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SOCIAL MOBILITY AND THE ARTIST IN  
*MANHATTAN TRANSFER AND THE MUSIC OF TIME*

GENE W. RUOFF

The differences that separate the authors of *Manhattan Transfer* and *A Dance to The Music of Time* are undeniable: an ocean, a quarter of a century, and the respective tonal techniques of shock and comic nuance. John Dos Passos and Anthony Powell are alike superficially, however, in their having been securely pigeon-holed by many of their critics, one as a political faddist, the other as a Proustian searcher of time past. They are alike more basically in the subject matter of their two seemingly disparate novels — society in flux — and particularly in their presentation of the artist's reaction to a social order that is constantly breaking apart and realigning, presentation that derives neither from the politics of Marx nor from the metaphysics of Bergson.

The theme of social mobility is not peculiar to the twentieth century novel. It extends from the old fairy tale in which Cinderella marries the handsome prince to the modern fairy tale in which Horatio Alger rises through strenuous effort and honesty to become a benevolent millionaire. In the early English novel Tom Jones discovers his true identity and takes his place as a country squire. The artist becomes the hero of the fable in *David Copperfield*, as Dickens' hero triumphs over the vile machinations of Uriah Heep and finds success as a popular novelist, secure with his perfect Agnes by the country fireside. To a writer as early as Thackeray, however, the novel of social mobility can be only a "novel without a hero," because good, if it exists, does not vanquish evil in the vicious world of the puppets of *Vanity Fair*. Social mobility in this case is no longer guided by the hand of ultimately triumphant virtue.

Dos Passos and Powell do not deny Thackeray's judgment of social forces: what good they find in humanity does not triumph in material terms. Their novels have heroes, nonetheless, in their semi-autobiographical novelists or novelists-to-be. Jimmy Herf assumes this role in *Manhattan Transfer* and Nicholas Jenkins in *The Music of Time*.<sup>1</sup> Calling either Herf or Jenkins a

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1 For similarities in the lives of Herf and Dos Passos see John W. Wrenn, *John Dos Passos* (New Haven, 1961), pp. 126-128. Little is readily available concerning Powell's life, but he and Jenkins seem to correspond in age, place of schooling, and general time of publication of the early novels Jenkins mentions briefly.

hero might seem at first to require some justification. Both are, after all, essentially passive figures. As novelist-heroes they lack any touch of Dedalian aesthetic rebellion; their virtue is sometimes compromised and never obtrusive; their vices are not even of striking interest. We learn little of Herf's mental processes, and even though Jenkins relates his own history, he remains curiously vague and shadowy compared to the characters he describes. The peculiar portrait of the artist in Dos Passos and Powell is determined by the authors' attitudes toward and depiction of societal forces. The artist drops from the center of the novel, and the focus is instead on society. The social order is analyzed slowly and empirically, and the novelist-hero and the reader learn about society's forces at the same rate. Only toward the end of the work, therefore, when the hero's education nears completion, does he become a significant force.

The importance of the social order in both *Manhattan Transfer* and *The Music of Time* is precisely in its mutability. Social strata are shuffled like cards, and the pattern of this shuffling, incomprehensible at first, becomes relentlessly obvious in the course of the description. Dozens of characters in New York and London follow paths that rise and fall, financially and personally. By understanding the pattern of this social change the artist comes to terms with himself and his vocation. The introductory image that describes the structure of Powell's work could be applied equally to the structure, if not the tone, of Dos Passos':

These classical projections . . . suddenly suggested Poussin's scene in which the Seasons, hand in hand and facing outward, tread in rhythm to the notes of the lyre that the winged and naked greybeard plays. The image of Time brought thoughts of mortality: of human beings, facing outward like the Seasons, moving hand in hand in intricate measure: stepping slowly, methodically, sometimes a trifle awkwardly, in evolutions that take recognisable shape: or breaking into seemingly meaningless gyrations, while partners disappear only to reappear again, once more giving pattern to the spectacle: unable to control the melody, unable, perhaps, to control the steps of the dance. Classical associations made me think, too, of days at school, where so many forces, hitherto unfamiliar, had become in due course uncompromisingly clear.<sup>2</sup>

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2 *A Question of Upbringing*, in *A Dance to the Music of Time* (Boston, 1962), p. 2. All references to this novel, *A Buyer's Market*, and *The Acceptance World* are to this edition and are cited in the text.

