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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLICATION OF THE MALE
ALCOHOLIC'S EXPERIENCE OF EXISTENCE WITH
MOTHER AND FATHER

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INTRODUCTION

Much is written, especially in psychodynamically oriented literature, about the unduly close dependency relationship male alcoholics have with their mothers. Whilst not disputing this it became apparent to myself when working with them that they also expressed strong attachments to their fathers who were described as absent or punitive. The literature goes on to theorize that a repressed homosexual element is often at work in the male alcoholic. Not much more of substance is said about the father other than he may be absent or punitive - even less is mentioned of the male alcoholic's experience with his father.

It appears that this relationship has remained largely unexplored as a result of an uncritical imposition of theory, especially psychodynamic, upon the complex phenomenon of alcoholism. These theories generally posit the mother's influence over all problems in living be they neuroses, psychoses or alcoholism. It is possible that a dialogue exists between mother, father and alcoholic son which is more extensive and complex than that currently described in the literature, with father playing a greater role than previously believed.

The behavioural approaches to understanding the alcoholic's experience of his parents fills an important gap in terms of

the subject's external structures of existence as they may influence him especially with reference to "modelling", influencing the son towards drinking behaviour, thereby implying an important father/son experience. But the emphasis on external stimuli influencing and shaping behaviour does not and cannot address itself to the male alcoholic's experience of father (or mother).

Neither the psychodynamic views or behavioural approaches permit the phenomena (of alcoholism in males in general with particular reference to the experience with and of their parents) to speak for themselves. In order to overcome this, the experience of the male alcoholic himself and his experience with and of his parents must, in themselves, be explored.

It is for this reason that the writer turns to the phenomenological way of inquiry - to allow the phenomena to appear as they are. It is necessary to explore the subject's structures of existence with particular reference to his experience of Body, World, Fellowman and Time (as described by J.H. van den Berg, 1971). To that extent we may see how the male alcoholic's experience of his parents is lived as dialogue with his Body, Time, the World of Ideas and Things, and Fellowmen. In his dialogue with his parents, to what things is he especially open? To what is he more and what is he less attuned? Is his historicity more open or confined and in what way does he exist in and as time?

Three subjects were interviewed and their protocols explicated. They were male alcoholics who were asked to relate significant events involving themselves with their parents, respectively. These experiences were then explicated according to Van den Berg's categories as mentioned.

The Discussion highlights similarities and differences amongst the three subjects and point to how their experience of their parents is lived as dialogue with Body, World, Fellowman and Time. It also reveals more clearly the son's experience of the father and what it means for him, as well as to show how this dialogues with experience of mother to reveal how this becomes fundamental to his structure of existence.

The subject's experiences will be preceded by the Methodological Considerations necessary for this project. This is preceded by a brief overview of the psychodynamic position concerning the male alcoholic's experience of his parents. And it is to this first chapter that we turn.

CHAPTER ONE

Since traditional theories do not tackle experience directly (ie. psychodynamic and behaviourally based theories), experience of the male alcoholic will have to be extrapolated from the theories themselves. It is also necessary to inspect the extent these theories inhibit the phenomena to speak for themselves and what significance is attributed to the male alcoholic's experience of his parents.

The general psychodynamic idea of male alcoholism is well known since it adheres to the formula proposed for all problems in living. Its emphasis lies in the idea of the adult having fixated his psychic energies at a particular stage of development, the oral stage having the most obvious significance for alcoholism.

Otto Fenichel (1946, pg. 379) puts the psychoanalytic conclusion in a nutshell when he writes, "In chronic alcoholics difficult family constellations created specific oral frustrations in childhood. These frustrations give rise to oral fixations, with all the consequences of such fixations for the structure of the personality. In boys the frustrations resulted also in a turning away from the frustrating mother to the father, that is, to - more or less repressed - homosexual tendencies. The unconscious impulses in alcoholics typically are not only oral but homosexual in nature."

If the development of the above statement is traced we may come to see its strengths and limitations with regard to understanding the male alcoholic.

Kessel and Walton (1975) sketch this development as follows: In passing from youth to maturity the young person constantly acquires new patterns of behaviour. Interruptions in emotional growth do not allow the person to mature. It leaves the person deficient in some ways and this is especially noticeable in his contacts with other people which are disturbed. This interruption at a particular developmental point in the person's growth is known as a "fixation". Under conditions of subsequent difficulty, most often in social interactions which resonate with the original stress, the adult can "regress" and suddenly display, in the context of otherwise mature behaviour, his fixed immature reactions. These regressive actions or attitudes reflect preoccupations retained from much earlier periods in life, in fact the behaviour which was appropriate at the point in time when the original interruption took place. These aspects of the self had not shared in the subsequent maturation of the person.

Now in psychoanalytic theory, the stage of development at which major fixation occurred determines those infantile traits the adults will continue to manifest in situations which make him anxious. The root of this anxiety lies in repressed infantile sexual and aggressive wishes, most often

directed toward the mother. The infantile wish is not and cannot be fulfilled. The extent to which the child is frustrated in the expression and fulfilment of these wishes by his own developing superego and interaction with the mother results in their fixation.

In any event, an oral personality has tendencies to be passive, to cling to other people for support. He has failed to adequately master very early infantile impulses: these persist and find expression in excessive mouth activities and an urge to take things into the self. A relationship between strong oral residues in the personality and the genesis of alcoholism has often been asserted.

The anal personality has developmental residues which show in maturity as excessive neatness, suppression of emotion, obstinacy and punctuality.

The genital personality is viewed as resulting from stresses at about five years old, is unduly preoccupied with sexual thoughts and impulses but at the same time keeps all relationships superficial and has little real capacity for intimacy.

Fixation at the oral stage (where many alcoholics would be located by psychoanalytic theory - this is not to discount anal and genital residues to be found in these and other alcoholics) is often attributed to inadequate mothering eg.

a woman who is unable to provide adequate affection for her child, and a sense of consistency, for whatever reasons. The oral personality seeks throughout life, to find those maternal comforts which he lacked during infancy when they were so necessary for secure emotional growth.

Conversely, the mother may pamper and anxiously over-protect the child. This may stimulate excessive dependency in the child. Commonly there is an inconsistent father who arbitrarily gratifies and reproves the child. The adult from such a background has inordinate needs for affection, protection and care and reacts with rage if not gratified. Some alcoholics seek in marriage a mother substitute, and are likely to marry women older than themselves.

We see so far that the father is given little place in the development of the alcoholic's life. Presumably he enters the child's psychic life at the various fixation points as do the fathers of other children ie. he only starts to feature significantly from about the "Oedipus Complex" stage onward, say at about four years old. The strong reliance on the "oral fixation" period (which occurs much earlier in the infant's life than the "Oedipus Complex") as the basic psychoanalytic explanation of alcoholism, therefore, virtually precludes any direct influence the father has over the development of the child. (Indirectly the father may affect the child in that the mother may under or overreact to the infant as an

expression of her relationship with the father).

Knight's article tries to fill this gap to an extent, although he writes only in a loose way. In describing a patient's life story (1937, pp 542-544), a patient who he sees to be largely representative dynamically and historically of other alcoholics, he writes, "When we come to the question of parental characteristics we notice some striking correlations.... Our patient's mother had always been over-indulgent and protective toward him. She was always trying to shield him from the father's discipline and severity, and consistently acted as intercessor for him in his attempts throughout life to obtain indulgence from the father.... The patient's father was unaffectionate and undemonstrative to both his wife and children. When he did grant indulgences, he did so sporadically and inconsistently, often only after being swayed by his wife's pleadings. Occasionally we find an over-indulgent father, but the cold, aloof, exacting type of father seems to be more frequent."

Knight cleverly ties up the oral fixation of the child to show it comes to involve the father too, eventually. The child's passive demands are so great that he could never be entirely satisfied, even by his mother. This fact, coupled with feelings of vague resentment and betrayal causes him to turn more to the father for proofs of affection in the form of indulgences. Since the mother could get things from the

father for herself and for him it's natural to identify himself with her in order to promote his own satisfaction. And this elicits various reactions from the father, depending on what sort of person he is and how he deals with these excessive demands. The child is seldom satisfied for long. This, together with the idea that the person is not capable of achieving normal masculinity and independence, (further aggravated by the father who is critical and absent or, at times, indulgent) is shown as the origin of a latent homosexual tendency for many male alcoholics. "He showed the typical behaviour of alcoholics towards men friends in drinking and getting tenderly affectionate with them, swearing eternal friendship, becoming lovingly demonstrative toward them, thus acting out strong and often thinly disguised homosexual attraction." (Ibid, p 545). So the male alcoholic has tremendous needs for gratification which he will try to fulfil by almost any means. This leaves us with a narcissistic person whose oral needs are great. He assuages his guilt (arising from infantile sexual and aggressive wishes) by drinking, he avoids dependency fears and his fear of homosexual tendencies; he obtains temporary gratification of the original oral needs by drinking.

This is a good causal-reductive explanation of alcoholism and its aetiology, although some would criticize it for being superficial, but more depth is unnecessary here. It really tells one very little of the alcoholic's experience with his parents. Nor, therefore, is there room for understanding the significance for him of his experience with his parents.

The theory given above does possess many human truths which the explication of my subject's protocols reveal. But it has no room for aspects revealing the significance of the alcoholic's experience with his parents on a number of levels. For example, in reliving the experience of being with his father, how is his bodiliness altered? If it is, how does this alter the dialogue one has with Fellowman - with mother, for instance? And in what manner is one's historicity and sense of time affected? And what is the nature of one's dialogue with the world then? Is one's world significantly altered? This is important because "togetherness is no mere idea. Togetherness or distance appears within the physiognomy of the world". (Van den Berg, 1971 pg. 67).

These questions address the male alcoholic's experience of his mother and father - the manner of doing as suggested is the phenomenological way, using Van den Berg's 4 categories of Body, World, Time and History and Fellowman in order to explore the male alcoholic's living situation, to reveal the structures of his existence.

Only psychodynamic views (especially psychoanalytic) have been considered here - they form the backbone of most lay and professional views of alcoholism. The other serious theoretical contender is behaviourism. It scores to the extent that it takes the influences of the external world seriously and, for our purposes, says a lot by implication about the father/son relationship, with reference to modelling

behaviour, peer group reinforcement as well as other social reinforcers encouraging drinking behaviour. But it fails in understanding the experience of its subjects; it is, indeed, not especially interested in that.

The intrapsychic view of psychodynamics, psychoanalysis in particular, cannot say much about the subject's relatedness with his social and physical environment other than to reduce it by seeing it as more evidence in support of a psychoanalytic view of the phenomena. Neither, in other words, can psychodynamics or behaviourism remain true to the facts as they are happening.

The explication of subject's protocols will make a beginning in filling in some of the gaps of knowledge pointed out. The protocols will be explicated according to Van den Berg's four categories, as mentioned above. His ideas and the manner of application to the area of study under scrutiny will be presented in the following section on Methodological Considerations.

CHAPTER TWOMETHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To realize the goals of this project, two pitfalls must be avoided. To remain true to the facts as they are happening by not distorting them with preset theoretical judgements. And secondly, to avoid experimentation by manipulating the subjects in some manner - one is not dealing with the phenomenon of interest then but an altered one. What is to be done is research, in the fuller meaning of the word; to search again, more deeply and thoroughly, the phenomenon as it exists.

That which is to be researched, the subject's protocols, is explicated. Here is meant the process of making explicit or thematacizing the locus of any given phenomenon within its context. This context is essential to understanding the phenomenon - when abstracted from the context it becomes a different phenomenon. A description of the phenomenon is necessary to discover relevant variables that would otherwise remain unnoticed.

Although there was no wish to influence the outcome of the research it was believed counter-productive to stand away from the subject and deny any influence the interviewer's

presence may have created. The dialogue the interviewer had with his subjects is reported. Where it was felt that the subject had responded more to the interviewer's influence than the subject at hand, it is reported (in the Appendix) and explicated as such.

In the same way one could ask, why not just interview the subjects on their experience of being alcoholic? The therapy practiced by this researcher with alcoholics whilst working as an intern in Clinical Psychology in the alcoholic unit at Komani Hospital, Queenstown, 1982, which was of a reasonably unstructured nature, showed that patients speaking of their problems returned again and again to experiences of significance with their parents. It was natural, therefore, to start at this central experiential gathering point to which these patients gravitated.

It is by choice that this study is essentially idiographic. There are three subjects and the various qualities and dimensions of their structures of existence are compared and contrasted. Their experience of mother and father in the world is the primary concern of this project. The means of this methodological preference will be verbal description by the subjects of their world in experiencing a significant event involving mother and father.

It is because this area of research is felt to be overgeneralized

that this method of research is used - to allow the uniqueness of each subject to emerge. What is common in their experiences may make a good starting point toward a new understanding of the phenomena.

In order to follow the rationale of using Van den Berg's categories of experience, it is necessary to understand them.

Van den Berg's Categories.

These categories are experiential and are not mutually exclusive as those used in the natural sciences; nor are they the only categories one may use. They cannot stand individually, all dimensions of existence being a dynamic event of dialogue - their interrelationship will become clear in the sketch below.

Man and World.

"If we wish to gain insight into another person... we should not inquire first about his introspectively accessible, subjective account of his observations... We get an impression of a person's character, of his subjectivity, of his nature and condition when we ask him to describe the objects which he calls his own; in other words, when we inquire about his world." (Van den Berg, 1972; pg. 39). Man is inseparable from the things around him and to abstract him from his world

is to be looking at a different person. Van den Berg sketches a picture of a street; walking down it could be a farmer, a fisherman, an old man, a woman and a child and each of them see their own qualities and characteristics in the same street. "The subject's qualities are the aspects of a world, physiognomies of the objects of everyday existence." (Ibid, pg. 74).

Man cannot think, feel, dream, do and so on, without an object. Comparing man to a physical light, man cannot exist without things because we can only recognise light if it strikes something which we recognise. We can see, therefore, that existence itself is a being-in-the-world, the idea of an isolated self is an impossibility. And this is what we understand by intentionality, by the world as target of experience.

Man is always dialoguing with the world, he is not contained within his skin. Both man and world belong to each other; the Cartesian split into *res cogitantes* and *res extensae* can only divide man's reality.

Man and Body.

By saying one has a body, one withdraws oneself to an extent from everyday existence; in doing so one changes one's body a little. For then the body one has is unlike the body one is. There must then be a distance between oneself and

one's body. It is when we reflect upon our bodies in this way that a distance is created between man and his world. This distance is unknown in prereflective, everyday life.

