CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF A HOME:

A STUDY OF THEMES

IN

THE WORK OF DAVID STOREY

Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

of Rhodes University

by

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December 1983

To My Husband

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Professor D.C. Bunyan of the University of Fort Hare for his initial guidance.

Thereafter, Mr R.H. Hall, Senior Lecturer in the English Department at Rhodes University, took over supervision. He has shown much care and patience and given sound advice. For all this I am deeply grateful.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Miss S.J. Arnot of the Rhodes University Library for all her help, and to Mrs M.J. Robinson for typing the thesis.

NOTES ON PRESENTATION

Page references are to the first editions of David Storey's novels and plays. For convenience, and because they are more readily accessible, I have also given page references to such editions of the novels and collections of the plays as have been published by Penguin Books. Details of the first editions and the Penguin publications appear in a footnote accompanying the first reference to an individual work.

There are no references to the Samuel French editions of the plays because, as acting editions, they often omit some of the dialogue.

In the absence of any book-length studies of Storey's work, I have had to refer more than might appear usual to unpublished American dissertations, reviews, interviews and articles in periodicals.

I should like to draw attention to two items I have used extensively because they bear the same title. The BBC Home Service broadcast (and also published) a talk by Storey—"Journey Through a Tunnel". This also appeared in *The Listener*. Laura Weaver used the phrase as the title of her dissertation on Storey. When quoting from, or referring to, these sources, I have taken care (in the text or in footnotes) to distinguish between them. Publication details appear in a footnote accompanying the first reference to each item and again in the Bibliography.

The bibliographical information contained in the footnotes has been shortened; all subtitles and fuller details appear in the Bibliography. Given the vagaries of periodical publication, and the varying methods of inter-library photocopying services, I have, where absolutely necessary, sacrificed strict uniformity of citation for the

sake of full and unambiguous information.

In footnotes, for the sake of convenience, all long titles have been shortened after the initial mention of the work concerned. Where an interview has a title, it has been retained, otherwise reference is given to the interviewer. For reviews the same approach has been followed save that the work reviewed is also mentioned.

All references to *The Times* are to *The Times* of London. All other newspaper citations indicate the place of publication.

For the sake of uniformity I have made certain alterations. Where an article cites a book title in quotation marks I have italicised it to conform to my thesis style. I have omitted the stop after "Mr" or "Mrs" instead of following the differing methods in various works. In the titles of some journal articles I have changed lower-case letters to capitals and altered roman numerals to arabic. But I have not changed American spelling, the use of "s" and "z", or put into words any numbers given in numerals in the original source.

In other matters of punctuation I have, where possible, simplified to avoid the awkwardness of double sets of quotation marks. I have used two methods of presenting ellipsis dots. Those separated by a space from the words on either side are Storey's; those that leave no space are my own.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Anyone familiar with David Storey's work will find, on reading a brief outline of his life, that much of the inspiration for his novels and plays springs from personal experience. The third son of a coal-miner, he was born in Wakefield on 13 July 1933. He is one of three surviving sons, an older brother having died in childhood. (In *Saville* and *In Celebration* the death as a child of a mining family's eldest son has a powerful effect on the parents and some of the remaining brothers.)

Although his father wanted his children to reach the middle class through education, Storey has indicated that this ambition was not pursued wholeheartedly:

> A professional man, that's what he wanted me to be, perhaps a teacher. And so I went to school. But I was confused as to what he did want. There was this chap down the street who *was* becoming middle class, had an office job, a bowler and a little motor, the symbol of middle class. And yet, every time my father saw that man get in his car and drive past, he would emit the most violent sounds of rage and derision. I felt my father was educating me for a part of society he really despised.[1]

Many fathers in Storey's work show a similar ambivalence towards their better-educated sons, as will be seen in some of the chapters that follow.

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[1] Robert Wahls, "The Broadway Jocks", *New York Daily News*, 18 March 1973, p.1; quoted by Laura Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1977), p.28.

His father's attitude was overshadowed by a far greater problem, however. Storey became deeply distressed by a division he felt within himself and saw in the outside world: a dichotomy he incorporates repeatedly in his writing.

> From one window, over the roofs of the other houses, I could see the chimneys of two collieries, a mill and a brickworks: from another I could see the lower, wooded slopes of the Pennines stretching towards Huddersfield. There seemed to be a split here between the intentions of nature and those of man....As I grew up I felt this division to be reflected very much in my own nature. I felt the need to be with other people, yet I was never happier than when I was on my own. Over the years this division widened: there was the school, my friends, football; and there were the woods, solitariness and art. In fact I soon found that I was most at ease and contented when I was painting pictures and writing poems.[1]

Storey's preference for solitary pursuits brought him into sharp conflict with the community in which he lived. He has said of the West Riding, "It is an intensely and even obsessively puritan region. It carries with it that profound and ironical puritan distrust of the isolated and solitary man: it believes not in the separation of the individual but in his absorption within society". Anyone who pursues intellectual or artistic activities is "viewed not merely with suspicion but with condemnation".[2]

Aware that "all the pleasures, desires and ambitions which were socially acceptable were purely physical", Storey tried to conform to his community's expectations. He "started playing football entirely from a sense of guilt, as a sort of act of atonement".[3] Yet he felt

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[1] David Storey, Introduction to *This Sporting Life* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1968), pp.vii-viii.

[2] David Storey, "Journey Through a Tunnel", *Listener* 70 (August 1963), p.160.