The care with which Powell unfolds this image makes it obvious that the Poussin painting is not carelessly chosen. The central figures in the painting, the four seasons, are arranged linearly on the canvas. As far as their individual positions are concerned, the motion of the group might well be horizontal; yet their interconnection, back to back, with linked hands, indicates that the true motion of the group is circular. The apparent form of both Powell's and Dos Passos' works is also linear, covering in chronological fashion the lives of characters and the cities themselves. But the pattern of this chronology, linking in repetitive circles of similar situations and actions, is cyclical in its progression. The two authors want to discover the melody of the greybeard, the forces of society, but they study these forces through the steps of the numerous individual dancers.<sup>3</sup>

Both novels are what is often called "pluralistic," apparently because of their authors' distrust of the single experience as an adequate statement of these forces. Despite this distrust of symbolic experience, however, they seem to let the portrayal of the pattern of social mobility become most vivid in the lives of two characters in each novel, one of whom rises to power while the other falls. In *The Music of Time* the success story is Kenneth Widmerpool's and the failure Charles Stringham's. In *Manhattan Transfer* these crossing paths are best shown, perhaps, by George Baldwin and Stan Emery.

Widmerpool's rise in society and power is dramatized in repetitive scenes in the novel. He is first seen at Eton, where Jenkins, Stringham, and Peter Templer, the flamboyant son of a *nouveau-riche* cement manufacturer, are close friends. Jenkins initially encounters Widmerpool on a cold winter afternoon. Widmerpool, an awkward, doggedly ambitious student, is out for his ritual training run. Among the students at Eton, Widmerpool

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3 Arthur Mizener, in his anxiety to separate Powell from the ranks of the "doctrinal" novelists he abhors, seems to find it necessary to deny the novel any formal structure that might lead to a formal moral position. He feels that the emphasis in Powell's opening image "is on the relations of the dancers to the dance, and what it finds important is not what abstract meanings may be ascribed to the dance or to the melody . . . , but what response of the order evoked by Poussin it arouses." See *The Sense of Life in the Modern Novel* (Boston, 1964), p. 93. Mizener's attitude is perfectly tenable, but it seems dangerously close to the rather questionable belief that moral conclusions and sophistication are incompatible. He forgets, in short, that "doctrine" may enter the novel not only *a priori*, but also empirically. Both Dos Passos' and Powell's moral positions develop in the latter manner within the novels.

is noted only for his comically unfulfilled striving in athletics and for having worn, early in his career, "the wrong kind of overcoat." Jenkins' knowledge of Widmerpool has come principally from anecdotes concerning his acknowledged oddness; as Jenkins says, "He had his being, like many others, in obscurity" (*A Question*, p. 5).

It is only with the *personal* encounter on the road that he begins to visualize Widmerpool as a human being: ". . . before that moment . . . stories had not made him live. It was on the bleak December tarmac of that Saturday afternoon in, I suppose, the year 1921 that Widmerpool, fairly heavily built, thick lips and metal-rimmed spectacles giving his face as usual an aggrieved expression, first took coherent form in my mind" (*A Question*, p. 4). Before this personal encounter Jenkins' feeling towards Widmerpool is like that of Charles Stringham — one of detached ironic amusement; the meeting in the road is the first indication that Jenkins has that this attitude, the prevailing Eton attitude, might not give an adequate representation of Widmerpool's personality.