In prereflective experience my awareness is not on or within my body, but "out there" with the objects involved in my experience. If I experience my world as threatening, I will experience my body as exposed and vulnerable and if I experience my body as exposed, my world will be threatening to me. When situated in childhood surroundings one is a child, in an adult surrounding one is an adult. "The body forms itself in accordance with the world in which its task lies", but it is equally justified that "... the world is changed by the body moving about in it." (Ibid, pg. 58). For people who are working figures, fighting figures, peaceful figures - the objects in their world are, respectively, working objects, fighting objects, peaceful objects. So the "prereflective body and prereflective world are united as in a dialogue. Both should be understood within their context". (Ibid).

Man and Fellowman.

"A word, a look or a gesture can brighten things or make them gloomy. The person with us is not another isolated individual who throws words in our ear and who remains forgotten to the objects around us. He is the person who is either with us or not with us and who makes the degree of

togetherness or distance visible in objects and in reality. Togetherness or distance appears within the physiognomy of the world. This physiognomy can be trusted or disturbed, can be near or far." (Ibid, pg. 66). As we can see here (and we know how someone's smile on a gloomy morning "brightens up" the day) we cannot separate our relatedness to people from our relatedness to the world. In speaking of our relationships with people, we speak of a relationship with the world of things. We speak of an original contact with objects and often we are those objects. The shoemaker becomes the shoe he is repairing and I become the car I am driving. Interhuman relations manifest themselves as physiognomies of a world, as nearness or distance of duties, plans or objects.

There is also a direct contact between fellowman, in the handshake, a hug. In love and friendship we are taught by other people that our bodies are right, our own bodies are no longer foreign to us, we are invited to be that body which we are. In this way other people can make our relationship to our bodies closer or more distant. Often it takes only some words or gestures to do this.

To say, then, that the objects around one have become strange means that one does not have the right contacts with people; to say that one's body has changed is also an indication of one's relation to people.

Man and Time; Life History.

The past always speaks to us in the present, it is significant to us now, as it appears now. The neurotic may have had a damaging past and he would try to make it more accessible by speaking to a therapist. The past that is significant is as it appears now, it has a presentness about it. And what has no task has no reality. The perception of objects, for example, which do not play a part does not occur. It is in this way that we deal with our past. But our motive decides the past, ie. we arrive at the future. Our recollection has a motive which decides the nature of the recollection; and the motive must then concern the future.

"That the present could be understood from the present is, even to us, not obvious at first," (Ibid, pg. 86). But the present is made by the future: the conditions of a decision are given by the past whilst the act itself originates from the future, the expectance, the wish, the fear. There is a paradoxical element of meeting oneself in the future. Van den Berg cites the example of the swimmer entering the water reluctantly, and he has a history which tells him why he should be so reluctant - the past is meeting him out of the future.

This swimmer could change things if he looked upon the present as it is: "an invitation from out of the future to gain mastery over bygone times". Neurosis is when the future is inaccessible, an accessible future meaning a well-ordered past.

Procedure.

This research is an attempt at explication of the male alcoholic's experience of his parents with regard to each dimension of being-in-the-world.

Choosing the subjects.

The initial criteria fulfilled were that the subjects be verbal and English-speaking with a history of alcoholism. Verbal here means simply that they were capable of ordinary speech and that their alcohol intake had not affected these powers of speech by inflicting any noticeable degree of organic damage. They had to speak English proficiently in order that the English-speaking researcher would lose nothing in the dialogue.

The subjects more than met the D.S.M. III's diagnostic criteria for Alcohol Dependence (D.S.M. III pg. 170, 1980) in (a) their "pattern of pathological alcohol use" and (b) their "impairment in social or occupational functioning due to alcohol use." They also met with the second part of the diagnostic criteria for Alcohol Dependence in that they exhibited increased tolerance to alcohol and all reported regular episodes of alcohol withdrawal (eg. morning shakes) after cessation or reduction in drinking.

All of the subjects have been hospitalized (voluntarily) at least twice for alcohol-related problems. These problems have had durations from a five year period for Wallie, seven years for Charles, to twenty years for Fred. (All the

names have been changed.) Wallie is 42 years old, Fred is fifty-one, and Charles is 32 years of age. This range of age occurred by chance.

The subjects, inmates at the mental hospital where the interviewer was doing a Clinical Psychology Internship, were asked whether they would like to spend time being interviewed. They were told that the interview would focus on events in their background. All three readily agreed.

The Interviews.

All the interviews had the identical structure.

Each subject was interviewed individually, alone with the interviewer.

With the permission of the subjects the interviews were recorded. Transcripts of each interview appear in their respective chapters, ahead. The subjects could spend as much time as they wished on their interview.

The interview was split into two sections, according to two sets of instructions.

The first instruction was, "Relate an event involving yourself and your mother which is significant to you." This was completed to the satisfaction of the subject. It was

the story arising out of this instruction which became the first basic protocol for each subject.

From that an interview followed, using the material of that basic protocol as the area of discussion upon which the interview was focussed. In this way the subject was invited to explore more fully his own images, feelings and impressions.

It was this interview which became each subject's first interview.

On finishing that the same procedure was followed for the second section of their time with the interviewer. The second instruction was, "Relate an event involving yourself and your father which is significant to you." From this arose the second basic protocol followed by the second interview arising out of these protocols.

The interviews were directive to the extent that the subject would have to be guided back to various areas of existence he would rather have avoided. Whilst this avoidance is useful information in itself, it would have meant a less detailed explication of the phenomena under study. Other than that the interviewer's role was passive and non-committal, the preference being to let the patient recount the experience in his own terms.

Organizing and Explicating the Interviews.

All the statements of the subjects, the basic protocols and interviews, were placed into the relative categories of experience. Each statement was then explicated - the explicatory work is in the Appendix.

Each subject has a chapter for his basic protocol and interview. This is followed by the explications, within each category for (1) the experience of mother, and (2) the experience of father.

The overall dialectic of the experience of both parents for each subject is then presented in a summary for each chapter (ie. each subject).

This is to be found in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, to follow.

Discussion.

The explications, within the categories, of the three subjects are compared and contrasted, with particular emphasis on the overall dialogue of the experience of both parents and how this is portrayed as each subject's being-in-the-world.

This is to be found in Chapter 6. It is followed by a Conclusion.

CHAPTER THREEWALLIE (42 Years Old)FIRST BASIC PROTOCOL (Mother)

"She has this thing about that I'm not studying enough although I've done very well at school. In Standards Nine and Ten I had a girlfriend who I wanted to visit. She asked me if I studied that day and I said, "Yes". But then she started adding up the time I'd spent studying and she accused me of lying to her, that I did not study at all. So I said to her, "I shall go to my girlfriend", and she slapped me through the face. And I did go off.

Then of course I felt very bad about it when I returned that same afternoon. When I got back I asked her to forgive me. She was very hard about it but later on I was studying hard to show her that I could and she came with food and spoke naturally to me again. So I assumed I was forgiven."

First Interview.

Interviewer: She had this thing about you not studying enough. Tell me more about that.

Wally: Well, she wanted me to achieve all the things my

sister couldn't... to do extremely well. She was always comparing me to other pupils and she always said that I had a very high I.Q. and that I'm not using it. She wanted me to be better than the other kids on the street.

Interviewer: How did you feel about all this?

Wallie: It made it sort of... I rebelled against it.

Interviewer: Tell me about your girlfriend then.

Wallie: I was very much in love with her. It was actually the second girlfriend I had. We went out for three years. She was good company, had a good figure, was good at sport and quite average in her class. My parents didn't get along with her parents, he was the mayor of the town then. Of course after the three years she moved away and she said, "This is goodbye". For about two or three years after that I didn't even look at a girl. I was very heartbroken about that. I still think of her now, sometimes.

Interviewer: You said your mother accused you of lying that day.

Wallie: Very often she did, yes.

Interviewer: How did you feel when she accused you?

Wallie: Well, I did say I studied although I didn't study very hard and to a certain extent she was right. But I had been sitting with my books and I was thinking of going out to my girlfriend. But I did try and study and I tried to

prove myself right. But I definitely got cross about that because I really didn't want to study any more... because they went on so about this.

Interviewer: And then you just left and went to see your girlfriend?

Wallie: Yes.

Interviewer: And then you came back feeling very bad about it when you returned.

Wallie: I was with my girlfriend and felt better there. So I went to her and I said to her, "I'm sorry I behaved that way". But she didn't answer me and I could see that everything was not alright. She cries very easily and she was crying at that stage. That made me feel more bad. After supper I went out and I really started studying.

Interviewer: And then she came to you with the food and drink.

Wallie: Yes, I Don't know what it was. She brought me some tea or coffee, asked me how I was progressing and I said, "Alright". So everything was forgotten.

Interviewer: And what were your feelings when she came back to you?

Wallie: I accepted her because I wanted to work for her approval and I felt better. I'd been to my girlfriend and my mother is quite alright so everything is hunky-dory.

Explication.Body.

What strikes one immediately is his use of body as a means of withdrawing from an emotionally laden situation. He removes himself bodily and he becomes passively aggressive - he manages to elicit a violent reaction from his mother. In receiving the slap from his mother he has already withdrawn from the outer extremities of his body - he bodily denies the full extent of her slap which is her anger and resentment. He is not living out his feelings, he has considerably dehumanized himself. He avoids anger, sadness and confrontation.

In referring to the pain of departure of his girlfriend there is a sense of distance but one initiated by himself even prior to her departure. This links to the above withdrawal theme. This distantiation is carried forth to the extent that he couldn't "even look" at another girl - he was too inwardly drawn from the perimeter of his body and life to do so. To accept his bodiliness is to accept pain. He was not open to life, he is helpless and unassertive. To the extent he is distant from people, he is closed to them, distant from himself, closed to himself.

He gives much thought to action but cannot mobilise into any. Most of his bodily activity occurs in his head as thought.

When a potential action becomes too threatening he switches to think of an alternate means of action but never actually moves into any action. He is absent from the world around him, "out of touch". And a vicious circle effect can be seen.

He is moved to anger when he is pressured to achieve. This conflicts with his emotional needs. So he (a) avoids conflict by withdrawing, and (2) meets some of his emotional needs by going to his girlfriend.

In both these procedures is a tacit aggression toward and rejection of his mother. Yet his mother has a stronger hold over him - seeing her in tears after feeling compelled to go back makes him feel bad. So she, by exerting pressures of guilt over him, and his need for her, has even at that age bodily influence over him. One could say that his bodily experience is largely one of having not separated from her.

World.

The things in the world upon which he has been forced to focus attain a dumb, unyielding gravity. In his books he sees his mother, challenging and unyielding. And from this aspect of the world he'd like to escape. And he does - to his thoughts; he seeks solace by withdrawing from the world.

In the beverage that his mother brings him is a sense of capitulation - accepting a reward for being a good, submissive boy. It is conditional, for acceding to her image of him and restating, by his actions, his dependency on her.

His world comes to be dominated by his mother's presence and he escapes this by retreating into thought. He cannot break away from his mother to be attuned to a world more of his own ordinary perception - then he would have to stand alone. To survive in a threatening world it is best to withdraw from out there and focus one's intentionality on those well known but unpleasant aspects of it - an uneasy truce.

Fellowman.

He cannot take responsibility for himself, he gives it to his mother who wants a lot from him. He is made to feel inadequate by her, she evaluates him on performance. As if to say "your sister failed me. Now it's up to you to make me happy and fulfil me by achieving". He is trained by the lever of guilt to deny his own needs and feelings to fulfil a mother who can only sense her worth in the achievements of her children.

He comes to believe that he is superior to his peers and that anything short of excellence is poor and despicable. Here a social distantiation has developed. He is frustrated in

involving himself with peers, aggravating feelings of difference and inadequacy.

In his relationship to his girlfriend there is a strange flattening of emotion. There is a sense of not really having known her, of idolizing her, attributing qualities to her he never found in his mother. To an extent the girlfriend is an act of defiance, a rebellion toward the mother. She leaves and he is hurt - he is not one to invest his emotions easily - and it would seem that he construes his experiment in rebellion unsuccessfully for some time to come.

He is trapped in a tension of pleasing himself (by visiting the girlfriend) or by staying home and studying (for his mother); as such, no real interaction or involvement with Fellowman or the world can occur.

The genesis of his distantiation from people is seen more profoundly when he speaks of his family getting cross with him. No avenue for his own growth and development is left available to him. It really is a struggle for existential survival. He construes advice from people as manipulation - so between the soft sell and the hard sell his only option is to diminish his contacts with people by withdrawing more. In being withdrawn he has some integrity and ownership of his existence. To no small measure must he equate achievement with abandonment of his existence and self-betrayal.

Yet, in apologizing to his mother he asks for the nearness which is missing in his contact with her. The mother punishes him by keeping him at a painful distance, withholding herself from him. Yet she cannot give freely of her feelings to him - for all her outer strength it appears that she is quite emotionally weak. She cannot be a child so she expects him to be an adult and have no natural childlike life. He is taught to cut off feelings, joy and spontaneity. He can share only in his mother's pain.

Similarly, she directs her inquiries later on to his work, not to him. He must identify a part of himself with his achievements and this is painful for him since this denies who he is. In his existential guilt he denies a world of possibilities.

His power over her is not to be overlooked. She needs to be accepted by him, too. To not work means to not accept his mother.

Time and History.

An interesting factor here is how "physical time" (say, how many hours he spends on his homework) becomes a bargaining point for him and his mother. Even in his relation with time he experiences his mother who dispenses and controls his time. He has a tension in his dialogue with time which is the

quality of connectedness of his mother and himself. It is as if an emotional rubber band exists in and as time - the length of time is not enough to erase his guilt feelings towards his mother and the longer he stays away the tauter it becomes and he is more compelled to return, and quickly. When he comes back to her and does what she wants him to, the quality of their connectedness slackens - it is without tension and also without life, quite limp.

Every attempt to free himself and move into the future will tug him back to the past, the longer and harder he tries to pull away. Since he is constantly tugged to the past his future is inaccessible.

SECOND BASIC PROTOCOL (Father).

"When we went fishing together I always wished him to catch the first fish, and the largest one. One day I caught one Galjoen and he didn't catch a thing, so I really wanted him to catch something because I always had a soft spot for my father. I stopped my fishing and caught two crabs and really it was a reward for me when he caught two big Musselcrackers. And he went on more about the two crabs than the fish he caught. I was just out of school then, very young."

Second Interview.

Interviewer: In telling me of your father you start off by saying, when we went out fishing together I always wished for him to catch the first fish and the largest one.

