The Concept of the Individual in Five American War Novels

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THE CONCEPT OF THE INDIVIDUAL
IN
FIVE AMERICAN WAR NOVELS

BY
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of the requirements for the degree
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THE CONCEPT OF THE INDIVIDUAL

IN

FIVE AMERICAN WAR NOVELS

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Arts, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Dr. Charles Woodard Date
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The Concept of the Romanticized Individual in Five American War Novels

A range of attitudes exists within war literature, from the great epics celebrating the victories of war to the disillusioned novels attempting to re-create war’s atrocities. Within this range lie the questions of right and wrong, truth and lies, justice and injustice. While these questions are not easily answered, the artist struggles with many variants to expose what he or she believes to be true. One of the many aspects which the artist attempts to deal with in the American war novel is the psychology of the individual soldier searching for answers, and for truth. Usually the protagonist is fighting much more than an "evil enemy"; he is fighting nature, society, and most of all, his conscience.

Eberhart and Rodman write in their study of war poetry that there was a "transition ... from the action level to the psychological" which occurred over many centuries (xxxiii). While earlier poets were inclined to write about heroism and the virtues of courage, the modern poet attempts to understand the darker side of war and to contemplate the
non-heroes. He looks beyond the illusions of the man who dies for his home and country, and speaks instead for the common man who must make real decisions concerning life and death, right and wrong, reality and illusion, as he faces a death that belongs not only to his country, family, or friends, but also to himself. The protagonists in this study are fighting nature, society and their consciences as much as they are fighting wars. They must fight their illusions about war, i.e., heroism and courage. The individual in these American war novels is a character saturated with illusions which he must overcome once he confronts reality.

The five American war novels I have chosen for this study are: Stephen Crane’s The Red Badge of Courage, Ernest Hemingway’s A Farewell To Arms, John Dos Passos’s Three Soldiers, Joseph Heller’s Catch-22, and Tim O’Brien’s Going After Cacciato. These novels fit the definition of a war novel only in a general sense, i.e., the setting is a war and the protagonists are combatants in that war. Beyond this, the study is significant because of the similarities between the main characters. In each of these novels, the main characters have common personality traits which identify them as "individuals." Basically, these characters set themselves apart from their fellow man. They are different because they have raised consciences or more sensitive natures than the other characters. Also in each novel, the main characters
escape or leave their situations in one form or another, which enables them to contemplate their situations in a different light and come to a renewed understanding or awareness. These novels also have in common what Peter Aichinger points out in his study, *The American Soldier in Fiction*:

If American society in general offers a special threat to this aspect of existence [the idea of individuality], then the war novel—or more specifically the antiwar novel—is the perfect medium for working out a response to the threat, since it pits the individual against the organization that above all others specializes in reducing men to interchangeable parts of a machine. (110)

As the main character in each of these novels begins to learn of his insignificance, the author allows the character to escape from the harsh realities of the situation to a more gentle haven where he attempts to find peace or attempts to better understand his situation.

In the late nineteenth century came the great romantic period in America when the individual took on new meaning and developments. The idealized individual in a democratic society was contemplated by early American intellectuals. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a major voice in the 1830's and 1840's contributing much to the development of the idea of
the individual. In his "Historic Notes of Life and Letters in New England," Emerson comments on the American intellectual movement during this time:

'the mind had become aware of itself. Men grew reflective and intellectual. There was a new consciousness. The former generations acted under the belief that a shining social prosperity was the beatitude of man, and sacrificed uniformly the citizen to the State. The modern mind believed that the nation existed for the individual, for the guardianship and education of every man. This idea, roughly written in revolutions and national movements, in the mind of the philosopher had far more precision; the individual is the world.'

(Mattheissen 6)

Emerson believed that society should exist for the individual. The ultimate duty of government in a democratic state is to protect, foster, and promote the individual.

The exaltation of the individual in America occurred as part of a transformation within the religious sectors. As Americans drew away from the strict Puritanism which relied heavily on the domination of God and the truth of the Bible, a manifestation of man as the center of the universe had occurred. This change is noted as part of the "American Renaissance" described by F. O. Matthiessen. As well, Roy H.
Pearce dubs it the "breakthrough" and describes it as follows:

... from 1830 to the Civil War and just after—is above all marked by the carrying-through of that transformation: from egocentrism sought after because it manifests an ultimate theocentrism, to an egocentrism sought after for its own sake, as it is taken to be one with theocentrism; from poetry expressive of God's way with man, to a poetry expressive of man's way with himself and with the God which his sense of himself reveals. (19)

Above all, the artist felt a need to be in touch with his individual self in order to express "his" art.

Emerson and his followers began to use the imagination to understand life. They wrote from the point of view of the individual rather than from a set of standards, forms, or classical traditions. They promoted an "organic" form which was a more natural and introspective method of writing. Compared to classicism, which stood for restraint, dominance of reason, unity and self-control in form, this organic form of writing was a more free, self-expression by the writer. Richard Fogle explains this type of writing:

The most complex relationships were now seen to be organic rather than merely mechanical; whereas reality had once been figured as a smoothly working
watch, a great and orderly machine, the analogy for it now became the growing plant or tree. Along with life itself, the mysterious process of growth stood forth as the central component in creation. Thus all things move, develop, grow, and to cease to grow is death. Reality is not static, but alive, ever moving and changing. And to penetrate into this reality is a gift of the imagination, which alone can relate man to nature, subject to object, the human mind to its external environment. (3)

This way of writing became a method by which the artist could look within himself for inspiration, not only for the content, but also for the form of his works. The artist began to explore and write from innate feelings and thoughts rather than from predetermined patterns.

The form of art for Emerson and his followers grew from a belief that the basic core of humanity was good and godlike and "the highest revelation is that God is in every man" (8). One of their recurrent themes was the "all in each of human nature" (8), which meant that each individual contains within himself, through intuition, the whole range of experience. Leslie Fiedler explains the beliefs of Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau as follows:
Some of the key assumptions [of Transcendentalism] are: that the real world is a world of ideas not apparent to the senses; that nature is beneficent and rational, and that man is, therefore, at home in the universe; that, in fact, both man and Nature participate in God, who is not finally separate from either; that consequently the fittest church is unadorned Nature itself and the truest Bible the heart of the lonely thinker; that a man alone with himself is closest to perfection and that mass society tends to corrupt him; that there is no evil illusions and distrust of the self. Such beliefs urge upon man as his essential duty the act of saying 'Yea!' to everything, of crying out, 'I accept the Universe!' (431)

Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau exuded a certain goodness in their beliefs and a certain optimism in their art. When Whitman wrote, "I celebrate myself, and sing myself/And what I assume you shall assume/For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you" (Whitman 49), he meant the "I" to include every man and for each to equally celebrate life. According to Matthiessen, "Whitman wanted his book to compel 'every reader to transpose himself or herself into the central position, and become the living fountain.' He took his final pleasure in reflecting; 'I have imagined a life which
should be that of the average man in average circumstances, and still grand, heroic’’ (650). Emerson and Whitman believed that man, the individual, the "I," should be the center of the universe. The individual should be manifest and his instincts, perceptions, and intuitions should be most important. Thoreau wrote in *Walden or, Life in the Woods*:

> It is not for a man to put himself in such an attitude to society [that is to take justice into his own hands such as committing highway robbery], but to maintain himself in whatever attitude he finds himself through obedience to the laws of his being, which will never be one of opposition to a just government, if he should chance to meet with such.

(214)

This points out the positive faith these artists had in the individual and his nature.

In contrast to this positive view of the individual, the beliefs of Melville and Hawthorne show a more negative outlook. Again turning to Leslie Fiedler, he describes the assumptions about the individual found in the works of Melville and Hawthorne:

> ... that the world of appearance is at once real and a mask through which we can dimly perceive more ultimate forces at work; that Nature is inscrutable, perhaps basically hostile to man, but cer-
tainly in some sense alien; that in man and Nature alike, there is a 'diabolic' element, a 'mystery of iniquity'; that it is impossible to know fully either God or ourselves, and that our only protection from destructive self-deceit is the pressure and presence of others; that to be alone is, therefore, to be lost; that evil is real, and that the thinking man breaks his heart trying to solve its compatibility with the existence of goodness. From this it follows that the writer's duty is to say, 'Nay!', to deny the easy affirmations by which most men live, and to expose the blackness of life most men try deliberately to ignore. For tragic Humanists [the term Fiedler uses to define Melville and Hawthorne as opposed to Transcendentalists], it is the function of art not to console or sustain, much less to entertain, but to disturb by telling a truth which is always unwelcome . . .

The individual in this context is a man struggling for his importance in an uncaring universe. The nature of man, embodying both good and evil, becomes a burden and an uncontrollable force against the promotion of the individual in the perfect society envisioned by writers like Emerson. Nature is not all good and compromising to mankind; Melville and Hawthorne find a real "diabolic" element in nature. They
believe the only way to combat this evil is to be truthful with oneself about evil. The important element concerning the individual in these two opposing views is that Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau believed that the individual is closest to perfection when alone, with society as an aid to help the individual become his best. They believed that man is basically good and god-like and that society should be set up to foster man's natural self. Melville and Hawthorne believed that man must be accountable to the presence of others and that to be alone is to be lost. They believed that if one looks beyond the masks that nature and society wear, one will find the disturbing truths of life or the evil side which is in all of us. Therefore, we can determine that Emerson, et al., believed in the individual, while Melville and Hawthorne believed that individualism may only be an illusion.

The novels selected in this study extend the exploration of the concept of the individual in relation to himself and in relation to his environment and society. The authors of these novels tend to agree with the views of Melville and Hawthorne and the idea of the diabolic nature of mankind, yet, they attempt to keep their protagonists innocent. The five main characters of this study are faced with reality while they themselves are portrayed as romantic characters. They are romantic in the sense that they believe in the
romantic illusion of the individual. In other words, quoting from a definition of Romanticism in *A Handbook to Literature*, romanticism is:

a literary and philosophical theory which tends to see the individual at the very center of all life and all experience, and places him, therefore, at the center of art, making literature most valuable as an expression of his unique feelings and particular attitudes and valuing its accuracy in portraying his experiences, however fragmentary and incomplete, more than it values its adherence to completeness, unity, or the demands of genre. It places a high premium upon the creative function of the imagination, seeing art as a formulation of intuitive imaginative perceptions that tend to speak a nobler truth than that of fact, logic, or the here and now. (468)

Each of the protagonists in the five novels is at the center of the work and the authors examine his personal feelings. As well, each novelist uses imaginative perceptions rather than relying on the basic facts.

The first two protagonists, Henry Fleming and Frederic Henry, seem to want to return to a more natural world where one does not have to think so much. They seem most capable reacting to the world in a natural, instinctive manner, and
as they think for themselves, they are confused and lost. They both escape to a simpler, natural world (the woods and Switzerland) in an attempt to find the truth. The middle two protagonists, John Andrews and Yossarian, react to an overbearing society in which their individualism is totally lost. They begin to figure out ways to escape the system, but only in a superficial manner. They also are the center of the work of art and the novelist uses their belief in the individual to point out a nobler truth about society. The final protagonist, Paul Berlin, learns to accept his society and deal with it in a conscious and/or conscientious manner. O'Brien uses an imaginative perception to find the truth in the fantasy sequence.

All of the authors use the romanticism described above by having their protagonists escape from the realities of war to a different setting. While Henry Fleming remains in confusion about his delusions of individualism, Frederic Henry takes a cynical stand towards it in the end. Then, John Andrews and Yossarian keep up the fight for individualism by becoming a martyr for it (Andrews) or superficially freeing himself from society (Yossarian). Finally, Paul Berlin realizes the illusion of the individual, comes to terms with it, and declares his commitment or obligation to others.
The significance of this study is derived from tracing the individual in a similar context and with similar qualities. What this study finds is a rise of consciousness in the characters through the romantic or fanciful sequences in the novels. The form of romanticism comes in the escape sequences which utilize the authors' imaginations. By examining these escapes into the imagination, we see a growing awareness of each character coming to terms with the concept of the individual.
The Confusion

of the First Romanticized

Individual in the American War Novel

When Stephen Crane wrote *The Red Badge of Courage*, he became the first American novelist to "define in his novel the form that deals with war and its effect upon the sensitive individual who is inextricably involved" (Solomon 72). Ernest Hemingway and others would emulate and build on this form that parodied the traditional ideals in which many young soldiers went to war believing and which created an experience for the individual that "tested his mind and spirit in a situation of great tension" (72). Many critics believe that Crane was one of few artists of his time who did not romanticize war to the extent that past artists did. Instead, he spoke more realistically of the sentimental term, "hero."

