

JOHN DOS PASSOS FACTOS E FICÇÃO | FACTS AND FICTION IN JOHN DOS PASSOS

IV SIMPÓSIO | IV SYMPOSIUM

14 DE JANEIRO DE 2011 | JANUARY 14, 2011

CENTRO CULTURAL JOHN DOS PASSOS

AUDITÓRIO | AUDITORIUM

Rua Príncipe D. Luís, 3 – Ponta do Sol

RESUMOS | ABSTRACTS

MIGUEL OLIVEIRA

John Dos Passos on the Color Line

John Dos Passos came in the early nineteen thirties in defense of the “Scottsboro boys,” a group of nine black teenagers, accused of having gang-raped two white women in a boxcar of a freight train, they had jumped on their way to Memphis, Tennessee. Although, the youths avowed their innocence, the jury, composed of white men only, found them guilty and condemned them to capital punishment, through electrocution.

When John Dos Passos learned the details of the apparent framed trial, he wrote several articles, in which he asked for donations to get the boys a new and fair trial with a decent lawyer. The attorney hired, succeeded in front of the United States Supreme Court to commute their death sentences into prison terms.

In his novel *Manhattan Transfer*, John Dos Passos criticized racism, while at the same time, in his *U.S.A.*-trilogy Dos Passos criticized segregation in America.

Nevertheless, by becoming conservative, with the passing of time, John Dos Passos now defended segregation, reproaching the Negro civil rights movements, fearing a racial warfare, i.e. a second Civil War.

J. DONALD SILVA, Ph.D (NEW HAMPSHIRE, USA)

Tide and Current in the Art of Dos Passos

Literature in the 20th century novel used new concepts of time. Dos Passos adopted them in his literary art. How other novels used time define the way Dos Passos portrayed time in his novels. An analysis of time in *Remembrance of Things Past*, *Ulysses*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, and *The Sound and the Fury*, shows how Dos Passos used time in U.S.A.. The analysis contrasts time in the traditional novel with time in the modern novel. With aspects of time, Dos Passos examined society and showed its reality in Modern America.

MÁRIO AVELAR, Ph. D (UA/ CEUL)

Notes on the aesthetic reinvention of an idiom – John Dos Passos and Modernist ruptures

In my presentation I will contextualize John Dos Passos' USA in the field of Modernist aesthetic ruptures. I will focus on the importance of cinema as an emerging artistic discourse and on its specific impact on major Modernist writers - Dos Passos, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf, in order to show how important an intertextual critical dialogue is in the understanding of 20th century writing.

GRAÇA VALÉRIO, MA (ESCOLA SECUNDÁRIA DA APEL)

John Dos Passos: What a waste!

During the day a plethora of facts and some of the most compelling fiction will have been addressed by a considerable number of speakers, all of whom will have raised some of the most crucial issues left to discover with regard to this American writer, his life and his work. Dos Passos, none the less, remains a mystery to many of those who go on discovering him. The evidence seems to suggest that Dos Passos still continues to renew himself and to mark his presence in a compelling way among today's audiences.

At a moment when most of his fellow writers are well-known and acclaimed, Dos Passos remains "an outcast". As yet, he remains an author with whom people may be found to interact quite enthusiastically.

MARIA DO CÉU MARQUES, Ph.D (UA/ CEUL)

Facts in John Dos Passos' fiction

This paper will focus on John Dos Passos, the American writer of Portuguese origin, who wrote more than forty books during his lifetime, including novels, travel books, poetry, plays, political tracts, and biographies. At the same time he created more than 400 works of art.

Studying Dos Passos' works is a good way to understand how much he differs from the other writers of his generation. His social interests and stylistic quest took him, since very early, through diversified forms and methods of writing. Although some of the subjects he wrote about such as oppression, exploitation or corruption remain up-to-date, they were not well accepted by some groups as they were too close to reality. The dark images of the world he described, as well as his political attitudes connected with the left – Dos Passos was one of the intellectuals of his times to come closer to Socialism – are among the reasons why he was not read or studied during the last decades.