Wallie: Yes, because he taught me how to fish and we went out often. He always took me with him and he spoke kindly to me. He was a very good father, really. I always felt under an obligation. I liked him so much I wanted him to achieve something, even if it is in fishing. He is seventy-six now and we still go fishing and even now I want him to catch something because... it was just a feeling.

Interviewer: And that day you caught one Galjoen and he didn't catch a thing.

Wallie: I wanted him to catch something because he praised that Galjoen and said, "Your mother will be glad about it". So I wanted him to catch it and I know it's a good spot for Musselcracker. It was from low-water to high-tide and the water was still coming in and there were still some pools where I got these crabs, two of them, which I gave to him.

Interviewer: And on catching the Galjoen how did you feel?

Wallie: Well, good about catching the fish and the fight I had with them, but then I wanted him to catch something too.

Interviewer: Then of course you stopped your fishing and went to get the two crabs.

Wallie: Yes, and some abalone as well.

Interviewer: And then afterwards he caught two big Musselcrackers.

Wallie: Yes, in succession because they always come in pairs. We've got a photograph of it, one was 20 pounds and the other almost twenty-five.

Interviewer: What else can you remember of the photograph?

Wallie: Well, I remember him, he was more stronger then, he must have been in his late fifties, he was still a powerful man.

Interviewer: And he went on more about the two crabs you

caught for him?

Wallie: Yes, that he told everybody about later. I suppose it was to make me feel good. He always wanted me to catch something again.

Interviewer: So you wanted good for him and he wanted good for you?

Wallie: Yes. He was very proud when we catch something and bring it back and he always goes on a lot about it. That was fishing, he was never a hunter and he played rugby 'till he was 34 but fishing was his sport and he dearly loved it and we were able to enjoy it with him and we wished him to achieve that because we felt sorry for him. I don't know why - he wasn't a pitiful figure or anything like that - he's such a good man.

Interviewer: Yes, it's difficult for me to understand why you should feel sorry for quite a successful person.

Wallie: I don't know why - he always tried to take our side. And now when I get back he'll be very, very disappointed because I landed up in an institution for alcoholics. He'll be disappointed, I know that.

Interviewer: So it hurts you that you've hurt him as well.

Wallie: Yes, it does. But I had to come. I couldn't stay out any longer. Not the way I carried on... He was

not a very good speaker. My mother was the one - she was on the Hoofraad of the National Party for about sixteen years. She had to make lots of speeches. He was actually a quiet sort of man.

Interviewer: And your mother?

Wallie: No, she was a dominating... she's quite dominating. Her whole family is like that. She was a Retief from Jamestown. And they were strong willed. She'd be nice at times too but then you'd get a little suspicious because you didn't really know what was behind it, if anything. Sometimes I think it was out of sheer goodness. But she wanted me and my brothers to go to university. I didn't even want to go to university. I wanted to join the Merchant Navy when I left the army. But I went to this university and I achieved quite well. I got my B.Sc. degree and when I got married I started my B. Ed. I never really studied hard - I suppose if I'd set my mind to it I'd have achieved a lot academically.

Explication.

Body.

He can allow himself to feel a tenderness and vulnerability when with his father. They do things together and then there is a contact with the world; he bodies forth and reaches out, acting upon the environment in a positive way - up to a

point - the cutoff point being when he feels he is doing better than his father.

A sense of panic prevails when he discusses being out of hospital. Without his father (and mother) his bodily boundary breaks down, he is too vulnerable in the world. He is self-destructive and needs to be contained even if by the security and rigidity of a mental hospital. One may see here the security found in his father and rigidity of his mother.

World.

In the world he is constantly attuned to the possibility of achieving more than his father; in the Galjoen is his sympathy to his father, his guilt about taking something away from him. In reaching out to the world he is stuck between his mother's pressure on him to achieve and his own wish not to achieve (more than the father). In his achievement he knows he will deprive his father of mother's praise and affection.

He has a need to give his father much of his own world. By doing so he tries to protect his father from pain, loss or sadness. He cannot bear the thought of a disappointed or sad father.

Although he is capable, with his father, of reaching out to the world he does it for father and not for himself.

And it is unlikely he can do it by himself. He is close to the world in that he is close to the father, albeit in a small world. In their world they are reminded of the world with mother which, for both, is lonely and distant. The son provides the father emotionally, to overcome this pain of the father's. The son cannot be especially open to the world; he is experientially tied down - he is tied to his father.

Fellowman.

There is a sense of mutual debt in his relations with his father. Their social boundaries are tangled. The father praises the son for giving to him; he also chooses to spend much time with him, he needs his son a lot.

In the obligation he feels to his father may reside a resentment for being manipulated into such a state of devotion.

Wallie sees his father through his mother's eyes, too: he is only worthy of love if he achieves. ("I liked him so much I wanted him to achieve something even if it is in fishing.") Since he'd not been especially successful in life he'd probably not received much love or praise from his wife - both must be lonely people. This would aggravate feelings of inadequacy in the father.

Yet Wallie wanted father to have more of mother's attentions and praise. He wanted father to be more than he was and had

a peripheral fear that he was inadequate. He needed father to be stronger than he was to save him from his mother's power. If not, he would not achieve independence of the mother. So it pays to idealize the father as being a strong man, a magical way of believing independence has been achieved.

Even in the activity of fishing together, Wallie is praised by the father. Involvement in the activity for itself is clouded, it too is achievement and praise-oriented, this time he is pleasing his dad. Is he able to truly appreciate anything he does?

His depiction of father as fisherman rather than hunter brings out the father's passivity. What also emerges is his frustration of not getting enough out of his father emotionally and feeling obligated to feed him, emotionally. He feels the tug of his father's pain and loneliness and tries to fulfil him in ways that his marriage failed to. Wallie is a fisherman too, not a hunter, he cannot go out and take what he wants, he has to take what he can get. And he becomes himself in a destructive way, as a regressed, needy child who is avoiding pain.

Mother was more effective in the masculine role than father (who was a better nurturing figure). He feels an ambivalence toward a father he has a soft spot for and who he wants to

be closer to and cannot really admire. The possibilities of a homosexual pattern exist. He feels ambivalently toward his mother too, with the added factor of distrust present.

His mother finds her way into Wallie's "father" interview. One must conclude from this and other factors shown that the experience of the father is such that he cannot stand up to the mother in his own right.

Wallie ends the interview with a wistful echo of the past, telling of his academic career. His mother's voice is in the achievement, his father's in the lack of it. His own is in the present as the carrier of that tension. In living in and as his relation to people and things, his is the tension, sadness and loneliness which is his parents' marriage. His success is hollow.

History and Time.

In the same way one can feel time stretch with his mother and being away from her, one can feel it when he is out of hospital.

Time has done little to change his relationship with father. His past is still living for him in a way which leaves him closed to the present since he has already structured the future in the way of wanting father to catch something, wishing things would go his way rather than going out and fulfilling his own needs.

The whole protocol occurs in his teens. It is imbued with freshness, innocence and vulnerability. One wonders to what extent it was his father's pull which prevented him from going to the Merchant Navy.

Nothing pulls him forward, no goals or sense of growth. He is pulled back by his father - he is pushed forward by his mother and pulled back by her, too. He is like a yo-yo in time.

Summary of both Explications.

Bodiliness.

The general trend in experiencing his mother is toward withdrawal from the world by cutting off his feelings. He avoids anger, sadness and confrontation and is distant within himself, out of touch with himself. There is a feeling of helpless immobility, retreating to his mind rather than confronting life out there. A strong sense of being bound to his mother prevails.

The possibilities of tenderness and togetherness emerge in his experiencing of his father. There is an enhanced sense of contact with himself and a greater, albeit limited, willingness to act upon the environment. He is not so bound in his body here.

Both in his father's security and his mother's rigidity is he "kept together"; without either he falls apart.

World.

He cannot escape the ties of his mother to fully involve himself in the world. It is unyielding and daunting for him so he withdraws, capitulating to his world of thoughts. He is only open to the world to the extent that it was approved of by his mother - it is an uninviting place.

In his dialogue with his father he is somewhat more open and close to the world - a small world of safety. But even here he must deny the possibilities which the world offers him to avoid doing better or being happier than his father. But he lives in a more harmonious way in this aspect of his world than he does with mother.

Fellowman.

Wallie cannot take responsibility for himself. He is striking in his feelings of inadequacy and guilt as well as his denial of needs. He is socially distant from his peers and imparted qualities his mother never revealed to a girlfriend he never really came to know.

He is trapped in a tension of pleasing himself and his mother, leaving him without real interaction or involvement in the

world or fellowman. He experiences a struggle for existential survival in a very demanding family, his only means of survival is to withdraw. He tries to overcome the distance between himself and his mother, but she can only accept him if he cuts off his feelings as a cerebral adult. To be acceptable he must deny a world of possibilities, he must deny his own needs and feelings to fulfil his mother's.

What arises with his father is not entirely dissimilar. His strong sense of obligation to him bespeaks of being manipulated by an inadequate and lonely man who needs to be fed, emotionally, by the son. The father is not strong enough either, despite the son's idealizations and wishes, to show him how to be independent from his mother. So Wallie cannot afford to achieve well here, to upstage the father.

Furthermore, he identifies with his father as the nurturant, caring parent who he'd like to get closer to and the mother is the clearly dominant parent who he finds difficult to trust.

Time and History.

His time is controlled by his mother who is the arbiter of how he spends it. He is also connected to her in time, not being able to be apart from her for too long. To pull into the future for him is to be tugged back into the past.

He cannot allow himself access to a future other than one in which he places his father above himself. As such, the future holds no promise of satisfying him. He is stuck in a time-warp of trying to please his parents.

CHAPTER FOUR

FRED (51 Years Old)

FIRST BASIC PROTOCOL (Mother).

"When my mom was sick I used to rub her feet for her. One day she called me into the room and said, "My boy, just come and rub my feet for me, please, they're very sore again". I went into the room and she lay there and she looked very pale... and she said to me, "I'm going into hospital and I'm not coming out again". I said, "No, don't be silly, mom, you're coming out of hospital, I know". But she knew she was going to pass away."

First Interview.

Interviewer: And that had quite a profound effect on you?

Fred: Mm.

Interviewer: What were you thinking at the time?

Fred: All sorts of thoughts went through my head. What's going to happen when the family breaks up now, sort of thing.

Interviewer: How old were you then?

Fred: When my mother died? I was about... thirty-seven, thirty-eight.

Interviewer: So your mom was how old?

Fred: She was in her fifties, fifty-six; I'm not sure.

Interviewer: I'd like you to describe as fully as you can what you saw that day - the room, your mom.

Fred: She really looked bad. In my heart I knew she was right, that she wasn't going to come home but I wouldn't accept it.

Interviewer: Can you describe her features?

Fred: She was very drawn, she had a lot of pain.

Interviewer: And what can you recall of the surroundings?

Fred: It was in the room in the flat. There was a bed, built-in wardrobe, there was a vase of flowers on the dressing table, carnations.

Interviewer: What colour were they?

Fred: Red, because I sent them to her. There was a mat on the floor - a wall-to-wall carpet, actually. When I walked in I closed the door.

Interviewer: Was this during the day or night?

Fred: In the afternoon. The end of the day.

Interviewer: So it was just the two of you in the room.

Explication.Body.

His reaction to fear is to vacate the body and enter his thoughts. He had a deep contact with his mother, on the bodily level, too.

The poverty of bodily-experience in this section has a significance which arises further on.

World.

He is detached when describing the things in the world of his mother and speaks mechanically as if he has already stripped himself of feelings to avoid the pain of her demise. Excepting for the red carnations in which his feelings for her lie. Feelings of love, anger, or both. In the situation with his mother he is not attuned to much in the world at all, excepting as inanimate objects. There is a great distance from him to them. He is cut off from the world and from himself. The only part which lives for him is that which is for his mother.

Fellowman.

Mother makes herself emotionally available at her extremities, in this case her feet which are in pain. Rubbing her feet is the physical extent to which he permits himself to comfort her. Possibly she was a woman who couldn't permit herself much emotional latitude. At 37 years old, Fred is rubbing her feet.

In calling him into the room and asking him to soothe her pain one may notice a subtle use of guilt (to soothe your ailing mom) as well as a sensuous privacy. He is under her power which has sensual overtones.

He wishes to avoid the existential reality of her impending death by not accepting her declaration on the matter. He would like to conceal her inner knowledge from himself and her. In her confrontation of death as a certainty one cannot help admiring her; she seems at that time an honest person in touch with herself. He expresses a deep need for her, even then at 37 years old. It implies that he never had those needs met by other women before that (and probably since that time, too). She is one of the central pillars of the structure of his existence.

And so he was not prepared to accept her at the time ie. dying. Who could? Still, there must be guilt in denying her her beingness, her most powerful possibility now, even if it is death. He says he could not accept what his heart knew to be right. So a significant part of himself, his awareness, is hidden by his thoughts. In doing so he severs the connection between himself and his mother. And he is also living in a divided state, mostly cerebrally.

The division between his mother and himself is low, he felt much of her pain and she carried much of his life. It is

possible that an incest threat existed here for Fred. He constructs a greater intimacy for himself and her when he closes the door to the room; he is claiming her for himself. In their intimacy she bravely and generously informs him of her death but it ruins the intimacy and Fred withdraws into his thoughts. So an ambivalence toward his mom is felt.

Time and History.

Time is frozen. There is a quality or rigidity, of being out of touch with one's body and the world and the attunement is only to the panic and pain of mother's impending death. And he has locked into that moment of not accepting her death and so not accepting her or himself - to accept her as dead is to accept himself as alone in the world, without support. He is stuck in the utter presentness of this time: "I'm going into hospital and I'm not coming out again." Next week she may be dead.

He avoids her death by being factual, cutting himself off from feelings. "When my mother died? I was about... thirty-seven, thirty-eight." He has not lived through her death, she has not died for him, she is still on the verge of dying.

In his relation to his words, living in and as his words, he elaborates the afternoon as "the end of the day". When light turns to dark, when mother, as the light of his life, is

gone and he is left alone to face the darkness. He sticks in the twilight zone by not confronting her death.

Movement is stopped. To move forward means the threat of entering the darkness, an obliteration in an acceptance of one's own death in relation to the death of the other. In doing so he would have to admit to many feelings about her which arose even prior to that ie. to unravel the past.

This too is too painful for him now.

SECOND BASIC PROTOCOL (Father).