Henry Fleming, as the hero or anti-hero of the novel, is filled with grand illusions of himself. He believes he is special and different from the other men, yet Crane does not allow Fleming to become the typical hero. While Fleming epitomizes the romantic hero in thought, his actions are much
different. Henry is not the romantic hero like Homer's Achilles, for example, but becomes a hero, of sorts, by false means. Like a romantic hero, Henry Fleming in The Red Badge of Courage seems to be an egocentric character who has illusions of being a hero. Henry is terribly confused by his own thoughts and feelings which just do not coincide with the actions society expects of him. Stallman writes of the "conceit of man," and that at the end of his novels, Crane's protagonists find that they are not great or grand, but small and insignificant in the whole scheme of things. Yet, in The Red Badge of Courage, Crane's second novel, the protagonist retains a separate consciousness to the end allowing him a sense of the illusion of the individual.

Crane and Hemingway both asserted a certain individualism in their writing as well as in their personal lives. Philip Young writes:

Often dedicated in their attitudes and their work to the annihilation of romantic idealisms and lies, both men seem themselves romantic individualists. Both stubbornly self-reliant, they disdained those who would not strike out for themselves, and as a result both held unpopular attitudes toward people who condoned or awaited a social reliance. Both opposed and insulted respectability, violated in dress, language, frankness and behavior the genteel
traditions of their periods, and developed defiant affections for people in disrepute. (Bassan 53)

The protagonists in their novels, Henry Fleming and Frederic Henry, are individualists like their authors. Both characters strike out on their own. They are self-reliant, refusing to conform to their social situations.

In *The Red Badge of Courage*, Henry Fleming is different from the other men. He has a conscience which the other men do not seem to have and which the reader observes throughout the novel. Several times in the novel Henry comments on his uniqueness: "He mused seriously upon the radical difference between himself and those men who were dodging implike around the fires" (RBC 19). Later, arguing about bravery with the loud soldier, Fleming thinks: "his [Fleming's] failure to discover any mite of resemblance in their viewpoints made him more miserable than before. No one seemed to be wrestling with such a terrific personal problem. He [Fleming] was a mental outcast" (21). Throughout the novel, Fleming thinks he possesses a deeper insight, perception, and knowledge than the rest of the men. Crane has given Fleming the conscience to realize the lies that men go to battle believing in and then contrasted that with the rest of the men who seem to unconsciously accept their fates. Through this contrast, we see the difference between the individual who believes in himself and an innate, natural response to life and the
individual who readily accepts the social realities of his life.

Henry seems to represent a form of the organic principle used by Emerson and Whitman. Crane uses Henry as a natural, organic reaction to war. Henry is fresh. He is more innocent and natural than the other men and less contorted by society. Fleming is a young farm boy. Compared to his compatriots, he is neither worldly nor experienced as are some of them. He remembers the great feats written about in the Greek epics, and actually expects and waits for them to happen. Fleming's fresh naivete contrasts with his continual acclamations that he is deeper and more intelligent than the rest of the men. This dichotomy causes an irony or confusion for the reader who is uncertain about Fleming's character.

Several critics have commented on the character of Henry Fleming. Leo Gurko has this explanation for the seeming lack of characterization: "the theory of the individual being strangled by social forces makes it all but impossible to allow him [Fleming] his own independence and latitude. From the start he is doomed to a losing battle" (62). Robert Shulman writes: "this modern American Everyman lacks the emotional and intellectual capacity to make sense of his shifting, violent world . . . at best Henry Fleming represents an image of man diminished from that in 'Song of Myself' or 'Self-Reliance'" (15). Both of these critics
find a lack of character in Fleming and both seem to put the blame on the external environment. John Wrenn explains Fleming's character as "a mere speck in an indifferent universe" (114), which seems to be the effect for which Crane was striving. Henry seems to embody the characteristics of the individual which Emerson and Whitman championed, but because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to maintain them.

Henry Fleming begins his journey to war with some grand illusions. Fleming wants to believe he is a hero, but reality proves otherwise. First, when he leaves home, he expects a great speech and a big fanfare from his mother. Instead, he gets this sound advice:

Still, she had disappointed him by saying nothing whatever about returning with his shield or on it. He had privately primed himself for a beautiful scene. But her words destroyed his plans.... 'You watch out, Henry, an' take good care of yerself in this here fighting business--you watch out, an' take good care of yerself. Don't go a-thinkin' you can lick the hull rebel army at the start, because yeh can't. Yer just one little feller amongst a hull lot of others, and yeh've got to keep quiet an' do what they tell yeh. I know how you are, Henry.'

(RBC 6-7)
Henry's mother continues her speech in an unromantic, non-Greeklike manner. Her matter-of-fact style defeats a small part of Henry's ego. Likewise, when he leaves from the train station, some friends and admirers cheer him on. However, what sticks in his mind is the dark, demure girl who looks "sad at the sight of his blue and brass" (8). Images of his mother and this girl recur in his thoughts as he struggles with his capabilities as a soldier or as he would like to believe, a hero.

When Henry gets into camp with the other men, he begins to anticipate the ensuing battles and wonders whether he will fight admirably or turn and flee. Henry not only wonders about what he will do when faced with the situation of battle, but also wonders about the legitimacy of fleeing. Henry Fleming is in perpetual turmoil over this question. Nothing is constant for Henry. His character is forever being challenged on this issue. For example, just when he was "into an ecstasy of self-satisfaction" (RBC 43) for passing the first trial in battle, he sees a regiment of men who stayed and fought. "This sight also filled him with wonder. The brigade was hurrying briskly to be gulped into the infernal mouths of the war god. What manner of men were they, anyhow? Ah, it was some wondrous breed! Or else they didn't comprehend--the fools" (RBC 48). In Chapter Seven, after he has fled from his regiment, he carries "the guilt of
a criminal," yet "he knew it could be proved that they [his comrades] had been fools" (52). As Henry's illusion of the individual begins to break down around him, he looks elsewhere for assurance that his actions are correct.

As Henry steps into the thick woods, he looks to the natural world for answers:

After a time the sound of musketry grew faint and the cannon blazed in the distance. The sun, suddenly apparent, blazed among the trees. The insects were making rhythmic noises. They seemed to be grinding their teeth in unison. A woodpecker stuck his impudent head around the side of a tree. A bird flew on lighthearted wing.

Off was the rumble of death. It seemed now that Nature had no ears.

This landscape gave him assurance. A fair field holding life. It was a religion of peace. It would die if its timid eyes were compelled to see blood. He conceived Nature to be a woman with a deep aversion to tragedy.

(RBC 53)

Henry was fortunate and glad to find this calm setting within the battle mania all around him. However, what Fleming learns from this experience may be Crane's way of pointing out his beliefs about nature and romance as an artist. While Henry is happy in his little haven, to further his certainty
that nature is on his side, he throws a pine cone at a squirrel and it naturally flees just as he had done in the face of danger. "'There was the law,' he said. 'Nature had given him a sign'" (53). Henry believes this to be an affirmation of nature and his previous responses to war. However, Crane seems to parody Emerson and Thoreau, for what Fleming finds next is more like the ideas of Melville and Hawthorne, who believed that to be alone is to be lost and that nature is mysterious and, at times, diabolical (Fiedler 431-432). For again, Henry is jilted. As he goes deeper into the forest, he comes upon a chapel-like area with a religious half-light. It is here that nature forsakes him once again, as the area reveals a decaying corpse.

Donald B. Gibson writes that Crane sees nature differently than Emerson and Thoreau. They basically see nature as "an intermediary whose existence allows access to a higher level of reality, of being" (66). Gibson continues: "Crane did not entertain the notion that any kind of sympathetic bond exists between humankind and nature . . . . He was the first American writer to write from the perspective that the human mind, consciousness, distances humans from nature" (69). Whereas Emerson and Thoreau saw nature as a means to self-exploration and self-knowledge, Crane found it inconsistent, mysterious, dubious and even conniving. When Henry comes out of the woods, he is still dazed and wandering
about. Henry is lost and confused in the woods and has learned that nature is indifferent to his situation. He now wants to go back to his regiment, but finds that it is not that easy.

When he begins marching with the wounded troops, he discovers his feelings of shame and guilt for his previous actions. As he marches along with the obviously wounded men, Henry is ashamed that he does not have a wound and feels he must hide the fact. Henry feels most guilty when he runs into his friend, Jim Conklin, and can do nothing to comfort him in his death. Henry now begins to feel the importance of social actions. He starts to realize his obligation to his fellow man. As Melville and Hawthorne believed, Henry also begins to see that it is through the scrutiny of others that we learn about ourselves.

Henry Fleming is learning now the social consequences of his "individual" actions. He is learning the importance of his conscience. His greatest desire now is to receive a wound so he can return to his regiment with dignity rather than the shame and guilt he presently feels. Ironically, Henry receives his wound, but not in any dignified manner. In fact, it is when Henry is pestering a determined soldier about the status of fighting, from which Henry has lost touch, that Henry receives his battle wound. An undignified scene, but Henry gets by with it, because when he is returned
to his regiment with the help of a kindly, cheerful soldier, Henry is readily welcomed.

Back with his regiment, Henry is witness to another interesting human development. He notices a change in Wilson's personality. Wilson changes from the loud soldier to a much meeker and helpful personality. Wilson gives Henry his bed, feeds him and dresses his wound. Henry perceives that Wilson no longer "continually regarded the proportions of his personal prowess" (78), but has now "apparently ... climbed a peak of wisdom from which he could perceive himself as a very wee thing. And the youth saw that ever after it would be easier to live in his friend's neighborhood" (78). Wilson did not flee from battle as many others did, but stayed with his regiment. He learned from his experience that he is very insignificant in the whole scheme of things. He also learned of his shortcomings as a human being and individual.

The youth has not learned yet of his insignificance, because he is still struggling with his own courage. When Wilson entrusts Henry with his keepsakes and burial instructions if he should die, Henry "felt immensely superior to his friend" (RBC 81) and "his self-pride was now entirely restored" (82). Henry believes himself to be an experienced and seasoned man now, but he has actually only skimmed the surface of life. Henry still believes that he is great. He
muses how could they kill him who was "the chosen of gods and doomed to greatness?" (82). When Henry thinks of the others who fled, they were "weak mortals" (83). "As for himself, he had fled with discretion and dignity" (83). Henry still believes he is an "individual of extraordinary virtues" (83).

To the end of the novel, Henry believes he is special and significant as an individual. He is concerned only with himself or only with things which directly affect him. The youth is appalled when he overhears the officer calling them "muledrivers" (RBC 117). "And the most startling thing was to learn suddenly that he was very insignificant. The officer spoke of the regiment as if he referred to a broom" (118). When the general reproaches the regiment for not putting up a good fight, they are incensed. "Presently, however, they began to believe that in truth their efforts had been called light. The youth could see this conviction weigh upon the entire regiment until the men were like cuffed and cursed animals, but withal rebellious" (136).

Throughout the final battle, the men are described as, "insane," "unconscious," "moblike and barbaric," "tortured savages," "madman," with a "vicious wolflike temper." Crane writes:

In the storm there was an ironical expression of their importance. The faces of the men, too, showed a lack of a certain feeling of responsi-
ity for being there. It was as if they had been driven. It was the dominant animal failing to remember in the supreme moments the forceful causes of various superficial qualities. The whole affair seemed incomprehensible to many of them. (124)

This quote points out the unconscious, animal instinct fostered in men at war. "Glory," "honor," and "courage" have no meaning in this context. Crane shows their barbaric attitude in war and points out the irony that this fighting did not make them feel important, nor did they feel at all responsible for their actions. They were not individual heroes as they are led to believe, but simple pawns in the game of war. In the end, the men begin to realize that they were fighting for superficial qualities. Their individuality taken away, they only were able to react in a basic, animalistic manner, without thought.

