

Chalupová, Eva

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## THE THIRTIES AND THE ARTISTRY OF LEWIS, FARRELL, DOS PASSOS AND STEINBECK

SOME REMARKS ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIAL  
AND IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE TIME

*Eva Chalupová*

The complex problem of the influence of the Nineteen-Thirties upon the creative work of Sinclair Lewis, James T. Farrell, John Dos Passos and John Steinbeck may certainly be viewed from a wide variety of angles. The influence of the revolutionary atmosphere of the Thirties is perhaps felt most strikingly in the ideological and thematic structure of those works which (as can be inferred from an analysis of the principal novels produced during the decade, Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, the trilogy *USA* by John Dos Passos, *Studs Lonigan* by James T. Farrell, and Lewis's *Ann Vickers*) become highly socially conscious and brim over with savage criticism of whatever is unjust and decadent in America and in the capitalist system.<sup>1</sup> In this study, however, I do not treat the question of the ideological and thematic structure, and I omit various other aspects, too, in order to concentrate upon one single problem: how does the influence of the Thirties assert itself as far as the artistry, style and technique of Lewis, Farrell, Dos Passos and Steinbeck are concerned?

First of all, it is necessary to realize the dependence of the progressive nature of the Thirties upon the concrete events which aroused the Americans from their lethargy and made them search for the causes of recurrent crises and for the roots of social injustice (above all, the depression with its economic and social disasters, and later, in the Thirties, the danger of fascism and war). The writers, disillusioned by the negative occurrences of the depression period (unemployment, starvation, increased exploitation), try to reflect truthfully and accurately the existing reality, without idealization or "dressing up". Consequently, in the Thirties, they all, Lewis, Farrell, Steinbeck and Dos Passos, are primarily and undoubtedly realists. (There are, besides, of course, some naturalistic, romantic or sentimental veins in their realism which I also intend to trace.)

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed analysis, see my unpublished dissertation: *The Influence of the Social and Ideological Development of the Thirties on the Creative Work of Sinclair Lewis, James T. Farrell, John Dos Passos and John Steinbeck* (Brno, 1978).

Furthermore, it may be pointed out that the writers, incited by the events of the Thirties, strive to express their protest against bourgeois America — but the new progressive content demands a new form. Therefore the writers seek for novel artistic procedures which would correspond with their new themes of penetrating criticism (for the time being, to make my point clear, let me instance at least the four experimental technical devices of John Dos Passos, treated in detail below).

The atmosphere of the Thirties, as has been suggested, necessitated the strengthening of realistic tendencies in the authors' writings. The effort to achieve the most precise representation of the chosen subject frequently entailed a predilection for exorbitant documentation, a feature that is characteristic of nearly all of them. The trilogy by John Dos Passos is overburdened with facts, scientific knowledge and documentation, which is obviously a consequence of the conception of "scientific art" advocated by the author. Dos Passos's characters are profusely documented, the biographies comprise every single detail enumerated according to a certain scheme (the place and date of birth, profession of parents, education, interests, family condition, etc.). For example, Dos Passos writes of J. Ward Moorehouse:

He was born in Wilmington, Delaware, on the Fourth of July. Poor Mrs. Moorehouse could hear the firecrackers popping and crackling outside the hospital all through her laborpains... Later Mr. Moorehouse came on his way home from the depot where he worked as stationagent and they decided to call the kid John Ward after Mrs. Moorehouse's father who was a farmer in Iowa and pretty well off... (*The 42nd Parallel* 168).<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Dos Passos starts the biographies of other characters *ab initio*. The characters are usually described in a rather dry and dusty way, as though being reported in an official document. Despite the peculiarities of their social position and way of life, they scarcely differ one from another. Critics protest against their being one-dimensional, human "automatons", "robots", exhibiting mechanical behaviour marked by a narrow range of emotions. Therefore the prevailing sense when reading Dos Passos is that of monotony.