ISABEL OLIVEIRA MARTINS, Ph.D (FCSH-UNL/ CEAUL)

John Dos Passos' *Three Soldiers*: Facts and Fiction about the American Way of War

John Dos Passos' second novel, *Three Soldiers*, was originally published in 1921 just two years after the Treaty of Versailles had been signed between Germany and the Allied Powers, and thus ending what was considered at the time as the most terrible war faced by humanity. The novel, together with Dos Passos' first work *One Man's Initiation – 1917*, published in 1920, was immediately acclaimed as an antiwar novel and would later be included in an antiwar World War I literary tradition that incorporated other works by writers of the so-called "Lost Generation" such as Ernest Hemingway and E.E. Cummings.

There is no doubt that the first encounter of John Dos Passos with the overpowering reality of modern warfare that was also experienced by some other American writers in the European war theatre of the trenches, and which had been foreshadowed during the American Civil War, was a shock that he had to denounce in his writings. A plain reading of *Three Soldiers* would describe it as a bitter denunciation of the war. Although this interpretation is not inaccurate nevertheless it disregards what I would

like to consider as being a regular misapprehension of the way American writers deal with the American way of war.

At a deeper level Dos Passos' work is a condemnation of the values by which modern American society had come to live by and above all a criticism of the army that is shown to be an organization that tries to annihilate the individual. Accordingly, what is at stake are the mythical American ideals regarding American intervention in wars, which in the end were not fulfilled in this war and not so much a criticism of the war in general.

ANA MARIA KAUPPILA, MA

From *Manhattan Transfer* to GAGA delusion: a cross-reading of John dos Passos' *stream of consciousness*

This paper takes into consideration the target audience – mainly Portuguese students of English language and culture – and time – 20 minutes per presentation. Moreover, one of the purposes announced is to encourage the students to read Dos Passos' works.

The concept of ***stream of consciousness***, in literary criticism is not exempt of complexity and somehow difficult to follow by nowadays youngsters. The aim of the paper is then to launch the discussion from the students' *vécu* – in this particular case the songs, lyrics and theatrical message from one of their idols [the singer Lady GAGA] – make them understand the concept and, this way – hopefully - make the reading of ***Manhattan Transfer*** less “distant” from their experiences and cultural knowledge.

Inner lives and fictional characters seem to easily meet in GAGA's performances thus making it possible to bring to students and their understanding of literature, timeless criteria and an interesting challenge.

In ***Manhattan Transfer***, Dos Passos “visits” New York and displays a fierce critique of society then: poverty and extreme wealth, alienation, perversion of values and social cruelty. It is, in all dimensions, an up-to-date document that students will, for sure, find worth the while reading

FERNANDA LUÍSA FENEJA, Ph.D (ISLA, Instituto Superior de Línguas e Administração)

Visions in the American mosaic: immigration and multiculturalism in *Manhattan Transfer*

New York in the 1920s - this is *Manhattan Transfer*. Published in 1925 and considered by many one of John Dos Passos's masterpieces, together with the *USA* trilogy, it portrays the way people of different backgrounds and origins and with diverse profiles and life stories meet and interact with the city, shaped by crucial keystones of American culture and History, among which racial and cultural diversity play a major role.

This paper aims at reflecting on how immigration and multiculturalism contribute to clarify Dos Passos's visions of America, whereby *Manhattan Transfer* appears as a microcosm of the American nation at large. Do such issues convey the belief in the potential of the melting pot or, on the contrary, underscore the weaknesses of a mosaic doomed to split up? Being the core question to explore here, this inevitably relates to the heart of the American ideological principles, as seen from Dos Passos' perceptive, critical insight.

Our purpose is thus to instigate further understandings of this subject by drawing primarily on the writer's approach to characters as well as on other relevant narrative devices, considering also the modernist features evident in Dos Passos's fiction.