Henry does come together in the final battle scenes and fights alongside his fellow men. Ben Satterfield writes that, in the end, Fleming has learned social responsibility and has learned to live with his fellow man and be a responsible part of society. He has learned, "the meaning of humanity--the essence of which is man's duty to man--and that life, like war, is not a romantic and beautiful dream brimmed with glory, but is hard and filled with pain" (463). Whereas Satterfield claims that Henry has learned and grown and is
now content and at peace with his life, I believe that Henry is still lost and confused. Satterfield explains that Henry's "red badge of courage is his courage to accept the reality of existence and to act in accordance with his choice. And it seems to me that acceptance means affirmation; to accept the universe is to affirm it, and to accept life is to affirm life" (Satterfield 464). So, Satterfield believes that Henry is at peace with himself now because he has experienced and accepted reality. This is the meaning of the peaceful setting in the final pages.

However, in the last pages, Fleming returns to his previous aloofness, deep in thought: "He took no share in the chatter of his comrades, nor did he look at them or know them, save when he felt sudden suspicion that they were seeing his thoughts and scrutinizing each detail of the scene with the tattered soldier" (RBC 155). Crane does retain the idea of the individual to the end of the novel. Henry Fleming has learned to be true to his fellow man, but also remains an individualist. He has fought alongside the other men, but he is fighting only for himself. When the fighting is over, he returns to his previous state of consciousness. Crane writes in the novel: "His mind was undergoing a subtle change. It took moments for it to cast off its battlefield ways and resume its accustomed course of thought. Gradually his brain emerged from the clogged clouds, and at last he was
enabled to more closely comprehend himself and circumstance" (153). Fleming does not give himself over freely to the group. He retains his belief in the individual. He still consciously thinks about himself and his actions. His feelings in the end are not the shared feelings of the group. Fleming’s feelings are personal and he keeps them to himself. If he had truly accepted reality and his responsibility to others, he would have confessed the truth about his false wound and how he deserted their friend and comrade in the field. Then he would have truly made peace with himself and been able to live a responsible social life. Instead, he continues to believe in the falsity which gives him a guilty conscience.

Crane's individual is an ironic romantic hero. Henry Fleming is like the romantic hero. He believes he is great and grand, better than his fellow man. He believes nature is on his side, but this is where he begins to falter. When he goes into the woods, he finds that nature is indifferent. Nature is not on his side and does not confirm his beliefs about himself. Instead, nature is an indomitable force which causes death, indiscriminately. Shortly after Henry emerges from the woods, he watches his good friend die and there is nothing he can do about it.

Henry realizes he cannot fight nature, so he seems to accept it. He returns to his regiment and fights like a wild
animal. But in the end, Henry finds his previous consciousness which separates him from his comrades. Even though Henry has seen death and experienced it through a friend, he still seems to believe in his ideal of the individual. We see this in the way Fleming casts off his battlefield ways. He does not join his comrades in their rejoicing, but finds his individual conscience. He walks into what can be interpreted as a romantic setting: "He turned now with a lover's thirst to images of tranquil skies, fresh meadows, cool brooks—an existence of soft and eternal peace" (BBC-126) because he still believes in the illusion of the individual. He believes, in the end, that he is the only one who can save himself. He is the only one who can change his own circumstances. He fights in the end for himself only, and retains his individuality.
The Cynical Individual

in the American War Novel

In *A Farewell To Arms*, Hemingway continues the plight of the individual at war explored by Crane. Robert Stallman suggests that Hemingway's novel starts where Crane's left off. "Henry, who has for surname the same given name as Crane's hero, begins as the already maimed hero, the idealistic Henry Fleming turned cynic" (176). Even though Fleming was somewhat cynical of nature and the officers, he does end in an idealistic and hopeful state. Frederic Henry, however, is not as idealistic or hopeful and ends in a state of desolation. Both Crane and Hemingway attempt to expose the truth which lies beneath the words, "glory," "honor," and "courage," but Crane works through the theme of his novel, while Hemingway works through the style. While Crane uses his protagonist, Henry Fleming, who tries to understand the truth in a moralistic and conscious search, Hemingway attempts to expose the truth by writing in a sparse, objective manner. These two artists differ in their manipulation of genres. Whereas Crane mixed realism and imagination, Hemingway seems to separate the two, but still uses both. Whereas Crane's hero, Fleming, wrestles with his individuality in the real
world and ends up submerging reality with imagination within the character's thoughts and actions, Hemingway's hero, Frederic Henry, knows that his individuality is doomed in the real world and resorts to a romantic world where he can be free and maintain control.

Frederic Henry is the "I" of the novel. Frederic is also the "Tenente" and holds a position of authority. He is a fairly significant cog in the military establishment. However, we find early in the novel that he is not necessary to the smooth functioning of that which he "controls": "Everything seemed in good condition. It evidently made no difference whether I was there to look after things or not. I had imagined that the condition of the cars . . . depended to a considerable extent on myself. Evidently it did not matter whether I was there or not" (AFTA 16). Therefore, while Hemingway promotes the individual through the use of a first person narrative, and a position of authority, he finds that his protagonist, as a distinctive person in the real world, is dispensable.

In the real world, Frederic Henry is stationed in a little town called Gorizia. He is a second lieutenant in charge of removal of wounded soldiers from the front to field hospitals. In the beginning of the novel, Frederic returns from a leave in Italy. Later while Frederic is speaking to the priest about his trip, he "explains, winefully, how we
did not do the things we wanted to do; we never did such things" (EPA 13). This is another indication of the insignificance and lack of control of the individual. Frederic means that we do things for other people because that is what is expected of us, to keep up appearances or as a duty or obligation. The priest had wanted Frederic to go to the Abruzzi and visit the priest's family there. Frederic had wanted to go, but did not.

Frederic may have wanted to go to the Abruzzi because it represents an idealistic existence of basic old-world values. It is described as follows:

I had gone to no place where the roads were frozen and hard as iron, where it was clear cold and dry and the snow was dry and powdery and haretracks in the snow and the peasants took off their hats and called you Lord and there was good hunting.

(EPA 13)

Peter Balbert points out that Frederic Henry finds some solace in this "ideal vision of the world [with] its concrete manifestations of existence" (34). The Abruzzi represents to Frederic a more stable and constant world where he can be sure of himself as an individual. But Frederic does not go there, perhaps because it is too unreal, too simple, too good to be true. It is a world that no longer exists except in one's imagination and he did not want to be disappointed.
Instead, Frederic Henry goes to all the major cultural centers of Italy, "Milan, Florence, Rome, Naples, Villa San Giovanni, Messina, Taormina, [etc.]" (Fta 11). He describes his time spent in Italy as follows:

I had gone to no such place [the Abruzzi] but to the smoke of cafes and nights when the room whirled and you needed to look at the wall to make it stop, nights in bed, drunk, when you knew that that was all there was, and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you, and the world all unreal in the dark and so exciting that you must resume again unknowing and uncaring in the night, sure that this was all and all and all and not caring.

(13)

The places in Italy that Frederic does go to become an extension of the war. He describes his trip in rather nightmarish terms and as having no meaning or values on a humanistic level. One just carries on in an uncaring manner. These two worlds, the Abruzzi and Italy, the simple, constant world and the rough, unstable world, define the idealism and reality of Frederic's two worlds. Hemingway uses stark realism and romantic imagination to define these two worlds.

In the real world, Frederic Henry's existence is plagued by undermining events or occurrences beyond his control, such as his knee wound, jaundice, and near escape from death on
the bridge of the Tagliamente. Through these experiences, Henry finds that not only is he dispensable or replaceable as a cog in the military establishment, but also his body parts and mind are replaceable or unnecessary. As examples, while he is fleeing to Milan by train, he thinks about his knee wound: "It was his [the doctor's] knee all right. The other knee was mine. Doctors did things to you and then it was not your body anymore. The head was mine, but not to use, not to think with, only to remember and not too much remember" (FTA 240). When he has contracted jaundice, his roommate, the surgeon Rinaldi, says to him: "'I will get you drunk and take out your liver and put you in a good Italian liver and make you a man again'" (175). Frederic's knee wound and his diseased liver represent facts of nature which he has no control over. Even his head, the way he thinks, is given up, as is seen in the next paragraph.

After his escape in Book Four, Frederic declares a "separate peace" from the war or the real world. "I had the paper but I did not read it because I did not want to read about the war. I was going to forget the war. I had made a separate peace. I felt damned lonely and was glad when the train got to Stresa" (AFTA 252). Previously, he also gave up the responsibility of thinking. He says: "I was not made to think. I was made to eat. My God, yes. Eat and drink and sleep with Catherine" (242). When Frederic can no longer
rely on his body or mind, he creates his own ideal world, the simple world which the Abruzzi represents, Switzerland.

Like the Abruzzi, Switzerland is cold, clear, and crisp where the peasants treat Frederic and Catherine like lords. In Switzerland everything goes well. Frederic and Catherine are happy. They stroll around through the snow, stopping at inns where they are treated royally. They stay with a couple who wait on their every whim. Everything is very fine.

Then it is time for Catherine to give birth to their child. A wondrous and joyous occasion which turns into a nightmare of the real war-like world Frederic thought he had escaped. When he knows that not only his child is dying, but also his Catherine is dying, he realizes the truth about life which he exclaims in this prophecy:

Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo. Or gave you the syphilis like Rinaldi. But they killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you.
Frederic learns here that death is a part of life. McNeely comments: "for Hemingway the man, first, to live 'truly' is in effect to live every day in a kind of necessary intimacy with death" (15). Frederic escapes death throughout the novel, but now he must face it. This is what the priest knows, that death is always present and that one cannot control nature, but Frederic avoids this truth. It is here that the novel turns back to reality, and ends in desolation for the protagonist.

In the next paragraph, Frederic recalls a time at camp when he has a "chance to be a messiah," and save a swarm of ants from a burning log. Instead, he throws water on them and steams them (AFTA 339). This symbolizes Hemingway's belief in the solitude of man. Man is alone in the world. He must fend for himself because no one else will look out for him. Like a god, Frederic could have saved the ants, but like the God he knows, he did not; everyone must die. With Catherine dead, Frederic must return to the real world alone. Frederic is a man with nothing left inside of him. He is completely devastated. As Frederic leaves the hospital, he walks "back to the hotel in the rain" (343). He goes back to civilization and the real world.

Frederic Henry is like the romantic hero who escapes reality and feeds off his own egocentricity. Frederic escapes to Italy, the hospital, and finally to Switzerland.
His ego is manifested in Catherine within the little dream world they have set up for themselves. However, with the death of Catherine and of the baby she carried, his romantic world is shattered and he must once again face reality. Because of this devastating realization, Frederic becomes the individual who must cope with a difficult reality. Unlike the romantic hero, Frederic returns to the real world.

While in the real world again, Frederic realizes that there is no escape from the unstable, inconsistent facts of life and death. Robert E. Fleming compares Hemingway’s world with George Peele’s of the 1500's. Hemingway took the title of his novel from Peele’s poem, “A Farewell to Arms.” Fleming writes:

Both poem and chapter [he only compares the first chapter of Hemingway’s novel] make certain assumptions about the validity of human ideals concerning duty, religious faith, and patriotic love for one’s country and its sovereign. Contrasted with the stable world perceived by Peele, the world inhabited by Frederic Henry is one in which duty, faith, and love are no longer green. Read together, poem and chapter offer a moving impression of the gulf that divides sixteenth-century attitudes from those of modern times and throws into dramatic relief the
emptiness of modern values, the sterility of the twentieth-century world. (99)

While Crane's protagonist walks into a peaceful, tranquil setting, Hemingway's protagonist walks into the rain. Henry Fleming has reunited with his regiment, yet stands apart from them with his own thoughts. He remains an individual, perhaps even a romantic individual. Frederic Henry emerges from his dream world and is now alone. It is uncertain whether he returns to society and finds his place there or more likely remains a loner. But what is certain, is that he has confronted nature and knows there is no hope. Frederic's solitude and desolation at the end of the novel symbolize not only the sterility of the modern world, but also the devastation of the individual who realizes the indifference of nature.
The Individual as a Victim of Society

The main character John Andrews in John Dos Passos’s *Three Soldiers* is a pianist and a composer in the novel and possesses some of the same characteristics as Henry Fleming and Frederic Henry. What Dos Passos does in *Three Soldiers*, which Crane and Hemingway chose not to do and what later novelists depend upon, is widen the scope of characters. Rather than rely on one character to suffice for all mankind, as Crane and Hemingway do, Dos Passos shows a diversity of characters. Alfred Kazin conveys this point in his article, “Dos Passos, Society, and the Individual”:

For what is so significant about Dos Passos is that though he is a direct link between the postwar decade and the crisis novel of the depression period, the defeatism of the lost generation has been slowly and subtly transferred by him from persons to society itself. (Hook 101)

Kazin is discussing the range of Dos Passos’s novels beginning with *One Man’s Initiation* through *USA: A Trilogy*, in which Dos Passos passes through this “artistic transformation from romantic individualist to radical collectivist and
social commentator" (101). We see the beginnings of this change in *Three Soldiers*.

