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Ariadne's Threads of Identity: Foreshadowing of Social and
Individual Identity Theories in John Dos Passos' *U.S.A.*

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Ariadne's Threads of Identity: Foreshadowing of Social and Individual Identity Theories in John Dos Passos' U.S.A.

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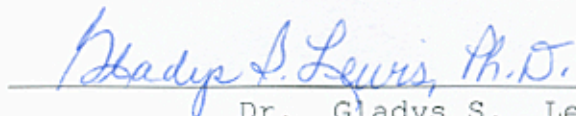
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The eminent biologist E.O. Wilson theorizes a unity of knowledge for all fields of study. Claiming that all knowledge springs from a basis in physics and continues to chemistry, biology, social sciences, and into humanities and even religion, Wilson then assumes that all knowledge can be connected. Many of these associations begin with people containing an understanding of two or more fields of study or even maintaining a general curiosity about life. American Modernist John Dos Passos is one artist who writes in a period full of new ideas and theories such as Existentialism and psychology. Centered on the mimetic ability for the author to capture concerns that define the human condition in order to bring forth some unknown truth, John Dos Passos writes a picture of America in his trilogy *U.S.A.* One basic struggle each of his twelve characters has is the challenge to define themselves. In this struggle we see the foreshadowing of future psychological studies: the beginnings of identity theory. What I shall demonstrate is that through the work of John Dos Passos, connections can be made between the *U.S.A.* characters of Mac, J. Ward Moorehouse, Eveline Hutchins, and March French and contemporary social identity theories. His writings precede very recent discoveries in the field of identity and allow links to be formed between the fields of humanities and the social sciences. By examining different theorists such as George McCall, Peter Burke, Michael Hogg, and Kay Reid, we see that Dos Passos writes about a society that constantly questions the development of self and identity. Due to his unique style, the development of identity, whether individual or social, is a natural product of the style.

Acknowledgements

"A man is never more his single separate self than when he sets out on a journey."

John dos Passos

During the course of my journey, numerous companions have helped me shape my thoughts and provided a light on my path. First, I would like to thank John Dos Passos for writing such a wonderful trilogy. Without his works, this thesis would not be possible. Secondly, to my family and friends who had to suffer through my soliloquies on theories and critiques, and while they may not have fully understood or cared what I was fervidly chatting about, their ears were much appreciated. To Dr. Matt Hollrah and Dr. Gladys Lewis, I cannot thank you enough for the time and thoughtfulness of your advice and teachings. Finally, to my thesis advisor Dr. Deborah Israel, I thank you for everything. Your advice challenged my writing and shaped a better product. I am indebted for your guidance and cannot thank you enough.

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Introduction

During the initial research phase of this thesis, I knew working with John Dos Passos and the *U.S.A.* trilogy was a unique opportunity. The works of Dos Passos fell out of the academic spotlight in the last few decades. Most critics responded to these texts in the years immediately following their initial publications or in volumes examining his life and entire literary output. Contemporary scholars need to reexamine the trilogy to fill this critical gap, concentrating on this author's ability to capture wholly the essence of the America of his time. Other Modernist attempted to capture this American essence: Stein's *Making of Americans*, and Hart Crane's *The Bridge*. Dos Passos creates a work from the interior of America,

examining the people and ideas that shaped the country for thirty years. In this thesis, I will open Dos Passos' work to a new interpretation.

John Dos Passos precedes discoveries in sociology and psychology. Because of the nature of the artist's ability to ask and explore basic questions and functions of our human condition, Dos Passos' thoughts are later identified through scientific advancements in today's world. Through his unique style as an investigator and reporter, Dos Passos' character development in the *U.S.A* trilogy anticipates identity formation and discovery. With the works of John Dos Passos and identity theory, this thesis will propose a correspondence between the evolution of character identities in *U.S.A.* and theories of identity formation developed later in the 20th century to unite the strings of knowledge and demonstrate that art anticipates psychological theory.

Jonah Lehrer's *Proust was a Neuroscientist* chronicles scientific advances that were seen in art decades before the actual scientific community provided explanations. While a Rhodes Scholar, Lehrer was working at a Noble recipient's neurology lab while reading Proust and was struck by the way in which art anticipated many scientific

advancements. Artists such as Whitman, Escoffier, Cezanne, Stravinsky, Stein, and Woolf, he states, "anticipate[s] the discoveries of neuroscience" (vii). These works of genius shocked Lehrer as he saw how, through these artist's talents and writings, dishes and scores, they were answering questions about how the human mind works:

The birth of modern art was messy. The public wasn't accustomed to free-verse poems or abstract paintings or plotless novels. Art was supposed to be pretty or entertaining, preferably both. It was supposed to tell us stories about the world, to give us life as it should be, or could be. Reality was hard, and art was our escape. But the modernists refused to give us what we wanted. In a move of stunning arrogance and ambition, they tried to invent fictions that told the truth. Although their art was difficult, they aspired to transparency: in the forms and fractures of their work, they wanted us to see ourselves. (viii)

In each chapter, Lehrer points out what the artist was writing, painting, or cooking and gives the outline of current science around their particular day. Then in remarkable clarity, he provides the modern neuroscience theories they preceded. For example, George Eliot's concerns with freedom anticipated the Human Genome discoveries that genes do not translate just one code meaning but that each code can stand for several instructions. GTAAGT has the freedom to stand for certain amino acids, stop, or even serves as a spacer in DNA (45).

Lehrer asserts, "The best metaphor for our DNA is literature. Like all classic literary texts, our genome is defined not by the certainty of its meaning, but by its linguistic instability, its ability to encourage a multiplicity of interpretations" (47). Such instability enables different reading of the same texts. One person can see the ending of *Middlemarch* as a traditional happy ending; however, others—like Virginia Woolf—"see Dorothea's inability to live alone as a turn of plot" (47). While George Eliot clearly had no overt concern for DNA or the complicated nature of our genes, she nevertheless was concerned with individual freedom and human's complicated ability to choose different paths. Like individual readers, our genes carry the ability to choose how they will be interpreted.

Just as the artists of Lehrer's book, the narrative of the epic *U.S.A.* trilogy spans American interests from coast to coast and even enters war-torn Europe. Divided into three parts when first published, *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *1919* (1932), and *The Big Money* (1936), the sequence follows America from 1900 to 1930. After the initial division of the main texts, Dos Passos seeks to combine new forms of writing by including Newsreels, Camera Eyes, mini-

biographies, and narratives about fictitious characters. The reader must understand Dos Passos' aim in these various forms in order to understand the changing American landscape and the nature of people Dos Passos has witnessed in order to gain an understanding of a country and its people still searching for an identity. For the identity of America and the individual identity concerns their own notion of self and their surroundings. People must be aware of society's role in the development of an identity just as America the nation must be aware of how the world views her. Identity is an umbrella term that describes any possible way a person seeks to define themselves as a separate entity. The Newsreels provide a sense of America's identity as they glean their texts from the headlines of the day, bits of popular songs, speeches, or advertisements to identify the actual feelings of the day. For example,

Newsreel LV

THRONGS IN STREETS

LUNATIC BLOW UP PITTSBURGH BANK

Krishnamurti Here Says His Message Is

World Happiness

Close the doors

They are coming

Through the windows

AMERICAN MARINES LAND IN NICARAGUA

TO PROTECT ALIENS

Pangalos Caught; Prisoner in Athens (Big Money 154)

Dos Passos crafts each newsreel to the other three forms he employs in the trilogy. Each article or fragment mimes the action or inaction of the other sections to emphasize the picture Dos Passos creates about American life. The actual news lines and songs help readers to understand the developing identity as America moves out of the old century and into a new one. Readers can see what the important ideas are and distinguish values such as protecting aliens or even the rejection of immigrants within the majority. The lyrics serve as an underlying concern for immigrants. These fragments of contemporary articles extend the notion that identity groups can be as large as a nation but just as complicated as in a single person.

The next device is the Camera Eye. Developed because of an interest in the new motion picture industry, Dos Passos uses the practice of montage in film to mirror the written word. Also, each Camera Eye reflects events in Dos Passos' own life. The artist actually enters his work and readers see America through the subjective source. Take Camera Eye (4):

Riding backwards through the rain in the
rumbly cab looking at their two faces in the
jiggly light of the four-wheeled cab and Her big
trunks thumping on the roof and He reciting
Othello in his lawyer's voice

Her father loved me, oft invited me

Still questioned me the story of my life

*From year to year, the battles, sieges,
fortunes*

That I have past.

I ran it through, even from my boyish days,

*To th' very moment that he bade me to tell
it*

*Wherein I spoke of the most disastrous
chances*

Of moving accidents by flood and field

*Of hairbreadth' scapes I'th' imminent deadly
breach*

why that's the Schuylkill the horse's
hoofs rattle sharp on smooth wet asphalt after
cobble through the gray streaks of rain the
river shimmers ruddy with winter mud When I
was your age Jack I dove off this bridge through
the rail of the bridge we can look way down into
the cold rainyshimmery water did you have any
clothes on? Just my shirt (*The 42nd Parallel*
21)

Here the author evokes an image from his past, and we see
him recalling his father. In each snap-shot Dos Passos
presents an "accurate, though not all-embracing or coherent
autobiography. Sometimes he gives details without regard
for time sequence or seems to omit details and
explanations" (Landsberg 191). Without knowing exactly

what they are reading, the reader is slightly able to see some of the events leading to Dos Passos' development into the author of the thirties. Through his Camera Eye sections, we see some of his struggles as a child, his emerging ideas toward Russia and Communism, and his work for Sacco and Vanzetti. This allows the author to show his identity development. Much like the Camera Eyes, the author is unable to escape the creation of his own identity in the trilogy.

The third component is the mini-biographies of numerous famous men and women who helped define the three decades the books span. Melvin Lansberg states that "one of their purposes is to allow Dos Passos to portray important members of the owning class, virtually absent from the fiction, and a more inclusive end is to furnish extensive historical background for the narrative" (193). Each of the biographies serves as a parallel to the happenings of Dos Passos' life to his fiction. Big Bill Haywood and Eugene V. Debs are labor leaders whose biographies interrupt Mac's sections and provide many points of reference for some of the theories to which he listens and subscribes. Other figures, including President Wilson, Isadora Duncan, and Henry Ford, illuminate ideas and

comment upon the many character's actions or are commented upon by the twelve characters. Dos Passos demonizes President Wilson through Richard Savage's commentary and attributes snake-like characteristics to him: "It was a grey stony cold face grooved like columns, very long under the silk hat. The little smile around the mouth looked as if it had been painted on afterwards. . . .A terrifying face, I swear it's a reptiles Face, not warmblooded," states Richard Ellsworth Savage (1919 374-75). Other biographies offer sympathy to radical rebels of the day (John Reed, Randolph Bourne, and Paxton Hibben) just as Dos Passos paints sympathetic pictures of such fictional characters as Ben Compton, Mary French and Mac.