[3] "Speaking of Writing—II", *The Times*, 28 November 1963, p.15.

condemned "to be continually torn between the two extremes of my experience, the physical and the spiritual, with the demand to be effective in both". Signing a fourteen-year contract with the Leeds Rugby League Club, in an attempt to prove his physical prowess, did little to resolve his conflict. As he says, "I went on painting pictures, I went on playing football, but with increasing despair, obsessed with guilt at the one thing and by the futility of the other". His guilt was exacerbated by his father returning "each day from the pit exhausted, shattered by fatigue",[1] while he, physically more able, painted pictures or wrote poetry. These experiences of alienation from family and society are clearly the basis of those that appear repeatedly in Storey's novels and plays and which will be discussed in ensuing chapters.

In this state of apparent impasse, Storey started writing novels in which he could "invent lives which in some way were more satisfying and meaningful"[2] than his own. But these early, unpublished novels did not prevent his turmoil from reaching an intolerable level. At this critical moment, he won a scholarship to the Slade School of Fine Art in London. Now free to express himself during the week, he was still bound by his contract with the Leeds club. Every week-end during the rugby season, he travelled for four hours from London to Leeds by train. After the match, utterly exhausted, beaten and bruised, he returned to the reassurance of London. These repeated journeys came to represent, in geographical terms, the irreconcilable division that he felt within him. While travelling on the train he made notes about

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[1] Storey, "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.160.

[2] Storey, Introduction to *This Sporting Life*, p.ix.

the antithetical aspects of his personality—"a self-absorbed intuitive kind of creature" and "a hard, physical, extroverted character"[1]—hoping to gain greater understanding of himself in this way. From these notes *This Sporting Life* finally emerged.

These personal details strongly suggest that Storey's work is disguised autobiography. So do other facts such as his holiday work as a schoolboy with a tent construction firm and his career as a schoolmaster. Tent-erecting is central to *The Contractor* and episodic in *Radcliffe*. Teachers appear in many of Storey's texts—all as reluctantly involved in the profession as their creator was.[2] Storey strengthens the idea of autobiographical influences on his work by revealing that he started writing "to exorcise the very feeling of alienation",[3] and that he "conceived a sequence of four novels which would constitute a sort of campaign for reintegrating myself".[4] This suggests that in his apparent obsession with a small range of similar characters and repeated situations, a psychotherapeutic need may have fuelled his creativity.

All this appears to be in direct conflict with Storey's stated preference for detachment: a preference that led him to prize the objectivity he feels is characteristic of Wyndham Lewis.[5] Still, he best indicates the relationship between his life and work when he

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[1] Storey, "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.160.

[2] Nicholas de Jongh refers to Storey's desire to "escape teaching" ("Storey's Line", *Guardian* (Manchester), 8 October 1970, p.10). Martha Duffy notes that the few years he spent teaching were "every bit as wretched as he had anticipated" ("An Ethic of Work and Play", *Sports Illustrated* 38 (March 1973), p.68).

[3] "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.160.

[4] "Speaking of Writing", p.15.

[5] Ibid.

says, "It's imagined experience based on general knowledge acquired from things I've seen—and lived through".[1] He seems eager to show that his work can be understood without referring to details of his personal life.[2] He has said that he wishes "to create something like a piece of sculpture—when you look at a piece of sculpture, you don't need to know about the artist's life".[3] He has also explained how his novels and plays diverge from the facts of his life:

> If you write too close, it's only interesting to yourself—and I don't think my life has been sufficiently interesting. You've got to externalize and transpose experience so that it's more universally recognizable. Art is a liberating experience—from yourself. You make it accessible to other people through a sort of fictionalized commonality.[4]

In this matter Storey's attitude resembles David Lodge's. Lodge concludes that "personal experience must be explored and transmuted until it acquires an authenticity and persuasiveness independent of its actual origins".[5] Like many authors, Storey writes about those aspects of life he knows best through personal involvement. At the same time, because many features in his work come from a common source, he continually appears to be reworking certain areas.

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[1] Mel Gussow, "To David Storey, a Play Is a 'Holiday'", *New York Times*, 20 April 1973, p.14.

[2] This approach is strongly supported by John Russell Taylor (*David Storey* (Harlow, Essex: Longman Group, 1974), p.4), myself and others.

[3] Howard Kissel, "Striking an Observant Pose on the British Experience", *Women's Wear Daily*, 12 October 1976, p.24; quoted by Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.340.

[4] Mel Gussow, "Talk with David Storey, Playwright and Novelist", *New York Times Book Review*, 28 August 1977, p.30.

[5] *The Novelist at the Crossroads* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p.32.

This characteristic reuse of themes, characters, and situations has been remarked on by most critics,[1] and anyone reading several of his works cannot fail to become aware of it. At times not only characters, but entire families bear remarkable resemblances to one another. Storey also shows a fondness for certain images. In many of his novels one character finds it difficult to judge another's reactions because light glinting off the other's spectacles veils any expression. Or characters may conceal their faces by pulling their hats down low over their eyes. Much of his work reveals that he has a highly developed visual imagination. He has said of writing his plays:

> ...my strongest feeling was a visual one. I always saw them framed like a painting, and the surface of the painting was to be kept continually mobile, both across and in-and-out: two-dimensional, a very plastic feeling. I find the proscenium arch very seductive, it is like a picture frame.[2]

Images in his novels often reflect his training as a visual artist. (In *Radcliffe* and *A Temporary Life*, he likens furniture and buildings to boulders and rocks: comparisons likely to occur to someone who often thinks in terms of plasticity.) Storey also uses dialogue which echoes that found elsewhere. (Both Mr Shaw of *In Celebration* and Colin's father in *Pasmore* suggest that if cut they will bleed coal-dust.)