"This also happened in the flat, a different flat. I was in my teens then. My mother had gone into hospital and while she was in hospital my cousin came to visit me. He slept in the lounge on one of those beds that you pull out. My father was in the room. It was about half-past seven in the morning, Saturday morning. He used to work over the weekends. And my cousin and myself were having a pillow fight there, making a racket as youngsters do. My father shouted, "Please shut up, I want to sleep." So we kept quiet for a while and afterwards we started up a racket again. Next minute, he came storming in and he had one of those fishing rod stands that you stick into the ground that you lay your rod in. It's a steel rod, quarter inch. He came at me with that; he promptly beat me up with it. And I was fending off with my arm and my arm was all swollen up."

Second Interview.

Interviewer: So what happened after this incident?

Fred: Well, that night, we went to hospital and he said I mustn't show my mom. My mom could see there was something wrong and said, "What's wrong my boy?" My dad was standing next to me and I was too scared to tell her. She saw me touching my arm and said, "What's wrong with your arm?" and I said, "Nothing, Ma." "Let me have a look," and she pulled up my shirt and she saw it...

Interviewer: So I guess you were in a lot of pain?

Fred: Yah.

Interviewer: Let's go back to the flat. I'd like you to describe to me as fully as you can what you saw in the flat.

Fred: It was a single bedroom flat, it had a big double bedroom, long balcony - I used to sleep out there.

Interviewer: And the room the fight took place in?

Fred: We had pictures hanging around the wall and in the one corner there was a dining-room suite, six chairs; there was a carpet on the floor - it wasn't wall-to-wall - in front of the window there was a studio couch which converted into a double bed. I think that's about all. Oh, there was a built-in heater on one side.

Interviewer: Have you got any comment to make about the two stories?

Fred: No, no comment.

Interviewer: Have you thought about them?

Fred: Yah, it's often come up in my mind.

Interviewer: Do you think they affected you in any way?

Fred: I don't know. I don't know in what way it could affect me, actually.



Interviewer: It seems to still stay with you.

Fred: Yah, it still stays with me.

Explication.

Body.

In his bodiliness we see a yearning to be touched by masculine others and a simultaneous denial of affectional needs in this area. His bodily withdrawal is apparent when his father approaches him with the rod, in his anticipation of the blow. When it does come, there is a curious quality of yielding to it, allowing himself to be defenceless, almost a strange sensuousness. He goes up to meet the rod with his arm, in defence, yet one feels that he almost anticipated, if not beckoned, this reprisal from his dad.

He brings his mother into the story and we see how, pre-reflectively, his body reaches out for hers and she senses there is something wrong.

In sleeping out on the balcony he is an outsider with no place in the flat for him. Inside is a short-tempered man with a woman he'd like to be close to and the feeling is to protect the woman. Yet there is a fascination and desire to be close to that man, to be like him. And to be like him is to have access to the woman.

So in the yearning for physical contact with males, which must be denied, is a way of attracting his father's anger which both satisfies the need (to some extent) and allows him to deny the need, and punishes him for it. So there is again much of his bodiliness which is out of his awareness. He is out of touch with himself.

World.

The things in the world, especially the two flats, remind him of his family experience of pain and anger.

In and as his relationship to the steel rod, he hardens accordingly. He cuts off his feelings in preparation of the assault. Yet he could not allow for the possibility of anger, he becomes passive and stolid when being beaten. Perhaps to be arguing with the father would bring him to an awareness that his father cared little for him.

He locates himself in an impersonal environment when describing the flat. He feels an intruder and an imposition on his parents. He speaks of the pictures on the walls in a warmer way than he does of the more functional pieces of furniture - here he is alienated and distanced. In the pictures he sees himself and his family somewhat together - there is more latitude for interpretation of reality in pictures. There is not that much bargaining power in chairs or beds - here is where we sat or did not sit together - here

is where fights took place.

Fellowman.

He describes people in a distant and factual manner. He stops being a stranger to his father when he is beaten by him. Here they join in a common task, a dehumanizing one. If contact with the rod were to draw them together, say by fishing, their closeness may be intimate and wholesome. Now, drawn together in violence, the impression is of an extreme closeness devoid of human contact, with no possibilities of human existence present other than to live as a carcass. This is how I must be when I'm close to father. What is frightening is the suspicion that he invites the attack and his strange smugness about it.

Father asks Fred not to reveal their relationship of violence to mother. Nor can he reveal anything of himself to his mother in father's presence. But she is close enough to him to know and the impression is of the two of them (mother and son) drawing support from each other in the face of this angry and frustrated man. He feels helpless to protect him or herself. She continues her inquiry in a soft and concerned manner. She exposes the wounded area and sees the disembodied "it" (in calling his arm "it" he has removed it from himself, made it object); it is an area of pain which he wishes not to know about, in it is his dehumanization. In his mother's presence he may come to own it, to reown himself

and feel human again.

Towards the end of the interview he objectifies both stories and removes any possibility of lived existence. He retreats into his mind.

Time and History.

There is no impression of past or future in the story. He was and is isolated in a family that never felt like a family. His present is still that muddled past and his future is inaccessible and has been so for many years.

Even in his relation to time he is distant and anonymous. Perhaps no identity equates with no pain. In time with father there is a distance; closeness comes with pain, cut-off feelings and a frightening attraction to him. To become close to time means to confront these painful feelings of the present and especially the past.

Summary of Both Explications.

Body.

His reaction to fear is to vacate the body and enter his thoughts. A deeply felt body sympathy between himself and his mother is substantially denied.

In relation to his father there is an increase of content in the protocol of, although denied, bodily experience. There is a yearning to be in touch with masculine others. Simultaneously these needs are out of his awareness. He attracts body blows and yields to them in a sensuous manner. He is very out of touch with his body and feelings.

World.

The only part of the world which lives for him is that which exists for his mother. He is detached from the rest and his attunement is emotionally vacant, only mechanical and distant.

The world for him in dialogue with father is one of pain and anger. It bespeaks of distant family ties, withdrawal into passivity and stolidness. The home environment is impersonal and he feels like an intruder with his parents. He is alienated and distant from his world.

Fellowman.

He pictures himself physically with his mother only up to a point. There may be a sexual feeling which he tries to keep out of awareness. He is under her power and it has a strong sensuality. She is one of the central pillars of his existence and he was not prepared to accept her as dead. In not accepting that he conceals a significant part of his existence in and by thought. He also severs a link between himself

and his mother and lives in an ambivalence concerning the danger of allowing feelings for her or not.

He speaks about people in the father section in a detached and factual manner. He stops feeling a stranger to his father only when he is beaten by him. It is an ugly caricature of intimacy with no possibilities of human existence.

Time and History.

He is frozen in time, trying to stop its march so mother won't die. He moves from bodily existing time to the factuality of his head which closes himself off from bodily-felt time. To move forward is to lose his mother and properly enter the past when she did die.

With father is the impression of a muddled vacuousness with no direction into past, present or future. He is distant and anonymous even in his relation to time. To accept lived time is to accept pain with the frightening attraction for father.

CHAPTER FIVECharles (32 Years Old)FIRST BASIC PROTOCOL (Mother).

"Well, I can remember the last hiding I got was through my mother. She had a lot of young chickens on the farm and in the evenings we used to take these chickens and put them in a big box for warmth during the night. There were over 500 of them and she came and called me. I was in Standard 9 at that stage. She called me and said I must go to the place where she kept the chickens and put the chickens in the box. And I refused because the chickens, as soon as you put them in, they jump out, you know, when you catch the other one. So you couldn't do it all by yourself (chuckle). So she got very annoyed with me and she wants to give me a bang and I stopped it with my arm and she hit her arm on my arm. She broke her arm and she called my dad and he took me to the cellar there and he gave me a hell of a hiding. Then she realized she was wrong and she came and she apologized."

First Interview.

Interviewer: How did you feel when she apologized?

Charles: Well, I felt good. And even my dad came and apologized as well because he gave me a hiding.

Interviewer: I'd like you to describe the surroundings when she hit you.

Charles: It was in the passage in the house and I remember it was the doorway, the doorway of her bedroom was just opposite the place where she hit me.

Interviewer: Can you remember any significant features of the doorway?

Charles: Yes, there's a rack on the one side where we used to hang our coats. On the left hand side there's a hat rack and there's a big picture in the front at the entrance to the dining-room, a landscape picture.

Interviewer: Do any colours strike you in the passageway?

Charles: Light brown. (Very definite).

Interviewer: Is that the colour it's painted?

Charles: Yah, that's right. I can still remember it was painted that at that stage. I was in Standard 9, that's 13 years ago.

Interviewer: What time of day was it?

Charles: It was midday. No, it was dawn.

Interviewer: So it was quite early in the morning then.

Charles: Yes, that's right.

Interviewer: Anything else you remember?

Charles: No.

Interviewer: Right. Were you in any pain when your mom hit you?

Charles: No, not at all.

Interviewer: How did you feel when she hit you?

Charles: Well, I was quite surprised because she got so annoyed because I explained to her properly that it was impossible for one person to do the job. I can still recall I told her to call my sister to come and help me.

Interviewer: And she just blew up?

Charles: That's right, yes.

Interviewer: So you were just very surprised.

Charles: Yes.

Interviewer: Nothing else?

Charles: No.

Explication.

Body.

Physical contact between himself and his mother is of an

aggressive nature. It is through her that father gives him a hiding, too. He seems like a victim in life, a person without an ally. He cannot appeal to his father to protect him from his mother. In receiving the hiding in the cellar his existence is debased and darkened whilst his father is acting in the shadow of his mother's request.

He is surprised at being hit, yet denies any pain. He has created a kind of "body-armour", cutting off his feelings to himself and his mother. He acts as if amused, but contained in his laughter is a bitterness and anger.

World.

He describes his world in a repetitive and concrete manner, yet his thinking is fuzzy. By repetition he can get a grip on the world and others in his life can perhaps understand and contain him in seeing that; there is also safety in being apparently concrete. In being fuzzy he cannot, on the other hand, be pinned down.

He helps his mother in her work. This time she asks too much of him. This conflict occurs "in the passage of the house... the doorway of her bedroom was just opposite the place she hit me". It appears almost as if she is defending her privacy. A subtle sexuality may be noticed.

There is a lot of detail in his description of the house in

which he lived but no life is imparted in it. He was not really a participant in a family life. He is observant yet distant from the world. He does not reveal himself in the physiognomy of the world except to show how detached and alienated he is, how barren his life is.

Fellowman.

He tries to impress upon his fellowman, when it suits him, that he is quite capable of doing things. Yet he admits an inability to his mom, after which he laughs. He transcends a situation in which he feels misunderstood and taken for granted whilst somewhere he is hurt and feels abused.

His mother cannot deal with her feelings, over here anger, appropriately. Her pattern when experiencing stumbling blocks in life is to move to anger first; this is then replaced by guilt when the damage is done (for example, Charles' father gives him a hiding) and perhaps some tenderness may emerge. It could be that Charles has learned that to receive warmer feelings from his mother means displeasing her first. When she apologizes he reacts this way, "Well I felt good". She is an inconsistent person who overreacts which points to her as a frustrated person who leaves her son feeling insecure, having to be buffeted about in an unpredictable way before he can receive some form of reassurance and affection. It is possible that he encourages feelings of

frustration in his parents turning it (destructively) to his advantage.

One senses her as a person who feels abused and unrecognised herself. She is like an inadequate frustrated child who doesn't want her son to see her vulnerabilities and at the same time, does. She'd like him to protect her in some way. His experience of this continues to one of being attracted and pushed away at the same time - built up and broken down, given responsibility and having it taken away. A covert sexuality may play a part in this strange, unfulfilling dance.

After making a seemingly simple but actually unreasonable request while standing opposite her doorway, he suggesting that he call his sister to help him, she erupts. It's as if she's not asking him what she really wants to and the sister would be a hindrance, not a help. She is a misunderstood woman and his experience of being with her is to feel inadequate and misunderstood himself.

Time and History.

He is attracted and repelled by the future in the same way as his relatingness to mother. The same applies to the past. He exists in an uneasy present. Future possibilities seem to loom up but when he goes for them they get taken away - to take a step forward means to take a step backward.

SECOND BASIC PROTOCOL (Father).

"Well we were ploughing in the lands one day, both on tractors. I was going the one way and he came the opposite way and he wasn't very satisfied with something I was doing, I can't remember what it was. And he got so annoyed he jumped off the tractor and he was looking for some stones, he was throwing it after me. It looked so funny because he got so annoyed and he was standing there throwing the stones after the tractor."

Second Interview.

Interviewer: How were you feeling when he was throwing the stones at you?

Charles: I was laughing. The more I was laughing the more he got annoyed with me.

Interviewer: So he must have been pretty cross then?

Charles: He was, he was.

Interviewer: What do you remember of the surroundings?

Charles: It was one of the biggest lands on the farm we were ploughing at that stage. And it was five tractors in that field, ploughing, and all the boys stopped their tractors watching the episode going on between myself and my dad.

Interviewer: How did that feel?

Charles: I didn't feel so good because they were laughing at us, you know.

Interviewer: What were the features of that landscape?

Charles: Well, it's next to a river... and the land is between the farmhouse and the river. You couldn't see the place where it was happening from the farmhouse. That's about all.

Interviewer: Any colours stick out for you?

Charles: I can remember we had maize in the land before we ploughed and it was light-brown - a sort of creamy colour after you've combined the maize. You know you get those creamy colours on the land.

Interviewer: Time of day?

Charles: About midday, just before lunch. It was very hot, I remember I was ploughing without a shirt on.

Interviewer: Describe your father to me, how he appeared throwing stones at you.

Charles: (Chuckle) He looked very funny. Bending down every time and picking up a stone and throwing it and shouting around with his arms and shouting at me.

Interviewer: How old were you then?

Charles: I was twenty-seven.

Interviewer: So your father was how old then?

Charles: He was sixty-one then.

Interviewer: Anything else you'd care to add?

Charles: No, not really.

Explication.

Body.

His laughter contains more scorn and anger than humour. It is aggressive and is bound to provoke the father.

The employees' laughter puts him in an uncomfortable position. It lifts him out of the situation into self-consciousness - he is very aware of the opinion of others.

Fellowman.

Even though he and his father are engaged in a common task, they are disconnected. He's far from his father, from the land and from himself. He is a person of many words yet little feeling or substance.

He cannot admit faults in himself although he all too easily sees himself through the eyes of others, especially in a negative way. Nor is he open to the possibility of his

father's anger toward him or of the possibility of his father's rejection of him. He avoids awareness of these by turning life into a joke, he also does not take his father seriously; dehumanizing him. In so doing he denies much of his father as a human being and much of himself as a human being.