In *Three Soldiers*, three different men represent a cross section of society. Fuselli is from the west coast, Chrisfield is from the middle of America, and Andrews is from the east coast. Dos Passos means to portray each character as a specific entity based on his background and the environment in which he grew up. John Wrenn explains the difference between Crane and Dos Passos in this context:

The fact that Dos Passos treated all three of his soldiers in considerable detail, while Crane focused his attention upon only one, suggests another distinction. To Crane one soldier was sufficient: others might act and react differently in certain particulars—as indeed they did in his novel—but one would serve to illustrate the general principle. Each man was, after all, a mere speck in an indifferent universe; one speck should serve as well as another. Dos Passos, however, saw each man as a universe in himself, set in what was at that time a hostile environment. He therefore required a number of examples to illustrate the problem . . . each of whom could be taken as more or less representative. (114)
The difference between Crane’s work and Dos Passos’s work lies in what they perceive is man’s relationship to the universe. Crane seems to suggest that every man is basically the same and that the universe or a character’s experiences and background lie outside of him as a part of nature or the great unknown; Dos Passos seems to suggest that each character makes up a separate universe dependent on the character’s background, genealogy, and personal experiences. Therefore, each of Dos Passos’s characters have distinctive personalities.

Daniel Fuselli is a second generation Italian from San Francisco, sturdy with curly hair. He is a materialist who is loyal and patriotic in a desperate attempt to get promoted. One phrase that is said to Fuselli over and over again is, “Don’t let ‘em ride yer.” But Fuselli does let them [the army] ride him with the intentions of getting on their good side and securing a promotion and raise. Then he can write home and tell his girlfriend and family how successful he has become. Fuselli is base and he does not become successful, but follows the officers around, toady ing up to them in a futile attempt to be noticed. As a materialistic sheep, Fuselli will do anything the officers tell him to do with the dream of achieving “fame and fortune.” He will not step out of the mold even when his chances of promotion are gone. Fuselli has a dream, but it
is a selfish, materialistic dream. Fuselli lives off the hopes, dreams, and heroism he acquires from the movies. His thoughts are all dreams from the movies he loves, from the Huns with their spiked helmets who he can't wait to kill, to the visions of himself rising in the ranks. When faced with reality, Fuselli is "lost in the machine . . . as helpless as a sheep in a flock" (72). In this passage from the novel, Fuselli begins to realize his fate:

And all the flood of bitterness that had been collecting in his spirit seethed to the surface. They had not treated him right. He felt full of hopeless anger against this vast treadmill to which he was bound. The endless succession of the days, all alike, all subject to orders, to the interminable monotony of drill and line-ups, passed before his mind. He felt he couldn't go on, yet he knew that he must and would go on, that there was no stopping, that his feet would go on beating in time to the steps of the treadmill. (TS 118-119) His only solace is snuggling into his covers at night and dreaming of what he will never have or become.

Fuselli is the type of individual who follows the crowd. He hopes for the instant gratification which can be acquired through material wealth. He is not a spiritual type of man and he allows himself to be driven into the dirt. In terms
of individualism, he is not an individual; rather, he is a product of society. The military establishment uses Fuselli and denies him any kind of restitution as an individual. He is last seen physically sick and working in a labor battalion.

Chrisfield is an Indiana farm boy, instinctual and spontaneous. He almost killed a man once in a fight back home, and in fact, does kill Lieutenant Anderson. Chrisfield is extremely bothered by the authority of the officers and must overcome much instinctual hostility, which he does with the help of Andrews. Andrews becomes for Chrisfield a stabilizing force. Inspired by Andrews, Chrisfield can enjoy the beauty of the environment, the simplest of things which he never noticed before. Chrisfield has what Andrews wants and Andrews has what Chrisfield needs. Chrisfield has the will power to act on his instincts, but he lacks the intelligence to make healthy decisions.

Chrisfield is the one promoted to corporal because he can carry out orders without much thought. He is at his best in a group. When he loses his regiment, he is very confused and alone, and wanders around in a dreamlike state. He is destructive alone, for this is when he kills the lieutenant. When he finally catches up to a regiment he can march with, "he did not feel lonely any more now that he was marching in ranks again. His feet beat the ground in time with the other
feet. He would not have to think whether to go to the right or to the left. He would do as the others did” (TS 201). Neither Chrisfield nor Fuselli are cultivated like Andrews. Therefore, they either act completely impulsively like Chrisfield or refuse to act except in obedience to authority like Fuselli.

Chrisfield finally deserts the army because of his bad conscience about killing the lieutenant; not because he feels guilty, but because he is afraid someone has found out about it. When Andrews meets with Chrisfield, Andrews notices a change. “Andrews looked at Chrisfield’s face by the firelight. His cheeks had lost the faint childish roundness they had had when Andrews had first talked to him . . . ” (TS 286). Chrisfield had completely lost the sweet innocence which he had when they were first together:

The wind in the trees made a vast rhythmic sound like the churning of water astern of the transport he had come over on. Cold flicks and olive shadows danced among the indented clusters of leaves as they swayed, as if sweeping something away, against the bright sky. An idea came into Chrisfield’s head. Suppose the leaves should reach the ground and sweep and sweep and sweep until all this was swept away, all these pains and lice and uniforms and officers with maple leaves or eagles or single
stars or double stars or triple stars on their shoulders. He had a sudden picture of himself in his old comfortable overalls, with his shirt open so that the wind caressed his neck like a girl blowing down it playfully, lying on a shuck of hay under the hot Indiana sun. Funny he’d thought all that, he said to himself. Before he’d met Andy he’d never have thought of that. What had come over him these days?

(TS 160) Chrisfield becomes for a moment a gentle, caring, feeling, loving individual. We see through this transformation the kind of effect Andrews, the artist, can have on one person.

Chrisfield has the will power to act on his feelings even to the extent of killing a man, but unlike Andrews, Chrisfield is insufficiently cultivated. He does not see the consequences of his actions. In his final scene, Chrisfield is “high-tailing it” from the MPs, who want him for being AWOL. Chrisfield runs, leaving a dying friend to be captured. Chrisfield has a free spirit characteristic of the individual. Chrisfield takes life as it comes. He acts completely on his animal instincts without thinking of others or of consequences. Of the three characters, Chrisfield is closest to nature; that is, he has not been refined by culture or society. He is an example of Melville’s and Haw-
thorne's man who is lost when he is alone, not in the presence of others.

John Andrews, the main character, is an intellectual from New York. A Harvard student of music who speaks fluent French, Andrews is also like Henry Fleming and Frederic Henry. He is an individual with a conscience and the predilection to be alone. John Andrews joins the army because "he was sick of revolt, of thought, of carrying his individuality like a banner above the turmoil" (TS 22). Even outside the army he has to fight for his personal freedom. As we find out later, "so was civilization nothing but a vast edifice of sham, and the war, instead of its crumbling, was its fullest and most ultimate expression" (225).

Andrews may have thought he was joining the ranks of men who were fighting for the overthrow of a civilization that destroys personal freedom, but he finds that he has joined the ranks that do the destroying. The army that Andrews joins is an extension of American society in the industrial age. Alfred Kazin writes, "The conviction of tragedy that rises out of his [Dos Passos's] work is the steady protest of a sensitive democratic conscience against the tyranny and the ugliness of society, against the failure of a complete human development under industrial capitalism" (Hook 102). Andrews represents this sensitive democratic conscience and his main struggle is his inability to complete
his own human development to its fullest capacity under the present repressive system.

Although Dos Passos has broadened the scope of his novel with these three characters and has given them briefly developed backgrounds, they are not any more full-bodied than Henry Fleming or Frederic Henry. They each serve their purpose in the context of the author's intentions. They tend to be one-dimensional in their respective roles. They become stereotypes of American society, useful to make a point. Leo Gurko explains this lack of characterization:

The narrowing of his [Dos Passos's] psychological range is due as much to his theory as to any creative short-comings. The theory of the individual being strangled by social forces makes it all but impossible to allow him his own independence and latitude. From the start he is doomed to a losing battle. The battle is never wholly lost; it goes on continuously, perpetually. But it is not to be won, nor in the pressure of society to be equally borne. Without the hope of victory or even the possibility of a draw, the autonomous existence of the individual is denied; without autonomy, he cannot grow into the fullness of stature, into the richest possibilities of his own nature that alone can make him memorable. (Madden 62)
This passage is actually written about Dos Passos's **USA Trilogy**, but can also apply to **Three Soldiers**. None of these characters have autonomy and none of them gain autonomy in the novel.

When we look at John Andrews, he struggles throughout the novel with an inability to act. While recuperating at the hospital, he decides to desert: "it seemed the first time in his life he had ever determined to act. All the rest had been aimless drifting" (TS 226). But he does not desert and later finds himself "standing dumbly humble while a sergeant bawled him out for being late" (241). In fact, each time Andrews does gain a bit of freedom, he has been helped immensely by others, while he acts passively and cowardly. It is actually Henslowe and Walters who arrange his entry into the school detachment in Paris. Andrews had to be coaxed and prodded to take any action. At one point, he had given up until Walters pulled some strings and got him in. And when he escapes from the labor battalion, it is the young boy who entices him to act: "Andrews slipped after him, hardly knowing what he was doing" (404). Andrews seems to have given up on fighting for his freedom and now awaits the day he does not have to fight for it.

When Emerson writes about the idealist in his essay, "The Transcendentalists," he seems to say that the idealist refuses to take part in society until things go his way.
"Cannot we screw our courage to patience and truth, and without complaint, or even with good-humor, await our turn of action in the Infinite Counsels?" (Emerson 109). Andrews holds these qualities of patience, truth, and good-humor throughout his travail. In the end, he throws his finished work to the wind in a symbolic gesture suggesting the freedom of his creative self. Alfred Kazin makes this comment about this stoic type of individual:

That human self in Dos Passos is the Emersonian individual, not Hemingway’s agonist; he is the arbiter of existence, always a little chill, a little withdrawn, not the sentient, suffering center of it. He is man believing and trusting in the Emersonian ‘self-trust’ when all else fails him, man taking his stand on individual integrity against the pressures of society. (Hook 102)

John Andrews seems to withdraw from society, rather than establish himself in it or over it. Society cannot or does not foster Andrews’s needs as an artist nor an individual. Therefore, he sits and waits, like Emerson’s idealist, for better times. And he might as well sit in prison as outside, where he would have to constantly defend and guard his freedom.

Dos Passos once described his credo as a writer as: “Man’s struggle for life against the strangling institutions
he himself creates” (Madden 59). **Three Soldiers** shows the tyranny of an oppressive institution, but goes further to portray the common man as his own victimizer. Ellwood Johnson writes about the anarchist theme in **Three Soldiers**, suggesting that, "the struggle is not between the individual and the military, but the more universal confrontation between the individual and the collective" (71). He continues:

The anarchist is aware that revolutions only substitute one ideological system for another. ‘Do you know what it’ll mean, your revolution?’ the Chink asks. ‘Another system! When there’s a system there are always men to be bought with diamonds’ (400). And later, Andrews says ‘that human society has been always . . . organizations growing and stifling individuals, and individuals revolting hopelessly against them, and at last forming new societies and becoming slaves again in their turn . . . ’ (421). The permanent revolution will be effected on an individual level by a substitution of personal faith for social systems. ‘We should have faith in ourselves,’ Andrews says, even to the rejection of the influence of literature and art (408). The individual’s refusal to participate in war, his refusal ‘to submit to the treadmill,’ his decision to live by the side of the road and tend
his garden (in Andrews's case, his music), and his faith in the music of his own soul--these are the only weapons the anarchist uses in his war against the state. (Johnson 71)

John Andrews does not live up to the name of John Brown, but perhaps deep down he knows that a revolution would not make things better, it would only cause another system. In his final minutes before he is taken away by the military police, Andrews softly whistles the tune, "John Brown's Body," and as he does he thinks, "if one could only find freedom by marching for it" (TS 470).