If we remember that the repetitive quality of Storey's writing arises partly from his attempt to reintegrate the opposing characteristics

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[1] Janelle Reinelt, for example, feels "it is possible to construct a basic narrative sequence which applies to *all* of Storey's novels and, with slight modification, to most of his plays" ("The Novels and Plays of David Storey" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1978), p.37). And John Nicholson refers to Storey as a writer "whose novels tend to follow a formula" (Review of *A Prodigal Child*, *The Times*, 1 July 1982, p.15).

[2] Interview with John Haffenden in *Literary Review*, No.54 (1982), p.23.

of his personality, then his reworking of certain areas is hardly surprising. He has described *This Sporting Life*, *Flight into Camden* and *Radcliffe* as "little bits" broken off from the "Great Novel" he wanted to write about the "Battle between the inner life and the capacity to live in the world".[1] He views *Pasmore* and *A Temporary Life* as emanating from a central, as yet unpublished source.[2] His plays also "stem from that—little shoots off the side".[3]

It would nevertheless be a serious mistake to equate with an impoverished imagination Storey's constant return to a confined range. A worthwhile theme may be tackled repeatedly. As Anthony Burgess suggests, "A painter may paint nothing except apples, but there are innumerable facets of apples to be treated artistically, even though the apple remains only an apple".[4] Storey—perhaps quite independently of Burgess—has defended his variations on a theme: "Cézanne could paint the same pair of apples in 25 pictures, as long as each picture was different, and the work always improved. I'm not afraid to transfer the same principle to literature".[5]

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[1] Michael Billington, "Making Life Work on Two Levels", *The Times*, 4 April 1970, p.21.

[2] John Higgins, "Night and Day", *The Times*, 16 September 1976, p.13.

[3] Ronald Hayman, *Playback* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1973), p.17.

[4] *The Novel Now* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), p.209.

[5] "World Without End", *Sunday Times* (London), 26 September 1976, p.32. Cézanne and his apples are also referred to by Helen Dawson in her review of *The Farm* (*Plays and Players* 21 (November 1973), p.43).

Whether Storey improves each reworking of a particular theme is open to debate;[1] but what he has succeeded in doing is exploring the variety of possibilities that exist in any given situation. Hence the repeated presentation of family conflict, of unhappy relationships between essentially isolated characters, of the inability to cast off one's roots, of working-class life and its hardships, and so on: all this is no mere recreation of one pale imitation after another. To adapt Storey's analogy of a piece of sculpture: in much the same way as we view a statue from a particular side and cannot see the whole without moving, so Storey, as he moves from text to text, reveals different aspects of his central concerns. And as any given view of a statue is complete, so, too, is each of Storey's texts. But the advantage gained by someone familiar with several of Storey's novels and plays is that of the observer who walks around the statue: a greater understanding of the whole. This analogy is, of course, only partially valid since in particular texts Storey focuses our attention on certain features that appear less prominently in others.[2] The ensuing discussion of his works will consider how he highlights different facets of the same subject matter.

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[1] For example, W. Stephen Gilbert suggests that Storey should say "a farewell to farms, tents, rugby players and teachers" because he "is in real danger of going round in diminishing circles" (Review of *Life Class*, *Plays and Players* 21 (May 1974), p.27). Michael Ratcliffe noted that after the "liberating simplicity" of *Pasmore*, it seemed as if Storey's "obsessional themes of family, fratricide and flight were driving him into smaller and ever decreasing circles of the imagination". But Ratcliffe feels the situation was remedied by the appearance of *Saville* ("The Novelist as Lowry", *The Times*, 27 September 1976, p.11).

[2] Several critics have observed this, among them Albert Kalson ("Insanity and the Rational Man in the Plays of David Storey", *Modern Drama* 19 (June 1976), p.113).

The other main feature of Storey's observations about his writing—the conflict of physical and spiritual which has already been outlined—is also of value in interpreting his plays and fiction. This dualistic vision that motivated him should not be overlooked, and it is not surprising to find it forming the basis for much of the presently available criticism.[1] But there are several drawbacks to taking this as the definitive approach. There is the danger of forcing the texts to conform to Storey's professed ideas.[2] Such a practice leads to a restricted view of his work (as he himself suggests).[3] Although his early novels were attempts to solve his own dilemma, he confesses that he is often unsure of exactly what his work conveys. Aware that too much conscious manipulation of ideas by a writer can have a negative effect,[4] he offers an interesting criterion for judging the success of his work:

> It seems to me that if, on reading something through, I know completely what it is about, then it is dead....it lives for me almost in the measure that it escapes and refuses definition....
> It is for this reason that I find *The Contractor*

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[1] Several unpublished dissertations are concerned with this aspect of Storey's work: Jeanne Froeb, "The Fiction of David Storey, John Fowles and Iris Murdoch" (University of Tulsa, 1977); Judith Harris, "An Unholy Encounter" (Ohio State University, 1974); and Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel". There are also references, among others, to it in John Stinson, "Dualism and Paradox in the 'Puritan' Plays of David Storey", *Modern Drama* 20 (June 1977), p.132; and in Taylor, *David Storey*, pp.6,18-19.

[2] Susan Clark falls into this trap at times ("David Storey" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1976), p.78).

[3] For example, although Laura Weaver's analysis of *This Sporting Life* is excellent, she is compelled to focus on Arthur Machin because she is tracing the divided-self theme. The novel's complexity seems partly overlooked as a result.

[4] Interview with Brendan Hennessy in *Transatlantic Review* 33/34 (Winter 1969-70), p.6.

> one of the most satisfying things I've written.
> Each time I see it in a different light.[1]

He now condemns *Radcliffe* and, to a certain extent, *Cromwell*, for being too explicit. But apart from being seen as manifestations of his own spiritual conflict, Storey's characters have something else in common: a more generally embracing factor that is also alluded to in his autobiographical comments, and may serve as a basis for interpretation of a wider kind.