He draws an irrational appearing anger from his parents, this time from the father. To stone a son is a grave action, it almost has a Biblical ring, as if Charles had sinned in some way and is being banished. In any event, he cannot allow himself to be open to anything else but the humour in the situation, certainly not the anger, bitterness and tragedy of it.

World.

His dialogue with the land is also one of distance and alienation. It is quantitative, there is no feel for it. His most meaningful relationship with the land is that it is the place where these incidents in his life occur. He cannot prereflectively go out and exult in the land - in it is the bitterness and pain of his poor contacts with his parents, his family, the labourers and himself.

In being directed to the world by the interviewer, Charles appears stuck. His words come nowhere near pointing to the actuality of his existence other than to underline his

loneliness and barrenness. He is lost in himself and cannot go out to meet, or even recognise, the multitude of invitations which is the world.

Time and History.

There is a timeless frustration about this whole incident as if something appeared to happen but nothing did. It looks as if Charles and his father were stuck in a repetitive way of being with each other. That at 27 years old this incident occurred bespeaks of a person who never grew up and who doesn't want to.

He is stuck in time, his future is inaccessible and his past is muddled. His words have no weight or importance, he speaks as if from a vacuum. He is on an existential treadmill using his words also in a goalless manner. He has placed out of his awareness the possibilities of interconnectedness to World, Fellowman and Time and his Bodiliness. His intentionality is specifically focussed on himself, he is narcissistic, he lives in a void. If he is the light of existence illuminating the world it is only in an infantile manner of primitive intentionality towards his parents that he is open. And he can only live as that and be that in the world: angry, dependent, paranoid.

Summary of both explications.

Body.

He is in a bodily dialogue with mother which is aggressive. He has no ally in life and cannot escape the darkness of his mother's existence. He denies any pain and has cut off his feelings in a way that gives the impression of his body as a suit of armour. He laughs at the world so as not to reveal his pain and anger to himself.

His laughter toward his father is more overtly angry and provocative. It is also dehumanizing.

World.

He describes the world in a repetitive and concrete way, yet on closer inspection, it is confused. His relationship with the world is thus: repetitive in being closed to new possibilities yet confused by all the possibilities as they appear and trying to keep life concrete as a means of controlling life.

He describes the house in which he lives with much detail but no description. He reveals himself in the physiognomy of his life as being detached, alienated and barren.

In speaking of the land it is equally so that he has no meaningful contact with it. He is lost to himself and other

people, he cannot go out to meet the invitations the world holds out.

Fellowman.

He will emerge misunderstood and hurt when with his mother. He appears to draw the frustrations of both parents upon himself. His mother appears as an inconsistent woman unable to express her feelings adequately. He senses this and would like to protect her in some way so he moves toward her only to be repelled. There is a covert sexuality present and he is victim to the confusion of her ambiguous messages to him.

He is not open to the possibilities of anger with or from father, he avoids awareness of life by treating it as a joke. His experience here is of rejection, incompetence and distantiation. He is closed to most lived aspects of life not the least of which being the bitterness, anger and tragedy of his life. Joy, peace and harmony are even further away.

Time and History.

He is attracted and repelled by the future in the same way in and as his relatingness with mother. Possibilities looming up ahead get taken away as he advances toward them. He is locked in the presentness of his mother as she exists for

him now and in the past.

There is a sense of timeless frustration with the father as if they are stuck in a repetitive and pointless dance with each other. He is stuck in time and lives as if in a vacuum. He is narcissistic to the extent of withdrawing himself from the ebb and flow of lived time and has structured the universe around his own primitive existence which is too infantile to be safely open to World, Fellowman, Body in their totality as structure of existence.

CHAPTER SIXDISCUSSION

In this section the explications of the three subjects' experiences will be compared and contrasted within Van den Berg's categories. Particular emphasis will be given to the dialectic of experience of both parents and how this emerges as each subject's being-in-the-world.

Body.

With Wallie and his mother we see a tendency to withdraw from the world by shrinking into his body to the extent of vacating it and dwelling in his mind. His helpless immobility and strong sense of being bound to mother prevail. In doing so he cuts off his feeling life and negates responsibility for himself.

In Fred we see a similar retreat from the body into thoughts, yet the motivation appears to be different. For Wallie it is to avoid feelings of pain and anger and loneliness. For Fred it has that but it is also a way of avoiding a more explicit sensuality, a radical means of creating a boundary between his mother and himself where it does not exist. He is very drawn to her, unlike Wallie whose repulsion to his mother stands out more.

Charles has not so much withdrawn into his body as turned it into a suit of armour to protect him from his mother's anger and betrayal. He is not able to escape into fantasy and thought as Wallie and Fred have; his feelings are too primitive and raw to allow that and he lives out his dehumanization in his body perimeters, thus keeping much out of conscious awareness.

When Wallie speaks of his father, possibilities of tenderness and closer human contact emerge. He feels somewhat freer to leave his mind and come to his senses and act upon the world, albeit in a limited manner. With the support of his father he can come to own some of his existence.

Fred's body seemingly leaps forward to be in touch with his father, no matter the cost to his human integrity. He turns himself into an object almost totally, in a strangely sensual and submissive way, when in violent contact with his father. His passions appear to run far more deeply here than they do with his mother. It is also more passionate than Wallie's quite sentimental closeness with his father. But Fred cannot share anything vaguely constructive in the world as Wallie can - he can only allow himself a very distant and bizarre means of contact with men in the world, in a self-punitive manner. He is very cut off from his feelings and body in the world of man.

For Charles there is not even that bizarre bodying-forth which

Fred has. His bodiliness is more or less the same with his father as it is with his mother. Virtually the only bodily-felt evocation of feelings is in his laughter which is a distorted means (here) for dialoguing in the world but he is bodily frozen. Wallie can fish with his father, Fred can endure being struck by his but Charles is somehow even more distant, beyond even his father's rage.

World.

The world for Wallie is unyielding and daunting. He has to capitulate to his thoughts and can only be open to that part of the world approved of by his mother - it is safe, boring and unfree.

For Fred, the world is distant, dark and closed. It feels mechanical. Only when relating to the thought of his dead mother does it brighten slightly.

Charles' world is repetitious, concrete and confusing. He is closed to new possibilities since the ones he has virtually overwhelm him. He reveals himself as detached and barren.

With father Wallie is more open and involved in the world, albeit in safely prescribed areas such as fishing. Even so, he must deny possibilities the world offers him so as not to upstage his father. Still, his dialogue with world has here constructive and positive elements.

Fred's dialogue with father and world holds only the possibility of pain and anger. It bespeaks of distant family ties and feeling an outcast. It is an unwelcoming place from which one must withdraw into passive stolidness. He never had Wallie's partially positive sharing of the world with his father.

For Charles there is a repeat of the distance and alienation that is his world of dialogue with mother and father. He is lost in himself and cannot go out to meet the world of possibilities as they exist. Fred at least had some contact with the world but for Charles one fears that there is little recourse to being in meaningful contact. It is exceptionally uninviting for him.

Fellowman.

Wallie cannot take responsibility for himself from his mother. He exists in a tension of pleasing himself and pleasing her leaving him helpless to interact meaningfully with others, world and self. His only way of maintaining some existential integrity is to withdraw. To be acceptable to his mother he must become what she wants him to, he must deny his existence.

Fred is involved with his dead mother in a way which is still sensual. He is under her sway even now and he tries to place out of his awareness his strong attraction and need for her. He is ambivalent all the same, since he cannot accept

her as dead, he has no one else to lean on. So he must deny her her reality as dead and cut off his feelings by withdrawing to his head. Wallie's withdrawal is to avoid the pain and anger of not being allowed to exist freely and to be angry with his mother may mean losing her. For Fred, whose initial experience with mother seems more positive, to feel anything for her means to confirm her loss.

The section on Charles' relatedness to Fellowman has been ominously small. It points to little meaningful involvement with mother (or father). It appears that she consumed Charles in her neediness and inconsistency. His experience is one of withdrawal from a state of inautonomy to a false sense of selfhood to be found in his narcissistic way of life. But he never gained enough separation to have the existential wherewithal to achieve selfhood. His is right where he was near the start of his life, symbiotically linked to his mother. It is unlikely that he can enjoy meaningful relations with others right now.

Wallie takes on his father's qualities of inadequacy and loneliness. He is manipulated by this kindly man who needs to be fed, emotionally by his son. His marriage is unable to fulfil many of the needs he may bring to it. Nor is the father strong enough to allow the son to enter the world by himself, so he remains tied to mother and father. Wallie also experiences his father as the more nurturant parent.

Fred is a detached stranger in the world of fellowman. Any feelings to be found in the ambivalence he has towards his mother is quite submerged. He has potential for contact with women but does not allow it. He stops feeling a stranger with his father when beaten by him, he is almost satisfied to be dehumanized then, as if attaining a small victory. He'd probably gravitate strongly to a nurturant male figure.

Charles has no such expression for closeness to father. He is really disconnected from him. He treats life as a joke and dehumanizes both himself and his father in this way. He clings to the notion of being rejected which is safer than allowing for the primitive feelings of rage he has which would be too much to handle. The bitterness in his laughter is at least a somewhat adult level of appreciation of his circumstance.

Both Wallie's parents make insuperable demands upon him and to maintain some existential remnant he must withdraw. He is stuck between trying to please both parents and not himself. He cannot maintain fair contact long in the world of fellowman and must retreat to feed himself in a place of loneliness.

Fred is torn between concealing tender feelings toward women which, if exposed, threaten his existence and, despite himself, sensual feelings towards men; but they are socially unacceptable and he can permit enjoyment only in a masochistic manner. Consequently he must withdraw from contacts with men and women. One can see how he attains limited satisfaction

by opening himself to abuse by men.

Charles' boundaries separating him from mother are low. He reminds one of a subterranean creature poking its head out of the earth only to be rapidly sucked back in. He has not yet formed an identity sufficient to stand by himself in the world independently of his parents.

Time and History.

Wallie's mother is the arbiter of his time. He is connected to her in time and cannot separate from her for too long; every venture into the future pulls him back to a tangled past. In the future he sees only possibilities which confirm his father's inadequacy as well as no means of satisfying himself. In trying to please both his parents he is stuck in a time-warp.

Fred's picture is different. He has tried to freeze himself in time. To move forward is to confront his mother's death and have a major pillar of his existence crumble. It has no direction into past or future and is cut off to the extent of seeming non-existence in the present. To accept lived time is to accept the pain of existence, so he vacates it. Wallie accepts up to a point (until he can no longer) being a yo-yo in time for his parents. Fred abdicates this acceptance altogether.

Charles is attracted and repelled more in the rhythm of a pendulum (than a yo-yo) by present and future, in his relatingness with his inconsistent mother. Possibilities ahead diminish into the trappedness of the past as he approaches them. He is locked into the ubiquitous presence of his mother and father. With his father he is latched into a timeless and useless dance, having no life or aim.

Whilst Wallie can live in time up to the point where he can't and he must withdraw into timelessness, Fred seems to live there most of the time (ie. out of lived time) but one senses that he knows what it is and where it is. He is not so out of touch with the rhythm of life as is Charles. Fred is frozen, waiting. Wallie is madly vacillating but at least he can share somewhat with others. Charles vacillates but in a vacuum, timelessly, as if in a dimension unknown to others.

CONCLUSION

This project was initiated out of a quest to more fully understand the male alcoholic's relationship with his parents and how this affected his world. The researcher singled out two themes for further study when dealing in a therapeutic situation with male alcoholics. These were the subject's dependency relationship with his mother and heightened expression of affection towards men. These two themes are recognized by psychodynamic theorists as the foundation of the male alcoholic's experience, or rather, they are the expression of a previous, faulty foundation as described in Chapter One. Yet in theorizing about these phenomena, they can do nothing but describe the experience in a general and superficial way and then ignore it to try and explain it by investigating hypothesized foundations. Their theoretical stance could not satisfy the researcher in that no attempt is made to explicate the dynamic interplay of mother and father in the male alcoholic's structure of existence nor do they sufficiently explore his experience with father, as such.

To say that the mother of the subjects interviewed were either over- or underindulgent and that the experience of their fathers is such that they were absent or abusive is to overlook the subject's fuller experience. To say that is as meaningless as saying Wallie and Fred have repressed homosexual tendencies. They probably do. But it does not

reveal any of their world for the researcher, one is no closer to understanding that world. Although both Wallie and Fred show strong desires to be close to men they are qualitatively very different from each other - they are different phenomena. They become the same when stripped of their meaning in order to fit a theory, as a cog in a clock can only be replaced by another identical one in order for the mechanism to work. This is to call it a repressed homosexual desire. Life is no clockwork mechanism - to understand its phenomena is to allow it to reveal itself.

This is where theory affects therapy. In allowing the subject's experience to unfold we may better arrive at the meaning of the phenomena for the subject, which is vital and alive. A causal-reductive (psychodynamically speaking) approach is of necessity intrapsychic. It cannot account for Wallie's relationship in Time as dialogue with mother or father. Nor could it describe in a lived way how he vacates his body for the safety of his mind. To speak of denial or rationalization is to overlook the experience of it and not fully understand the meaning it has for the client.

Although common themes do exist they exist only in their manifold uniqueness for each subject. Withdrawal is the most profound theme. In Wallie and Fred this is quite severe but not so bad as it is for Charles. But it is not just in a matter of degree that they differ. In Wallie and Fred we can see how it is through their fathers that their

ability to act upon the world is largely dependent. As dialogue with mother, if the father is not able to live independently of her, the son will have difficulty breaking away from her to encounter the world. One cannot say this for Charles since his personality remains too undifferentiated, even now.

Another common feature relating to the above phenomena is the turning of the body into an object. By vacating the body they become "it" and negate a being-in-the-world.

Responsibility for self is given to others.

Distance, alienation and loneliness is seen for all three subjects but they manifest differently in location and degree. Openness to the world is limited for all but it manifests differently for each subject. Wallie enjoys some success here, Fred's world is darkly impersonal and mechanical whilst Charles' is repetitious and confusing.

It is interesting how the Body and World sections of this project are relatively small when compared to Fellowman sections. Even though the questions initiating the protocols and their interviews were directed towards incidents involving the parents, it is clear that these subjects, if asked to describe their worlds more fully, would still reveal themselves as out of touch with Body and World ie. their poor contacts with people is revealed in the physiognomy of the world.

Another observation is the output of each subject as seen in the lengths of their protocols and interviews. These are in concordance with the extent to which they are in touch with the world. This is not to say a garrulous subject would be more in touch with the world.