Freedom does not come easily. In Three Soldiers, the realization that personal freedom cannot be fostered unless every person believes in the individual proves the moral weakness of mankind (Johnson 69). According to Johnson, "in his [Dos Passos's] mind, the engulfing collectivism of the century was an inevitable result of the moral weakness of people in general, and it was the pursuit of typical human weakness with their far-reaching political consequences that occupied him as a fiction writer" (69). Johnson points out that it is the toadyism of a Fuselli, the violence of a Chrisfield, and the passivity of an Andrews that reinforce the system (71). Each of these characters struggles to take control of his life. The question Dos Passos asks is whether the oppressed, the oppressor, or both, are at fault.
The struggle for John Andrews, then, is his inability to develop creatively and freely as an individual, much like the transcendentalist Emerson describes. The struggle for John Andrews culminates in the novel when he realizes his inability to change the system. Close to the end, he thinks:

And why, instead of writing music that would have been worth while if he hadn’t been a deserter, he kept asking himself, hadn’t he tried long ago to act, to make a gesture, however feeble, however forlorn, for other people’s freedom? Half by accident he had managed to free himself from the treadmill. Couldn’t he have helped others? If he only had his life to live over again. No; he had not lived up to the name of John Brown. (TS 469)

John Andrews blames himself for his passivity in this passage. John Andrews did have other options, but none which would change the system. He could have given himself up and, with the help of Walters and Henslowe, secured a position in the army with little or no punishment for his transgressions, but that would have meant relinquishing his principles. He also could have escaped to Jerusalem with Henslowe as part of the Red Cross. That, however, would have meant running from a lie for the rest of his life. Instead, John Andrews chooses to be captured because that is the only way he can stand true to his principles. His passivity symbolizes a
commitment to his creative, sentient self, rather than to a more social self.

In essence, what we learn about the individual in *Three Soldiers*, is an awareness of the diversity of characters, such that Crane’s and Hemingway’s main characters speak for all mankind, while Dos Passos’s three characters each speaks for himself. This experiment in characterization for Dos Passos was the beginning of a movement from individuals to society. John Andrews, representing one of the last of the romantic individualists, symbolically frees his inner self, while allowing his outer self to be imprisoned. That he reprimands himself for not helping all mankind achieve freedom of the soul, is a sign that he recognizes his weakness as an active member of society. As Ellwood Johnson suggests: Dos Passos is not making his characters victims of society, but may be pointing out that they are their own victims. If each of them would assume more control of his inner self, perhaps each could break out of the mold. The way things are, however, suggests only the importance of institutions and their functions and methods. This idea is more fully realized in Heller’s novel, *Catch-22*, when Yossarian does realize the consequences of his passivity and the possibilities of controlling his life.
The Individual

Subsumed by a Social System

_Catch-22_ is unlike the typical World War II novel, because, as Robert Merrill explains:

_Catch-22_ is closer in spirit to the war novels of the 1920's than to the novels of World War II . . . . Heller simply did not share the common predilection of World War II novelists for describing their combat experiences in vivid, highly knowledgeable detail, thus producing fictions designed to register 'the way it was.' (16)

Instead, Heller, like Dos Passos, was interested in "social protest." Heller states: "I wasn't interested in the war in _Catch-22_. I was interested in the personal relationships in bureaucratic authority" (16). So, whereas other WWII novelists chose to express the brutal realities of war, Heller chose to continue the fight for the individual in a social system.

As such, Heller's novel is original in its manner of showing the struggle of the individual. Heller's use of the absurd is a comment on the social system which keeps the
individual in his place. While some critics saw this novel as somewhat of a farce with an optimistic outlook, Heller meant it as much more. Although the structure of the novel seems haphazard and humorous, Heller says in an interview: "It took me five years of planning and making notes and cogitating to get the effect that the book was unplanned, that the narration was spontaneous, just being spilled out on the pages as they approach. It takes a lot of care; it takes a lot of planning to make things seem unplanned" (Interview 66).

Stephen Sniderman and Robert Merrill, two recent scholars of Joseph Heller, suggest the structure of the novel is an attempt to show the reader his own tendency to assimilate to society. Merrill writes: "Heller added this feature [the system of repetitions in the novel] because he wanted to make his crucial point about widespread complicity in bureaucratic regimentation. He wanted us to laugh and then look back with horror at what we were laughing at" (53). Catch-22 continues the plight of the individual begun by Crane, and continued by Hemingway and Dos Passos. Yossarian is an individual fighting for the personal freedom he believes is his like Henry Fleming, Frederic Henry, and John Andrews, but, in this novel, we are given a much clearer picture of the oppressor.
The numerous characters in *Catch-22* can be divided into the categories of "oppressed" and "oppressor." Leon Seltzer explains the motivation and relationship between these two factions:

The true motive in each case is opportunism, or, on a more basic level, the need or compulsion to assert one's will over others. And the sanction for such tyrannical assertion is Catch-22, since in essence it means the right to do whatever one can manage to do with impunity.

To survive, the system depends on the cooperation of the oppressed with the oppressors.

For so long as the masses never recognize its existence as a fabrication of ambitious individuals to achieve and preserve personal power, they must remain impotent to resist its dubious authority.

(Nagel 90)

The authoritative characters do whatever they need to do to promote themselves, with no regard for the rest of humanity. The oppressed characters, then, are used to whatever means the oppressors desire.

Seltzer suggests that, "The great dichotomy of individualism is perhaps most clearly expressed in Heller's novel" (Nagel 82). Seltzer elaborates: "That through the course of American history the ideal of freedom should have
become so corrupted as to be popularly construed to mean the right to do anything and everything not strictly prohibited by law is perhaps the deepest tragedy of the book” (Nagel 82). The ideal of individual freedom has been corrupted by a lack of morals and humanity even in our laws. This is one premise of Heller’s novel that is shown through the two categories of characters, the oppressed, who still want to believe in humanity and the oppressors, who have no sense of morals or humanity. Although the pretense is humorous, Heller’s novel shows the very diabolic nature of man.

Some of Catch-22’s oppressive characters include Colonel Cathcart and Colonel Korn. Colonel Cathcart’s goal is to continue to raise the number of flights his men fly, as well as make them fly the most dangerous flights, so that he can get his name in print. It makes no difference that he is abusing the rights of these men who he controls, nor that relief pilots readily wait on another island. Cathcart’s motivation is seeing his name in print in The Saturday Evening Post like his peers. He wants to keep up with his peers, and one way to obtain this goal is to have his men fly the most and the most dangerous flights. “Colonel Cathcart wanted to be general so desperately he was willing to do anything . . .” (C22 194). Another scheme of Cathcart’s, again with the sole purpose of singular recognition, is the prayer sessions. After reading an article in The Saturday
**Evening Post** about a cohort who devised a similar plan, Cathcart devises a plan in which the chaplain conducts prayers before the men go out on a mission. However, the plan is canceled when Cathcart finds out that the enlisted men pray to the same god as the officers. Cathcart obviously does not see the enlisted men as anyway equal to himself. He is an officer; they are pawns on his game board.

General Peckem is another oppressive character. As a perfectionist, he observed, "'My only fault,' . . . 'is that I have no faults'" (C22 328). His main concern is taking over General Dreedle's command. Speaking to Scheisskopf, he says, "Dreedle's on our side, and Dreedle is the enemy. General Dreedle commands four bomb groups that we simply must capture in order to continue our offensive" (C22 332). General Peckem's only enemy is anyone standing in his way "to the top." His main obstacle, General Dreedle, is another oppressor who maintains this philosophy:

He believed that the young men who took orders from him should be willing to give up their lives for the ideals, aspirations and idiosyncrasies of the old men he took orders from. The officers and enlisted men in his command had identity for him only as military quantities. All he asked was that they do their work; beyond that, they were free to do whatever they pleased. (222)
Peckem and Dreede are two examples of the oppressor whose only motivation is opportunism.

General Dreede’s job does not go to Peckem, but to Lieutenant Scheisskopf. Scheisskopf’s main concern is perfect formation in parades, because this is the one means which has brought him recognition in the past. Perhaps the greatest allegory of man turned machine in war literature, is Scheisskopf’s idea to achieve perfect formation:

... he considered every means of improvement, even nailing the twelve men in each rank to a long two-by-four beam of seasoned oak to keep them in line. The plan was not feasible, for making a ninety-degree turn would have been impossible without nickel-alloy swivels inserted in the small of every man’s back, and Lieutenant Scheisskopf was not sanguine at all about obtaining that many nickel-alloy swivels from Quartermaster or enlisting the co-operation of the surgeons at the hospital. (74-75)

The lieutenant is not worried at all about the inhumanity he is inflicting, but only about the technical difficulties it presents.

Several other minor characters are given an amount of control. They are Wintergreen, who tends to control everything from his desk at headquarters through paperwork
and red tape, and Captain Black, who invents the Glorious Loyalty Oaths wherein he is able to control the "disappearance" of Major Major. As well, Corporal Whitcomb controls the chaplain. As the chaplain's assistant, Whitcomb "felt he could do the chaplain's job much better than the chaplain was doing it and viewed himself, therefore, as an underprivileged victim of social inequity. He lived in a tent of his own as spacious and square as the chaplain's. He was openly rude and contemptuous to the chaplain once he discovered that the chaplain would let him get away with it" (C22 206). All these characters have usurped a certain amount of authority, because everyone else allows them to do so.

This usurpation of power is most obvious in the character of Milo Minderbender. His name alone vouches for the characterization. Heller describes him thus:

... a simple, sincere face that was incapable of subtlety or guile, an honest, frank face with disunited large eyes, rusty hair, black eyebrows and an unfortunate reddish-brown mustache. Milo had a long, thin nose with sniffing, damp nostrils heading sharply off to the right, always pointing away from where the rest of him was looking. It was the face of a man of hardened integrity who could no more consciously violate the moral principles on
which his virtue rested than he could transform himself into a despicable toad. One of these moral principles was that it was never a sin to charge as much as the traffic would bear. He was capable of mighty paroxysms of righteous indignation. . . .

(C22 65-66)

The interesting aspect of Milo's character is that he is not completely despicable, like the character of Aarfy. He is simply reacting to the circumstances of a situation in which he can make a lot of money, and he takes advantage of it. He perhaps gets carried away, but we have a feeling it is not totally his own fault. He becomes a go-between in the vast marketplace of supply and demand. He simply supplies wherever there is a demand, and however that demand is most easily and profitably supplied.

Seltzer's study notes Heller's comment on Milo's innocent character:

I gave him a mental and moral simplicity that, to my mind, makes him a horrifyingly dangerous person, because he lacks evil intent. [This] enables him to find easy justifications for everything he is compelled to do, so that while his acts may frequently appear hypocritical or deceitful, they are nonetheless executed sincerely and with moral courage.

(Nagel 83)
Milo is liked enough to become mayor of Palermo and of "nearby Carini, Monreale, Bagheria, Termini Imerese, Cefali, Mistretta and Nicosia" (C22 241). As well, he has the good judgement to accept Yossarian as his only confidant. Yet, he becomes a scoundrel when it comes to business. One scheme has him serving chocolate-covered cotton to the men because he could not get rid of a glut of Egyptian cotton until Yossarian suggests he sell it to the government. The most diabolic scheme is when Milo makes a deal with the Germans to bomb his own encampment. Through all of this Milo seems unaware of the wrong he is carrying out. Everyone is outraged by Milo's lowdown deceit, until he shows them the huge profits he has made for the syndicate. Then, everyone seems able to forget the horror.