A compelling aspect of Storey's work is that almost all of his characters are alienated in one way or another. Estranged from, and often in conflict with, their parents, their marital partners, their children, their occupations and the community in general, they are misfits. But not all of them passively accept misery or inexplicable isolation; and many strive for an harmonious existence within themselves and in society.

One possible metaphor for this desired synthesis is "the search for a home"; the ramifications of this image in Storey's work will form a major part of the ensuing discussion. The implications of "home" are varied. It can mean warmth, love, happiness, food, shelter from the cares of the outside world. It can provide succour in a wider sense, giving us roots—a fundamental to cling to. Or it can be simply a place where we feel comfortable. The image also admits the idea of "accommodation", suggesting "adaptation" as well as the usual connotation of a dwelling. Some of Storey's characters come to realise that the ability to compromise (with its undertone of reconciliation) is an essential part of the wholeness they seek. The country of one's

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[1] John Russell Taylor, *The Second Wave* (London: Methuen & Co., 1971), p.145.

birth, mental hospitals, institutions such as orphanages, and even the successful or rewarding end to some activity—usually the aim of a sporting event or game—can be called "home".

> Home, for Storey, is where the heart of the matter is. His characters are always struggling to get in or out of it. Being locked out, in his fiction, is a frequent problem; finding that a partner has left home, the ultimate ordeal. Sometimes Storey juxtaposes the idea of going home with that of going into a Home, the domestic connotations of the former throwing into forlorn relief the bleak impersonality of the latter.[1]

By using such a universal image, he is able to present a multifaceted view of life, often gaining added dimensions through ironic reversal of predictable responses.

In tracing the need of Storey's characters to find a home, I decided to follow the chronology supplied by the publication of his novels. This approach provides a convenient structure, despite his habit of working simultaneously on several texts—sometimes leaving them to lie fallow for a while before returning to them. Each chapter examines various facets of his characters' search as it appears in the novels, and I have focused mainly on those plays that either best illustrate the theme under discussion or open up new areas. But this does not imply that these themes are missing from those plays I have not considered in detail. Chapter 2 will consider some ways in which the characters hope to solve their existential problems: by plunging into physical activity, by withdrawing into themselves, by trying to run away from their problems, or by living vicariously through others. (To lay the foundation for subsequent discussion, I spell out these themes at some length in a synoptic analysis of the first novel, *This Sporting Life*, then a little more selectively and comparatively in the

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[1] Peter Kemp, "The Homing High-Fliers", *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 July 1982, p.710.

case of *Flight into Camden*.) Most of these sought-after "remedies" are found in more extreme form in *Radcliffe*, and constitute the basis of the discussion in Chapter 3. Since this novel marks the end of a phase in Storey's writing, I use the opportunity to view the development of his ideas thus far. Chapter 4 mainly concerns those characters who have withdrawn into varying states of isolation, and insanity as a possible refuge is highlighted. In the next chapter the main concern is with how parental ambition destroys family relationships and alienates children from not only their mothers and fathers, but also their communities. The penultimate chapter will consider some of the ways in which Storey (with muted optimism) indicates that an harmonious existence can be experienced, albeit temporarily.

CHAPTER 2

THE SEARCH BEGINS

> I wanted a bit more than a wave. I wanted to have something there for good....
>
> Arthur Machin

> I had my head to Mellor's backside, waiting for the ball to come between his legs.
>
> He was too slow. I was moving away when the leather shot back into my hands and, before I could pass, a shoulder came up to my jaw. It rammed my teeth together with a force that stunned me to blackness.[1]

The explosive opening of *This Sporting Life* engages the reader at once, and plunges him into Arthur Machin's violent world of Rugby League football. Having rapidly described the stunning blow that breaks his front teeth, Arthur, as first-person narrator, gives a more leisurely account of the football match's final moments. The players return to the changing room, bath, change and joke with each other. By lingering over this scene, Arthur firmly places Rugby League football in the forefront of the novel.

The anaesthetic gas he receives when he visits the dentist makes plausible Storey's use of two lengthy flashbacks. They show why Arthur started playing this punishing game. Realising that successful Rugby League players earn more and become influential in their communities,

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[1] David Storey, *This Sporting Life* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1960), p.1; and Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1962), p.7. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (p.1/P.7).

he has decided to improve the depressing circumstances of his working-class life by turning professional. Because he is unknown at the club he wishes to join—the City Rugby League Club at Primstone—he is forced to ask a most unlikely character, Johnson, for help. Although he seems insignificant, Johnson manages, after a year's effort, to organise four trial games for Arthur. From Arthur's account of these games, several important concerns of the novel emerge.

During the trials his attitude towards football changes from one extreme to another. At first he feels insecure and so the players seem isolated, the game futile. Then he discovers that his size and strength allow him to dominate others. He revels in this new-found power and the crowd's sudden interest in him. So from the outset these games expose the positive and negative effects of playing football. When elated by their physical superiority and the crowd's approval, players overlook dismal playing conditions, their desperate fatigue, fears of injury and the spectre of waning prowess. Such invigorating experiences transform Arthur's view of the bleak environment into something "luminous, sparkling" (p.36/P.41)[1] and make him more determined to succeed. One incident especially displays his aggressive assertiveness: Arthur injures a team-mate because he suspects the player, by deliberately withholding the ball, is jeopardising his chance of selection.