When Jenkins meets Widmerpool again in France, the change in Widmerpool's status is immediately apparent: "There was no question here of his being looked upon by the rest of the community as the oddity he had been regarded at school" (*A Question*, p. 127). Away from school the Widmerpool-cliché built up there is shown to be invalid. Widmerpool demonstrates his skill in arbitrating a petty dispute between two men in their rooming-house, and Jenkins is forced to a new assessment of Widmerpool's personality. "There was something about the obstinacy with which he pursued his aims that could not be disregarded, or merely ridiculed" (*A Question*, p. 157). Jenkins does not at this time recognize the motivation for Widmerpool's actions, "the quest for power," but he is slowly coming to terms with him.

Jenkins meets Widmerpool again at a dinner in *A Buyer's Market*. Here again he is forced to re-evaluate him. While in France he had scoffed at the idea of Widmerpool's being capable of falling in love: "I used to think that people who looked and behaved like Widmerpool had really no right to fall in love at all" (*Buyer's Market*, p. 80). Widmerpool destroys this vestige of the Eton image, in rather "mortifying circumstances," when Jenkins discovers that they are both in love with the same girl, Barbara Goring. Through seeing him in a different environment and with a wider range of experience, Jenkins comes slowly to understand Widmerpool as a person. In their repeated meetings, Widmer-

pool's path of success in business life, the world of power, and failure in personal life (culminating in his proving impotent when he tries to "seduce" his rather worldly fiancée) show Jenkins that he is not a character to be understood easily or dismissed lightly.

By the sixth and most recent volume of the unfinished sequence, *The Kindly Ones*, Widmerpool has established himself in society through sheer force of will. Despite not infrequent errors in business judgment, he is the intimate of the industrialist Sir Magnus Donners-Brebner. He has also worked his way up in the Regimentals, and is ready to assume another form of power with the impending outbreak of World War II. He is even treated totally as an equal or superior by Templer, who at Eton had been a leader of Widmerpool's deprecators.

Stringham, in direct contrast to Widmerpool, follows a downward path after leaving the stable Edwardian world of Eton. The vestigial remnants of the values of Eton are anachronistic in the power society of the 1920's and 1930's. Any attempt to return to these values is nearly disastrous. LeBas, for example, the priest-like former headmaster of the boys' dormitory, faints at an "Old Boys" dinner when Widmerpool tries to discuss the operations of modern business at this gathering designed specifically to recapture the past. Charles Stringham, the handsome, charming aristocrat who existed at the top of the traditional hierarchy at Eton, similarly crumples in a society dominated by the rising men of the will.

Stringham's failure is manifested more in personal than financial terms, for his family still has enough money to keep him from having to earn a living. He does, however, take a job with Donners-Brebner after spending a year at the university. This excursion into the world of power is terminated shortly, though, and this termination is linked in some unexplained way to Widmerpool's rise within the firm. As Widmerpool explains Stringham's departure, "People talk a good deal about 'charm,' but something else is required in business, I assure you" (*Buyer's Market*, p. 270). Perhaps the only other substantial act that Stringham attempts is marriage to Lady Peggy Stepney, a marriage that ends as quickly and quietly as his association with Donners.

Widmerpool's ascendancy over Stringham becomes explicit after the Old Boys dinner from which Stringham, drunk as usual, has to be taken home. When Stringham resists being put to bed, Widmerpool overpowers him:

The two of them wrestling together were pouring with sweat, especially Widmerpool, who was the stronger. He must have been quite powerful, for Stringham was fighting like a maniac. The bed creaked and rocked as if it would break beneath them. And then, quite suddenly, Stringham began laughing. . . . He laughed and laughed until he could struggle no more. The combat ceased. Widmerpool stepped back. Stringham lay gasping on the pillows.<sup>4</sup>

This physical combat suggests to Jenkins “a whole social upheaval: a positively cosmic change in life’s system. Widmerpool, once so derided by all of us, had become in some mysterious manner a person of authority” (*Acceptance World*, p. 209).