Milo seems always able to come up with an excuse which clears him from wrongdoing, at least in the eyes of the law. What keeps him alive is his ability to trick everyone into believing that they all have a share in the syndicate. "What's good for the syndicate is good for everyone," Milo continuously reminds his patrons. Seltzer describes Milo's moral principles:

Human impediments are not merely obscured by his morally insane business ethic--they disappear altogether. Milo's utter insensitivity to death... his total
absoption with monetary gain has dispossessed him of all empathy. Heller’s absurdist brand of allegory should be clear enough: Milo’s ruthlessly capitalistic commitments do not, and cannot, support life. .................

[Milo] actually perceives legal loopholes as benign sanctions to encourage creative business ventures. (Nagel 78)

Milo is characteristic of the businessman whose capitalistic ideologies completely overlook any human element in the quest for power and wealth. With capitalism in control, the individual, especially the sensitive, morally-principled individual, becomes a victim of the system.

The oppressed characters in Catch-22 are all killed or considered crazy. They include Yossarian and his friends: Nately, Dunbar, Clevinger, Dobbs, McWatt, and Kid Sampson. Nately, who falls in love with a whore in Rome, is killed while flying extra missions, which he volunteered for, so he could stay longer with this woman. Dunbar carries out antics in the hospital with Yossarian until he is finally “disappeared” because of the uprising he caused with the soldier-in-white. Clevinger is an innocent, passionate soul, who disappears in a cloud and is never seen again. Dobbs is killed with Nately on the LaSpezia mission. Kid Sampson, a scrawny, pale, blond kid, is killed when McWatt flies too low
while buzzing the beach. After McWatt sees what he has done, he flies a suicide mission into the side of a mountain.

Chief White Halfoat, representing the American Indian, like his race, is constantly pushed off his land or out of his tent to settle somewhere else. Doc Daneeka wanders about aimlessly after he is accidentally pronounced dead in McWatt’s suicide mission. The chaplain is set apart from the rest of the encampment in his own tent in the clearing in the woods, so he does not upset the other men. Finally, Yossarian, with his normal temperature of 101° and his diagnosed defective liver, is admitted to the hospital regularly. Although he tries incessantly to be sent home because of insanity, he cannot be considered insane because he is sane enough to admit he is insane. Each of these characters is trapped by “catch-22” which is the means by which the oppressors keep the oppressed in their place.

The only character who is not part of the power structure, but fully recognizes it and finds a means to beat it, is Orr. Everyone perceives Orr to be a simple, innocent, dumb kid. Yet, Heller comments in an interview:

Orr is the most intelligent person in the book. You have to read it twice or three of four times to realize that throughout the book Orr is playing a game. He is advancing a false self so that even Yossarian feels sorry for him. And all the book
long Orr has figured out his survival, and he knows that part of surviving is to conceal his real intentions. (73)

Orr is seen in the novel as "mere child's play for them. They [his oppressors] would take his money, screw his wife and show no kindness to his children . . . . Orr was an eccentric midget . . . with a smutty mind and a thousand valuable skills that would keep him in a low income group all his life" (C22 321). Actually, Orr is the most capable person of all. Through Orr's character, we see the victim of the oppressors' whims rising above his circumstances by playing a counter-game to the game of his oppressors.

In contrast to Orr's ingenuity, is Yossarian's sincerity. The other men seem to trust Yossarian more than anyone else and come to him for moral support and advice. Dobbs feels that if he only receives Yossarian's okay, he can carry out his plan to murder Colonel Cathcart so the Colonel can't raise the number of missions anymore. Doc Daneeka and the Chaplain seek him for advice, and even Milo wants him to be his partner and confides in him. "Milo looked at Yossarian with profound emotion. 'That's what I like about you,' he exclaimed. 'You're honest! You're the only one I know that I can really trust'" (C22 239). While Orr secretly changes his circumstances through his own ingenuity, Yossarian seems to get nowhere with his simple kindness and good heart.
Although Yossarian is sought by others for help and advice, he elicits the aid of others in an attempt to remove himself from the craziness. At first, he wants Doc Daneeka to declare him crazy, but the Doc cannot because of "catch-22," which says, "Anyone who wants to get out of combat duty isn't really crazy" (C22 47). So Doc cannot declare him crazy because Yossarian asks him to declare him crazy. Yossarian also tries to go through Major Major and the chaplain, but neither are of any assistance. Yossarian tries other schemes which release him from duty for a short time, but never permanently. He fakes illness and spends much flying time in the hospital. He poisons the camp by putting laundry soap in the food, thereby prolonging the time before they must fly the most dangerous missions. To avoid the mission over Bologna, Yossarian sneaks into the intelligence tent and moves the bomb line over Bologna on the map, so that it looks like it has already been bombed. All of Yossarian's schemes are short-sighted, unlike the long-term planning of Orr's counter-game. Not until Yossarian experiences Snowden's death (the third time in the novel) and the fall of Rome, does he begin to realize his powers.

Through Snowden's death, Yossarian finally comes to terms with man's nature and his own destiny:

It was easy to read the message in his [Snowden's] entrails. Man was matter, that was Snowden's
secret. Drop him out a window and he’ll fall. Set fire to him and he’ll burn. Bury him and he’ll rot like the other kinds of garbage. The spirit gone, man is garbage. That was Snowden’s secret. Ripeness is all. (C22 450)

Yossarian finds that life is everything and unless one values the conscience, morals, and spirit of man, there is nothing left but garbage. When Yossarian walks through the ruins of Rome, he sees many examples of the downfall of man because the spirit has been forgotten and man is reduced to garbage. The first and perhaps most lasting image is of the sickly boy:

The night was raw. A boy in a thin shirt and thin tattered trousers walked out of the darkness on bare feet. The boy had black hair and needed a haircut and shoes and socks. His sickly face was pale and sad. His feet made grisly, soft, sucking sounds in the rain puddles on the wet pavement as he passed, and Yossarian was moved by such intense pity for his poverty that he wanted to smash his pale, sad, sickly face with his fist and knock him out of existence because he brought to mind all the pale, sad, sickly children in Italy that same night who needed haircuts and needed shoes and socks. (421)
This boy represents all the unfair, insensitive, inhuman suffering in the universe where man is nothing more than matter, garbage.

This walk through the Eternal City is like a reawakening for Yossarian. He feels a need to do something, but still does not know how. When he returns to camp, he unconsciously begins to affect change. His first action is to march backwards, because he is afraid Nately's whore might spring out at him any moment to kill him. Unwittingly, Yossarian upsets the smooth functioning of the camp as everyone begins to see the results of this kind of rebellion. Yossarian's actions afford him the notice of Colonel Cathcart and Colonel Black. When these two officers offer Yossarian their deal, they place him in a position to prove himself, not only to himself, but also to all the oppressed who wait and watch diligently.

Like John Andrews, Yossarian has three choices: he can submit to the system with a minor stipulation which includes giving up his principles; he can refuse to submit, and like Andrews, face a court-martial; or he can become a fugitive, in his case, retaining his moral principles, his individuality and a symbolic freedom. Only through the inspiration of Orr, does Yossarian choose the latter. Finally, Yossarian understands Orr and actualizes his own possibilities—the possibilities that allow him to affect a
change among his peers and that allow him choices beyond those afforded him by the system. So it is that Yossarian can say, "'I'm not running away from my responsibilities. I'm running to them'" (C22 461). It is his responsibility now to prove to his fellow men that change is possible, and that they do not have to submit quietly to an oppressive system. In the end of the novel, he has already affected a new strength in Danby and the chaplain.

Stephen Sniderman suggests that if Yossarian is held responsible for his actions, it is he who directly or indirectly affects the action of the novel—his friend's deaths, Milo's behavior, the raising of flights, etc. Yossarian is definitely the main character around which all the significant events of the novel revolve. Therefore, it is Yossarian who controls or has the power to affect change within the system, according to Sniderman. So, he concludes that, "By making everything in the novel, the good as well as the evil, Yossarian's 'fault,' Heller argues that the individual, not bureaucracy or the establishment, still holds the final trump" (39). Like Dos Passos, Heller is pointing out the possibilities of the individual to affect change in a controlling society.

Robert Merrill agrees with Sniderman's estimation that man victimizes himself by accepting society's ways without questioning its motivations or goals. Merrill suggests that
Heller uses the structure of the novel, the absurdity, and the humor as part of his method in developing this theme. The pattern of development allows the reader to see humor in the ugliness and as it accumulates, the reader is left finally with an appalling realization of his own acceptance of it. Similarly, the characters in the novel continue to accept the absurdity of their existence without questioning the motivations or goals of those in charge.

Leslie Fiedler writes in *No! In Thunder*:

In the end, the negativist is no nihilist, for he affirms the void. Having endured a vision of the meaninglessness of existence, he retreats neither into self-pity and aggrieved silence nor into a realm of beautiful lies. He chooses, rather, to render the absurdity which he perceives, to know it and make it known. (Glicksberg 175)

If we accept the point of view in *Catch-22* as that of the negativist, then Heller is using the absurdity to point out the loss of meaning in human existence. Using the quote above, we might briefly put into perspective the novels of this study so far. Crane seems to retreat into the realm of beautiful lies as his character is left in a romantic state of hope and tranquility. As much as he attempts to expose those lies, in the end, Henry Fleming does still believe in the concept of the individual. Hemingway might be seen to
retreat into self-pity as Frederic Henry loses everything he loves in life and ends in a state of desolation. Dos Passos seems to use the aggrieved silence in his character as John Andrews is silenced by the system when he is captured and his work of art blows away in the wind. Finally, Heller renders the absurdity of a meaningless life without morals or principles by which to live. Heller suggests that the blame lies with the oppressed in their acceptance and in their refusal to act. Although the use of the absurd paints a very clear picture of a deteriorating society, it also makes us unsure of who to blame. In the last novel of this study, Tim O’Brien seems to have accepted the assimilation of the individual into society and has set limitations to the possibilities which Yossarian seems to set free.
The Individual in Perspective

In *Going After Cacciato*, Tim O'Brien continues the tradition of the individual, who, inextricably involved, searches for control in a chaotic setting. Like the other novelists in this study, O'Brien uses an escape mechanism, or in this case, a fantasy sequence, to find the control that is missing. Unlike other novelists of the Vietnam War, O'Brien does not insist on writing "the way things were," as does Caputo, for example, in his novel, *A Rumor of War* (Raymond 98). Instead, O'Brien focuses on "what might have happened." Peter C. Rollins (424) explains: "after completing a memoir of his combat experiences . . . Tim O'Brien decided to explore the issue of GI commitment through fiction. 'I did not want to nail down sights and sounds anymore. I was more concerned with what might have happened.'" Since such is the case, O'Brien continues the quest of the individual from where Heller, in *Catch-22*, left off. Yossarian, at the end of the novel, heads into a seemingly impossible and unknown journey. Paul Berlin, from the beginning of *Going After Cacciato*, realizes the journey in a controlled and abiding fantasy which reveals the limitations of not only the
soldier/character in the novel, but also the author/artist in modern American society. Through the exploration of possibilities in Paul Berlin's fantasy, the limitations of the individual and the artist are determined.

While the reader becomes intimately involved with the main character, Paul Berlin, the novel also introduces many subordinate characters. In the vein of Dos Passos's technique of showing several character types as representatives of society, O'Brien shows an array of characters, and like Heller in Catch-22, he reveals idiosyncrasies of each character which distinguish them as separate entities. Michael Raymond points out that the characters are not even introduced until Chapter Twenty-Two, and then suggests that they "are made to personify deceptions, roles, and preferences. They are not people" (99). O'Brien explains at the end of Chapter Twenty-Two, after brief descriptions of Eddie Lazutti, Oscar Johnson, Jim Pederson, Stink Harris, Lieutenant Corson and Doc Peret: "a few names were known in full, some in part, some not at all. No one cared. . . . it was better not to know his full name. Easier to forget what happened, because, in a sense, it never did" (GAC 178).

As we, piece by piece, find out the circumstances of death for each of these characters, we realize that their purposes are neither as representations of society as in Three Soldiers, nor as contrasts to the main character, as in
Catch-22. Rather, these subordinate characters represent the non-entities, that is, all the faceless people who died in a ruthless war, whom we have forgotten about. As these characters are killed, the reader sees the merciless nature of commanding orders which are fulfilled regardless of the manslaughter which they invoke. The subordinate characters are interesting and add dimension to the plot and theme of the novel, but it is necessary that they not be fully developed because of what they represent, the common foot soldier in the Vietnam War.