Intuitively aware as he is that football is not a panacea for life's ills, Arthur's feelings about the game fluctuate. Besides, he realises

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[1] Several critics have noted how Storey uses description of the environment to reflect a character's inner state (Clark, "David Storey", pp.16-17; Stinson, "Dualism and Paradox", p.134 and footnote 8 on p.142; and Taylor, *David Storey*, p.27).

that Weaver and Slomer (who provide much of Primstone's financial backing) consider the players as mere pawns in their own power game. Noting that "They bought and sold players, built them up and dropped them, like a couple of kids with lead soldiers" (p.85/P.88), Arthur shows that their fickleness is dangerous. Yet he chooses either to ignore such insights, or to rationalise them as a necessary part of professional sport. Nothing diverts him from his chosen course.

Arthur's gas-induced recollection of these trial games might lead us to dismiss him as a rather brutal, ambitious character, singularly unconcerned about the feelings of others and foolishly stubborn in his determination to succeed at a game that has serious drawbacks. Influenced by Storey's description of him as "a physical dynamo" hurtling "down his crude path to destruction",[1] we may be tempted to stress only the negative aspects of Arthur's attitude.[2] Yet it is clear that Arthur fosters his aggression (to the detriment of his better nature)[3] because society and his adverse living conditions pressurise him. Apparently modifying his earlier, uncompromising opinion of Arthur, Storey himself suggests this.[4]

Arthur's steady job at Weaver's factory does not satisfy him, but merely adds to his uniformly drab existence. Moreover, Storey's

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[1] "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.160.

[2] Judith Harris follows this approach ("Unholy Encounter", pp.56-62).

[3] Several critics have discussed Arthur's redeeming qualities (Frank McGuiness, "The Novels of David Storey", *London Magazine* n.s. 3 (March 1964), p.80; J.M. Newton, "Two Men Who Matter?", *Cambridge Quarterly* 1 (Summer 1966), p.285; and Taylor, *David Storey*, p.7).

[4] Introduction to *This Sporting Life*, pp.ix-x.

descriptions emphasise the environment's depressing effect. The claustrophobic ugliness of industrial development surrounds the characters and the ubiquitous rows of terrace houses resemble "Little black hutches nailed together by those big pegs of chimney" (p.32/P.37). Such gloomy surroundings can be offset, even if only partly, by the security of a happy home: something else Arthur lacks.

Tired of living with his parents and failing to find a suitable boarding house, he finds lodgings with Mrs Valerie Hammond, a widow with two children. Little commends Arthur's new home apart from the low rental, a room to himself, and the relatively few chores he does for Mrs Hammond. Everything about her house underlines the harsh reality of daily life. The neighbours' close proximity allows no privacy. There is incessant noise from children shouting and crying and playing games over the backs. Areas outside the house are covered with ash, suggesting the stifling of plant life outside and of human life within. The interior of Mrs Hammond's house is equally uninviting: a chaotically untidy "den of unventilated air" (p.39/P.44). This disorder, her children's incessant crying and her own frequent weeping show her inability to cope with the demands made upon her. So, apart from asserting his independence, Arthur has achieved little by leaving his parental home.

By revealing the unpleasant circumstances in which Arthur lives and works, Storey clarifies his urge to overcome them and his motives for playing football. But he weighs Arthur's approach to problem-solving against Mrs Hammond's. While Arthur decides to challenge his stifling existence by playing football, Mrs Hammond submits to hers by increasingly withdrawing.

Having married her husband, Eric, to escape from a demanding

father, she has discovered that changing her home has not fundamentally altered her life. When Eric dies, the possibility that he may have committed suicide haunts her. Feeling guilty because she thinks that she failed to assuage her husband's despair, and faced with the daunting prospect of caring for two children with very little financial compensation from Weaver's factory (where Eric worked), Mrs Hammond retreats into herself.

> She didn't want to be seen. Her life...had been taken up with making herself as small, as negligible as possible. So small that she didn't exist....Living had turned up so many bad cards for her that she was refusing any more deals. She was withdrawing and lying down. (p.65/P.68-69)

She keeps Eric's boots near the fire and polishes them, refusing, or unable, to get over past events. And the harshness of this past makes her terrified of facing the future.

This perfectly understandable, but desperate attempt at self-protection may prevent further distress, but it also excludes happiness. She vigorously resists Arthur's early efforts to break down her self-imposed isolation. She also annoys him by refusing to take any interest in his football activities.

Yet this strained relationship between them slowly changes as material benefits appear from Arthur's increased earnings. He buys a car and begins to take Mrs Hammond and her children out into the country, away from their stultifying surroundings. Regular Sunday excursions offer an escape from the daily grind and help to lessen their antagonism towards each other. But Arthur's total absorption in the football world minimises the chance of any real communication between them. When not training or playing matches, he spends his free time establishing relationships among his new connections.

His car, his increased income, and his popular success enable him

to meet a wide variety of people. (He is also introduced to Mrs Weaver, whose manner suggests an interest in extra-marital dalliance.) But he associates with them fleetingly; his improved status is ephemeral. Even the close ties he carefully maintains with Weaver could prove a liability. His precarious life as a professional footballer is highlighted by Ed Philips, a newspaper reporter, who points out that Weaver's friendship does not guarantee future success. Any conflict between Weaver and Slomer, or Weaver's retirement from the Club, could leave Arthur without influential support at Primstone.

Awareness of such dangers does not dampen his enthusiasm for football. When the close season curtails the activities he enjoys, he becomes restless and bored. One Saturday afternoon Mrs Hammond becomes the focus of his pent-up emotions and he forcibly has intercourse with her. Although this violence could have precipitated her complete withdrawal, her outlook becomes more positive and sex now forms a fairly regular part of their shared existence. She takes more care with her appearance, and Eric's boots are removed from the hearth. Their growing relationship contains the promise of a better life: a real home. Arthur need not seek fulfilment solely in the game and Mrs Hammond faces possible escape from her self-destructive isolation. But Arthur, overlooking the potential of this fragile link, turns his attention to Mrs Weaver's ostensibly greater allure.