Stringham passes from control by Widmerpool to control by family. Tuffy Weedon, his mother’s old-maid secretary, takes him over and tries to dry him out. After he disrupts one of his mother’s parties in what he calls one of the “brilliant improvisations” that constitute his career, the control becomes stiffer. He is kept broke and unable to drink. In *The Kindly Ones* he is reported by Tuffy to be in London trying to join the army. During the war, Powell’s foreshadowing indicates, Stringham’s final confrontation with and destruction at the hands of Widmerpool will occur.

Not surprisingly, many of the characteristics of Widmerpool are found in Dos Passos’ George Baldwin. The novel critical of social mobility employs inevitably what seem to be stock characters. Baldwin is a lawyer, appropriately enough, for it is within the letter of society’s law that the upheaval is taking place. Baldwin enters the novel as the archetypal starving young advocate, reading his name backward on the office door through which clients never appear. His will to success triumphs, however, and he is last seen as a “reform” candidate for mayor, having subordinated all save his lust to his desire for power.

Baldwin, more vicious and effective than Widmerpool, leaves a beautiful trail of broken persons in his rise through society. He begins forging his career as an ambulance chaser, seducing the wife of Gus McNiel, the client whose damage suit brings his abilities as a lawyer into prominence. After he has demonstrated his legal proficiency by milking the railroad of \$12,500 for hav-

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<sup>4</sup> *The Acceptance World*, p. 208. Mizener recognizes the importance of the conflict between Widmerpool and Stringham. Characteristically, however, he refuses to emphasize the upheaval in society that Jenkins sees in this conflict. See *The Sense of Life*, pp. 90-91.

ing struck a man who was daydreaming on the tracks, Baldwin is invited into the established law firm of Emery and Emery. A marriage of convenience solidifies his social position without assuaging his sexual appetite, and he persists in chasing Ellen Thatcher, the wife of Jojo Oglethorpe and, later, the lover of Stan Emery and the wife of Jimmy Herf. McNiel, who started Baldwin on his rise by stepping in front of the train, saves him again by keeping him from murdering Ellen, who has repeatedly rejected him. True to his principles, Baldwin repays this debt by betraying Gus to advance his political career. Gus persuades Baldwin to run for district attorney, and he does run, but on an opposing reform ticket. The novel ends with Baldwin in triumph — he is district attorney, will run for mayor on a united reform platform, and has taken Ellen from Herf, who is going to divorce her.

Baldwin, like Widmerpool, is a man without the sins that lead, apparently, to failure in a power-directed society — loyalty and capacity for love. He does not even let his one touch of humanity, lechery, interfere with his rise to power. He will not break with the wife he detests, because, as he puts it, “a divorce would be very harmful to my situation downtown at the moment.”<sup>5</sup>

At the opposite end of the scale of social mobility in *Manhattan Transfer* is Stan Emery, son of the head of Baldwin’s law firm. Both Powell and Dos Passos carefully establish firm connections between their outstanding representatives of rising and falling society. Like Stringham, Stan has no place in power society. He enters drunk, “swaying a little,” and exits drunk, burning in self-destruction in the flames of the apartment he shared with his sleazy pick-up wife.

The parallel drunkenness of Stringham and Stan (the latter does not appear in a single scene in which he is not drunk or drinking) may be only coincidental, but this does not seem likely. Both are caught in a period of social transition, a period that has as its ideal the will to succeed. Both are wealthy already and have no reason or way to follow a rising path. They devote themselves, therefore, to accomplishing nothing. Stringham’s comment about the “brilliant improvisations” of his career describes also Stan’s actions. Both become creatures of impulse, in each case impulsive drinking. They are victims of the ennui of the old rich. They have nothing to do, no goal to seek. Stan has a rebellious tendency that Stringham lacks, but it is completely undirected. The

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5 *Manhattan Transfer* (Boston, 1925), p. 185.



major movement of society has defined them out of existence. Meaningless existence leads Stan to an equally meaningless marriage and a break with Ellen, the actress whose successful career is paralleling that of George Baldwin. Both Stan and Stringham have only self-destruction left to them. Stringham's path to suicide has been blocked, at least for a time, by the controls placed upon him by his family. Stan's has not.

