert or preserve himself by lighting out for the territories. But this involves escape from the very sort of trial which should prove that he is a hero." 24

The problems facing Manhattan society remain, and Manhattan Transfer encourages the reader to engage these problems (through the art of its prose, through the stark portraits of social inequalities, through the puzzle of its structure, and through the dynamic principle of montage); it even provides the reader with possible responses. One can opt out of the dilemma like Jimmy Herf or, like most of the characters, resign oneself to a belief in the universal tyranny of spleen-and-ideal--or perhaps hidden among the larger characters is the best response, Elmer's, who, despite the crooked politicians and apathetic public, doesn't waiver in his commitment to encourage change.

Notes

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