Farrell is also prone to excessive documentation. He records each detail with absolute literalness. The main principle of his writing is the accumulation of details and the frequent repetition of single episodes, sentences and observations. For example, Farrell describes Studs Lonigan's thoughts:

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<sup>2</sup> Page numbers in quotations refer to the following editions: John Dos Passos: *Manhattan Transfer* (New York, 1925), 1919 (New York, 1932), *The Big Money* (New York, 1936), *The 42nd Parallel* (Leipzig, 1931); James T. Farrell: *Studs Lonigan: Young Lonigan, The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan, Judgement Day* (New York, 1938); Sinclair Lewis: *Ann Vickers* (London, 1965), *Cass Timberlane* (London, 1946), *Dodsworth* (London, 1930), *Gideon Planish* (Stockholm, 1944), *It Can't Happen Here* (New York, 1935), *Kingsblood Royal* (London, 1948); John Steinbeck: *In Dubious Battle* (New York, 1936), *Of Mice and Men* (New York, 1954), *The Grapes of Wrath* (New York, 1939), *Tortilla Flat* (In Pascal Civici's Selection, *The Portable Steinbeck*, New York, 1954).

He looked at Lucy. She was cute, all right. He told himself that she was cute. He told himself that he liked her. He repeated to himself that he liked her, and she was cute. (*Young Lonigan* 107.)

Farrell sees the details with almost photographic accuracy and it is not too much to say that his novels could well pass for extraordinarily dependable sociological documents. Besides, he has an ear for the recording of dialogue, especially the slang of the Chicago adolescents among whom he himself grew up:

"Hello, fellows . . . Soy, got a fag?" asked Three Star Hennessey.

"Go on home and wash your face," Red said.

"Don't be a heel," said Hennessey.

"Why don't you go to school? The truant officer will be nabbing you, and your old man will kick your ears off," said Studs, with the superior sneer warranted by age and size. (*The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan* 16.)

Like Farrell and Dos Passos, Sinclair Lewis frequently uses the documentary method, notable for its abundant detail. His descriptions of places seen and things done are extremely accurate:

To Avignon, they wandered, to San Sebastian and Madrid and Toledo and Seville. To Arles, Carcassone, Marseilles, Monte Carlo. To Genoa, Florence, Sienna, Venice, with two months divided between Naples and Rome and a jaunt to Sicily. To Vienna, Budapest, Munich, Nuremberg. And so, late in April, they came to Berlin. (*Dodsworth* 234-5.)

Lewis's faithful reproduction of reality does not manifest itself only in his close representation of external surroundings, houses, things, or persons, but also (in this he is much like Farrell) in his mimicry of speech, expressions and gesture. Moreover, Lewis's style is marked by the use of overstatement and immoderation, an artistic device which helps him to delineate character, situation, etc., as, for example, in the following case:

Quennie Havock had the brassiest voice . . . and her hair looked like brass, and her nose looked somewhat like brass, and she was such a brass-hearted . . . old brazen harridan that people describing her simply had to add, "But Quennie does have such a sense of humour and such a kind heart". (*Cass Timberlane* 27.)

Generally evaluated, Dos Passos, Farrell and Lewis share the inclination towards an absolutely precise depiction of reality by means of the documentary method. This cannot be confidently said of John Steinbeck, whose descriptive power is much less dependent upon the camera than that of Lewis or Farrell, though he, too, employs realistic detail, as, for example, in *Of Mice and Men* where many details pile up to reflect the life of American itinerant farm labourers.

It seems that Steinbeck can never be so monotonous and dryasdust as John Dos Passos in recording reality — and yet he is only too arid and dull in *In Dubious Battle*, a book permeated with disputes, controversies and debates on political issues, especially on everything which is connected with a strike. The novel *In Dubious Battle* lacks the usual Steinbeckian humour, emotionality and vivid colours — but is nevertheless

highly realistic in its description of fruit-plantations, labourers and their strike.

The orchard trees were dim behind a curtain of grey gauze. Jim looked down the line of sodden tents. The streets between the lines were already whipped to slushy mud by the feet of moving people, and the people moved constantly for there was no dry place to sit down. Lines of men waited their turns at the toilets at the ends of the streets.

Burton and Mac and Jim walked toward the stoves. Thick blue smoke poured from the chimneys. On the stove-tops the wash-boilers of mush bubbled, and the cooks stirred with long sticks. Jim felt the mist penetrating down his neck. He pulled his jacket closer and buttoned the top button. "I need a bath," he said. (*In Dubious Battle* 210.)