Recounting the crossing careers of these four characters gives an inadequate, but necessary, picture of social mobility in the novels. The picture is inadequate first because these paths are echoed by those of many other characters. Widmerpool is joined in the world of power by other aspiring young men of the business world; women such as Mona Freeman and Matilda Wilson, who casually change lovers and husbands in their search for power; even writers such as Mark Members and J. J. Quiggin, who try to combine art with their quest for financial gain. Stringham's drive toward self-destruction is characteristic of the action of the English upper class, which numbers among it Erridge, a leftist peer who fights with the Spanish revolutionaries; Jenkins' Uncle Giles, who dies and leaves his unexpectedly large estate to a lady clairvoyant rather than to the family that has shunned him for his shady business dealings; a successful Edwardian novelist, St. John Clarke, who forgets the friends and associates who have courted his wealth and leaves his money to Erridge, whom he hardly knows. Such irrational impulsive actions are the weapons by which the aristocracy destroys its own supposed basic values of loyalty, family, and social position. It is tearing itself apart from within. Stan Emery is joined in failure by Herf's alcoholic uncle Joe Harland, and by those whose dream has vanished: Bud Korpenning, whose leap into the river climaxes the first section of *Manhattan Transfer* as Stan's suicide does the second, and the "Flapper Bandits," whose brief career of petty crime is found in the third section. Ascension to power is less frequent in this novel, but Ellen moves from chorus line dancer to dramatic actress in vocation, just as she moves from vaudeville hack to mayoral candidate in "love" in finding material success.

The essentially episodic form of the novels also makes chronological accounts of characters' lives critically misleading. The lives of Widmerpool, Baldwin, Stringham, and Emery are not presented continuously. Dos Passos consciously fragments his presentation into brief scenes. He does not even bother with rudimentary exposition of occurrences between characters' appearances. Any exposition necessary occurs in conversation. Passage of time is often indicated merely by headlines or other

mention of current events such as Sarajevo and the Thaw murder case, a technique that Powell also employs. Powell, because of his first-person narrative method, is committed to a certain amount of continuity, but this is played down even in Jenkins' account of his own life. Jenkins neglects large portions of his experience, even such seemingly important details as his courtship and marriage. Jenkins' acquaintances appear, their situations are seen and compared to past situations of their own and of others, and they disappear and are largely forgotten, except in incidental comparisons, until their next appearances.

The episodic technique has more than mere stylistic consequences. Through the use of short scenes Dos Passos is able to give a spatial cross section of his society. He pictures numerous characters in different situations at the same approximate point in time. This, once again, lends to his purpose of showing the steps of social mobility by comparative situation and changes in situation. Powell effects essentially the same spatial cross-section by the "miraculous" reappearances of his characters: "There are certain people who seem inextricably linked in life; so that meeting one acquaintance in the street means that a letter, without fail, will arrive in a day or two from an associate involuntarily harnessed to him, or her, in time" (*A Question*, p. 225). It is important to the novel of social mobility that the characters appear essentially at the same moment, so that their positions in life may be directly compared. For this reason, among others, accounts of large parties and social gatherings are very important to Powell. They bring his characters together periodically for comparison.

Through the repeated use of the temporally arrested spatial cross-section, then, the movement of society can be dramatically demonstrated. It is important to see that this description of society is presented empirically. Society is found lacking, at least by Herf and Jenkins, but not on any theoretical political or economic basis. Neither hero has any preconceptions about the decadence of capitalism or the chaos of broken tradition. Society is judged, rather, on the basis of the people it allows to attain power. In both novels these men, the Widmerpools and Baldwins, put power over any personal value, are monomaniacs of the will. The persons who lack this power of will or do not wish to exert it, the Emerys and Stringhams, can be destroyed by society, despite the worth or attractiveness of some of their attitudes and emotions.