The final part of the trilogy is fiction. Dos Passos creates twelve people, all who reside on different levels of the middle class, that attempt to find their way in America.¹ They span every part of America from the East to West Coast, Texas to Hollywood, Jewish to anarchist, educated to radical, and soldiers to business men. Each character seeks a certain life for himself but will either be doomed or fade into the shadows. Each personality is not an island in the novels, but moves about and around the other characters. Moorehouse meets Mac in Mexico.

Daughter is found next to Moorehouse and Stoddard in France eating dinner. Anderson and Eveline return to America on same ship. Readers see them react and comment on each others' actions. Although not every character crosses paths with every other person, intersections frequently happen. While these connections may seem coincidental, many of the intersections serve a higher purpose. Not only are the character's viewed from an autobiographical narrative perspective, but they can be seen from the eyes of the other eleven characters as well. In this way, Dos Passos provides a multi-layered experience for the reader so as to give depth to the characters' portrayals and eventually, the characters' sense of identity, especially within Moorehouse's development in a later chapter.

Noted critic Blanche Gelfant emphasizes Dos Passos' concern with identity in her essay "The Search for Identity in the Novels of John Dos Passos." Gelfant states that the "problem of achieving a whole and innerly motivated 'real' identity is one of the characteristic and driving problems of our time" (196). Gelfant takes aim at the numerous characters that span Dos Passos's long career and suggests that a failure to achieve any real identity derives from the character's childhood. Jimmy Herf, in *Manhattan*

Transfer, and Charley Anderson, from *U.S.A.*, are fatherless. Jay Pignatelli, in *Chosen County*, grows up in a hotel, suggesting no permanent residence. Thus, Gelfant asserts that the choices these characters make later in life are reflected in their disastrous childhoods. Later, Gelfant marks a movement away from the characters ability to make sense of the larger world and turn inward, projecting their own demons onto the larger causes. She feels that Dos Passos' hero's are generic and cannot withstand the inadequate feelings that their identity project. However, many characters are actively seeking an identity, no matter if they end tragically, like Joe, Eveline, or even Mary. Gelfant's major difficulty stems from an obtuse view that spans the whole of Dos Passos' works and fails because of it. Aiming her scope at such a large collection does not pay special homage to the beauty of Dos Passos' skill at crafting characters caught in a society with a fragmented identity.

With the advent of modern theories of identity formation, literature offers clearer insights with a new, more expansive view. Identity as a concept creates societal angst, but instead of looking at it as an end, Dos Passos foreshadows what later psychologists have thought

about identity. Mary French pits her endeavor against one group in favor of another, searching in her group's prototype for a voice of her own. Mac is so caught up in other's opinions he cannot develop into his own self until the end. All the characters struggle to form a solid sense of and with Dos Passos' fragmented style, readers can discover the challenges they face, their opinions of each other, and, sometimes, a resolution. Eveline's death reveals much more than a hopeless America; she serves an example of a person who cannot interact without an identity and the despondency that comes from its absence.

Moorehouse breaks out of one identity after his first marriage but develops a sharper, more focused self when he builds a public relations empire. The development of these characters anticipates the coming of identity theory. Each demonstrates fragmented psychological behaviors reflecting how the real society Dos Passos was capturing, behaves, develops, and functions.

¹ The twelve are: Fainy (Mac) McCreary, Charley Anderson, J. Ward Moorehouse, Janey Williams, Joe Williams, Richard Ellsworth Savage, Eleanor Stoddard, Eveline Hutchins, Ben Compton, Mary French, Anne Elizabeth Trent (Daughter), and Margo Dowling.

Mac is a printer and I.W.W. man he seeks revolution but does not grasp many of the concepts. He goes from one relationship and marriage to Mexico, and in his escape leaves his revolutionary ideas behind.

Charley Anderson is a soldier. Unsure of what to do after the war, he goes into aeronautics. However, he cannot escape the wanton past life of a soldier and falls back upon drinking. His life offers no real purpose or urgency to seek out purpose.

J. Ward Moorehouse is a public relations executive who leads a bland inner life. Ultimately successful at what he does he is a character that spans the entire trilogy.

Janey Williams is a stenographer from a very poor middle class family. She seeks a better way of life and snubs that which would keep her down, including her brother Joe whom she rejects in 1919. Her success comes from working under J. Moorehouse.

Joe Williams is a born loser. A soldier who leads a life of wandering, he is written to portray the victim.

Richard Ellsworth Savage is an educated man from Harvard. He trades in his values and ideas for money which forces him to abandon his poetry. He will become Moorehouse's assistant after the war.

Eleanor Stoddard is an interior designer engaged in art life wherever she goes. Her ultimate goal is for wealth and social position which she seeks with a cold indifference.

Eveline Hutchins is Eleanor's friend and partner throughout the novels. She cannot find peace and is thus restless in her sections. She seeks the company of men and yearns to be interesting.

Ben Compton is a Jewish strike leader. He is very dedicated to the Communist party and organizes numerous strikes. However, he refuses to accept party authority and is thrown out.

Mary French is a college student who leads a life in radical activity. During the course of her story, many disappointments occur, but she continues to believe in her ideals.

Daughter (Anne Elizabeth Trent) is from Texas. A girl who learns just how cruel the world can be. She will be seduced and left by Richard Ellsworth Savage after the war.

Margo Dowling is a woman who stands firm against all odds and finds herself a success in Hollywood.

Chapter One

Who Am I?: Mac

The character "Mac" illustrates many firsts for Dos Passos. He is the first character readers meet, the first glimpse into the world of *U.S.A.*, and the first character whose story ends by the conclusion of the first novel. Mac presents a portrait of youthful America, a newness and a freshness in a world that is rough, uncaring, and unforgiving. Dos Passos begins his epic trilogy, not with a birth, but with a child of "good Scotch-Irish stock" in New England who bridges the gap between a century dominated by a strict code of conduct and a new era that promises a fresh start (*The 42nd Parallel* 92). Mac's characterization depicts the individual's need for an identity and his struggles to achieve a sense of self.

Mac's identity personifies three modern identity theorists: Erik Erikson, Sheldon Stryker and George

McCall. Constructing a bridge between the Social Sciences and Dos Passos requires a basic understanding of where and how identity theories developed. As psychology evolved as a field numerous branches appeared in the 1900s, which started with the foundations of Freud and James. Not until the 1960s and '70s did identity theory or, for that matter, identity questions arise. Erik Erikson's influence and progress displays a psychologist's first thoughts on the topic. Over the course of his work, Erikson shows concern with children and their identity formation. He uses four aspects of personality to define identity: People's conscious sense of individual identity; continuity of personal character; ego synthesis; and solidarity within a group (Stevens 62). With all these parts, Erikson notes that identity can never firmly be established because humans as a conscious group are always undergoing evolution to the way we perceive and are perceived. In *Childhood and Society*, Erikson pursues identity within three processes: introjections, identification, and identity formation (159). Introjections occur in the infantile stages of life when a child "internalizes the injunctions and demands of parents and other key figures and thus, as it were, establishes inner representations of them" (Stevens 63). Then, typically, the child will identify with adults that

are significant in their lives. Finally, Erikson states that identity formation begins when identification ends and the child moves into adolescence. Here we see the expanding self-awareness and a more developed exploration of self (Erikson 159).

Sheldon Stryker insists that a salient identity, an identity that projects outward, plays across numerous fields. On these different levels, one constructs a hierarchy of identities. In the hierarchy, a person will behave differently based on personal rankings of the identity ("Identity Salience" 558). Stryker goes on to state that the more salient an identity is, then the more likely a person will act according to role expectations within the identity. The person will seek out situations that give an opportunity to enable the identity. Lastly, the person will then commit to the said identity. Commitment is the number of people that one relates to through an identity. He suggests that "the greater number of persons to whom one is connected through having a particular identity, the greater is the commitment to that identity" ("Integrating" 16).

While Stryker's identity theory focuses on the traditional role identity plays within a lifetime, McCall

discusses the variation that identity provides. Two ideas span McCall's works. First, that identity can be organized into a prominence hierarchy of identities that reflect how one sees themselves ideally. Jan Stets summarizes: "The placement in the hierarchy depends on how much the individuals obtain support from others for an identity" (Stets 91). Also, how they are invested in the identity and if they receive any rewards from the identity factors in. This "Ideal Self" or how prominent the hierarchies are, reflects the priorities that people serve over time (*Identities and Interactions* 82).

Secondly and most recently, McCall argues for a different approach than his earlier works to the creation of identity. Many times the theorists ask who one is, but McCall suggests that to find out who I am is to ask who I am not. The term self-disidentifications refer to people who reject a group that they identify with early for another group and identity. McCall's study in 2003 suggests that the "not-me" is framed by characteristics and dispositions, and the "me" is framed in roles and statuses (*Advances* 12). He notes that identity is in constant change and can occur unexpectedly, but communicating the forces that surround identity gleans a more accurate

picture of real life. Later, these theories of McCall and Styrker, as well as Erikson, help understand the anticipation of Dos Passos's character development within identity formation.

Dos Passos' style reflects Mac's struggle for identity in two parts: Mac becomes absorbed in the style of life around him, contributing very little in dialogue, and he is characterized by what he does rather than any internal struggle. In Dos Passos' style a reflective inquisition occurs; he is reporting the happenings of a country as a camera would see it. Mac's construction features portraits within a portrait, for we see a character within the span of the novel but also within the fragments of the other forms within the text. As each story is broken between the Camera Eye, Newsreel, and biographies, we see Mac growing up and searching for an identity as America searches for one also. This fragmentation creates an unclear picture of Mac's character, for we never see him as a unified whole.

Mac, known as Fainy McCreary at the beginning, is a child of circumstance. With a father who has a night watchman post and a mother who washes clothes, Mac's life

is difficult. The first event reported occurs when Mac must go to the drugstore and passes a group of kids:

At the corner of Quince was a group of boys he'd have to pass. Passing wasn't so bad; it was when he was about twenty yards from them that the first snow-ball would hum by his ear. There was no comeback. If he broke into a run, they'd chase him. If he dropped the medicine bottle he'd be beaten up when he got home. . . ."Scared cat. . . Shanty Irish. . . Bowlegged Murphy. . . Running home to tell the cop." (*The 42nd Parallel* 5)

The dichotomy between how Mac is perceived by the kids and how he is viewed at home is the first time Mac ponders his identity. But Mac's sense of self questions his surroundings and begins McCall's hierarchy of identity. The kids view him through the negative insults, "Scared cat, Shanty, Bowlegged" and he knows if he runs, these identities will become truth (*The 42nd Parallel* 5). However, he also must consider his family's view of him. Dropping the bottle to flee is appalling to a family that cannot afford a new bottle of medicine. Both social images projected onto Mac involve pain, pain from the other boys and pain from his family. The use of pain as a reinforcement of his social position points toward a societal rule in his life. Dos Passos uses this beginning story to justify Mac's introjections identity but also demonstrates a heightened ability to perceive society. If

Erik Erikson proposes that children internalize injunctions of adults and others around him, then this episode when Fainy is torn between the two largest forces herald the theorist. Dos Passos creates a character who displays the crucial presence of identity creation as one of the major forces in a child's life. In the case of Mac, he becomes keenly aware of what the neighborhood children think of him and what the parents' think of him. Reporting the facts as they happen allows Dos Passos to control Fainy and reveal the power of a need for identity in a scared child. Giving fragments of Mac's childhood reveals the importance of memories and assimilation of strong emotional catalysts, for they help in his development. To Dos Passos, giving every small detail is not as important as underscoring the major changes in a person's life, which exposes his journalistic actions.