Like the sensitive individual of the other novels, Paul Berlin is concerned with the ethics and morals, and the truths and deceptions of his situation. As Paul Berlin sits in the high tower overlooking the South China Sea one night during guard duty, the reader becomes intimately involved with Berlin's thoughts, just as we did with Henry Fleming's. Like Fleming, Paul Berlin seems to be the only one overtly concerned with his situation. This is explained by Doc, who tells Berlin, "'You got an excess of fear biles,' . . . 'And my theory is this: Somehow these biles are warping your sense of reality. Follow me? Somehow they're screwing up your basic perspective, and the upshot is you sometimes get a little mixed up. That's all'" (GAC 45).

Doc's advice was to concentrate, but Berlin insists that, "it wasn't all dreaming--it wasn't even pretending
... It was an idea. It was a working out of the possibilities" (GAC 46). Like Fleming, Berlin was confused about his situation. "He was scared, yes, and confused and lost, and he had no sense of what was expected of him or of what to expect from himself. He was aware of his body. Listening to the instructors talk about the war, he sometimes found himself gazing at his wrists or legs. He tried not to think. He stayed apart from the other new guys" (58). We hear much of the other novels in this passage. Like the others, he is confused and scared. He is unsure of his capabilities. He is aware of his body, and wonders whether it will be able to perform in the manner expected. Like Frederic Henry, Berlin realizes that he will have to separate his body from his thoughts, because his body will be theirs now and not just his. When they first march into the mountains, Paul Berlin, "did not think. The march connected him to the road, and the climb was everything. An anatomy lesson, the feel of the tendons stretching, the muscles and fluids and gelatinous tissues moving like a machine. His body marched and his brain slept. He would climb until the machine stopped" (GAC 199).

As an individual, Paul Berlin must make a decision to relinquish himself to the fighting machine. Like the other protagonists in this study, Paul Berlin is faced with three choices: "the issue, of course, was courage. How to behave.
Whether to flee or fight or seek an accommodation" (GAC 101). Paul Berlin chooses to flee. However, unlike the other protagonists, Berlin’s flight is an imaginary journey. Paul Berlin escapes into a dreamlike fantasy, and at the end of the novel, he returns to reality.

While most critics write of O’Brien’s use of a tripartite form in *Going After Cacciato*, Dale Jones suggests O’Brien’s organization contains four levels of time. The four levels consist of: the present or “Paul Berlin’s guard duty in an observation post”; the timeless or “the imaginary search for Cacciato which occurs in Paul Berlin’s mind”; the recent past or “Paul Berlin’s combat experiences”; and the distant past or “his growth from childhood to early manhood in Minnesota” (317). (Other critics combine the present and past combat experiences.) Although at times these four levels may seem incongruent, chaotic and meaningless, they are, in the end, effectively connected. In fact, through the long fantasy journey after Cacciato, Paul Berlin finally finds a measure of order and control within his otherwise senseless war existence.

The levels of time or existence allow O’Brien to deal with the protagonist in a random, yet accumulative, as well as creative and stable manner. This seems to be a necessary format for the author who is attempting to mix art and the
reality of the Vietnam War. Philip Beidler explains this point:

The task of the Vietnam writer, O’Brien seems to point out throughout the book, is to recognize the radicalness of this disparity [between facts and interpretation, memory and imagination, life and art] yet in the same moment to realize that there may be a lens of consciousness, so to speak, through which it may be made to appear at least provisionally resolved. Somehow, the job will be ‘putting facts in the right framework,’ one in which the outlines of the two have become congruent and seemingly indistinguishable. (172)

O’Brien successfully juxtaposes what he remembers of the facts with what he feels he can only interpret with what he may have just imagined. The final result is an accurate separation of fact and fantasy which all becomes clear in the end.

Tobey Herzog, in his article, “Going After Cacciato: The Soldier-Author-Character Seeking Control,” suggests that Paul Berlin acquires three different personas. He is, of course, a soldier. He is also the author of his fantasy and he is an actor or character in his fantasy (89). As a soldier on guard duty, he realizes that his war experience so far lacks unity, control or order. He begins to have trouble differen-
tiating between what is truly happening from what he might have imagined or dreamed. When the "dumb-as-a-bullet" Cacciato decides to walk to Paris, Paul Berlin begins to experiment with possibilities. Just as Orr inspired Yossarian, so Cacciato inspires Berlin.

Through Cacciato's inspiration, Berlin becomes the author and actor of a fantasy. Of course, the possibilities Berlin is concerned with have nothing to do with the 8600-mile journey to Paris, but have everything to do with the impossible circumstances which the common foot soldier must face. Herzog comments on the journey by writing, "Perhaps the tale about Cacciato has been an alibi to cover cowardice" (94). Certainly Paul Berlin is looking for alternatives to the confusing, difficult situation which he must survive or certainly wants to survive. Dale Jones suggests, "The fantasy-journey to Paris and the deserter Cacciato represent unrealized possibilities, alternatives to the actuality of Berlin's participation in the war. [The fantasy-journey and Cacciato] ... represent a dramatization of the continuous tension that O'Brien himself actually felt, as he expresses it in his journal, *If I Die in a Combat Zone*, between deserting the Army and serving in Vietnam" (317). Each of the protagonists from the previous novels, as well as Berlin, need to make this decision which is based not so much on courage or cowardice, but on a natural response versus a
conditioned social response. In order to find a suitable answer to this question, the protagonist must explore both ends of the question.

The fantasy-journey after Cacciato provides Berlin with the means to insert order, control, and purpose into a situation where they are missing in the factual experience. Michael Raymond points out that in this narrative level, "the particulars of time, place, action, and character are fully reported" (99). In this level, Berlin becomes the author of a fantasy, wherein his squad takes on the responsibility of bringing Cacciato, who has gone AWOL, back to the ranks. Before this, the men are unsure of their purpose. In the chapter entitled "The Things They Didn't Know," Berlin explains:

Not knowing the language, they did not know the people. They did not know what the people loved or respected or feared or hated. They did not recognize hostility unless it was patent, unless it came in a form other than language . . . (309). It was all a sad accident, he would have told them—chance, high-level politics, confusion. He had no stake in the war beyond simple survival; he was there in Quang Ngai, for the same reasons they were: the luck of the draw, bad fortune, forces beyond reckoning. (GAC 311-312)
Without purpose, the men also lacked control. Through the fantasy, Berlin can imagine himself in different situations and dilemmas, all of which have a possibility for resolution and survival. O'Brien meticulously reports the fantasy in an ordered, sequential fashion directly contrasting with the out-of-sequence events, facts, and illogic of the real-life experiences he had in Vietnam. The fantasy-journey becomes a means for putting order into the common soldier's experience. More than that, however, the fantasy allows O'Brien to experiment with art by successfully mixing facts and fiction.

In an observation post segment of the novel, O'Brien seems to be commenting on the difficulties of this juxtaposition of elements. Berlin is reflecting:

Order was the hard part. The facts even when beaded on a chain still did not have real order. Events did not flow. The facts were separate and haphazard and random, even as they happened, episodic, broken, no smooth transitions, no sense of events unfolding from prior events. (GAC 248)

It seems quite likely that O'Brien is speaking not only of his war experiences, but also of the art of fiction. Raymond writes, "the significance of the focus soon becomes apparent as Berlin indicates that art and order are different from life and facts" (100). As so many Vietnam War veterans had
These three levels of narration reflect American culture and it is this sentiment—mission over men—which distorts the basic human core. Raymond asserts that:

... the American culture appears randomly as a disappointing Indian Guide experience, as pick-up basketball games with clear-cut strategies and clear-cut winners and losers, as an unanswered telephone call to home, and as obligations to 'look for the good,' to win a silver star, and to be able to say 'it wasn’t so bad.'

(102)

O’Brien intends for the reader to realize that war is not a game with clear-cut strategies that win or lose. War, especially the Vietnam War, is not a simple narrative with a beginning, middle, and end that has a definite plot, order, and purpose. War and existence for these soldiers has a Russian-roulette quality which makes every second of their duty time an act of courage. Berlin believes this:

The issue, of course, was courage. How to behave. Whether to flee or fight or seek an accommodation. The issue was not fearlessness. The issue was how to act wisely in spite of fear. Spitting the deep-running bile, that was true courage... the obvious corollary: the greater a man's fear, the greater his potential courage.

(GAC 101)
The past and present narratives reveal the falsities which
tell the common soldier that he has a purpose to fight and
win and become a hero for his country. However, once he is
exposed to the reality of the situation, it becomes obvious
to him that he is fighting for his life. The purpose becomes
a matter of overcoming fear, a matter of survival, and a
matter of degree.

In the timeless or imagined narrative, Berlin comes to
realize the irony inherent in personal freedom and social
obligation. At the end of his fantasy, Berlin is faced with
a decision which basically comes down to this dichotomy
between the individual and society. Sarkin Aung Wan, the
young Vietnamese woman Berlin has become intimately involved
with in his fantasy, represents personal freedom. She says
in her statement at the trial:

'Spec Four Paul Berlin: I am asking for a break
from violence. But I am also asking for a positive
commitment. You yearn for normality--an average
house in an average town, a garden, perhaps a wife,
the chance to grow old. Realize these things. Give up this fruitless pursuit of Cacciato. Forget
him. Live now the dream you have dreamed. See
Paris and enjoy it. Be happy. It is possible. It
is in reach of a single decision. . . . I urge
you! March proudly into your own dream.'

(SGC 374-375)

Sarkin Aung Wan stands for personal freedom and unrealized dreams and the strength to pursue what seems unattainable. Sarkin Aung Wan, on one hand, becomes an icon for the American Dream.

Paul Berlin, on the other hand, stands for social obligation and commitment. As much as he would like to opt for this romanticized version of life, he has come to see reality. Paul Berlin rebuts with this:

'My obligation is to people, not to principle or political justice. . . . I stress the importance of viewing obligations as a relationship between people, not between one person and some impersonal idea or principle. An idea, when violated, cannot make reprisals. A principle cannot refuse to shake my hand. Only people can do that. And it is this social power, the threat of social consequences that stops me from making a full and complete break. Peace of mind is not a simple matter of pursuing one's own pleasure; rather, it is inextricably linked to the attitudes of other human beings, to what they want, to what they expect. The real issue is how to find felicity within limits. Within the context of our obligations to
other people . . . Even in imagination we must be true to our obligations, for, even in imagination, obligation cannot be outrun. Imagination, like reality, has its limits.' (GAC 376-378)

This seems to be an extension of what Fiedler wrote about Melville and Hawthorne. The individual must rely on the attitudes of others for his own peace of mind. The individual alone without obligations except to an idea or principle cannot be happy. This passage sorts out the difference between the romantic hero who believes in himself and his principles and the individual who feels an obligation to his society and not just the ideas or principles of society, but the people involved in one's life. The other protagonists in this study seem to just miss the mark on this point. None of them make the full social commitment that Paul Berlin makes.

At the end of the novel, the fantasy ends and reality continues. We are back now to when Cacciato first leaves. The regiment decides to let Cacciato go, report him missing-in-action and return to the observation post. However, they do not give up hope for Cacciato or his dream. We hear Paul Berlin and the Lieutenant saying about Cacciato's departure, "'Miserable odds, but--' 'But maybe.' 'Yes,' the Lieutenant said. 'Maybe so'" (GAC 395). O'Brien is not saying that we should give up our dreams; on the contrary, we must hold onto our dreams in order to effect positive change. O'Brien also
seems to say, though, that we must not lose sight of reality when reaching for impossible dreams.
The Necessity of the Idealized Individual

The American war novelist has experimented with different forms, characters, and themes, but one popular ingredient seems to be individualism. The novelists of this study seem to be of one idea. They all tend to admire the idea of individuality while their protagonists become frustrated, confused, disillusioned, and finally, assimilated by the facts of the social order or the military establishment. What I have found by examining these five novels is a progression from the individual who wants to return to nature (Crane and Hemingway) to the individual who must cope with society (Dos Passos and Heller) to the individual who has put the romanticism of the individual and the responsibilities toward society into perspective with one’s obligations and limitations (O’Brien). For the individual, this movement means a loss of status and personal control. It means giving up the idea of self-reliance and accepting a responsibility to society. For the artist, this movement means a focus on the common man rather than on the heroic do-gooder. It means that the characters might become less developed on a personal basis, but more developed on a social basis. Finally, as the
artist moves away from nature towards society, he moves away from romanticism towards realism.