The triumph of power seems to create similar personal problems in the two novels. Social mobility leads to marital

mobility. Ellen's rise as an actress is related closely to her successive love affairs and marriages. Divorces among Jenkins' contemporaries are too numerous to mention. But among the group, except Jenkins himself, no one who has been married has stayed married long. Marriage for the artist seems particularly hazardous. The artist is aligned with the world of imagination against the world of will that is remaking society. The apparently successful marriage of composer Hugh Moreland to Matilda Wilson comes to an end in *The Kindly Ones* because, Moreland says, "She wants power. Plenty of power."<sup>6</sup> Marriage is seen by Jenkins as an act of the will, exertion of power, and he says pointedly, "the artist who traffics in power does so, if not necessarily disastrously, at least at considerable risk" (*Buyer's Market*, pp. 253-254). The permanence of the marriage of Jenkins and Isobel Tolland would seem to depend on whether imagination and will can be successfully merged.

The problem of marriage extends, in both novels, to the rather fundamental problem of childbirth. No children are born in New York and live in Herf's generation, and only one, so far, has made it into the world in Jenkins'. Abortive, illicit affairs sprinkle the pages of *Manhattan Transfer*: Cassandra Wilkins has an abortion arranged by Ellen; Ellen herself aborts Stan Emery's unborn child after he has committed suicide; the child of the "Flapper Bandits" will be born in prison. In *The Music of Time* Widmerpool buys an abortion for a girl he has never slept with; Moreland's wife has a still-birth; Jenkins wife has a miscarriage and is pregnant again at the end of *The Kindly Ones*. Fertility, as well as marriage, seems largely to rest on the fate of the relationship between Nick and Isobel. Ellen's and Jimmy's child in *Manhattan Transfer* is born outside New York, in Europe during the war. Fertility in the socially mobile society seems, in Dos Passos, to be an impossibility.

These, then, are the societies which face the novelist-heroes Jimmy Herf and Nicholas Jenkins — they have as their essential form change, and this change is creating a structure based totally on the power of the individual will. The knowledge of society that Herf has slowly gained leads him finally to become a novelist. His is not a strikingly forceful aesthetic commitment — he himself never even mentions it; it is tossed out in conversation by another character. His decision seems the obvious result of his gradual education concerning social forces. It ties in with his rather irrational decision early in the novel not to enter his uncle's business, and links also to his writing in the newspaper

6 *The Kindly Ones* (Boston, 1962), p. 247.

field. He has learned one basic fact about New York — some people are going up, some down. He refuses to join the group in power, and he has seen the destruction of Stan, a person who tried to stay in the city without adopting its values.<sup>7</sup> When he leaves New York, he says he is going “Pretty far,” far from destructive social movement and into a vocation that will be immune to the force of power. Jenkins’ artistic resolution has, of course, not totally been made. Whether he must physically leave London society will probably be determined chiefly by whether he can succeed in merging imagination and will in both his vocation and his marriage. The failure of the marriage might lead him to the decision of Jimmy Herf. Its success would mean that the artist can trade in certain forms of power and can exist, however shakily, in a power-directed society.

Perhaps the essential fact to note in the decisions of Herf and Jenkins is that their ways of arriving at the novelist’s vocation run counter to the more common introspective emphasis in the *Kunstlerroman*. Henri Bergson has been highly influential in establishing the free act, the artistic act, as that which comes from within. The artist, he says,

. . . aims at giving us a share in this [complex personal] emotion, so rich, so personal, so novel, and at enabling us to experience what he cannot make us understand. This he will bring about by choosing, among the outward signs of his emotions, those which our body is likely to imitate mechanically, though slightly, as soon as it perceives them, so as to transport us all at once into the indefinable psychological state which called them forth.<sup>8</sup>

He states specifically the type of free action and emotion with which, we assume, the artist might most rewardingly be concerned:

. . . there are finally two different selves, one of which is, as it were, the external projection of the other, its spatial and, so to speak, social representation. We reach the former by deep introspection, which leads us to

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7 The only person who succeeds materially in *Manhattan Transfer* without becoming a man of the will is Congo, who becomes a bootlegger. Significantly, he operates outside the framework of society. Perhaps in Herf’s visions of himself as a deportee and identification with the “Flapper Bandits,” he sees the path of the artist as that also of an outlaw.