The next stage of Mac's life moves him to Chicago where he will shift into the next stages of his maturity. With no work for his father, Uncle Tim persuades the McCreary family to move to the Midwest, promising a land of "supply and demand jobs" (*The 42nd Parallel* 10). Tim's speeches affect Mac in a curious way, for they set in motion a path that Mac will follow until he fades out of

the novel. Mac's identification with the adults around him recalls Erikson's theory which places Mac on the cusp of identity formation, which begins around adolescence. Mac will always search for opportunity in other parts of North America. He will never be content to settle in one place, partly due to these first lessons he receives from Uncle Tim:

John, take it from me that I'd be the last one to want to bring disrespect on the dead that was my own sister by birth and blood. . . But it ain't your fault and it ain't my fault . . . it's the fault of poverty, and poverty's the fault of the system . . . Fenian, you listen to Tim O'Hara's tellin' the truth. . . It's the fault of the system that don't give a man the fruit of his labor. . . The only man that gets anything out of capitalism is a crook, an' he gets to be a millionaire in short order. . . But an honest workin' man like John or myself we can work a hundred years and not leave enough to bury us decent with. (*The 42nd Parallel* 10)

Tim's speech is the first outside opinion that reaches Mac's adolescent ears. By writing Mac as a youth on the brink of adulthood, Dos Passos forces Mac's character to identify with the loudest opine. Mac has the ability to become anything he desires. The world is his to command, but Dos Passos's influence of the characterization does not allow this possibility. Mac will move around in search of money because of his uncle's passive influence. His uncle's basic social teachings prove to be the foundation

of Mac's passive role in a societal uprising. Dos Passos creates Mac's loose role through his style. Seeing the action or inaction as it happened rather than as it happens attests to the journalistic qualities of his writing style. Just like an article in a newspaper, Mac's actions are in the past. Dos Passos uses words throughout Mac's narrative like "squirmed," "went," "glanced," "was," "started" or "began" within his actions because they have already happened. Mac made the decision without the reader's knowledge, without any dialogue, and the strongest voice wins. For example, Mac finds opinions in the socialist and Marxist groups that help shape his identity; he develops a commitment to an identity that warrants discovery. These groups extend Uncle Tim's earlier views, and since Mac must conform to the strongest voice, the Communists become a natural choice. Commitment to an identity, as Sheldon Stryker states, has Mac mimic a person's teachings or opinions depending on the people around him. He takes them as his own and then, as promptly as he enters, Mac leaves the lesson behind for a higher salient identity. This is never clearer than in the talks with Ben Evans, a Nevada socialist worker, about women. Ben tells him, "You take it from me, boy . . . Love'em and leave'em, that's the only way for stiffs like us" (*The 42nd Parallel* 83).

Ben's philosophy shapes Mac's relationship with Maise, his girlfriend in California, with whom Mac will produce children but leave when times prove rough. Mac's self image evolves from his community and processes through elements of personal interaction. Mac represents a product of commitment; he is not just a typesetter or a revolutionary or a passive watcher, but he becomes all of these elements because they actively form his identity. Dos Passos does not invent commitment. However, he uses Mac to demonstrate that people conform; in fact, they want to conform. Mac sees a way to get ahead through Bob Evans, Uncle Tim, and even Doc Bingham, and being part of their circle provides certain privileges. As a friend to Evans, Mac is able to work on the *Nevada Workman* as a printer. But Dos Passos, again, does not let us see more than just the superficial conformity, for Mac has many other problems than the strikes. Linda Wagner notes that "their actions and statements are vague at best and execution. 'But God Damn it to hell, a man's got to work for more than himself and his kids to feel right' is the closest Mac comes to an explanation of his philosophy" (96). She also suggests that Mac's wanderings show an inability to commit to any one ideology. However, for Stryker's identity theory, commitment warrants how many connections Mac makes rather

than the actual acceptance of ideology. He leaves the Socialists for Maisie, then leaves her for the Mexican Revolution, but finally ends all relations with revolutionary principles at the end of his sections. Rather than have Mac completely believe in the expressions of others, which reflects the passive levels of his commitment, Dos Passos chooses vague pieces to reflect the aimlessness that really is Mac.

Instead of Mac identifying his surroundings, readers must perceive them for him. Dramatic irony becomes an important stylistic tool Dos Passos uses because it allows the audience to make connections to society. The reader witnesses the push and pull of ideas from Mac's surroundings as he absorbs, retains, and expels ideas about life, America, and society. The ideas are not more important to Mac than materials like books or printing presses, which help describe his identity, for they represent another part of his perceived self. When Mac leaves Connecticut, he does not think of the people he is leaving behind, but only the possessions that identify them in his memory: "the red bridge, the scabshingled houses where the Polaks lived, Smith's and Smith's corner drugstore . . .there was Billy Hogan just coming out with a

package of chewing gum" (*The 42nd Parallel* 8). In viewing his present that soon becomes his past, he does not see the people, but rather the surroundings and possessions, the Polish houses and Billy's gum. A sense of place develops part of who Mac will become at an early age, before the presented truths of Uncle Tim, which reinforces Dos Passos's ability to capture the complexity of life, of humanity's struggle with making meaning. Stylistically, Dos Passos creates a picture where the important events are highlighted. He purposely conceals unimportant actions and, instead, presents the only ideas that matter at a given juncture. Again, this reaffirms Dos Passos' journalistic technique to give only the important information.

The end of Mac's portrait marks the first time Dos Passos allows a character to fade into the background. At this time, Mac has become disillusioned with the socialist revolution in Mexico and stays with Concha. Not knowing why or how the decision came shows the character's actions but not the deliberative process of choice. However, because his Mexican community is so strong within his identity hierarchy, perhaps Mac has finally found a preferable community for identification suggesting that Mac was always more concerned with money making than societal uprising.

The America that disillusioned Mac supersedes the failing social revolution in Mexico. Iain Colley suggests that "Mac finds his grasp on his convictions tenuous and fluctuating" (67) when we see Mac's innocence as a child questioned by any adult audience. Mac finally makes a conscious choice not to join Zapada's revolution but settle down. He shifts his identity in another direction and will no longer be defined by revolution, an idea that precedes George McCall. McCall argues that to find out who Mac is one needs to ask who Mac is not. The term self-disidentifications can be applied to Mac's ending because he rejects the socialist identifiers from earlier in life to form a newer identity. This rejection can be from a number of unexpected events in Mac's like such as realizing the failures of the revolution, finding a love of money, or wanting companionship with a woman. Mac rejects the characteristics of the revolutionist when he goes back to Concha. He will no longer be the wandering, elusive man working odd printing jobs and sleeping with women because that does not define who he is now. His new role becomes a business and family man. The precedence, to McCall, takes place when Mac rejects and then conforms to the strongest voice in the novel, Capitalism. By rejecting what identified him the most, Mac obeys the rules of convention

and reveals a harsher criticism of America. As Colley states, "[Mac] reveals the flaw in the American autodidact's odyssey and the limitations of a career so crammed with 'adventure'" (78).

Mac represents America at the turn of the century. Dos Passos has styled him on a young America that has everything to win or lose. By committing to a strong salient identity, Mac characterizes himself by ideas that others observe as important. He is able to assimilate the new identities but yet reject them just as fast. However, he does stay committed to each one as long as those people who represent these identities are around him. Once Ike leaves, that identity is replaced with another around Massie and so forth. While Mac does settle down to a family, Iain Colley suggests that he hasn't yet found his way:

He signifies, as engrammatic hero, the replacement of the sensitive young man by a new and tougher type. Mac is an interesting figure. He reveals the flaw in the American autodidact's odyssey and the limitations of a career so crammed with "adventure". Nevertheless, he is a member of the last generation to be able to lead such an existence; future prospects will be much grimmer (78).

While Dos Passos portrays this grim picture of America, the identity concerns are less disenchanting. Mac does display

many characteristics that modern identity theorists discuss today. Wandering into the abyss, Mac displays a sense of searching that describes the problems of identity.

However, he commits to the role and is defined by what he does and does not do. Dos Passos understood identity problems within the realm of humanity thus anticipating the theories of McCall and Stryker, and even Erikson. If Mac is struggling to find an identity, then so must the society that Mac is imitating. As Mac fades into history with a new identity, he demonstrates that searching is possibly all that one can do.

Chapter Two

What is My Group: Mary French

While ultimately Mac rejects the life of organized labor and settles down in a bookstore after being disillusioned by wavering politics and people, Dos Passos presents another figure enticed by or torn between the world of the middle class and revolution. Mary French, introduced at the end of the trilogy, becomes a parallel to Mac. Her fate is tied to her groups, vacillating between what she wants and actuality. Mary stands as a precursor to social identity theories by Marilynn Brewer and demonstrates how complicated life can be.

The history of social identity theories began with Henri Tajfel. Concerned with the aftermath of World War

II, Tajfel sought to understand prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup conflict. According to Michael Hogg, Tajfel believed that these occurrences could not be explained by personality or interpersonal interactions (112). However, a large part of human's individual actions configured social forces, and thus he sought to theorize how this ensues.

Tajfel's defines social identity as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to a certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" ("Social Categorization" 292). Within the same group, humans compete for various things such as prestige or pleasure. The diverse approaches within the group behavior to achieve these goals are influenced by the way people behave. After Tajfel, copious amounts of social identity theorists sprang from his basic teachings. Many, such as Michael Hogg, developed categories to distinguish the many behaviors humans exhibit within the groups they identify with.

Marilynn Brewer builds her theory of social identities on the previous works of Henri Tajfel. Tajfel defines social identity as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some

emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (292). Brewer suggests a discrepancy within previous social identity theorists that use social identities as aspects of individual self. But to mix individual selves into a social hierarchies present negative connotations within the field, according to Brewer, and social identities need to be discussed as extensions of the self well beyond the individual (476).