However different Steinbeck may appear, he has the one highly important thing in common with Lewis, Dos Passos and Farrell — he is likewise a realist. His picture of the life of the poor is decidedly realistic. But Steinbeck's realism does not assert itself by means of the photographic transcription of each detail; he is an artist on a higher level. Steinbeck's critical realism, it is very interesting to note, matures under the influence of the Thirties and is finally (in *The Grapes of Wrath*) capable of great generalizations. In the following passage, Steinbeck clearly draws a general conclusion valid for all capitalist exploitation:

There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation. There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize. There is a failure here that topples all our success. The fertile earth, the straight tree rows, the sturdy trunks, and the ripe fruit. And children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange. And coroners must fill in the certificates — died of malnutrition — because the food must rot, must be forced to rot. (*The Grapes of Wrath* 477.)

As was suggested, Steinbeck's realism does not confine itself to the strictly literal reproduction of reality. On the contrary, Steinbeck frequently plunges into vague symbols and half-expressed suggestions: it may be stated that in his works, especially in *The Grapes of Wrath*, symbolism inseparably complements realism. The symbols are entrusted with important tasks in Steinbeck's fiction. The account of a dust storm in the first chapter of *The Grapes of Wrath*, for example, represents a symbolic picture of a wrathful atmosphere. The last chapter (Rosa-sharn's offering her milk to a starving man) symbolizes the humanism of the nation and its longing for life, its resistance to the forces of evil and a collective will to endure and to be victorious.

Ma's eyes passed Rose of Sharon's eyes, and then came back to them. And the two women looked deep into each other. The girl's breath came short and gasping. She said "Yes".

Ma smiled. "I knowed you would. I knowed!" . . .

Rose of Sharon loosened one side of the blanket and bared her breast. "You got to," she said. She squirmed closer and pulled his head close. "There!" she said. "There." Her hand moved behind his head and supported it. Her fingers moved gently in his hair. She looked up and across the barn, and her lips came together and smiled mysteriously. (*The Grapes of Wrath* 618-9.)

It is sometimes stated that Steinbeck's works, including his greatest, suffer from sentimentalism or even from melodrama. (The closing scene

of Rosasharn nursing the starving man is really rather melodramatic.) This can also be said of Sinclair Lewis (let us recall the sentimental happy ending of *Ann Vickers*). But as J. D. Adams has it, "Though there was a strong romantic vein in the temperaments of both, they were realists in practice, and though sentimentality sometimes marred their work, it was not their controlling frame of mind".<sup>3</sup>

Both Steinbeck and Lewis are good story-tellers; Steinbeck is unanimously considered a first-rate novelist while Lewis is frequently denied this evaluation because of his technical flaws and carelessness of style. Nevertheless, Lewis is praised for having a story-teller's imagination, for his story is always so absorbing that he seldom fails to hold the reader's attention up to the last page.

There is no doubt that John Steinbeck and Sinclair Lewis are serious critical realists, deeply concerned with the problems of their native country. And yet their work always retains occasional flashes of humour. Even in the midst of the depression when they were sincerely sobered by the existing reality, they were capable of comic writing. At the same time, it must be admitted that Lewis's humour was always rather sarcastic and sardonic, thus corresponding to his critical purposes and to his theme. One of the most humorous of Lewis's books is *Gideon Planish*, exposing the New Deal climate and consisting of a whole gallery of comic characters — senators, Episcopalians, professors, aristocrats (Winifred Homeward, the Talking Woman; Sanderson-Smith, smoothing the way for European fascism in America; Colonel Marduc, the king of all advertising men).

As for Steinbeck, his *Tortilla Flat* is filled with good-natured humour and in *The Grapes of Wrath* there are several comic scenes. A reader cannot but smile when Steinbeck introduces the comic figure of Grampa:

... a lean, ragged, quick old man, jumping with quick steps and favoring his right leg — the side that come out of joint. He was buttoning his fly as he came, and his old hands were having trouble finding the buttons, for he had buttoned the top button into the second buttonhole, and that threw the whole sequence off... His was a lean excitable face with little bright eyes as evil as a frantic child's eyes. A cantankerous, complaining, mischievous, laughing face. He fought and argued, told dirty stories. He was as lecherous as always... He drank too much when he could get it, ate too much when it was there, talked too much all the time. (*The Grapes of Wrath* 104-5.)

*In Dubious Battle* is the only exception, lacking any humour whatsoever, and it is therefore felt as something incongruous with the rest of Steinbeck's work in the Thirties.