But for all the differences and similarities of experience what does emerge is the uniqueness of each subject. The experiences which could be labelled the same are all subtly different on the surface with more significant differences in meaning for each subject.

It is inconceivable to imagine these explications without entering into the subject's experiences with father. A meaningful portrayal of his life could not have been attained. The world that he is and lives in is that triadic relationship of himself and his parents as they exist for him now.

To flesh out this theme more fully more subjects could have been interviewed. The limitations of this project could not overcome this shortcoming. It would also be interesting to do a similar study with women and then compare their experiences to male alcoholics.

Hopefully this attempt to more fully understand the male alcoholic's experience can contribute to doing just that; it

is also hoped that the methodology used here has been developed a little more towards furthering the purpose of this work: to understand man in his world.

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APPENDIX

EXPLICATORY WORK

All the underlined words are the subjects, from the basic protocols of each followed by their respective interviews.

SECTION ONE A - WALLIE. Mother

Body

I shall go to my girlfriend.

- he wants to remove himself from the situation, physically, to be in the presence of his girlfriend after being accused by his mother of lying to her. He deals with the situation by withdrawing - it also implies that he is going to the presence of another female who will accept him - a passive means of aggression, trying to hurt the mother.

and she slapped me through the face

- the mother's response is outright physical and aggressive.
- he elicits a violent reaction, is defaced for a while, as if to say "it went through that part of myself who presents to the world", what he presented to his mother then. It seems much was hidden in that presentation i.e. much of himself did not feel the slap, the full extent of her anger. He had/was already withdrawn.

And I did go off

- he proceeded on his way - the threat was carried out.
He physically removed himself from that situation of anger and confrontation.

Then of course, I felt very bad about it, when I returned that same afternoon

- only when returning to that situation he felt bad - implied that he'd cut himself off from it when he'd gone.

After three years she (girlfriend) moved away.

- the physical distance between them was severely and abruptly enlarged.

and she said, "This is goodbye".

- the physical input from her was verbal.
- it sounds pathetic, very abrupt. A sense of having prepared for distance, cast off feelings already even before she left. There is a mood of lost helplessness and unassertiveness here.

For about two or three years after that I didn't even look at a girl

- it seems that he could not bring his body/self to experience even the visual sensation of a girl. The impression is of a great distance between himself and his previous girlfriend and girls in general. As if he had kept himself suspended from life, from the risk of involving himself with a girl again.

I was very heartbroken about that

- What was feeling and open to love and life, experience in him was broken, was in disrepair. He was not open to experience or life then.

I still think of her now sometimes

So even now he can be in a state of re-experiencing her for the closeness/distance and openness/closedness which she was for him.

But I had been sitting with my books

An immobility in being with the books - the impression is of stasis, stuckness.

and I was thinking of going out to my girlfriend

No physical action but, many thoughts about action, he cannot confront the task at hand, thinks about an alternative piece of action. Meanwhile, he is absent from his physical whereabouts, thinking of the girl.

But I definitely got cross about that

What moved him to anger, a physical feeling was being pressured to achieve. It also seemed to conflict with emotional needs which he had (which his girlfriend could potentially meet).

- and his girlfriend appears too as a reaction to the demands placed upon him to achieve - his means of revenge almost, upon his mother.

I was with my girlfriend and felt better

In being with his girlfriend, the pressure is off him - she's a haven from his mother and her demands.

I went to her

It appears that even though he felt good about being with his girlfriend he was compelled to go back to mother.

That made me feel more bad

- in response to seeing his mother crying he felt worse. No, bad ie. a bad boy - so his mother was a guilt merchant and played upon his need for reassurance/dependence on her to manipulate him.

- message: "You've hurt me by not working, doing what I want".

World

I had been sitting with my books

- the books attain a certain gravity, as if they held him down - dumb, silent companions, challenging him, not yielding to his wishes. They embody his mother for him - challenging, unyielding -

(... and thinking of going out to my girlfriend)

he'd like to escape from the pressure that the books/mother came to mean for him.

She brought up some food (tea or coffee)

- Once he was studying she stopped punishing him with her tears and silence - the tea or coffee come as the conditional reward to him for writing and also for bending to her wishes and remaining dependent on her (possible relationship to the meaning of alcohol for him?)

She started adding up the time I'd spent studying

Time as object - he did not devote enough time to her ideas for him - so even his relation to physical time is in strain.
- to look at his watch would remind him of how he is disappointing his mother by not working.
- all the objects in his world as presented here bespeak of the tensions in his relations with his mother.

Fellowman

She has this thing about that I'm not studying enough

- sense of inseparableness - he can't come to his own decisions, a large part of him is not differentiated from his mother ie. he still gives her responsibility for himself.
- he is not fulfilling a requirement she sets out for him to achieve. She wants a lot from him. She must therefore be quite empty herself.

She wanted me to achieve all the things my sister couldn't...

To do extremely well

- This wanting mother - can't accept him as he is. She

makes him feel inadequate - wants him to do better than his sister - so she couldn't accept the sister in what she did either - everything therefore is evaluated on performance. As if to say "Your sister failed me, made me unhappy, now it's up to you to make up for her failures and to, by achieving, fulfil me, make me happy". It appears that the mother could only sense her own worth by the achievements, performance of her children. Calling upon her, by the lever of guilt to perform, thereby training the children to deny their own needs and feelings.

She was always comparing me to other pupils

- emphasizing his differences to others - setting him apart, perhaps instilling a false superiority in him, separating him from his peers.

Said I had a very high I.Q. and I'm not using it

- making him believe he's superior to his peers, and instilling a guilt in him that anything short of excellence, perfection, is poor and despicable.

She wanted me to be better than the other kids in the street

- inducing him not to accept himself for what he is - separating him from his peers - he becomes her "product" (since he's a reflection of her and her upbringing). His development is arrested.

I rebelled against it

- it seemed that his rebellion was internal - never successful (then). The girlfriend was an act of rebellion (amongst other things).

I was very much in love with her (girlfriend)

He felt deeply for her then. But the tone and sense is flat - Flattened affect?

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It was actually the second girlfriend I had

So he had strong needs then (age 17 or so). This being his second girlfriend. Matter of fact. Setting the record straight.

We went out for three years

A long time at that age.

She was good company, had a good figure, was good at sports and quite average in her class

- speaks of her in a mechanical, objective way - perhaps to conceal the pain now which he did feel when she left. But there is still a sense of not knowing her, of idolizing her. Perhaps he senses in her all that his mother was not; was even average in her class. He's rating her (3 "goods" and one "average") - trying to match himself up instead of permitting a flaw.

My parents didn't get along with her parents. He (her father) was the mayor of the town then

- social differences? They couldn't move together for some reason.

She moved away

A great loss to him, perhaps the first time he's experienced affection etc. Taken away. It appears that he couldn't partake of her, "This is goodbye". She said it, he withdrew; for about two or three years after that I didn't even look at a girl

- so his emotional investments are not easily made, and as the girl was at a great distance from him, so was he from other girls and from himself emotionally. It is possible he construed his experiment in rebellion (leaving his mother's expectations for this girlfriend) as unsuccessful. He never said goodbye - probably still feels anger, resentment, loss in her leaving. If that is so, must find it very difficult to open up to other people since then.

Well I did say I studied although I didn't study very hard and to a certain extent she was right.

- he partially agrees with his mother and is doing this in terms of her - the impression is that the work is still at a distance from him.

But I did try and study and I tried to prove myself right

- to his mother, the tension in him of going to the girlfriend

(pleasing himself) or studying (pleasing his mother). Still a sense of no real interaction, involvement with the world.

Got cross... because they went so on about this

- The family went on, nagged him, left him no avenue for his own expansion - would not allow him to live out his own unique possibilities in life - at that stage was going through the battle throes. Also he starts becoming resentful to people, particularly those "advising" him what to do - ie. his contacts with people are distanced - the impression is of him getting a verbal barrage from which he must cut off if he's to protect himself.

I said to her "I'm sorry I behaved this way"

After detaching from his mother, coming back from his girlfriend where he felt better, he apologizes for "behaving that way" - he asks for the nearness which is missing once he reenters the situation he fled.

But she didn't answer me and I could see that everything was not alright

- His mother still keeps him at a painful distance punishing him in her anger and hurt - when he wants to be consoled and his apology accepted - actually he wants to be accepted - his words are a propitiation to her.

She cries very easily and she was crying at that stage

- the woman is hurt, insulted, angry - he wants something

from her, her love and acceptance - all she can give him is her pain - in some respects she's asking him to share in carrying the burden of her own life. She cannot in fact give freely of her feelings, particularly positive ones - for all her outer strength she is a very weak woman. She cannot be a child so she expects him to be an adult and have no childish life - but unawaredly she is always a child. Raises questions about the marriage.

After supper I went out and I really started studying

- for her this guilt was now worked up to a good pitch. In some respects he must equate achievement with abandonment of his existence and he cannot know himself well at all, since everything has been done in terms of others.

She brought me some tea or coffee, asked me how I was progressing

- she directs her inquiry to his achievement, not, "how are you?" He therefore must come to identify with his achievements. But he must feel an awful existential guilt, since that is not him. A whole world of possibilities has been denied.

So everything was forgotten

- indeed everything was. What seems like a friendly gesture is really a magic wand she has which he did not have the awareness or strength to see through and deny - it waved

away what was real in him and made him live out a life which suited her (his choice, remember).

I accepted her because I wanted to work for her approval and I felt better

- his choice. Note the power he had over her, how she needed to be accepted by him - very symbiotic. In accepting her he feels better so he could not work for her approval unless he accepted her. To not work means to not accept her. This is why it's so important to her, too.

I'd been to my girlfriend and my mother is quite alright so everything is hunky-dory

He got his needs partially fulfilled at girlfriend (and diminished his anger); came back out of guilt to mother "who is alright" and fitted into that tight, dependent mould of guilt and so everything is fine. So, the equation is that when he fills his emotional/sexual needs with other women he feels guilty and has to run back to his mother (and inauthentic life of achievement).

Time and History

The whole protocol occurs in his middle to late teens. The interesting factor of time is how they (mother and son) bargain with each other over physical time. Also how the tension of their relationship is seen in his dialogue with time.

I felt very bad about it when I returned that same afternoon

Note how he stresses that same afternoon.

- as if the space of time was not enough to erase the bad feelings - as if embodied in the time away is an emotional rubber band which gets more taut and has a stronger tug the longer away from her (mother) he is.

Later on I was studying hard to show her that I could...

After the event of her crying he came back to do what she wanted him to and we see how they're even bound in their dialogue with time, how the rubber band has slackened, the tension is assuaged now that he sits and does what she wants him to.

Father

SECTION ONE B Body

I always had a soft spot for my father

- an area of tenderness, vulnerability in relation with his father.

Well, good about catching the fish and the fight I had with them, but then I wanted him to catch something too

- in catching the fish he fought, was wholly involved and it felt good, expended energy upon the world and achieved what he wanted - but this positive feeling was disrupted by the

fact that his father had caught nothing - he put his father before him.

He was very proud when we catch something and bring it back and he always goes on a lot about it

- Sense of doing something together, applying themselves to a task - an added strength in him, yet it appears his father drew strength from him too.

But I had to come. I couldn't stay out any longer, not the way I carried on

- compulsion/desire to physically arrive here (in hospital) is very strong. Hospital was a place out of which he could no longer stay - felt vulnerable, insecure, needed the protection of such a place - as if the perimeter of his body were not enough to protect him from the onslaught of the world.

He was "carrying on" in a self-destructive way when "out" - therefore sensed the need to come back "in" desperately, to the protective environs of the hospital.

World

I always wanted him to catch the first fish and the largest one

- wanted father to take precedence in the world over him - did not want to achieve more than the father - so in the world

is a constant attunement to the possibility of achieving more than his father (see how he is stuck between his mother blackmailing him to achieve and his wishes not to show up his father).

One day I caught one Galjoen and he didn't catch a thing
- in the Galjoen is evoked his sympathy for his father and his attempt to maintain father as someone superior to him. His achievement is a prize he never wished for - thought he was taking something away from his father (guilt).

He praised the Galjoen and said "Your mother will be glad about it".

So, in the Galjoen he sees himself depriving his father of his mother's praise and affection.

I know it's a good spot for Musselcracker

- he sees in the world potential for his father - he seems to need to give to his father a lot. It's like saying, "Here is a spot that will provide good things for Dad".

It was from low water to high tide and the water was still coming in, and there were still some pools where I got the crabs, two of them

- same as above. He is also not permitting his father to feel disappointment, pain or loss, sadness - to bring the crabs to him is to patch him up and say, things aren't so

bad, see I'll make you happy. To acknowledge having a disappointed or sad father (which he inwardly sensed) would be too difficult for him to bear.

- gives the father a pair of crabs (two) a unity? Something whole? Gives him wholeness? Crab delicacy, something special, with forbidding outside?

They always come in pairs (the Musselcrackers)

- fisherman's wisdom

We've got a photograph of it, one was 20 lbs, the other almost 25

- in the photograph is their prize. It is also the reflection of them doing and achieving something together. It sounds like far more of an achievement to him than the way in which he considered his studies.

Fellowman

When we went fishing together

Immediate sense of togetherness.

I always wanted him to catch the first fish

- in their togetherness is a sense of debt, subservience (wished for?)

I really wanted him to catch something because I always had a soft spot for my father

- he'd be happy if his father was happy; symbiotic relationship too - seems like the one family member cannot disentangle from the other.

- possibly brought up to believe that one lives for others?

And he went on more about the two crabs than the fish he caught

- he found it more important to talk about the gift his son gave him than the two fish he caught himself - so he values the fact that his son gives him something. This is picked up by Wallie who feels the need (out of a subtly induced guilt?) to provide his father.

He taught me how to fish

Instructed his son how to catch fish, to eat.

..and he spoke kindly to me

- the words were gentle in form and manner which he received from his father.

We went out often. He always took me with him

- it appears that the father chose to seek the boy's company often. This makes a deep impression on Wallie who feels the intensity of their closeness.

He was a very good father, really

- trying to convince himself. Possibly he's heard other

theories.

I always felt under an obligation

- it appears then that the father was a guilt merchant, too. I can imagine the underlying theme: "See how good I am to you - what do I get back in return? And I protect you to some extent from your mother, for that I need your love and devotion". At some time must feel anger and resentment at being manipulated into feeling obligation - at some level he must sense his father feels a bitterness or superiority over his son who he has manipulated.