Brewer notes that:

Personal identity is the individual self—those characteristics that differentiate one individual from others within a given social context. Social identities are categorizations of the self into more exclusive social units that *depersonalize* the self-concept, where *I* becomes *we*. (476)

Consider a small dot in the middle of an ever increasing set of circles. The dot represents one's personal identity. The expanding circles that do not touch one another signify the social identities of a person. Brewer suggests that each circle turn into a frame of reference for the next and so on. The notion of social self interweaves within the larger group and validates a person's self-worth. Her final point demonstrates that a self-concept is "*expandable and contractable*" across multiple levels of social identity (476). When one

definition of the self changes then other means must change accordingly.

Brewer's larger point indicates a basic tension between validation and similarities to others and a counter need to be an individual. To her, social identity becomes a compromise between assimilation and differentiation from others, where "the need for deindividuation is satisfied within in-groups [family members], while the need for distinctiveness is met through intergroup comparisons" (477). Basically, social identities require individuals to pursue optimal distinctiveness within a given situation. For people to achieve "optimal distinctiveness," they must find a balance between assimilation and distinction within and between social groups. When inclusion is threatened by any number of forces, we shrink back from the group to an individualized nature, therefore losing the optimal range of inclusion. In these groups, people are constantly looking for similarities and judge from the standpoint of the prototype. Michael Hogg adds to social identity discourse by suggesting that people achieve a sense of social identity through a comparison with the prototype: a "fuzzy set of attributes that are related to one another in a meaningful way and that simultaneously capture

similarities within the group and differences between the group and other groups" (Hogg 118). By relating to various prototypes, Mary French seeks to find her optimal distinctiveness within the rising salient group of organized labor.

Dos Passos begins Mary's narrative with the dichotomy between her mother and father, two people who represent two distinct groups and are the strongest prototypes in Mary's early life. Mr. French is a poor doctor who would rather help sick people because they are sick than take payment. However, Mother French, repulsed by this notion, cannot abide his lack of consideration:

Then Mother would put away the dishes and clatter around the house muttering to herself that if poor Daddy ever took half the trouble with his paying patients that he did with those miserable foreigners and miners he would be a rich man today and she wouldn't be killing herself with housework. (*The Big Money* 85)

Beginning with this first disagreement, Mary is caught between two worlds: the world of charity or helpfulness and the world of gains. Her father represents humanitarianism and the need to help people, no matter what the cost, and her mother is looking to climb the social ladder, stepping on the heads of others to reach the top. Each plays an important role in Mary's life and identity.

Mary rejects the teaching of her mother for her father, choosing to help him in the office rather than to go out dancing or to date. However, this world comes at a cost to Mary, for she cannot see the dark spot until it is too late, choosing to believe in the good in all over the black decay of society. Her father is a drunk and dies by the drink, which is how Mary discovers her father's life is complicated and messy. After his death, Mary remains in a state of shock: "She didn't feel anything. She seemed to be seeing things unusually vivid" (*The Big Money* 99). With this new found sight of the world, Mary chooses to work in Chicago rather than to finish college. There she joins the work at Hull House, throwing herself into the position of social worker and champion of worker's rights. Mary's identity is still caught between two polarities after she rejects her mother and her hawkish attempts to bring up a socialite and embraces Mr. French's humanism. The dichotomy they create in her still forces Mary to question her identity within her personal sphere.

When Mary moves to Chicago, she puts herself in a salient, or rapidly rising, group. Organized labor rises after The Great War and hopes within the Labor political parties continue the proliferation of the ideas of Marx,

Vleban, Debs, and others. The group affords her little in the way of happiness, but the work is challenging. Here Mary searches for a prototype. The men with whom she becomes involved each represent a different prototype. Her first standard becomes G.H. Barrow, the lecturer of the working class. Barrow portrays a fierce fighter for the workers, and Mary's perception of him lies first in the past, having heard one of his lectures at Vassar. His visit pleases her and reaffirms the happiness she finds in social work and, after the lecture, she supplies names and information to demonstrate her pleasure. Dos Passos crafts the dinner scene with precision. Mary listens attentively to Barrow's every word and idea. Once she even echoes his ideas as if she had believed them before dinner.

Of course he didn't believe in bourgeois morality but he wanted understanding and passionate friendship in a woman.

When he talked he showed the tip of his tongue sometimes through the broad gap in the middle of his upper teeth. She could see in his eyes how much he had suffered. "Of course I don't believe in conventional marriage either," said Mary. Then Mr. Barrow broke out that she was so fresh so young so eager so lovely so what he needed in his life and his speech began to get a little thick and she guessed it was time she was getting back to Hull House because she had to get up so early. When he took her home in a taxi she sat in the furthest corner of the seat but he was very gentlemanly although he did seem to stagger a little when they said goodnight. (*The Big Money* 103)

Her behavior toward the prototype is distinctly unusual. If she so abhors the conventional ways of the middle class as she states, then what stops her from having an affair with Barrow? The problem with Mary's identity centers on the vacillation between the present group of counter culture and the middle class beliefs that she grew up with. Her identity reaffirms Brewer's optimal distinctiveness. Mary tries to find stability between two conflicting motives or groups for inclusion. However in order to conform to the group's prototype and reach optimal distinctiveness, she does sleep with Barrow but does not see any significance in this occasion. This act unbalances her identity because she does not feel any difference after the act. She has over-satisfied Barrow and left herself unfulfilled, but when she deprives him of her body, nothing is realized either. Her identity desperately wants a steadiness, but Mary over-compensates her distinctiveness while searching for and identifying with the prototypes. Dos Passos skillfully manipulates Mary's character to stimulate the desire for balance between her social groups. The equilibrium Mary so desperately wants allows Dos Passos to sketch another picture of society that "may persuade one to change sides" (Colley 108) in order to appear balanced.

Numerous prototypes appear in Mary's groups, each serving a higher purpose. Ben Compton enters her life when she begins writing for the *Freeman*. Compton, a Communist who needs a place to hide, becomes a marker to Mary's identity. Mary's rent free apartment becomes a perfect hideout because of her roommate's vacation. She has heard Ben speak to crowds and finds herself in awe of his deep, forceful voice. The voice attracts her to Ben, and she consents to build a relationship with him after one week. Compton represents the youth in Mary's radical life, the idolized nature of passion for a cause. Forceful, Ben has been to jail for the cause, and, in Mary's eyes, he is the zenith of the movement. He becomes the new prototype, and Mary begins to shape her identity around him. Mary becomes more radical by reading Lenin, Trotsky, and others because of Ben's influence. She lets the newspapers he brings home stack up in the house. During this time, Mary is torn again. The life of a radical has no place for personal feelings, but Mary cannot escape developing feelings for Ben or Don. Ben claims that the revolution has no time for feelings now and that they need to fight. The relationship starts to produce a strain on Mary, because she discovers she is pregnant. But the revolution has no time for feelings, and Mary gives in to the prototype and aborts the

pregnancy. She has sacrificed her feelings once more to conform to the group. To coalesce with the group and with Ben, she works for the strikes harder than ever. She discovers "with Benny Compton, and particularly with Don Stevens, there occasionally sputters the hope of a warmer personal relationship than that of fellow workers in the cause—but the cause itself extinguishes such hopes" (Colley 108). Ben's relationship with Mary slowly declines because of the demanding strike committee which he chooses over any personal entanglements.

Because of his erratic life style, Mary moves on to another prototype: Don Stevens. Stevens represents a major figure in the party as Ben did, but Mary still falls for the contumacious air that attracted her to Ben. Like Compton and Barrow, Stevens attracts Mary through his voice, his passionate speeches of labor uniting and overcoming the Capitalist nation. But just like the decline in her relationships with Ben and Barrow, Don sets sail, this time literally.

Each of the men in Mary's life represents a disappointment. Barrow's, at first, heavyweight figure loses Mary's heart when she sees a weak champion of worker's rights and labor. He uses his eloquence to try to

persuade men in power to help. However, he embodies a man without action in Mary's eyes. Words are fine, but actions are better:

Mary didn't have time to be embarrassed meeting George Barrow. They went out together to get a plate of soup at the cafeteria talking about nothing but the case as if they'd never known each other before. Picketing the State House had begun again, and as they came out of the restaurant Mary turned to him and said, "Well, George, how about going up and getting arrested. . . . There's still time to make the afternoon papers. Your name would give us back the front page."

He flushed red, and stood there in front of the restaurant in the noontime crowd looking tall and nervous and popeyed in his natty lightgrey suit. "But, my dear g-g-girl, I . . . if I thought it would do the slightest good I would. . . I'd get myself arrested or run over by a truck . . . but I think it would rob me of whatever usefulness I might have."

Mary French looked him straight in the eye, her face white with fury. "I didn't think you'd take the risk," she said, clipping each word off and spitting it in his face. (*The Big Money* 364)

Always present, the disappointments wear off the charm of the prototype, and her inclusion fails to achieve a balance. This scene contains a pattern for each culminating point in Mary's relationships with prototypes; after Don, she will not allow the men to walk out on her without a jab. She accuses Ben of being a stool pigeon at their last meeting. For Mary, the attraction to these three men is not only in their ideals, but also in their

voices. Dos Passos skillfully crafts a desire in Mary for an identity for a strong voice, and she gravitates to it. Carol Gilligan attributes Mary's lack of voice to women's "reluctance to speak publicly in their own voice, given the constraints imposed on them by their lack of power and the politics or relations between the sexes" (70). So if Mary lacks a voice, she looks toward a strong, passionate male voice to fill the void in her own identity. Gilligan goes on to suggest that, "to give up [her] voice is to give up on relationship and also to give up on all that goes with making a choice" (xvii). Mary has indeed given up her right to choose, and Dos Passos frequently allows the men in her life to walk out without her consent. Not until Mary harshly rebukes Barrow and Compton does Mary find her own voice, however the voice is tainted. Mary's new found voice seeks to tear down the inactions of Barrow and the self-serving words of Compton.

Mary, still ever committed to the cause, continues searching for a balance in her identity. She now begins to plan her own protest which sets her apart from Mac and shifts her identity to a higher inclusion. Does Dos Passos use these wounds to show insight into the human fate? Melvin Landsberg notes that, "Such experiences shape

character. . . . Mary is so hardened by social conflict and private misfortune that she loses much of her original breadth and generosity" (203). The male prototypes with whom Mary has interacted help to construct the Mary readers find at the end of the trilogy. After months or years of looking up to them and their machinations, she has become one of them. She is unbalanced and unable to reach an optimal distinctiveness, so she loses herself to the collective. We see in Mary's end a stark contrast to Mac. Mac walks out of the life of a radical and gains individual identity, but Mary chooses to continue to work with the Revolutionaries despite the harsh treatment of her friends, their treatment of her, and the bitter face of reality.