His failure to begin a liaison with Mrs Weaver, despite her obvious interest, shows the basis for conflict within him. On the one hand he yearns to be a successful, wealthy individual, heartlessly manipulating those around him and making the most of every opportunity offered, regardless of the consequences: a longing fed by the books he reads. He readily identifies with the physical superiority and sexual prowess

of their fictional heroes. These fantasies partly find expression in his football success. On the other hand, he lacks the single-minded ruthlessness such ambitions require. (Certainly, none of his fictional heroes would have failed, out of loyalty to their employer, to seize the chance offered by Mrs Weaver.) Neither can he always suppress his awareness of the suspect fruits of football fame. And his partial understanding of Mrs Hammond's situation and his intermittent desire to help her, undermine his attempted callousness. But he is not given to introspection. When the new football season starts, his restlessness vanishes, and with it any chance of self-examination and a greater insight into his existential problems.

At about this time he visits his parents. This meeting confirms his desire to escape from the stunted lives of most working-class people and intensifies his alienation from his parental home. His father, a railway worker, questions the worth of his success. So does his mother. Having earlier encouraged him to strive for greater financial security, they now challenge him about money; his relationship with Mrs Hammond; the people he mixes with; and what they see as his loss of values. Arthur retaliates by forcing them to confront fleetingly, the emptiness of their own existence.

> Then, just for a moment, [my father] saw that through my eyes there was nothing there at all. He saw the neighbourhood without its affections and feelings, but just as a field of broken down ambition. He might have wanted to be a footballer in *his* youth. My mother looked at him as if she'd been turned to stone. He just sat there, the little man with no trousers, his head shaking from side to side in bewilderment, his face screwed up with inadequacy and self-reproach, half-blinded with tiredness and with life-fatigue. (p.110/P.112)

By discounting the importance of the neighbourhood's "affections and feelings", Arthur reflects his own refusal to acknowledge that working-class life does offer something positive.

Once Storey has firmly established the background to Arthur's participation in football, to his involvement with Mrs Hammond, and to her chosen solitariness, he stops using flashbacks. The first part of the novel ends with two telling scenes: their juxtaposition suggests the alternatives between which Arthur can choose.

In the first of them he is confronted by football's tinsel triumphs. The rivalry between Weaver and Slomer, Arthur's own insignificance to them, and his isolation from the other players all crystallise during the Christmas Eve party at Weaver's home. In the Weavers' bedroom, the large tapestry depicting a hunting scene symbolises Arthur's predicament: "the dogs have just got their teeth into a small, pale animal, and it's already dripping blood" (p.115/P.117).

The second scene, at Mrs Hammond's house, lacks the material comforts of Weaver's, but offers hints of genuine caring instead. Mrs Hammond, with the children safely in bed, prepares evidence of Santa Claus's arrival, waits up for Arthur and shows real concern about his injury and broken teeth. She even shows him a wartime photograph of herself. Her appearance astounds him: "her feelings unlocked and running free" (p.133/P.134). Something of this far-off enjoyment is evident in the contented intimacy with which the scene ends. Not only has Arthur been offered an opportunity to see where the greatest chance of fulfilment lies. A decision to rejoin the mainstream of life with him could help Mrs Hammond regain her former sparkle.

Storey's division of the novel into two parts marks this crucial point in their lives. Part One ends with the moment of greatest peace in their relationship. In Part Two they do not grasp this opportunity to find happiness together.

Mrs Hammond accuses Arthur of turning her into a kept woman.

Ever-conscious of her neighbours' prying eyes and relish of gossip, she reveals an even greater dread: that once she admits that she depends on him, he will desert her. He understands her growing conflict, but fails to convince her that he is becoming more reliant on her, and not merely trying to impress her—and others—with his success. They become less able to communicate, although she occasionally lowers her protective barrier of reserve. Paradoxically, Arthur's attempts at reassurance increase her determination to avoid risking further blows to her shattered self-esteem. As she says:

> I can't let my feelings go. Not again. Not to have them cut off like Eric ... and everything gone, in one person, and dead. I want to be sure. You've to give me some time. (p.160/P.161)

If Mrs Hammond is torn between her longing for a stable, happy relationship and her fear of eventual rejection, Arthur is also struggling with conflicting emotions. By participating in football he has achieved a great deal and he cannot envisage a life without this success. His need to impress others and so feed his self-esteem is emphasised throughout the narrative. He accomplishes this so well that others see him as a physically strong man, incapable of tender emotions. He is often called "Tarzan", and he sometimes castigates himself as an "ape". The other characters judge him as he does himself: in terms of his football playing, his increased earnings, and the attendant public acclaim.[1] Even Frank Miles, his relatively perceptive captain, cannot separate Arthur from his sporting achievements (p.185/P.185).

Ironically, Arthur's façade as an unfeeling ape is a trap of his own making which society now expects him to maintain. Because of his

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[1] Bernard Lockwood, "Four Contemporary British Working-Class Novelists" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1966), p.159.

reputed lack of feelings, he cannot persuade Mrs Hammond that she can make him "feel whole and wanted" (p.163/P.163). With unflinching clarity he acknowledges his dilemma:

> I wanted a bit more than a wave. I wanted to have something there for good: I wasn't going to be a footballer for ever. But I was an ape. Big, awe-inspiring, something interesting to see perform. No feelings. It'd always helped to have no feelings. So I had no feelings. I was paid not to have feelings. It paid me to have none. (p.163/P.163-64)

Arthur begins to realise the price of his fame. He has become an outsider. His money and success exclude him from his own social class—his parents, Mrs Hammond, the working-class community—while class distinctions prevent him from buying his way into others. So he is not really accepted by Weaver, Slomer and their ilk.[1] Ironically, the greater his prestige, the greater his degree of isolation.