8 *Time and Free Will*, tr. F. L. Pogson (New York, 1960), p. 18.

grasp our inner states as living things, constantly *becoming*, as states not amenable to measure . . . and of which the succession in duration has nothing in common with juxtaposition in homogeneous space. . . . To act freely is to recover possession of oneself, and to get back into pure duration.<sup>9</sup>

The free decision for Bergson, then, is one that stems from the totality of a person's temporal duration, not from the external influence of society.

Powell and Dos Passos, in their spatialized analyses of society's forces and of the artist's reaction to them, oppose the Bergsonian definition of the free act of the artist. Herf's and Jenkins' observations of and conclusions about society lead directly to their decisions to become artists. Proust's Marcel rejects the *snobisme* of French society that he has so carefully described, and Marcel would thus seem similar to Powell's and Dos Passos' heroes. But experience with societal forces in his instance seems primarily intended to contrast with the intense emotional experiences of his childhood in Combray. To these latter experiences his memory returns involuntarily in such vaguely understood episodes as those concerning the madelaine cake and the hawthorne bush. At the end, with his commitment to art, he returns voluntarily to the emotional experience of Combray.<sup>10</sup> What he has learned from society has led him back to another part of his emotional experience. For the empiricists Dos Passos and Powell there is no pure experience to which their heroes can return. Childhood in Dos Passos is a Freudian nightmare, and in the one glimpse of his childhood that Jenkins gives, the battle between will and imagination is already in progress, not yet in the drawing room, but in the kitchen. Herf and Jenkins are prepared for their novelistic careers not by the intensity of their past emotional experiences, but by their education concerning society. If art is a refuge from the forces of this society, it is a refuge created by the novelist, not even partially a refuge of past time to which he can return emotionally.

The dearth of inwardness in Dos Passos' and Powell's view of the formation of the artist is reflected in their heroes' attitudes toward their work. Herf, as mentioned earlier, formulates no aesthetic theories, does not outline great goals for his development. Jenkins can even say in passing,

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 231-232.

<sup>10</sup> For a full account of Marcel's path toward becoming an artist see Germaine Brée, *Marcel Proust and Deliverance from Time*, tr. C. J. Richards and A. D. Truitt (New York, 1958), esp. pp. 26-49.

I was then at the time of life when one has written a couple of novels, and moved from a firm that published art books to a company that produced second-feature films. To be "an author" was, of course, a recognized path of approach to this means of livelihood; so much so, indeed, that to serve a term as a script-writer was almost a routine stage in literary life.<sup>11</sup>

This statement, it should be needless to point out, would not be characteristic of young Stephen Dedalus. The artist's attitude toward his work lacks aesthetic intensity because his decision to become an artist is made as much in societal terms as in personal terms. Both Herf and Jenkins drift into their vocation, and their realization of the importance of this vocation comes not from the intense emotional impact of hearing their names shouted on a beach or from grasping the identity of the beautiful emotion of childhood and that created by a Vinteuil melody, but from their knowledge of their position in society. Their understanding of the role of the artist increases slowly and corresponds to their understanding of the relationship between the self and its societal surroundings. Dos Passos and Powell, then, are linked principally in their epistemology. Knowledge is gained in their works not from probing the hidden emotional lives of their characters, as Proust or Joyce would do, not from analyzing from different viewpoints a limited segment of experience, as Faulkner or Durrell would do, but from empirical analysis of the relation between the individual and social forces.

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<sup>11</sup> *At Lady Molly's* (Boston, 1957), p. 12.