Mary French ends the trilogy rushing out to a committee meeting. She fades away much like Mac. However, the representation of Mary still suggests dichotomies. She cannot satisfy all her needs, the men cannot, and work seems to be her last resource. Through Mary's search for balance, Dos Passos displays concepts that precede Brewer's social identity theory. In the end, Mary seems to become a prototype, uncaring with relationships but passionate about the cause, which reflects the men's treatment of her. With this sad statement, does Mary benefit within group

identities? Does she develop an identity of her own? No, it is not so. Mary rushes out onto the street ready to continue the work of the revolution.

Chapter Three

What is My Sense of Self Within A Group?: Eveline Hutchins

As *1919* opens, a unique event transpires for the readers, for Eveline Hutchins is the first character they have met before; thus, she serves as a transition between the books of the trilogy. Through Eleanor Stoddard's narrative, readers have already become familiar with Eveline's actions and some of her story. As an artist, she works with Eleanor as a partner in an interior design business. Meeting Eveline again, this time through a narrative of her own, readers experience her as the point of view character. She is only the third woman to enter the trilogy and the first in the second book. She serves as one of "two principal female characters [that] are

polarized: one[Eveline] belongs to the Moorehouse world of selfishness, deceit, vanity; the other [Daughter] acts as a centre of spontaneous life brutally crushed out of existence- the corrupted survivor and the victim" (Colley 99). She is a woman whom Dos Passos develops into a collective whole, searching for an identity in different groups.

Building upon the ground-breaking work of Henri Tajfel, two theorists, Anne Reid and Kay Deaux, distinguish between social selves and personal attributes. Making a point to discern the differences between attributes such as honesty or being fun, Reid and Deaux to examine how people relate within the personal sphere and the social realm. For example, people can be honest in multiple groups, which would establish a collective self because a person's social identity is more than a personal identity in a group. People behave quite differently in groups, and Reid and Deaux's research reflects the redirected emphasis on attributes and behaviors rather than preexisting identities to gain meaning.

The theories of Tajfel, Reid and Deaux help readers to understand Eveline's character and place within the trilogy. Eveline's search for an identity within the

multiple groups she encounters is the main focus of her narrative. Anticipating these theorists, Dos Passos painstakingly describes the phenomenon of social relations through his depiction of Eveline.

Dos Passos begins with Eveline's childhood. The opening lines describe the Hutchins children:

Little Eveline and Arget and Lade and Gogo lived on the top floor of a yellowbrick house on the North Shore Drive. Arget and Lad were Eveline's sisters. Gogo was her little brother littler than Eveline; he had such nice blue eyes but Miss Mathilda had horrid blue eyes. (1919 83)

In the opening lines two distinctly important views are expressed. First, Eveline examines the group around her. Her beginning identity forms through her siblings. She is a member of the Hutchins household and makes judgments about Miss Mathilda, the nanny, based on this group. Second, the judgment imposed on the horrid blue eyes reads in a childish way. Eveline's words and the phrasing "horrid blue eyes" pass a child's final verdict. These two examples serve as a reinforcement of the underlying identity formation theories that Dos Passos precedes. Henri Tajfel claimed that "categorization causes people to perceptually accentuate similarities between stimuli within the same category and difference between stimuli from different categories" ("Qualitative Judgment" 20). With

Tajfel's statement in mind, readers see that Eveline reacts to Mathilda because of the family group she has aligned herself with. Gogo is a member of the group but Mathilda is not, and therefore is an outsider and away from favor with the siblings. Tajfel goes on to suggest in 1971 that "research showing that being categorized, on a minimal or trivial basis, causes people to discriminate in favor of their own group" ("Social Categorization" 166). Eye color, to a child, may seem like an important physical trait but has no bearing on a person's value. Eveline has made a value choice and separated herself from Mathilda and reinforces her vision of the group, but this choice also serves a larger role in her development. Nancy Chodorow suggests that "girls come to define themselves more in relation to others" (93). Eveline, at this early age, begins to place the people around her into groups, which will continue with her identity later in life. Dos Passos, again, develops his characters in such an acute and precise way that the complexities of life are mirrored before the writings of Tajfel or Chodorow develop social identity theories.

The upper middle class plays an important role for Eveline by distancing her from other characters in the

novels. Serving as a larger group setting, the upper middle class demonstrates the different levels at play within a larger group. The Hutchins are not in the wealthy class, but, being the children of a Unitarian minister, they enjoy a comfortable living because of their father's position. Eveline and her siblings are given every opportunity for success, which, again, sets Eveline apart from other characters in the trilogy. The children attend boarding school and enjoy vacations abroad. They go to well-known colleges and spend a year in Europe. These are not opportunities that other characters are afforded, but again, while the Hutchins' live well, they are not necessarily in the wealthy class. Being in the upper crust of the middle class affords a chance meeting for Eveline. Sally Emerson introduces the value of fine things like operas, grated cheese, and art. Eveline is so flustered after her first meeting with Emerson that she "bursts out crying and wouldn't answer any of her sister's questions; that made them madder than ever" (1919 87). With Eveline, through materials and ideas, more group identifiers appear. After all, that is how she becomes friends with Eleanor. Eveline has an overwhelming desire to lead an interesting life, a hope that comes from the upper middle class. Eveline is a character who can afford an interesting life.

Thorstein Vleban notes in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* that:

Both men and women, are to some extent exempt from the necessity of finding a livelihood in a competitive struggle with their fellows, making it possible for members of this class not only to survive, but even, within bounds, to follow their bent in case they are not gifted with aptitudes which makes for success in the competitive struggle. (205)

Comparing Eveline's upper middle class life with that of Eleanor's, or even Janey's, denotes a difference in action. Janey resides in the middle class but must suffer through temporary jobs until Moorehouse hires her as his secretary. Eleanor holds no social position, all the while being in the middle class. Eleanor and Janey's identities develop out of a longing for a social position which reflects their cold demeanors. Eveline's character differs because she begins with almost everything the other women desire, yet is still hollow. Even with the guidance of Sally and various cultural opportunities, Eveline lusts after newer, brighter, more pleasurable items:

That fall Margaret and Adelaide went to Vassar. Eveline would have liked to go east too but everybody said she was too young though she'd passed most of her college board exams. She stayed in Chicago and went to artclasses and lectures of one sort or another and did chruchwok. It was an unhappy winter. Sally Emerson seemed to have forgotten her. The young

people around the church were so stuffy and conventional. (1919 88)

Without the identifiers of interest in her life, Eveline becomes bored and more importantly, suicidal. During her adolescence, Eveline seems to lack a social group outside of her family. This passage suggests that she has bettered herself from her family and needs new, if not shinier, objects in her life. The family group cannot give her "self" the formation it requires and Eveline seeks a new group for identification. Social identity theory suggests:

People have as many social and personal identities as there are groups they belong to and personal relationships they are involved in. Social and personal identities vary in subjective importance and value and in how accessible they are in people's minds (chronic accessibility) or in the immediate situation (situational accessibility). (115)

Eveline rejects one group and is left with an idea of a better group, which would label her ideas as chronic accessibility. Because the ideal group is only in her mind, she is unhappy with the groups in her reality. But her rejection of her family's group also demonstrates the complicated subject matter that Dos Passos attempts to capture. Eveline is unhappy with her life in Chicago, with all the drab people surrounding her, and longs for a happy, bright life under the wing of educated Sally Emerson. When this dream does not come true, she wants to end things on

her terms: a poetic note telling her family goodbye. She does not kill herself because life can still be somewhat pretty but, rather, she will remember the bottle of laudanum for a time when her life is too horrid to keep living.

As Eveline's story progresses, the style and tone of her narrative develops into a collective organization, becoming intertwined with the other characters until her narrative becomes overshadowed by another's: J. Ward Moorehouse. Eveline travels with Eleanor to Europe to aid the Red Cross in wartime. In Europe, Eveline's circle of friends expands and becomes more diverse. Don Stevens, Moorehouse, and Paul Johnson each become Eveline's lovers and the latter marries her. During her time in Paris and France, Eveline becomes more sexually active and Eleanor becomes more faultless. The text shows Eveline in more and more groups. She always resides in contact with another person or group of friends. She lives with Yvonne and Eleanor, in Paris, and in this first group, Dos Passos makes a point to compare the food of the apartment to that of President Poincare, claiming that he does not go without, so they too will not go without the best food either. Later in the winter, Eveline joins Moorehouse and

Janey. This is the beginning of her conformity with Moorehouse's group. A transformation, a loss of a defining identity, occurs. The change is slight, and at the first occurrence in her narrative does not suggest anything at all. But it does highlight a growing tension between Eleanor and Eveline, culminating in Eveline's departure from the house. Her identity, as Iain Colley suggests, moves closer to a Moorehouse surrogate than an actual self (99). This makes sense that she would start to lose what little of her identity that she possesses to a larger, more forceful identity, even if Moorehouse is a shell of a man. What begins with an adherence to art, operas, and grated cheese in her childhood and adolescence, becomes worldly and mercurial.

Not until *The Big Money* do readers realize Eleanor is pristine, and the two women become polarized, yet part of the larger Moorehouse group. Moorehouse becomes the third point in the relationship, when both women take to his bed. Eleanor sees in Moorehouse an opportunity to rise into a higher social position, one which will be achieved at the end of the third novel, and Eveline's apparent displeasure with other men's frivolity leads her to seduce him.

But before Eveline's final appearances, she collects men around her. She has a series of relationships with men of all sorts: a pacifist, a soldier, and some Frenchmen. The war is her escape from boredom (Landsberg 215), and the men in her relationships see that she is kept busy. But many of the men do not hold Eveline's attention, and at the end of her narratives, she marries Paul Johnson. Two factors could explain her marriage to Paul, but none overwhelm the readers: she could be with child or she could be feeling her age and her marriage seems the proper thing to do. Either way, she continues to collect men, seducing Charley Anderson after her marriage. Noted psychologists Anne Reid and Kay Deaux suggest an alternate view of personal identity that fits with Eveline's narrative: They distinguish between collective selves that reflect social identities and individual selves that reflect personal attributes rather than personal identities, and they remind that qualitative differences exist between types of social identity such as ethnicity, religion, stigma, and political forces (1084). Eveline collects men because of how exciting they are to her or what they can do to please her. Eveline's identity becomes associated with the personal traits of the other men rather than her own characteristics. While Eveline's character relies on the

personal attributes of the men around her, her own social identity lacks any personal meaning. Reid and Deaux note that this phenomenon occurs most frequently in new groups (1090). Charley Anderson is young and full of ambition which attracts Eveline. Don Stevens, a pacifist, whose political stance magnetizes Eveline because she claimed to be one earlier. Stevens represents Wilson's earlier war view in Eveline's eyes, a view that wants to stay out of the war in Europe which would reflect the popular social identity. Anderson represents the after affects of the war. He looks for the big money which represents the American social identity in the twenties. However, many of these men are not new to her life. Eveline becomes attracted to the men more because of their personalities, ambitions, or values than anything else. At a dinner party, Eveline notes that Charley has raw ambition and begins flirting with him in front of Paul:

Charley and Paul helped Eveline bring in another table that was all set in the bedroom. Charley managed to sit next to her. "Gee, this is wonderful food. It all makes me think of old Paree," he kept saying. "My brother wanted me to go into a Ford agency with him out in the Twin Cities, but how can you keep them down on the farm after they've see Paree?"