I am not for a moment trying to maintain that Steinbeck's was a care-free humour laughing at the pressing problems of America in the 1930's, I only want to suggest that the grim events of the Thirties did not necessarily call forth a grim response as far as the method of artistic presentation is concerned (as was the case with Farrell and Dos Passos, whose novels of the Thirties were indeed agonizingly gloomy). In this respect,

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<sup>3</sup> Adams, J. D., *The Writer's Responsibility* (London, 1946), p. 129.

Alfred Kazin has suggested that Steinbeck promised "a realism less terror-ridden than the depression novel, yet one consciously responsible to society; a realism mindful of the terror and disorganization of contemporary life, but not submissive to the spiritual stupor of the time".<sup>4</sup>

John Dos Passos and James T. Farrell record the most unpleasant facts with grim and sober straightforwardness and overscrupulous realism reminding one of a naturalistic approach. Farrell openly claims his adherence to literary naturalism, which he himself calls "social naturalism". He has much in common with Theodore Dreiser, though he excels his predecessor in being more objective and less sentimental, and rather adopts the scientific detachment of Zola, letting hideous reality speak by its own repulsiveness.

The influence of the Thirties, as regards the artistry of the writers in question, perhaps asserts itself most powerfully in making the authors search for the most suitable artistic devices to correspond to their progressive, topical theme. And in fact the writers frequently hit upon strikingly novel or highly experimental devices and implanted several technical innovations in their method of artistic presentation.

In the Thirties, John Dos Passos repudiated the excessively kaleidoscopic approach which had been dominant in *Manhattan Transfer*, the novel he published in 1925, and tried to draw more generalizing conclusions. Aiming at the most appropriate expression of his denouncement of bourgeois America in his trilogy *USA*, Dos Passos turned to daring experimentation. He invented a new set of four technical devices: the portraits of twelve fictional characters; more than twenty biographies of actual public figures — the Living Biographies; the Newsreels; and the Camera Eye.

The characters are taken up in rotation, their stories crossing and re-crossing without any regard for the bearings of one on another. Interspersed among the stories of the characters are the brief biographies of actual people. They are not presented as though in an encyclopedia listing outstanding celebrities, but each biography is rather written as an elaborate poem in prose, giving the author, as Beach has it, "his best chance to show his hand".<sup>5</sup> Let us, for the sake of illustrating Dos Passos's art, quote a passage from the first biography:

#### LOVER OF MANKIND

Debs was a railroad man,  
born in a weatherboarded shack at Terre Haute.  
He was of ten children.

His father had come to America in a sailingship in '49,  
an Alsatian from Colmar; not much a moneymaker, fond of music and reading,  
he gave his children a chance to finish public school and that was about all he could do.

At fifteen Gene Debs was already working as a machinist on the Indianapolis and Terre Haute Railway.

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<sup>4</sup> Kazin, A., *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature* (New York, 1942), p. 393.

<sup>5</sup> Beach, J. W., *American Fiction (1920-1940)* (New York, 1942), p. 59.

Where were Gene Debs's brothers in nineteen eighteen when Woodrow Wilson  
had locked him up in Atlanta for speaking against war,  
where were the big men fond of whiskey and fond of each other, gentle rambling  
tellers of stories over bars in small towns in the Middle West,  
quiet men who wanted a house with a porch to putter around and a fat wife  
to cook for them, a few drinks and cigars, a garden to dig in, cronies to chew the  
rag with  
and wanted to work for it  
and others to work for it... (*The 42nd Parallel* 30-1.)

The Newsreel is a disorderly montage of newspaper headlines, articles,  
advertising slogans and lines from popular songs selected to evoke the  
image of a reader scanning a newspaper and hearing or singing a song;  
the montage places the action in the calendar of history. The first News-  
reel (Newsreel XX) of the second volume of the trilogy (1919), for ex-  
ample, brilliantly evokes the atmosphere of the war years:

Oh the infantree the infantree  
With the dirt behind their ears  
ARMIES CLASH AT VERDUN IN GLOBE'S  
GREATEST BATTLE  
150,00 MEN AND WOMEN PARADE  
but another question and a very important one is raised. The New York Stock  
Exchange is today the only free securities market in the world. If it maintains that  
position it is sure to become perhaps the world's greatest center for the marketing of  
BRITISH FLEET SENT TO SEIZE  
GOLDEN HORN  
The cavalree artilleree  
And the goddamned engineers  
Will never beat the infantree  
In eleven thousand years  
TURKS FLEE BEFORE TOMMIES AT  
GALLIPOLI... (1919 p. 3)

The most complicated device is the Camera Eye, a lyrical passage where  
the author speaks directly, expressing the stream of his consciousness,  
his own commentary on the epoch described in the trilogy and at the  
same time the author's appeal to his contemporaries.