When Mrs Hammond hears that Judith Parkes (one of the girls closely associated with the City players) is pregnant and that Arthur is suspected of being the father, all her worst fears seem to have been realised. Her fragile relationship with him cannot bear this added burden. Unable to reason with her, a frustrated and angry Arthur confesses his feelings about her to Mrs Weaver, who suggests that he approach Mrs Hammond "more gently" (p.172/P.172). But her advice does not help him to sway Mrs Hammond from her ruinous course. Even the news that Maurice Braithewaite is the real father and is to marry Judith, does not prevent her from confronting Arthur. This final battle, in which all her insecurities pour out, highlights their total inability to communicate their needs to each other. While he is furious at her apparent ingratitude, she accuses him of destroying not only her self-respect, but also her reputation (and her children's) in the

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[1] Nigel Gray, *The Silent Majority* (London: Vision Press, 1973), p.138.

community. Roused to a frenzy and terrified that Arthur will shatter her self-imposed isolation, she accuses him of denying her right to exist: of wanting to kill her. Demanding that he never return, she locks herself in the kitchen with her children. She has totally rejected him.

By aggressively defending her isolation, Mrs Hammond is withdrawing from society in a way characteristic of certain neurotics. In *The Divided Self*, R.D. Laing has discussed this type of behaviour. It is not the purpose here to evaluate his theories, but his observations, if applied to Mrs Hammond, throw interesting light on her actions.[1] He suggests that individuals with a weak sense of themselves and their worth, fear a love relationship. Since it demands a certain relinquishing of self, it may further threaten the individual's identity. Laing's graphic term for this fear—"engulfment"—aptly describes the annihilation the afflicted person anticipates. He states that "the very act of experiencing the other as a person is felt as virtually suicidal".[2]

Nevertheless, Mrs Hammond does not slump into a dangerously depressed state solely because of Arthur's inept treatment. Years of gruelling hardship have helped to cause her withdrawal. Her behaviour is also allegedly characteristic of working-class individuals who, under

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[1] Although Storey denies the use or influence of Laing's psychological theories in his work, he "recognises affinities between Laing and himself and concludes that they arrived at the same conclusions by different means" (Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", pp.17-18).

[2] *The Divided Self* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1960), p.49.

pressure, tend to isolate themselves and fight doggedly to preserve their identity.[1] Ironically, the working-class community gives Mrs Hammond no comfort: her neighbours' malicious rumour-mongering and taunts add to her already stressful life. Although these factors explain her fear of commitment, her rejection of Arthur and, with him, of the prospect of a fuller life, seems tragically perverse.

For a while after their parting not even football offers Arthur an escape from his troubles. He has been dropped from the team and a visit to Frank Miles brings little comfort. Frank bluntly tells him that his arrogance, based on Weaver's friendship and his rapid rise in in the football world, have caused his present unenviable situation. Suspecting that Arthur's involvement with Mrs Hammond also damages his playing, he recommends that he settle that side of his life too. But Arthur finds it difficult to act on this advice. Barred from her house, which has become home to him, he rents a squalid room. For several days he stays away from work and drives aimlessly about or reads novels. But he discovers that, unlike a fictional hero, he cannot abandon his problems by simply driving out of town (p.192/P.191). Eventually unable to endure his isolation, he reluctantly returns to his parents. Here, to his surprise, he finds Mrs Hammond. In the ensuing scene the bitter anger among the characters erupts; and by the end of it Arthur has been rejected by his parents and Mrs Hammond.

While life with his parents remains strained, football begins to offer solace once more as he draws on the façade of a professional

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[1] For further discussion of this topic see James Gindin, *Postwar British Fiction* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976), pp.97-98; Gray, *Silent Majority*, pp.136-37; and Lockwood, "Four Working-Class Novelists", pp.166-69.

athlete "like a welcome disguise" (p.212/P.211). He plays increasingly violently, as if reaffirming his rejection of emotion. For a time this approach works. Then he realises that living in unfeeling loneliness is worthless.

This realisation coincides with the news that Mrs Hammond, having suffered a stroke, is in the Riding Hospital. A doctor confirms her dangerously depressed state and her loss of will to survive. In a last vain attempt to help her with his money, Arthur arranges a private room for her. He now admits to himself the importance of having someone depend on him:

> I felt elated—an elation compressed by some bitterness and by self-reproach, as if at last, really at last, I'd got hold of something which before had always slipped my grasp, and which I wasn't too clumsy to hold. Now it was real, and held me. I was no longer alone. (p.236/P.234)

Ironically, his insight comes too late. But during the weeks when Mrs Hammond clings to life, he confirms that a personal relationship can provide something to transcend the dreary, alienating aspects of daily life. He visits her constantly, and at Christmas, just before she dies, he brings her children to see her. During one visit he holds her hand, an action that seems to "mould two pieces into one" (p.241/P.238).

When she dies, only football remains. But Arthur discovers that the game is a refuge no more. A detailed description of the preparations for a match, and of the match itself, echoes the novel's early scenes. Yet crucial differences are apparent. Watching the younger players, he becomes conscious of his advancing age. He understands with alarming clarity Frank's fear of the "abrupt diminishing of life" (p.247/P.245) that faces a footballer on retirement. The closing pages give a graphic account of Arthur's discovery that his body cannot

withstand much longer the gruelling physical demands of the game.