"But New York's the capital now." It was teasing the way she leaned toward him when she spoke, the way her long eyes seemed to be all the time figuring out something about him.

"I hope you'll let me come around sometimes," he said. "It's going to be kinder hard sleddin' in New York till I get my feet on the ground."

"Oh, I'm always here," she said, "and shall be till we can afford to get a reliable nurse for Jeremy. Poor Paul has to work late at the office half the time. . . . Oh, I wish we could all make a lot of money right away quick." (*The Big Money* 52)

Flirting with Charley reveals, or at least suggests, that Eveline has not changed with marriage. She still becomes attracted to personal attributes within the context of her group. However, the money comment may suggest a problem that Eveline has not had to face in her life, which others later in the novel note. The above passage also reflects Dos Passos's style in painting a picture that fragments. Her moves suggest alternate motives, a lean here, a kiss pushed back, all indicative of her promiscuous, restless life. Readers never see her do anything in the text, the action is always assumed, and when her death comes through hearsay, she becomes much more interesting to the reader.

Overall, Dos Passos creates a mixed palette with Eveline Hutchins. Not a whole person, Eveline's identity becomes a collective construct pieced together by bits of others whose identities are stronger than herself. She decries the "conclusion of a decade consecrated to hedonism" (Landsburg 215). Eveline's hedonism resides in

her lust; she seduces men on a personal level, developing relationships on attributes first then seduction, whereas Moorehouse will be a seducer of ideas. If she is a surrogate Moorehouse, then her life is unfilled because the act of seduction is just as hollow as the rest of her deeds. The last narrative to describe Eveline is Mary's, when Eveline is hosting a party of mixed guests. Mary notes that she:

found herself shaking hands with a tall slender woman in a pearl grey dress. Her face was very white and her lips were very red and her long large eyes were exaggerated with mascara. "So nice of you to come," Eveline Johnson said and sat down suddenly among the furs and wraps on the bed. "It sounds like a lovely party," cried Ada.

"I hate parties. I don't know why I give them," said Eveline Johnson. "Well, I guess I've got to go back to the menagerie. . . .Oh, Ada, I'm so tired."

Mary found herself studying the harsh desperate lines under the makeup round Mrs. Johnson's mouth and the strained tenseness of the cords of her neck. Their silly life tells on them, she was saying to herself. (*The Big Money* 439-40)

Described as a rope fraying at the ends, Eveline conducts her party, mingling with people like the actress Margo Dowling or George Barrow. The party, though trying at points, reveals Eveline's true identity: a mixed cup of oil and water that cannot come together. Try as she might, her last group does not accept her, made evident by Mary's

rejection of her and the piece of gossip from the woman in spangles: "You know I think it's most ungrateful of Holdy after all Eveline's done for him. . . in a social way" (*The Big Money* 443). This is a devastating blow for Eveline for because the other members of her groups that she tries to identify with no longer sustain her. Eveline's inability to sustain a social identity forces her to seek out other groups through personal attributes, but she is unsuccessful and cannot uncover her individual self. Unable to find any group she identifies with, Eveline finally takes the laudanum later that night.

Chapter Four

Where does my Identity Exist?: J. Ward Moorehouse

With Eveline's inability to find an identity, Dos Passos' characters serve as a reminder of how hard forging a self actually is. Outside influences, such as parents and friends or even social movements, help define how one characterizes the self. Such is the case with J. Ward Moorehouse, as well. The character of J. Ward Moorehouse threads its way throughout the entire trilogy. Dos Passos, according to Linda Wagner, constructs Moorehouse's narrative to "serve as a plot focus, partly because in it Dos Passos found a vehicle for his social criticism" (97). If Moorehouse is the main subject for the novels, then it makes sense for him to appear in many of the other

character's lives. Even at the very end of *The Big Money*, Moorehouse remains, but his central narrative does not. His detailed story ends in *The 42nd Parallel*, but his uniqueness lies in the sense that readers see him through other characters, specifically in the narratives of Janey, Eleanor, Mac, Eveline, and Richard. This is helpful in constructing not only his personal sense of identity, but also his social identity.

Looking closely at Dos Passos' style, the construction of Moorehouse develops into metonymy and synecdoche. He literally represents the interests of Capitalism and becomes the intuition some characters actively work against. Mathew Packer claims that Dos Passos presents a "still life" or a petrified forest of characters (216). Every character around Moorehouse suddenly stops moving forward, such as Eveline Hutchins. Others escape the fossilized effects of the man because their encounters are but a few chance meetings. Eveline, Eleanor, and Janey all become an extension of Moorehouse and, while Eveline and Eleanor look for solace in marriage, neither one finds any fulfillment in their lives. As Jean Paul Sartre states:

Dos Passos wants to show us this world, our world, our own, to show it only, without explanations or comment. There are no revelations. . . We have already seen everything

he wants to show us, and, so it seems at first glance, seen it exactly as he wants us to see it. (168)

At second glance, meaning surfaces and demonstrates the genius that is Dos Passos. The essence of Moorehouse cannot be trivial or deserving of a passing glance that claims all of Moorehouse is understood. By analyzing Moorehouse' three narrative chapters and through the varying other characters who perceive him, identity creation becomes a product of Dos Passos' original style.

J.Ward Moorehouse Views Himself

Numerous critics discuss the characters of the novels in terms of good, bad or neutral. John Lydenberg evaluates Moorehouse as a hollow man; his actions and reactions are clouded to the reader who cannot tell how or why he chooses the paths that he takes (102). While Lydenberg's critique casts Moorehouse and even Richard Ellsworth Savage as tired, worn out people using the same phrases and slogans as the machinery of American interests, Moorehouse represents so much more than a stereotypical villain. Moorehouse and the palpable judgment passed upon him and his rhetoric is deliberate because he becomes a seducer of ideas. Numerous critics decree that Moorehouse is the evil antagonist of the book (Lydenberg carries the banner), for

Moorehouse is a war profiteer, making his riches from the countless laborers of America who cannot rise above poverty. Yet, he seeks to bring understanding between the uneducated and the educated, a truce between the employees and the employers, through the untapped possibilities of marketing: "Of course selfservice, independence, individualism is the word I gave the boys in the beginning. This is going to be more than a publicity campaign, it's going to be a campaign for Americanism" (*The Big Money* 494). Here, Moorehouse demonstrates his finesse with language; Dos Passos creates a slippery and silver-tongued character with a style that rivals only one other character, G.H. Barrow. Moorehouse enters into a pact with known evil doers, like Doc Bingham, and helps exploit the useless products through hollow language in the name of America herself! Delving into the development of Moorehouse, a greater appreciation is found through the character's complexity rather than through a strict, flat character with no other purpose than being a representation of American capitalism.

The beginning of the Moorehouse narrative starts midway through *The 42nd Parallel*. Dos Passos paints the portrait from J.W.'s birth and familial beginnings. The

first identifying trait resides in the difference between the siblings; J.W. is the brightest and the best but not the strongest. From the first page, his mind plays one of the major attributions of his identity and sets him apart from the other children. This family setting illuminates Moorehouse's attitude due to Moorehouse's large family. Society shapes his outward appearance, for people describe him as a marble champ and tycoon, an orator, head debater, and a person worthy of college. His surroundings distinguish him as better. He actively asserts his superiority by being the public school marbles champ and running the market on agates. These skills do not display the habits that evolve in the private sector of life. To be a skilled debater, one must demonstrate successful verbal skills in persuasion and articulation; to be a marble champion he must be in control of the shooting ball, being able to aim precisely at the target. These tools require people for manipulation and language to intoxicate people. The marbles become a symbol when Dos Passos uses specific words in the first few pages of the Moorehouse narrative to create his beginning identity with adjectives like "admiringly," "patriotic," "glorious," "bitter," and "clean," all focused toward a character with glory and fame as a goal (*The 42nd Parallel* 139). By carefully choosing

and controlling the word choice, Dos Passos exhibits a stylistic choice in depicting Moorehouse. Each of these words affects the total man, for Moorehouse looks very bright, patriotic, clean and bitter. Each of the words reflects an act that has built the young Moorehouse. He develops bitterness because the effects of drinking had on his father, but people admire him for his charm and good looks, and his appearance at this point is well kept--even Eveline notices his jowls firming around his uniform collar. The diction Dos Passos uses demonstrates an intense level of control when shaping the character. From these beginnings, Moorehouse displays a concern with how society must perceive him, and he develops his identity out of this need.

In developing Moorehouse's identity, Dos Passos precedes many characteristics of identity formation that resides in the works of Peter J. Burke. Notably, Burke notes concern with the internal dynamics found in one's identity. Dos Passos gives Moorehouse numerous characteristics that shape perceptions of his character which Burke describes as a standard or reference for Moorehouse ("Identities" 5). Jan Stet summarizes, according to Burke, that when an identity is active in any

given context, a feedback loop is established (96). This loop contains four components:

First, the identity standard (the self meanings of an identity), Second, perceptual input of the self-relevant meanings from the situation, including how one sees oneself and the meaningful feedback. . . (reflecting appraisals), third, a process that compares the perceptual input with the identity standard (the comparator) and fourth, output to the environment that is the function of the comparison or perceptions of self-meanings from the situation with actual self-meanings held in the identity standard. (96)

Basically, the individual is working to establish a standard or identity verification between the internal self and the external forces which are re-affirming the self's existence. For Moorehouse, his character's constant flux between how he should behave and how others think he should function is the problem. Moorehouse's behavior is reflected in words, which reflect his identity. When Eleanor visits Gertrude over the alleged affair, Moorehouse uses the coming war to sway Gertrude's decision not to divorce: "We must all make our sacrifices. . . My dear, I shall trust you and your mother" (*The 42nd Parallel* 282) The war effort to Moorehouse is a huge party in Europe, and the his words represents an identity that is hollow--his words do not have any meaning. While Burke generated his identity theories in the 2000s, Dos Passos' art precedes

Burke's very basic principles through his development of Moorehouse's conflicting identities.

