

Conclusions: Kostî's Menck & Nat (Part II)

by Richard Kostelanetz (March 2015)

In memory of the great American writer Benjamin de Casseres (1873-1945), who authored *Mencken and Shaw* (1930)

Long interested in rewriting classic American literary works, beginning with Herman Melville's "Bartleby" and continuing with Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" (both of mine published by Bartleby & Co. in Brussels), I discovered a fugative text produced before 1920 by my critical hero H. L. Mencken in collaboration with his sometime co-conspirator (and co-editor) George Jean Nathan. Published as *The American Credo* (1920), it has two parts. The first, curiously mistitled "Preface," is longer than the second part. If the former offers a critique of American society, the latter is meant to represent Americans' ideas. The few critics thoughtfully commenting on this book judge its first part as superior to its second. Even so, the second was more inspiring to me. [more>>>](#)