#### THE CAMERA EYE (40)

I walked all over town general strike no buses no taxicabs the gates of the Metro  
closed Place de Iéna I saw red flags Anatole France in a white beard placards  
MUTILES DE LA GUERRE and the nutcracker faces of the agents de sureté  
Mort aux vaches  
at the place de la Concorde the Republican Guards in christmastree helmets  
were riding among the crowd whacking the Parisians with the flat of their swords  
scraps of the International worriedlooking soldiers in their helmets lounging with  
grounded arms all along the Grands Boulevards... (1919, pp. 400-1.)

While *The Camera Eye* (40) comments on the working-class riots in  
Paris during the years of World War I, the author at the same time  
clearly alludes to his own stormy period of the Thirties.

Generally, Dos Passos's structural plan was highly praised. The Soviet  
critics, however, warned against the mechanistic character of Dos Passos's



experimentation and especially against the lack of organic connection among various structural elements.

Dos Passos's new technique inspired John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath* to create special chapters — essays on the general situation, complementing the chapters dealing with the Joads. There are thirty chapters in the novel, fourteen devoted to the fate of the Joad family. The remaining brief chapters are lyrical and journalistic essays, authorial commentaries, episodes from U.S. life, etc.

In contradistinction to John Dos Passos, Steinbeck aimed at creating one organic whole formed of all the structural components; the chapters are unified by one common idea and even by a common action (the development of America in the period of the impoverished life of the Oklahoma farmers in California). Steinbeck's experimentation, like Dos Passos's, was bold. Yet *The Grapes of Wrath* was not regarded (in contrast to *USA*) as an experiment because it immediately passed into tradition, as J. N. Zasursky pointed out.<sup>6</sup>

James T. Farrell is not so versatile and skilful a craftsman as Steinbeck. His style lacks variety, despite the stylistic experimentation of *Gas-House McGinty*, published in 1933, which deliberately neglects plot.

Turning to Farrell's more famous creations, the Studs Lonigan and Danny O'Neill series, we find the author's style rather plain and sober. As Kazin has it, Farrell "wrote with his hands and feet and any bludgeon within reach... He had the naturalist's familiar contempt for style, but it became a significant style in itself... whose success lay in the almost quantitative disgust with which Farrell recorded each detail". And so we may say that in the Thirties Farrell acquired a distinctive, unattractive but effective style which reacted to the cruel and violent reality by the cruelty and violence of artistic expression. Let us supply at least one example of Farrell's "rough" style:

He knew that he was being followed. As soon as he had a chance he'd run. He walked, as if he wasn't quaking with fear. He glanced back. Two of the bruisers were drawing close to him. He started to run. He tripped. They cold-cocked him, and left him unconscious. They weren't letting a runty, hook-nosed kike get their dough.

The two bruisers fought over the dough, and one of them was laid out. When Davey came to, feeling the bump on his head, he cried like a baby. Christ, wouldn't he ever get a decent break? (*The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan* 62.)

In spite of the seeming carelessness of his style, Farrell was a novelist who intentionally cultivated his technique so that it might best serve his purpose.

Though Sinclair Lewis, like Farrell, is blamed by many critics for his frequent carelessness of style, he cannot equal Farrell in brutality and harshness of artistic presentation. Lewis has other weapons to hit the object of his criticism with; he is not so gloomy and prefers to ridicule and mock the unhealthy phenomena. His favourite weapon is irony. He combines contradictory elements so that their total makes an impression

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<sup>6</sup> Zasursky, J. N., *Amerikanskaya literatura XX veka* (Moskva, 1966), p. 332.

of irony. This enables him to provide his books with an author's commentary, an ironic commentary based on absurd contrast. Introducing Judge Dolphin, Ann Vicker's lover, Lewis writes:

He was a competent scholar, a giver of sane and honest verdicts — and he was a notorious devotee of wine and wenching; he delivered authoritative lectures in the lawschools — and he was an associate of all the most extravagantly dressed, cynically dissipated higher politicians of the state. (*Ann Vickers* 295–6.)