Basic development occurs in the childhood identity of Moorehouse, but the next illuminating piece of his construction dwells in his disastrous marriage to Annabelle Strang. Strang, a notorious woman in Ocean City, but Moorehouse either chooses not to recognize her reputation or does not notice. However, when he does finally ask her to marry him, they flee to Europe and questions arise about Annabelle's behavior. Only after he chooses to divorce her for unfaithfulness does his identity become solid. He will no longer be a fragile boy chasing after someone else, which is part of his identity standard, but he will make his life according to no one but himself. This new self is apparent in his final letter to Annabelle,

I now realize that you have intended all along to use me only as a screen for your disgraceful and unwomanly conduct. I now understand why you prefer the company of foreigners, bohemians and such to that of ambitious young Americans.

I have no desire to cause you or your father any pain or publicity, but in the first place you must refrain from degrading the name of Moorehouse while you still legally bear it and also I shall feel that when the divorce is satisfactorily arranged I shall be entitled to some compensation for the loss of time, etc., and the injury to my career that has come through your fault. I am leaving tomorrow for Pittsburgh where I have a position awaiting me and work that

I hope will cause me to forget you and the great pain your unfaithfulness has caused me.

He wondered for a while how to end the letter, and finally wrote

Sincerely JWM (*The 42nd Parallel* 161)

This letter represents the first time Moorehouse internalizes his identity. In constructing this letter which pushes him away from his marriage, he does two things: first, he defends himself against a negative identity, and second, he sees the divorce as an opportunity to make considerable monetary compensation. This skillfully crafted letter feigns concern for Annabelle's father, but from the text, comes information that her father's income shows decline. Through this letter, Moorehouse takes the first steps towards establishing a more defined ambition. Dos Passos uses ambition to define Moorehouse during these pages and in this first section, he is. By marrying Annabelle, who is the daughter of a very rich doctor, Moorehouse attempts to better his station in life. Taking on a foreshadowed doomed marriage, trying to get people to invest in shaky real estate, and moving away from his family, smear ambition onto the pages, but the letter also reveals Moorehouse's hollow nature, as Lydenberg points out (103). The letter also stresses the importance of names. Moorehouse does not want his good name

to become tainted and asks that Annabelle remember this. This serves as more foreshadowing because Moorehouse will assume other names for himself later in life. Dos Passos's word choice is devoid of the elegance it will soon take as "Ward" sheds his first identity to become "JWM."

As blatant as this change is, it does not remain consistent. People still refer to Moorehouse as Ward during the second section. During this transition, Moorehouse achieves success, not through his ambition, like he would want us to believe, but through an acquaintance from Europe. Mr. McGill's character points out how the people who surround Ward create his social identity. McGill's position in the Chamber of Commerce in Pittsburg starts Moorehouse the publicity mogul and becomes a factor in the feedback loop. Moorehouse plays such an important figure in the trilogy-- his personal identity becomes a creation through others' narrative. Unlike Mac who doesn't appear in other narratives, his identity creates and evolves through his experiences, but Moorehouse relies upon the social constructs to define his sense of self.

Ending of J. Ward Moorehouse in the Narrative of Himself

As if Dos Passos anticipates Burke, the characters constantly push Moorehouse back into the feedback loop. As

The 42nd Parallel enters into the Great War, J.W. Moorehouse does not fade quietly into the background of America or disappear from the pages of the next two novels. Instead, his narrative ends with a rather pleased group of people quietly listening to a proposal to start a massive public relations campaign. A collective form envelops Moorehouse, a collective issuing praise and approval, which he actively seeks: "There was a great deal of clapping. He sat down and sought out Judge Planet's face with his blue-eyed smile. Judge Planet looked impressed" (*The 42nd Parallel* 214). Karen Cerulo notes that this collective attitude is distinguished by action rather than reaction (393). Moorehouse's speech at the end of the third narrative provides the firm foundation of the action of words and their inherent power:

American business has been slow to take advantage of the possibilities of modern publicity . . . education of the public and of employers and employees, all equally servants of the public . . . Cooperation . . . stockownership giving the employee an interest in the industry . . . avoiding the grave dangers of socialism and demagoguery and worse . . . It is in such a situation that the public relations counsel can step in in a quiet manly way and say, Look here, men, let's talk this over eye to eye . . . But his main importance is in times of industrial peace . . . when two men are sore and just about to hit one another is no time to preach public service to them . . . The time for an educational campaign and an oral crusade that will drive home

to the rank and file of the mighty colossus of
American uptodate industry is right now, today.
(*The 42nd Parallel* 214)

As a pinnacle to Moorehouse's identity formation, the speech combines many ideas such as ambition, brightness, and rhetorical control to set him above the rest of his family, friends, and other people around him.

Metaphorically, Dos Passos uses this speech to tie Ward's position in the trilogy as a bridge between characters.

Moorehouse's agency will be a bridge between the powers of men, and this bridge will link the various identities created by the other characters. Cerulo furthers this by stating that a collective agency is forming. Identities will emerge because there is a collective conscience that wills achievements (393). With Moorehouse, this transforms his identity drastically, but this moment ends all direct control that he possesses in shaping who he is.

Moorehouse's identity becomes an institution and an enigma. His identity, now solidified in his personal narrative, will form and control other characters' actions and ideals but also be a part in that same process. Moorehouse moves away from the internal dynamics of Burke's personal identity theories to the dynamics of a collective. While in the next sections he speaks and acts, Moorehouse's identity becomes intertwined with the other characters'

conceived notions of him, which bind him to overarching ideals, or suffers the whispers of a populace on the brink of revolution.

Eleanor Views J. Ward Moorehouse

The first outward glimpse of J.W. Moorehouse lies in the eyes of Eleanor Stoddard, a young interior designer. They first meet at the Moorehouse estate, while she is working for Gertrude, the second wife of Moorehouse. Eleanor is smitten by J.W., and their relationship becomes an affair that spans two continents. To her, "he looked as if he had a sense of humor and [she] thought she liked him much better than Tom Custis [a present boyfriend]" (*The 42nd Parallel* 221). She notes the twinkle in his eye and a face where prosperity was just beginning to curve his features. They discussed a variety of things, but she "liked better to hear about the stockexchange and how the steel corporation was founded and the difficulties of the oil companies in Mexico, and Hearst and great fortunes" (*The 42nd Parallel* 221). His slight southern accent and gentlemanly manners are another identifier and attractive feature to Eleanor, but the prose style of the passage provides greater interest. Dos Passos does not quote a conversation but rather reports and lists what they say and

do: "They had cocktails with absinthe in them and a bottle of very good burgundy and Ward Moorehouse enjoyed sitting back on the sofa and talking and she enjoyed listening and began to call him J.W." (*The 42nd Parallel* 221). These long conversations appear in a stream of consciousness narrative from Eleanor's point of view in which jumbled words like "stockexchange" and "oldschool gentlemanly" spill from her descriptions (221). Importantly, her construction of Ward Moorehouse centers around him being calm and cool, and both are at ease in each other's company. Within Eleanor's narrative, Moorehouse becomes the lens to view the group. As an emerging prototype, Moorehouse becomes the center of Eleanor's group, and as Wagner, Colley, and others note, Moorehouse is the central character of the novels.

Eleanor's narrative provides a new feature when she gives Moorehouse a new name. He becomes J.W., a recurring indication of his identity. For Eleanor, his name takes on a less formal, more personal feeling. He is no longer her boss but, rather, her friend. His identity assimilates into their "platonic friendship," and each feels secure while the other is around. The name also sheds importance onto what Moorehouse tries to achieve in his life. At this time, he wants to help Eleanor with business, and he wants

her to teach him about art, not something as important as his publicity firm or Red Cross work, so his guard and formality diminishes. Eleanor views J.W. in this position; he is not a business man who is lost in thought, but a passionate human who cares. This is the first side of J. Ward Moorehouse we see from another's perspective, but throughout the other narratives, his identity becomes parallel to the Camera Eye as Moorehouse unfolds before the audience, just like the America Dos Passos is creating. Eleanor's narrative falls just before Mac's final chapter, which means no negative connotations from the other characters have appeared. Moorehouse has just delivered his speech to Barrow and the Judge, without any new developments within the ad agency. Therefore, without the mode of Capitalism, part of Moorehouse's environment that effects his identity, Lyndneberg's analysis of Moorehouse the devil cannot stand. But, because this is a novel partly satirizing Americans systems and beliefs, the readers incline to a view of Moorehouse in a positive light. However, since the primary focus is identity formation, Lydneberg's interpretation makes no difference how or what Moorehouse becomes, but that his identity does develop through this prototypical angle. This progress is in a state of flux with Eleanor, for Moorehouse is moving

toward the collective but yet, he still maintains a narrative of his own, that is, until the end of *42nd Parallel*.

Janey Views J. Ward Moorehouse

The second encounter with Moorehouse outside of his narration happens through Janey. Her first appearance displays Janey looking for work in the busy New York area. She happens to find work with Mr. Moorehouse through a series of coincidences. First, she overhears talk about a secretary needed at a hotel. Second, she takes notes for Barrow, and lastly she assumes that Moorehouse needs a good secretary. When she does become his employee, she notes a strange familiarity in his name, a "name she ought to know" (*The 42nd Parallel* 228). Other words that surround Mr. Moorehouse are "mystery", "debonair", and "intoxicating" (259). Janey always hopes to see and talk to Moorehouse, even if it is just for a moment.

Janey's relationship with Moorehouse differs from Eleanor's. Both start from business, but Janey maintains the employer/employee formal relationship. From her perspective, his identity personifies a boss or a leader. Michael Hogg suggests that group members identify strongly with the leadership of the prototype (125). Janey's motives

in her narratives and even in her brother's revolve around her job. Since Moorehouse is the prominent figure at work, naturally Janey looks up to him and the readers see his identity develop through her lens. Even the formality of Janey's language is only broken by her desire for Moorehouse's approval. These attributes are not evil or even disgusting, but show Moorehouse in a state of flux, still searching for his place in the world. Janey's narrative still interweaves with his own, and both characters fall into hollowness. Janey becomes a spinster, cold and unforgiving even towards her brother. Moorehouse, while demonstrating some compassion by referring to Janey with her proper name, begins to lose his individual identity after the trip to Mexico, being an observational instrument only.

Mac Views J. Ward Moorehouse

Moorehouse visits Mac in Mexico, with aims of "fair play and friendly cooperation" between the American business and the Mexican papers (*The 42nd Parallel* 249). Mac first learns of J. Ward Moorehouse through Ben Compton, claiming that J. Ward is a "big hombre from New York, jez, he looked like he didn't know if he was comin' or goin'." "Looked like he expected a bomb to go off under the seat"

(249). Later the same night, Ben hosts a party for the newly arrived guests. Mac and J. Ward discuss the unofficial business that Ward seeks between the papers and government. Here Moorehouse speaks as "an old newspaperman himself" to blend in with Mac and Ben, but without effect, for after he leaves both men comment on how smooth Ward is. "'Jez, Ben, that's a smooth bastard,' said Mac to Ben after J. Ward Moorehouse had gone. 'Mac,' said Ben, 'That baby's got a slick cream of millions all over him'" (250). Both men suspect that Moorehouse is not something to rest their hopes upon, and this is the first negative identifier placed upon Moorehouse. Moorehouse's words alert Mac to the hollow appearance of the ad man and he sees through the false visage. For Dos Passos to use these negatives stylistically shows how feeble J. Ward's attempts are at bridging America and Mexico.