I liked him so much I wanted him to achieve something even if it is in fishing

- it appears that he's picked up his mother's style of loving, or, sees him through her eyes: you're only worthy of love if you achieve. It implies that he's not been a success in other areas of life, therefore was unloved by the mother who's very conditional with her affections. She must be a very closed and lonely woman. Father strikes one as inadequate.

He is seventy-six now and we still go fishing and even now I want him to catch something

- so nothing has changed over the last twenty years.

It was just a feeling

- he downplays feelings as inaccurate and insignificant.

I wanted him to catch something because he praised the Galjoen and said, "Your mother will be glad about it".

- wanted father to get some of mother's love/attention/praise; to be more than he was - perhaps lived in growing peripheral fear that his father was inadequate. Also he may have wanted father to attract more of mother's attention to take the pressure off himself. If the father cannot stand up to the mother the son remains dependent on her. So he needed the father to be stronger than he was to save himself from the mother.

Well, I remember him, he was more stronger then, he must have been in his late fifties, he was still a powerful man

- Remembers him as more powerful than now. Perhaps an awareness that Pa's not such a strong man after all. Even at that age he was (still) a powerful man.

- picture of a man whose strength has diminished. Or an idealization.

Yes, that he told everybody about later. I suppose it was to make me feel good

- He wanted to express to others (and himself) how well his son treated him, show how well brought up he is, show how kindhearted he is; that side of son's emotional development was his doing (as opposed to mother's more success-oriented upbringing standards).

- Perhaps it was to make him feel good; the father is conveying some human values to him and praising him by putting him in

the spotlight.

- or to show what a good fisherman he is, like Pa.
- or to show that he's worthy of love.

He always wanted me to catch something again

Would've liked to have been proud of his son; perhaps make him into a more successful man than he was - for selfish and unselfish reasons. But the son is not given space to make mistakes, fail, to grow in his own right - that much praise instills achievement into the activity, rather than enjoying it for itself eg. 1) Wallie felt good about catching the fish but not for long - he wanted Pa to catch some, too.

2) What is meant is that in relation to activities such as this, an involvement in the activity for itself is clouded because it is construed as achievement oriented - doing things for others, in terms of others. So one cannot truly appreciate anything one does.

That was fishing, he was never a hunter and he played rugby until he was 34 but fishing was his sport and he dearly loved it and we were able to enjoy it with him and we wished him to achieve that because we felt sorry for him

- fishing is more passive, restrained. The animal comes to your spot; in hunting you go out and get it, you exercise more assertion and choice; in fishing you take what comes your way, or not.

- rugby is incidental, a social nicety.

- even in his enjoyment of the sport with Pa, how Pa loved it, he couldn't really break through to Pa and say, "Pa,

love me as much as you love your fishing".

- and once again, this sense of having to emotionally feed Pa, support a mom who is clearly lonely, suffering in his silence and probably morally and personally restricted to accepting his lot with a brave, nice front. A good man, uncomplaining - but his sons feel the underlying tug of his pain and can do things with him to alleviate that which his wife couldn't or wouldn't.

I don't know why - he wasn't a pitiful figure or anything like that - he's such a good man

- see last section of previous sentence's explication.
- it is out of Wallie's awareness.

I don't know why (we felt sorry for him) he always tried to take our side

- He tried to protect them from the mother. But his attempts were out of duty - if he'd been successful in a real way that obviousness would've been unnecessary; The kids would've been protected from a demanding, voracious mother. Nor could he stand up to her, and he may have felt guilty as a man and as a father.

He'll be very disappointed because I landed up in an institute for alcoholics

- so his fathering was in vain. As a son (his father's product) he's disappointed him. He has become himself in a destructive way, though.

- he never really got from father what he wanted; he got the strong impression of a caring, loving father but in reality had to feed his father love and care.

- he, too, was a fisherman and not a hunter (he didn't go out and take what he wanted, he had to take what he could get) and "himself" is a regressed, needy child who avoids pain.

He was not a very good speaker

A man who couldn't verbalize, express himself in public.

My mother was the one - she was on the Hoofraad of the National Party for about 16 years. She had to make lots of speeches. He was actually a quiet sort of man.

- She was active, masculine, dominant, rational. As a man she was better than Pa - must have had ambivalent feelings about him for being a disappointing, yet overtly loving father.

- has homosexual pattern. Ma wore the pants.

No, she was a dominating... she's quite dominating

He changes his tune, midstride. Dilutes his feeling about her and so also about her in relation to his father (because she'd have dominated him, too).

Her whole family is like that. She was a Retief from Jamestown and they were strong willed

So on the subject of strength and dominance he goes on to

speak of Ma. Sees a historical connection. Perhaps slightly in awe of that achieving family.

She'd be nice at times too, but then you'd get a little suspicious because you didn't know really what was behind it, if anything. Sometimes I think it was out of sheer goodness

He suspected her of always having a motive to being nice.

Eventually he couldn't tell whether she had one or not.

So he's always on guard, must find it difficult to accept kindness, especially from a woman.

- and sometimes it probably was out of sheer goodness, but he's never sure.

But she wanted me and my brother to go to university

- The "but" rejects her as giving without a motive in the previous sentence. Because she wanted her boys to achieve and he saw that as always the point of her giving - for them to comply.

I didn't even want to go to university. I wanted to join the Merchant Navy when I left the army.

- he wanted something of his own doing, for better or worse. Be out in the open, the sea. To leave the rational - sea, fishing, still have links to father? Be with men only?

But I went to this university and I achieved quite well. I got my B.Sc. degree and when I got married I got my B.Ed.

The sense of it is that he went through the motions. A vague

wistfulness. When he got married he studied further
 - did he marry a woman like his mother?

I never really studied hard. I suppose if I'd set my mind to it I'd have achieved a lot academically.

A wistful echo of the past. His mother's voice in the achievement, his father's in the lack of achievement. His own in the present as the carrier of that tension. In living in and as his relations to people and things, he is the tension and sadness and isolation and loneliness of his parents' marriage. The hollow academic success here - a one-sided success.

Time and History

In the same way one can feel time stretch with his mother and being away, one can feel it when he speaks of being out of the hospital: But I had to come. I couldn't stay out any longer. Not the way I carried on...

To a large extent he lived out the sadness of his father's lonely existence (and his mother).

He is seventy-six now and we still go fishing and even now I want him to catch something.

- Time has done little to change the relationship. His past is therefore still living for him in a way which leaves him closed to the present in that it has actually structured

the future in a certain way, of still wanting Pa to catch something, wishing things would go his way, rather than going out and taking what he'd like to fulfil his own needs.

The whole protocol occurs in his late teens. I was just out of school then, very young.

- a sense of freshness and vulnerability, even innocence. A crucial time. To what extent did his father's emotional pull prevent him from leaving for the Merchant Navy? But remember he went to university. Still.

Nothing pulls him forward ie. goals or growth. Only pulled back by his father. Pushed forward by his mother, a counter-push back.

SECTION TWO A FRED Mother

Body

All sorts of thoughts went through my head

- the reaction to the impending disaster, to have a stream of thoughts.

In my heart I knew she was right

- here is where the truth lies, he had a deep contact with his mother and was aware of it; they dialogued not only cerebrally but bodily, too.

World

One day she called me into the room... the room of the flat. There was a bed, built-in wardrobe

- that was her place, her sanctuary, nearly her deathbed; asked to describe it he speaks in a mechanical way. The feeling is that he has already mechanized himself to avoid the pain of her demise.

Then there was a vase of flowers on the dressing table, carnations

- the only living thing (apart from mother) sticks out; a place of lived investment in the room
- here lies his heart, the carnations are his heart.

Red, because I sent them to her. There was a mat on the floor, a wall-to-wall carpet, actually

- because he sent them to her. His feelings of love/anger. He then continues to describe the rest of the room mechanically, already detaching himself from the emotional significance of the flowers. Even elaborates - perhaps a slight wish to impress the interviewer.

Fellowman

When my mom was sick I used to rub her feet for her

- to comfort her he rubbed her feet, touching at her physical extremity and gently massaging. As if to say, this is the extent to which we will allow ourselves to comfort you (mom) physically. Here is our limit, no matter what the ailment. Is there an erotic hint here? Maybe. She makes herself emotionally accessible to him at her extremities. Maybe a woman who couldn't allow herself much emotional latitude. How much affection could she, therefore, give Fred who at 37 years old rubbed her feet for her?

One day she called me into the room and said, "My boy, just come and rub my feet for me please, they're very sore again."

- the impression is that is where she permitted herself to feel anything, including pain.

- so, in the end at least, his job was to be her emotional balm.

- just come, a subtle command, that's all I'm asking of you - subtle use of guilt - help to sooth your ailing mom. The impression exists of entering her lair (web?).

- he's called into the room and closes the door when he walked in - bit of sensual intimacy. He is very much under her power and it's a sensual power.

I went into the room and she lay there and she looked very pale

- her blood has vacated her face to be used elsewhere, he knows that she is in danger and prepares for a disaster. On entering the room he is already in dialogue with her - he is attuned to his mother's well-being.

... and she said to me, "I'm going into hospital and I'm not coming out again."

- that's straight talk. A brave admission, an attitude of acceptance or resignation of her impending death.

I said, "No don't be silly mom, you're coming out of hospital, I know."

He wants to deny her death and departure as much to protect herself and protect himself. He conceals her intuition from her and from himself.

But she knew she was going to pass away

- out of his grasp. She seems, here, in touch with herself.

He is expressing a deep need for her. The implication is that he never found those needs met in other women before that (or, one imagines, since then). She must have been one of the central pillars of his existence.

She really looked bad. In my heart I knew she was right, that she wasn't going to come home but I wouldn't accept it - it was not acceptable to him to have the dialogue with her as living terminated. He couldn't accept her as she was at that time ie. dying (who could, really?) Still, there must be guilt in denying her her beingness, her most powerful possibility now, even if it is death. But, he's saying that he could not accept what his heart knew to be right. So there was a significant part of himself, of his awareness, which his thoughts overrode, vetoed. And in doing so, the connection between his mom and himself is severed. And he is also in a divided state, living cerebrally.

When I walked in I closed the door

He confines their presence to the room. A greater intimacy occurs and is constructed by him. He is claiming her for himself. And then she asks him to rub her feet.

In their intimacy she informs him of her impending death - a brave and generous gesture - but it ruined the intimacy.

He withdraws into his head. Does this imply that intimacy with other women will have the same effect?

She was very drawn, she had a lot of pain

- strangely, this is how he comes across in the flesh. One must risk saying that he felt this too, still does. If so, the mother/son divisions are low; much of him must've flowed to her and her to him. The threat of incest and the attendant anxiety may be higher than the norm.

Time and History

The impression is that time is frozen. There is a quality of rigidity, out of touchness with things and attunement to the panic and pain of mother's death - he is locked into not accepting her death, or her, or himself.

"I'm going into hospital and I'm not coming out again."

- This is where he is stuck. In the utter presentness of that time. Next week she may be dead.

What's going to happen when the family breaks up now, sort of thing?

- This to him is the moment of the family's break-up - with the passing away of his mother so is the whole family collapsing.

When my mother died? I was about... thirty-seven, thirty-eight

- the quality is very factual. He has moved back into his head again; the death was not lived through - his mother has not died for him, she is still on the verge of dying and he is frozen in that time.

She was in her fifties. Fifty-six, I'm not sure.

A young age - but she was a young mother to him (+ 20 years).

Are people generally unsure of the death of loved ones' age?

Has Fred avoided the painful detail or is it a coincidence?

In the afternoon. The end of the day.

In his relation to words, words being the house of existence, it is no coincidence that he elaborates the afternoon as "the end of the day". When light turns to dark, when mother is gone and one is left alone in the darkness. That is the brink of where he was when it all happened, when he chose to stick by not confronting her death. Movement is stopped, an obliteration or denial of life since it is so painful. An acceptance of one's own death since the death of the other is too hard to bear. Especially at the end of the day.

SECTION TWO B

Father

Body

Any my cousin and myself were having a pillow fight there

- a means of contact, gregarious but safe.
- limited contact but strong implications, bodies don't necessarily touch but contact is made through hard blows.

Making a racket as youngsters do

- together they were being what youngsters are, funloving, noisy.

So we kept quiet for a while and afterwards we started up a racket again

His father diminished his teenage pranks temporarily - then

they made a noise again. It is possibly an aggressive act against the father, since he knew prior to being warned that his father would want to sleep then. A means of attracting father's attention?

He came at me with that

Immediately the sense is of withdrawing in anticipation of the blow - the dialogue is fully with weapon, father and body.

He promptly beat me up with it

- Physical contact again, of the harshest kind.

Not even at a distance, the other end of a rod. Is there a strange sense of acceptance here, even the merest hint of pleasure? In a sense he was submissively yielding to it.

And I was fending off with my arm and my arm was all swollen up

- he tried to protect the rest of his body with his upper limb. And in its pain and vulnerability rose up to meet the threatening rod.

My dad was standing next to me and I was too scared to tell her

- in the presence of his father he felt restricted to tell her how his father had perpetrated violence upon his body. So, when father is next to him, he is fearful of speaking to his mother. So, when he is in dialogue with the masculine

identified, father in him, does that mean what is maternal to him is denied?

She saw me touching my arm...

- This was his way of notifying her. Either consciously or not, his body precedes him and speaks the truth. Truly his relationship with his mother was close enough then to elicit that reaction from him in a prereflective way.

... long balcony - I used to sleep out there

- out of the flat, no place for him? An outsider. One has impression of short-tempered man in room with woman one is close to. Feeling is to protect the woman. Yet strange fascination and desire to be close to that man, to be like him is to be close to her. To be close to him is to be like him, to be like him is to be close to her.

Yah, it's often come up in my mind

- coming up to his awareness, often. So in his being this is a phenomenon which reoccurs - he is still in those situations.

Yah, it still stays with me

And he stays with them, both are stories of pain. Him moving towards his mother and, despite himself, being attracted by his father.

World

This also happened in the flat, a different flat

- what happens of significance was in the places where they lived, their homes. Perhaps the home takes on the sadness and anger mentioned so far.

He slept in the lounge on one of those beds that you pull out

- factual. Either mentioned to inform the interviewer of the conditions in which they lived ie. not very well off. Or to say that his cousin and himself slept apart. Or just insignificant emotional padding - which means why is padding necessary? It may be necessary when emotionally laden experiences need to be contained.

Next minute he came storming in and had one of those fishing rod stands that you stick into the ground that you lay your rod in

- his use of "you" refers to an anonymous anyone. A device which keeps the rod up in order to catch something, a passive instrument. Now a potential weapon in the hands of his father.