When Stephen Crane wrote *The Red Badge of Courage* in 1895, the individual and romanticism were in question. Romanticism was practiced by the transcendental writers who believed in the importance of the imagination. Many critics agree that Crane's novel was one of the first realistic novels in America, but it also contained a degree of romanticism. On one hand, the colorful imagery, the idealism of the youth and the romantic setting at the end come from the romantic imagination. On the other hand, the realistic battle scenes, the descriptions of men and wounds and the realistic environment and dialogue come from the realistic mind. It would seem that Crane is writing during a time when these two movements are clashing and fighting for survival. Just as the protagonist, Henry Fleming, is confused about his situation, Crane seems to show the confusion between these two movements, especially considering his obscured ending.

To continue the confusion, Crane also pointed out the differences between the idealistic Greek heroes of Homer's writing and the real fears and feelings of Henry Fleming. Fleming is a common man and he is very much alone in his thoughts and feelings. The reader gets the impression that Fleming is the only one who questions his fears. While the veterans laugh and make fun of him, Fleming cannot decide
whether he is right or wrong in feeling a desire to save his life. As Fleming makes a decision between fighting and fleeing, he is also making a decision between social-reliance and self-reliance.

When Fleming goes into the woods, it is nature that he confronts for answers. However, nature only confuses him more. Crane seems to show the reader the opposition to Emerson's and Thoreau's idea that nature is good and the only means to self-fulfillment. As Fleming emerges from the deep woods, he reconsiders himself and society.

*The Red Badge of Courage* opens the debate between the individual and society and between romanticism and realism. Nothing is resolved except that nature is mysterious and inimical. Instead, the reader may be more confused on the issue. For at the end of the novel, Fleming seems to have made a social resolution, but he remains aloof from his buddies as he walks into a romantic setting.

Ernest Hemingway was aware of a glossing over of facts by the war writers of his time. So, in *A Farewell to Arms* he attempts to portray the truth in a matter-of-fact style that tries to be objective and realistic. While the novel reads like a sparse and objective retelling of events, Hemingway slips in a touch of romanticism. As Frederic Henry decides to leave the war and embark on a separate journey, he also decides to choose self-reliance over social-reliance.
Frederic Henry sets off to manifest his self with the aid of Catherine as his manifestation. When she dies, Henry is left alone and desolate, showing the results of the totally self-reliant individual. The ironic ending shows Hemingway's cynical attitude towards romanticism. No question arises about the intent of the final scene: man's final destination is death and he must deal each day with this fact.

Both *The Red Badge of Courage* and *A Farewell to Arms* have a main protagonist through whom the theme is realized. The reader does not know much about Henry Fleming's and Frederic Henry's backgrounds. Mostly, the reader knows what Fleming is thinking and feeling and what Frederic does or how he reacts to his situation. Also, both of these protagonists make attempts to escape to more natural settings, but both are fooled or disappointed in their findings. Crane and Hemingway show in their novels the feelings of confusion and desolation of the individual attempting to come to terms with nature.

In *Three Soldiers*, John Dos Passos begins a change in character development. The three soldiers in this novel each represent a section of America. Rather than use one character to speak for all of mankind as Crane and Hemingway do, Dos Passos uses three characters, each very different, who speak for themselves. These characters have backgrounds
which are established for the reader early in the novel. Yet, these three characters are not developed fully enough, so they do not become any more than stereotypes of American society.

The three characters, Fuselli, Chrisfield, and Andrews, seem to be defined by their society. Fuselli is defined as an Italian from San Francisco, Chrisfield as a farm boy from Indiana, and Andrews as a Harvard student from New York. These three characters do not have distinguishable personal characteristics, but only the more social characteristics. The reader does not know many thoughts or feelings of Fuselli, Chrisfield, or Andrews, and those we do know are repressed and only known by the reader. The distinctive personalities of these characters are hidden from their social surroundings so that they must pursue their dreams within the boundaries set by society.

Dos Passos leads us to believe that these three men are victims of their society. However, an underlying truth may be that these men allow themselves to become victims. Fuselli, Chrisfield, and Andrews each hold the romantic ideal of individualism. They each have a dream which they believe can come true. But, rather than change the system to accommodate their dreams, they follow the rules of the system and get lost or destroyed in it. Therefore, none of them reach their dreams, because the system was not made for them and they
sheepishly submit to it. Of course, Andrews symbolically frees his soul when he allows his composition to fly in the wind. But, as he says, he did not help anyone else to obtain freedom.

In *Catch-22*, Heller draws an even more destructive and absurd society. This is the society of capitalism. In the novel, Heller’s belief seems to be that freedom has come to mean the right to do anything one can lawfully get by with. Through a seemingly out-of-control style, Heller shows what happens when money and power take precedence over humanity. The individual becomes caught in a vast machine that treats him like so much matter or simply garbage.

The characters of this novel can be grouped into the oppressors and the oppressed. The oppressors, including General Dreedle and General Peckem, Lieutenant Scheisskopf, Colonel Cathcart, as well as Wintergreen and Milo Minderbinder, will do anything they can lawfully get by with, to retain, improve, or control their status of power. Milo, as head of M & M Enterprises, is the epitome of an oppressive, controlling person who completely disregards the evils or inhumanities to which he subjects others. He does not mean to hurt anyone and probably does not even realize the atrocities he causes, for at heart he is naive and innocent. His only motivation and cause is the syndicate and “what is good for the syndicate is good for everyone.” He can even con-
vince the masses of the justice in his actions. In *Catch-22*, we see the overriding acceptance of a system which uses and abuses the individual.

The oppressed individuals are caught in the “catch-22” syndrome. If Yossarian wants to get out of the military by pleading insanity, he cannot, because if he pleads insane himself, then he is not insane. And so on. The only oppressed character who masterminds the system is Orr. He is thought by everyone to be simple, helpless, a fool. However, Orr fools them all by strategically working out a plan—which takes much time and effort—and sets himself free. The irony, of course, is that the biggest fool turns out to be the most intelligent character.

Orr becomes Yossarian’s mentor as Yossarian begins to realize the principles of humanity and his ability to affect change. After his surrealist journey through the devastated streets of Rome, Yossarian unwittingly does something, to affect a change. When Yossarian begins to walk backwards around the camp and upsets the normal functions, it is only then that the oppressors notice him. When they offer Yossarian an ultimatum, Yossarian opts for the resolution which denies the oppressors a means to keep him in his place and retain their power. Instead, Yossarian reinforces belief in a standard of principles in mankind. Yossarian flees like
Orr did, symbolizing an individual freedom from an oppressive society.

The protagonist in *Going After Cacciato* goes through the same feelings of confusion and desolation as the main characters in the other novels. He also struggles with the question of whether to fight or flee. Paul Berlin also takes a journey like the others to find the answers. When Tim O’Brien wrote this novel, he was trying to understand his Vietnam experience in yet another way. Instead of writing about "the way it was," he chose to write about "what might have happened." Therefore, the novel functions on a level of realism and, in a sense, romanticism.

Three levels of the novel are realistic accounts of Paul Berlin’s experiences. One level is his present experience on guard duty at the observation post. The other two realistic levels are his recent past recounting his war experiences and the distant past recounting his growth to manhood. The fourth level of the novel is Paul Berlin’s imaginary journey after Cacciato which takes him and his regiment to Paris. Although much of the fantasy seems realistic, parts of it can be seen as romantic. Simply the fact that they made it to Paris is difficult to believe in reality. Plus, there are many times when their getaways and lucky breaks seem like a contrived movie. Nonetheless, Tim O’Brien has interrelated these levels, producing what has been called “magical real-
ism." Beidler explains: "it suggests a conscious inquiry into the processes of an art capable, often for all its seeming 'unreality,' of indeed transforming reality into something somehow truer than it ever was in experiential fact" (213).

The fantasy actually carries more meaning and truth than the real experiences. The fantasy ends and Paul Berlin has not realized his dream because he cannot forget the past. His dream cannot come true because he not only has an obligation to his father, friends, and country, but also has an obligation to the facts of life and reality. O'Brien seems to say that if a part of art is our hopes and dreams, then we must keep them in perspective with the reality of what we know of our past.

All of the artists in this study use romanticism to some extent. It is used primarily as an escape mechanism for the individual who cannot accept his society or environment. In The Red Badge of Courage, A Farewell to Arms, Three Soldiers, and Catch-22 the romanticism is part of the reality, but in Going After Cacciato, the realism is part of the romanticism of the imagined fantasy. In The Red Badge of Courage romanticism is represented by a peaceful, tranquil calm as when Henry is in the woods away from the sounds, sights, and smells of the battlefields or when he sees the sun peeping out of the leaden rain clouds. In A Farewell to Arms
romanticism is represented when Frederic and Catherine live happily together in Switzerland. In Three Soldiers romanticism is present when Chrisfield and Andrews leave the troop and rest by a body of water. In Catch-22 romanticism is shown when Yossarian leaves through the hospital window on his way to freedom. In Going After Cacciato romanticism is represented by the impossible journey, when impossible dreams might be fulfilled.

When the protagonists return from their dream worlds they learn to accept their fates in the world. They learn to accept their society and their responsibilities to it. All of the protagonists must wrestle with ideals which cannot be realized or which they would rather live without. Fleming struggles with the myths of Greek heroes while Frederic Henry exposes the false words, "honor," "glory," and "courage." John Andrews and Yossarian shun the false happiness of wealth and power and the evil it breeds. Paul Berlin wishes for the American dream while trying to understand the win or lose mentality of American culture.

The individual at odds in the American war novel seems to need romanticism in order to sort out the societal ideals which differ from his own experiences. In Crane’s and Hemingway’s novels in this study, the individual seems more concerned with himself and nature than with society. Crane compares Fleming to a squirrel, tries to check him according
to the laws of nature and uses metaphors comparing the war sights and sounds to ferocious animals and beasts. Hemingway also uses the natural environment as a metaphor for the action or mood of the novel. As well, Frederic gives up much of his self for the basic animal or naturalist instincts of survival. Both Crane’s and Hemingway’s protagonists desire a closer relationship to nature when the war proves too much. However, they also seem to blame nature for war. Fleming is seen blaspheming nature and calling the men “nature’s dupes” for going cheerfully to war (Stallman 173). Frederic finally realizes that death is simply a natural process.

In John Dos Passos’s and Joseph Heller’s novels, the individual seems more concerned with an uncaring society. The societies Dos Passos and especially Heller paint make the individual a victim. The main concern seems to be in following the rules and regulations of establishments or in finding the “catch-22” of the system. However, both Dos Passos and Heller seem to agree that the individual is his own perpetrator. By allowing the system to carry on without rebelling, the individual allows the system to take precedence over his own freedom. John Andrews is not like John Brown because he does not take the activist’s role. Both John Andrews and Yossarian act out a symbolic freedom, John Andrews a symbolic freedom of the inner soul and Yossarian a
freedom that can only be symbolic because of its impossibilities.

In Tim O’Brien’s novel, the individual seems to truly come to terms with his society. As Paul Berlin faces the reality of his situation, he must come to terms with many outside influences. Through his imagined journey, he realizes the obligation he has to his family and society. What O’Brien seems to say is that we must separate the fantasy from the reality, art from life. However, we should not lose sight of the value of fantasy or romance. Paul Berlin’s fantasy is necessary for him to sort out the reality of the situation from the ideals that he grew up with. By putting the ideals into a fantasy, Berlin is able to see the impossibility of their actual occurrence. This way Berlin is able to keep in perspective that which really is and that which only might be.

The individual in the context of these novels is the common man. He wants to believe he is special, but either his society will not accept him as such or he must accept himself that he is only a mere speck in the universe. If the individual is realized in the American war novel, it seems it can only be in a romantic or an imagined sense. The individual at war is a romantic idealist who becomes more and more objectified as part of the fighting machine by those who run the system. However, if the artist does not keep the
imagination alive, it will be lost and the artist will become his own victim. In other words, the imaginative capabilities of the artist are a necessary means of self-preservation. It is an important function which enables the individual to differentiate between illusion and reality.
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