Within Mac's section, Dos Passos allows two different groups to merge. The revolutionary policies of Mac and Capitalism in Moorehouse suggest a merger or even a symbiotic relationship. Theorists Prentice and Miller, in 1994, imply that conflict and harmony between two conflicting groups can form identity (484). Even though Mac and Moorehouse never join the same group due to the

deep cultural divides of the men's ideology, Mac's aversion to the rhetoric of Moorehouse develops another layer to his identity. As we have seen, Mac suspects the image as well as Moorehouse the man. This demonstrates a severe mistrust in the institution of the American system and in Moorehouse's own identity.

Eveline's View of J. Ward Moorehouse

When World War I breaks out, J. Ward Moorehouse immediately wires Washington to offer his services, although what the services are remains unclear. He assumes direction of publicity for the Red Cross where Eveline Hutchins and Eleanor are working as nurses. Immediately, Eveline notes how everyone has heard of the great publicist from New York. She notices how well his clothes fit and his eyes that sparkled blue (1919 174). However, her first actual experience with Major Moorehouse comes when she hears one of his speeches:

He made a little speech about the importance of the work the Red Cross was doing to keep up the morale of civilians and combatants, and that their publicity ought to have two aims, to stimulate giving among the folks back home and to keep people informed of the progress of the work. (1919 174)

This speech plays into the institutionalized figure of Moorehouse. He pays homage to the Red Cross with flattery

and sharp rhetoric, but the words are not strong. While Eveline is enraptured by this man of rank, she develops a closer relationship with him. At first, Moorehouse is Major, a very formal title for a man she does not know, but after learning that he is a friend of Eleanor's, the tone and formality drop to J.W. Later in the narrative, J.W. becomes a figure that provides immense pleasure to both Eveline and Eleanor. Both women have affairs with him and are thus trapped in the power of Moorehouse's charm. Eveline's narrative, as seen from the previous chapter, moves with Moorehouse to a collective identity. Eveline has lost herself in Moorehouse, and he is lost within the descriptions of parties and peace talks. As a stark contrast to the identity that Moorehouse takes on in *The 42nd Parallel*, Eveline becomes the first character to mention the humorous side of Moorehouse, but in her mind he serves as an opportunity to give Eleanor and her an enjoyable time. He serves as a ray of light amidst a terrible war and this fourth identity expresses "collective initiatives that are self-reflexive and sharply focused on the expressive actions of collective members" (Cerulo 393). When viewed from Eveline's perspective, a reinforcement of Moorehouse's cooperative identity is created through her individual viewpoint.

Richard's View of J. Ward Moorehouse

The last narrative that displays Moorehouse is the prose of Richard Ellsworth Savage whose relationship with Moorehouse spans the last two novels of the trilogy. Richard first hears of Moorehouse in Paris in 1919 with the war quickly coming to an end: "Mr. Moorehouse turned out to be a large quietspoken blueeyed jowly man with occasionally a touch of the southern senator in his way of talking" (*The Big Money* 285). In the Savage sections, Moorehouse loses the twinkling blue eyes that set him apart in the previous narratives. He also loses the rhetorical skills that were attributed to him in his youth. He becomes tired, worn down, and expressionless. To Richard, Moorehouse is a boss and friend. But, as Lydenberg notes, both men are in business together. Each man corrupts the power of words around Doc Bingham's account. But, as in the instance before, Moorehouse becomes a man in the twilight of his life. He has, according to Richard, developed a belly and longs for company, since it is lonely with only the children around (*The Big Money* 387). But Moorehouse is still the best at "publicrelations" there is, and Richard respects that. The prototype of Moorehouse is still relevant within his group. Richard's role reaffirms

Moorehouse's powerful identity throughout the novel.

Moorehouse may be old and tired, but he still functions in the group.

With Richard and publicity, appearance is everything and Dos Passos's style reflects the declivity from Savage. Once a great man, fit and bright, only his words remain polished; however, they are hollow, just like the man who uses them.

The Ending of J. Ward Moorehouse in the View of Others

Moorehouse becomes an over-saturation of ideas that focus on his formation of self. Kenneth Gergen, a recent identity theorist, notes:

Emerging technologies saturate us with the voices of humankind—both harmonious and alien. As we absorb their varied rhymes and reasons, they become part of us and we of them. Social saturation furnishes us with a multiplicity of incoherent and unrelated languages of the self. For everything we "know to be true" about ourselves, other voices respond with doubt and even derision.
(6)

Gergen points out that this fragmentation between direct and indirect relationships shifts our perceptions into a multitude of variations. The effects are dire; we lose many knowable characteristics of the authentic self due to the overabundance of stimulation from others (7). Other

characters create a loss of pieces of Moorehouse. Mac views Moorehouse as an inhuman bastard, but Eleanor and Eveline fall in love with him, attributing some of the only positive words to his identity. Dos Passos creates a character with an identity formation which precedes Gergen's theories. He does create this fragmented portrait of a single man living in America and his creation of this man provides those like Gergen with a fictional forerunner of their theories on identity formation.

With J. Ward Moorehouse, Dos Passos creates a powerful figure, one that transcends all three parts of the *U.S.A* trilogy. When the audience leaves Moorehouse, at the end of *The Big Money*, he is left behind. Moorehouse's narrative interweaves between the main players and develops a distinct, yet mysterious identity throughout the trilogy. Readers never seem to capture the whole Moorehouse, for his true self seems to always be on the next page. But Dos Passos arguably creates a character that embodies Sartre's "existence before essence" through his identity. Moorehouse become more than nothing through the narrative style of Dos Passos; he was once nothing, but in the end he becomes something more: an enigma.

Connecting the Last Strands

"What does this novel or experiment or poem or proteins teach us about ourselves?" questions Jonah Lehrer. "How does it help us to understand who we are" (196)? With these questions aimed at Dos Passos, what is this novel trying to accomplish in terms of identity? The answer has been present from the first lines of the trilogy: "U.S.A. is the speech of the people" (*The 42nd Parallel* xiv). From the Newsreels, to the Biographies, Camera Eyes, and the twelve characters, Dos Passos attempts to capture America, a land in turmoil and prosperity, people looking for success or finding failure, or even an America that is whole, not composed of fifty states or millions of people, but a collective nation with one identity. Or maybe America is a nation with multiple identities seeking to

establish some importance within the collective. America is at once a collective and an individual. Mac, no longer looking for the next revolution, finds solace in an identity of his own. Mary French gives up her personal identity for the larger Revolution. Fittingly, Dos Passos begins his work with Mac and ends with Mary, for each represents strict individualism and the collective forces of groups. Mac and Mary remain after their respective narrations end, and, unlike other characters, serves as a reminder of how hard life, particularly American life, is. "The strength of *USA* lies in its honest, unflagging exegesis of the particular form that presents life with the brilliant yet limited accuracy of the novel," notes Iain Colley who suggests that "Dos Passos had dug into his native culture for its words and symbols to realise it in all its variety—and in its essential entropy" (118). The degeneration of a society that resides on the brink of greatness or destruction centers on the personal effects of identity. The characters are searching for an identity of their own through destructive behaviors, wanton affairs, or other acts of hedonism, but many are unable to find importance in the hollow actions. However readers view this society, it remains clear that a correspondence between ideas occurs.

Edward O. Wilson, a noted biologist, concerns himself with a unified learning system in today's collection of knowledge. In his book *Consilience*, he roots out the underlying notions of how knowledge and learning take place in our education. Seeking to prove that all knowledge relates and the components build upon each other, he plots a course or foundation that begins with physics. Chemistry, a far more complicated branch of science, Wilson notes, is founded upon physics, then enters Biology, the Social Sciences, Humanities, the Arts, Religion, and finally Ethics.

The metaphor which Wilson uses to demonstrate his theory of unity or "consilience": the labyrinth.

It's likely origin[,] a prehistoric conflict between Crete and Attica, is a fitting mythic image of the uncharted material world in which humanity was born and which it forever struggles to understand. Consilience among the branches of learning is the Ariadne's thread needed to traverse it. Theseus is humanity, the Minotaur our own dangerous irrationality. Near the entrance of the labyrinth of empirical knowledge is physics, comprising one gallery, then a few branching galleries that all searches undertake the journey must follow. (73)

Even more fitting, this image of a difficult maze underscores the fact that there is no true center and no real end. Each passage, like knowledge, expands with more avenues and more branches when discoveries are made. So it

must be that finding one's way out of the maze, accompanied with a thread, becomes easier than to go forward without one (73). While there are dead ends in the maze, so, too, will there be dead ends in empirical research. But Wilson is optimistic in his quest, and his optimism is shared with Lehrer and another writer who argues for new culture: C.P. Snow.

C.P. Snow argues for a culture in science and the arts that communicates with each other. In 1959, he states quite plainly that the two disciplines suffer "from a mutual incomprehension." Whereas literary scholars study Shakespeare and Shelley, scientists seek out the particles of our universe, and the two cannot communicate because neither has any common ground. Snow's idea of uniting the two fields uses the notion of a third culture where poets and scientists would be able to communicate and learn from each other. Today, third culture is growing but as a distortion of the original idea of Snow. Lehrer notes that the third culture of today has scientists sharing their ideas with the general public. They hope that the public will understand and appreciate the scientific work of knowledge about life and the universe (191). Sadly, Lehrer suggests that the third culture movement has failed in its

original attempts to reach the arts. Maybe it has not failed but has lost Ariadne's thread. If Wilson is correct and knowledge is a labyrinth that can backtrack to understanding, then maybe walking backward is the part missing. Only by reconnecting the two parts with the field of social sciences can the dialogue resume.

Groping back through the darkness of the labyrinthine fields of human knowledge, the audience tugs at the strings of learned experiences in order to find a way back to the entrance. With unexamined or unknown principles behind, and attained knowledge before, the strings serve as grounding to reality and a relationship to other areas of understanding. Within the *U.S.A.* trilogy, readers become aware of the shuffling identities that lie within America. Dos Passos gives threads as a guide in order to find some meaning within a vast country searching for its own identity. The identity theories and theorists also add strings to the ever enlarging maze of human understanding. With the additional help and more communication between the fields of knowledge, America's identity and the identity of its people should become easier to grasp. However, a lesson from the labyrinth proves that more questions will arise and more knowledge will come just around the corner.

What remains after this thesis becomes practical. Scientists, scholars, philosophers, and artists need better communication between the subjects. Each group that participates will be able to understand problems and, maybe, offer better solutions with more knowledge.

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