It's a steel rod, quarter inch

Factual, detail. He has hardened in speaking, in and as his relationship to the steel rod. So already he has cut off his feelings, he has prepared himself for the assault. He

could not bring himself to the possibility of anger to his father. Why? Would being angry with father mean to lose him? (especially when mother is in hospital). It's like he became passive, stolid, accepting of that beating. The distance between them is so much, would being angry with him lead to that affection for him which would be too difficult for him to handle? Would it show that the father cared very little for him? Or is he scared that the rage of hurting his father may incur his mother's wrath?

It was a single bedroom flat, it had a big double bedroom, long balcony - I used to sleep out there

- factual and impersonal. Trying to locate his place in the flat, in relation to the others (his parents). It must be difficult to locate your place in an impersonal situation. He used to sleep "out there", banished from the inside. Impression of being an imposition on his parents.

We had pictures hanging around the wall and in the one corner there was a dining-room suite, 6 chairs, there was a carpet on the floor, it wasn't wall-to-wall; in front of the window there was a studio couch which converted into a double bed.

I think that's about all. Oh, there was a heater on one side He collectively owns the pictures on the wall, they're quite friendly, almost intimate. Things you look at. But the more functional things are pointed at - "there was" - These were things we were supposed to have used together - and

herein lies his alienation from those things families use together. In the pictures we see himself and his family somewhat together, hanging around the wall, keeping together. Or up in the air like the reflection or creation or improvement of reality a picture could be. Built-in heater, a last minute mention that there was some warmth in the flat.

Fellowman

I was in my teens then, my mother had gone into hospital and while she was in hospital my cousin came to visit me
Someone left, someone arrived.

My father was in the room
Flat, factual, impersonal.

He used to work over weekends
Flat, factual, impersonal. No words to describe him, no adjectives. Distant like a stranger.

My father shouted, "Please shut up, I want to sleep."
He raises his voice in anger and says "please"? Anyway, he attempts to quell the boyhood nature of the two teenagers. Is Fred trying to show by using the word "please" that his father was justified in his actions?

He came at me with that, he promptly beat me up with it
Who is father becomes the steel-rod, hard and threatening.
Fred's experience is focussed entirely on his father coming
at him as the rod. Fred, existing in and as his relationship
to it, becomes the rod, too. Hard and unyielding. Here him
and his father join in a common task. It is very dehumanizing.
If contact with the rod were to draw them closer together, say
when fishing, their closeness may be intimate and wholesome.
Now, drawn together in violence, the impression is of an
extreme closeness devoid of human contact, with no possibilities
of human existence present other than to live that moment
as a carcass. This is how I must be when I'm close to
father. More frightening is the suspicion that Fred invited
this attack from his father. There is a strange smugness
about the result.

Well that night we went to hospital and he said I mustn't
show my mom

Wants the violence done to his son hidden from his wife.
Do not reveal yourself to your mother; this venture which
is between us, ours, must not be shared with this woman
common to us.

My mom could see there was something wrong and said, "What's
wrong my boy?" My dad was standing next to me and I was too
scared to tell her

The mother's contact with the son was close and intimate, she

immediately sensed his discomfort. She claims him as her own, one can almost feel Fred's desire to be held by her in his pain. But he cannot come to that in the presence of his father, he cannot come to reveal anything of himself, out of fear.

She saw me touching my arm and said, "What's wrong with your arm?" and I said, "Nothing, Ma".

"Let me have a look" and she pulled up my shirt and saw it...
 He bodily sallies forth to her. She notices and inquires. She is soft and concerned. She exposes his wounded area and sees the disembodied it, he has called his arm "it" and removed it from himself, it is an area of pain which he wishes not to know about. In itself, the arm is borne out of dehumanization. Perhaps by showing it to the mother he can allow himself to feel and to own himself once again - it is unlikely in the presence of his father, though.

I don't know. I don't know in what way it could affect me actually

He objectifies the stories ("it" instead of "they"). Any bit of life in the stories is now extinguished, presumably because he knows he is coming to the end of the interview.

Time and History

There is no impression of past or future in this story. If

anything it gives the impression of a family which never felt like a family unit and he was isolated from it, or in it. His present is still that muddled past, his future is inaccessible.

It was half-past seven in the morning, Saturday morning

Even in his relation to time he is distant and anonymous. Perhaps he cared not to have an identity, no identity, no pain.

He used to work over the weekends

Over that period of time, when fathers and families get together, his father worked. Maybe the noise was to keep him in, get his attention since soon he'd be gone. Time with father is distance, closeness means pain and dehumanization; feelings are cut off.

Yah, it's often come up in my mind. Yah, it still stays with me

There he still is. Perhaps it's more pertinent to say, "I still stay with it." No past, no future. The only route to the future is to confront the pain of the present and past especially.

SECTION 3A CHARLES Mother

Body

Well I can remember the last hiding I got was through my mother

Last time he was physically struck was on account of his mother. He blames her.

... she wants to give me a bang and I stopped it with my arm and she hit her arm on my arm

Bodily contact between them is in the form of aggression, on her part. He defends himself; he recounts this as amusing. Anger towards her, somewhere.

She broke her arm and she called my dad and he took me to the cellar there and he gave me a hell of a hiding

He sounds like a victim, like a person without an ally in life. He could not appeal to his father in that instance for protection against the mother. Dad takes him to a deep, dark place to execute the punishment.

Well I was quite surprised (when hit) because she got so annoyed because I explained to her properly that it was impossible for one person to do the job

He only felt surprise when hit. He denies pain. If the blow broke her arm it must have been of considerable force.

Has he therefore cut himself off from his feelings, a sort of body-armour? Contained in his surprise is a feeling of being misunderstood, as if that took precedence over the physical blow.

World

She had a lot of young chickens on the farm and in the evenings we used to take these chickens and put them in a big box for warmth during the night

- this was her project. He helped her with it. It seems important to her.

There were over 500 of them and she came and called me, I was in Std. 9 at that stage, she called me and said I must go to the place where she kept the chickens and put the chickens in the box

He's very repetitive, doesn't use pronouns, sticks to nouns. Concrete thinking, yet fuzzy. Is his world like that? So much to handle that I must try keep it under control by concretizing it. Quite verbose, finds it difficult to be concise or to end, to say what he really wants to say.

And I refused because the chickens, as soon as you put them in they jump out, you know, when you catch the other one

- this was a task he refused since it was asking too much of him. She is asking him to transcend his finite (ie.

bodily) limitations in the world.

It was in the passage in the house, and I remember it was the doorway, the doorway of her bedroom was just opposite the place where she hit me

The passage is the common area of interconnectedness in the house, taking and connecting the living spaces of the various family members, together. It was opposite the doorway (he emphasizes this) where he got struck by her. Opposite the entrance to her bedroom a misunderstanding occurs. Almost as if she is defending her privacy. A subtle sexuality may occur here.

Yes, there's a rack on the one side where we used to hang our coats. On the left hand side there's a hat rack and there's a big picture in the front at the entrance to the dining room, a landscape picture

Lots of detail which bespeaks of intimacy yet is bare, no description offered. It seems he was never really involved in the family. The picture is a minor concession to detail, he still does not reveal himself.

Light brown (emphatic). Yah, that's right. I can still remember it was painted that at that stage. I was in Std. 9, that's thirteen years ago

The memory seems closer to him now, he's warmed to the image. The significance of that colour for him has not as of yet emerged.

Fellowman

So you couldn't do it all by yourself (chuckles)

- he cannot own the inability to do something by himself. Yet he admits it to his mother. Does he change emphasis when it suits him? To his mother he is categorical, to the interviewer it is more in the nature of a disclaimer, perhaps trying to present himself in a less negative light ie. I'm a person who can do things right.
- his laughter; he finds humour in the situation, which may be valid. It is also a means of transcending a situation in which he feels misunderstood, taken for granted, a little hurt, a little abused.

Then she realized that she was wrong and she came and she apologized

After the hiding dad gave him. So once dad punishes him her rationality comes back, or her guilt, to replace her anger and need for vengeance; a duty which father duly performs in a place which has a ritualistic aura for him. So her pattern in dealing with difficulties in life, when crossed, is to move to anger first and this is then replaced by guilt and maybe more tender feelings. Does this imply that in order to break through to mother Charles has to annoy her first, to resist her, or cross her?

And then when she apologizes:

Well, I felt good. And even my dad came and apologized as well because he gave me a hiding

He feels good. She is an inconsistent mother who cannot express her feelings fluently. Anger is expressed irrationally - she must be frustrated in some ways since she overreacts. But she only comes to the other side of her feelings later, when the damage is done. He must feel insecure, buffeted about in a storm he has to endure to receive some form of affection or reassurance.

It appears that the parents vent their frustrations on him and he has learned how to turn this (very destructively) to his advantage.

Well I was quite surprised because she got so annoyed because I explained to her properly that it was impossible for one person to do the job

She's taking some frustrations out on him, or reacting to a provocative manner of his. One senses she feels abused as a person. She is like a small child who doesn't want her son to see her vulnerabilities and who does want him to see. She'd like him to protect her in some way. What are the emotional tugs he feels? He is attracted and pushed away at the same time - built up and broken down, given responsibility and had it taken away.

I can still recall I told her to call my sister to come and help me

So in the passageway opposite the doorway to her bedroom she makes a seemingly simple but unreasonable request. He refuses and she irrationally erupts, even (or especially?)

after he suggests she call his sister to help him. It's as if that's not what she meant to ask him - and the suggestion of the sister helping puts fuel on the fire. She wants the son to help her (to love her) and not to let the sister interrupt in that task. A misunderstood woman.

Time and History

The sense is mostly of vacillation. He seems attracted and repelled by the future in the same way he is toward (or by) his mother. The same applies to the past. He exists in an uneasy present. Future possibilities of existence seem to loom up but if he goes for them they get taken away; his dialogue with time is the same as with his mother. For him to take a step forward is to take a step backward, being tugged back in time and experience by his mother. He is walking a never ending conveyor belt, getting nowhere.

It was midday. No, it was dawn .

A mistake. Were things so clear as if in the middle of the day then?

Charles was supposed to move the chickens at dusk. Dawn is daybreak, the first light of day. Was this his first dawning of his relationship, as he experienced it, of his mom which remained with him for a long time to come?

SECTION 3B

Father

Body

I was going the one way and he came the opposite way and he wasn't very satisfied with something I was doing, I can't remember what it was

- They were moving past each other antagonistically to plough the land.

I was laughing. The more I was laughing the more he got annoyed with me

The laughter was of a scornful nature and contained more anger than humour, it is passive-aggressive in tone; it sounds almost calculated to anger the father. It's self-conscious laughter, not from the depth of one's being.

It didn't feel so good because they (the labourers) were laughing at us, you know

He felt bad in that the absurdity of the situation was noted by their employees and put him in an uncomfortable position. A strong self-conscious nature is present. Very aware of how others perceive him.

It was very hot, I remember I was ploughing without a shirt on
Working in a casual unencumbered manner.

Fellowman

Well we were both ploughing in the lands one day, both on tractors

- doing a task together, helping father out. This sentence like all the others, expresses a disconnectedness in its tone which typifies this experience. He is really very far from his father and from himself. There are so many words and so little feeling.

I was going the one way and he came the opposite way and he wasn't very satisfied with something I was doing, I can't remember what it was

- he notes a dissatisfaction in his father concerning his own work. He can't remember what it was, he is not open to the details of his reproach, cannot admit faults in himself, too painful. He wasn't very satisfied

- now that's a distortion implying he was marginally satisfied. No, the event shows that the father was not at all satisfied with his behaviour. 'He is not open to the possibilities of his father's anger to him and perhaps his father's rejection of him. He turns it into a joke. This is a way of clinging to father, too. To elicit anger from the father also shows that father cares for him. But it is anger which he must control otherwise it will get too scary for him.

And he got so annoyed he jumped off the tractor and he was looking for some stones, he was throwing it after me

His father literally moved to anger. It appears as a reaction to Charles' behaviour and attitude more than to his poor job performance. Unless it was an overreaction - perhaps even both. To stone a son is heavy, almost a Biblical way of sinning. The father has much anger toward the son which he cannot seem to express appropriately and Charles seems to draw his father to this anger.

... and all the boys stopped their tractors watching the episode going on between myself and my dad

- their interaction brought the unwelcome attention of the labourers. He regards them as boys, not as men. By convention at least, but they make quite an impression on him to sour the event which he claims to be enjoying. To an extent he starts to see himself through their eyes and finds what he sees not as humorous as before. He cannot escape the event through his laughter any longer. In his dialogue with the labourers what he is unaware of comes to his awareness - that in this situation he does not feel good.

He looked very funny. Bending down every time and picking up a stone and throwing it and shouting around with his arms and shouting at me

His appearance on the surface was funny. But he was not funny. He is open to the humour in the situation but is

not open to the tragedy of it, nor to the anger and bitterness of the encounter. His father is frustrated, perhaps even hates him.

I was 27. He was sixty-one then

A fair age difference. There is still an adolescent feel about him at that age.

World

It was one of the biggest lands on the farm we were ploughing at that stage. And it was five tractors in that field...

- no description offered, except to mention the size. No qualitative dialogue with the land is offered here.

Well it's next to a river... and the land is between the farmhouse and the river. You couldn't see the place where it was happening from the farmhouse. That's about all

He is disconnected from the land. His heart is not into it. He offers the geographic location, not a description of the land. It is related to the situation and his dialogue with world is as such ie. the most meaningful relation with the land for him then was that it was that place where the incident occurred, which couldn't be seen from the farmhouse. A great disconnectedness from the house and family, the farm and land, father and labourers, and himself.

I can remember we had maize on the land before we ploughed and it was light brown - a sort of creamy colour after you've combined the maize. You know you get those creamy colours on the land

What stands out is a quite neutral shade, associated with crops. There is a feeling of stuckness here as if the words come nowhere near pointing to the actuality of Charles' existence.

Time and History

There is a timeless frustration about this whole incident. As if something appeared to happen but nothing really did. There is that feeling of the two of them being stuck in a repetitive way of being with each other which has the impression of being stuck in time for many a year. That at 27 an incident like this should occur bespeaks of a person who never grew up and who doesn't want to. Time is stuck, the future is inaccessible, the past muddled. His words have no weight or import. His intentionality is focussed on himself, he is narcissistic to the extreme, as such he is focussed on nothing, lives in a void - if he is the light of existence illuminating the world it is only in an infantile manner of primitive intentionality towards his parents that he is open.