More characteristic of Lewis in the Thirties, however, was not so much gentle irony, for he had been greatly embittered by the crisis and its consequences, as sarcasm and satire, which he used extremely effectively. Besides, later in the Thirties the danger of fascism sharpened the edge of Lewis's criticism and his artistic expression became more bitter and brutal in the face of the threatening war. The ensuing passage from Lewis's anti-war novel perfectly demonstrates the author's effective satire:

Doremus Jessup, so inconspicuous an observer, watching Senator Windrip from so a humble a Boeotia, could not explain his power of bewitching large audiences. The Senator was vulgar, almost illiterate, a public liar easily detected, and his "ideas" almost idiotic, while his celebrated piety was that of a traveling salesman for church furniture, and his yet more celebrated humor the sly cynicism of a country store. (*It Can't Happen Here* 86.)

*It Can't Happen Here*, an unprecedented attempt by Sinclair Lewis at an epic novel, brought the author world-wide fame. It illustrates, according to B. A. Gilenson, "how the creative diapason of the practitioners of critical realism has widened under the healthy influence of the atmosphere of the social and aesthetic struggles of the 1930's".<sup>7</sup>

Even if we realize that Sinclair Lewis was distinguished as an artist before the advent of the Thirties, we should not overlook the fact that his style was moulded into a more polished shape in the course of this decade and that his later novels (*Ann Vickers*, *It Can't Happen Here*, *Gideon Planish*, *Kingsblood Royal*, *Cass Timberlane*) were stylistically better written.

This analysis has led me to the conclusion that the influence of the developments of the Thirties on the style and narrative technique of Lewis, Farrell, Dos Passos and Steinbeck asserts itself most clearly in the endeavour of the authors to reflect truthfully and accurately social reality by means of the documentary method or the accumulation of details (Dos Passos, Farrell, Lewis) or by realistic detail combined with symbol and suggestion (Steinbeck), and in the search for strikingly novel and experimental devices corresponding to the progressive content of the novels (the four technical innovations of Dos Passos, and Steinbeck's lyric and journalistic essays).

Finally, I venture to deduce that, in general, under the influence of the Thirties, the four writers gained enormously as artists — they matured artistically. Their style and technique underwent substantial changes and developed into a highly effective and distinctive form.

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<sup>7</sup> Gilenson, B. A., *Amerikanskaya literatura 30kh godov XX veka* (Moskva, 1974), p. 288–289.

## NĚKOLIK POZNÁMEK K VLIVU SOCIÁLNÍCH A IDEOVÝCH PROUDŮ 30. LET NA STYL A VYPRÁVĚCÍ TECHNIKU LEWISE, FARRELLA, DOS PASSOSE A STEINBECKA

Studie zkoumá vliv společenských a ideových proudů 30. let na styl a vyprávěcí techniku čtyř významných amerických prozaiků, Sinclaira Lewise, Jamese T. Farrella, Johna Dos Passose a Johna Steinbecka. Tento vliv se projevuje především v úsilí autorů pravdivě a přesně zobrazit společenskou realitu prostřednictvím dokumentární metody či akumulací detailů (Dos Passos, Lewis, Farrell) nebo realistickým detailem kombinovaným se symbolem a náznakem (Steinbeck). Vliv 30. let se dále projevuje ve snaze dát tvorbě pokrokový obsah a v hledání nové vyprávěcí techniky k vyjádření tohoto nového obsahu. (Dos Passosova experimentální technika v trilogii *USA* a Steinbeckovy lyrické a žurnalistické eseje v *Hroznech hněvu*.) V této souvislosti studie zvlášť pojednává o stylu Farrella a Lewise, který sice nemá charakter experimentu, ale pod vlivem 30. let nabývá na účinnosti. Události a myšlenkové proudy 30. let ovlivnily všechny čtyři autory natolik, že si vytvořili svůj osobitý styl a dva z nich navíc nové stylistické prostředky k zachycení pokrokového obsahu svých děl.