Arthur is the character who most clearly shows the effects of football's transient rewards. But Storey uses others to emphasise this theme. Maurice Braithewaite, who also plays for Primstone, seems to have achieved everything Arthur hopes to gain when he joins the club. Yet after Maurice reluctantly marries Judith, he decides to join another club and his success soon diminishes. As Arthur observes, "I watched him from the window as he jostled in the Saturday crowds, unnoticeable, making his way back home" (p.214/P.212). Later Maurice starts playing for Primstone again and his fortunes improve. Still, much of his renewed prestige is based on football's temporary benefits. Even Frank, who seems to accept life philosophically, worries about his own future without football and the extra income, popularity and friendship it provides (p.247/P.245).

This Sporting Life ends as it began, with a vividly described football match. But Arthur's isolation has increased: all potential sources of refuge have been forcibly removed or are in the process of failing him. Yet despite this crumbling of his personal world, his understanding of life has developed. He has come to value personal relationships and seen through the superficial glamour of football success. No longer seduced by fictional fantasy, he has discovered that helping others achieve a better life can be as important as doing so himself. And bleak though the ending is, it would be wrong to conclude that Arthur's positive involvement in life is as futile as Mrs Hammond's retreat from it.

Mrs Hammond and Arthur are not the only ones who long for fulfilment. But the other female characters do not succumb as she does. Arthur

is scathing about working-class wives:

> Mothers, mothers. Always mothers. Women are never anything but mothers. There's never a wife been born yet. I hate all these bloody mothers and their stinking brats. Can't women ever be anything without kids, kids, all the time? You're not just animals. Mrs Hammond—she's a woman. Somewhere she's a woman. (p.211/P.209)

Yet few girls reject this wretched future. Describing how they frequent the social club hoping to find suitable husbands, Judith remarks:

> It's more or less an auction sale, and they're terrified of going to the wrong bidder. They all *want* to be bid for—you've got to have *some* prestige. But in most cases they take what they can while they can. (p.206/P.205)

Football offers some of the men a better life. Like Arthur, Frank and Maurice see it as a means of overcoming the debilitating existence endured by most working-class people. And like Arthur, they come to realise the dangers of relying so heavily on something so temporary. Apart from the players, others involve themselves in football, hoping to find something there that is missing from their lives. This is true of Weaver, Slomer and George Wade, the chairman. It also applies to Johnson, whose isolation Arthur consciously exploits to gain entry to Primstone. His interest in Arthur's progress enables him to participate vicariously in a world that would otherwise ignore him. So he benefits from Arthur's callous behaviour in some ways. Storey, by clustering minor characters with similar needs around Arthur, widens his exploration of alienated individuals seeking a more fulfilling life by participating in a game. Although he does not develop the idea, he also suggests that the crowd's interest—audibly evident in their shouting and groaning—enables them, fleetingly, to forget other problems. And, while the novel largely centres on two working-class characters' inability to achieve purposeful lives, the wealthier classes are no

happier. Neither Weaver nor Slomer derive lasting satisfaction from their activities, and Mrs Weaver appears frustrated despite her comfortable life.

The novel offers a sombre vision of individuals from various walks of life struggling to enrich their existence. They experience momentary happiness, and football, with all its limitations, offers clear, short-term advantages. Apart from increased earnings and social prestige, there is camaraderie among the players. The game's demands unite a disparate group of individuals for a few hours, helping them to blot out other considerations. Relationships with others briefly alleviate feelings of alienation, but these optimistic notes cannot dispel the dominant impression of futile lives.

In *Flight into Camden* (published in the same year as *This Sporting Life*) Storey remains preoccupied with the theme of finding a purposeful life: a spiritual home within a bleak environment. But he does not merely rework earlier ideas. Rather, he highlights themes that appear only fleetingly in the first novel. There, Arthur quarrels with his parents and Mrs Hammond has completely lost contact with her father. These failed relationships contribute to their alienation, but are only marginally treated. Now, in *Flight into Camden*, Storey focuses more fully on how family members alienate each other.

A key issue in *This Sporting Life* becomes another major theme in this second novel: the failure to find an alternative home with someone else. Storey now explores this in greater depth. When the two major characters, Margaret Thorpe and Gordon Howarth, flee from their respective homes, their flight is reminiscent of Arthur's abortive attempt to leave his problems behind. But unlike Arthur, who belatedly appreciates

Mrs Hammond, Margaret and Howarth hope almost from the start that their relationship will end their isolation.

Flight into Camden covers an eighteen-month period in the lives of the Thorpe family. Always rather an outsider, Margaret, the only daughter, estranges herself further by asserting her individuality: something her family has denied. Her fortuitous meeting with Howarth (himself unhappily married and aloof) and their subsequent involvement, provides the impetus to her stumbling quest for self-fulfilment.

As first-person narrator, Margaret reveals little about her earlier life, but several salient facts about Howarth gradually emerge. He has been a promising artist, but the death of his first child seems to have destroyed any true creativity. Two later attempts at painting—first when he leaves his wife and then in London—confirm this loss. In a letter to Margaret he writes:

> If I'd been an artist as I wanted to be when I was young, my work might have taken the place of you. But I'm not creative in that way. That part of me was deadened. You've been my art.[1]

When she meets him, he is teaching industrial design at an art college, a job he dislikes. Yet they take some time to decide to flee to Camden Town. Howarth claims that Margaret has given him renewed hope when he felt all was futile, but she is torn between love for her family and her need to assert herself. Yet when he decides to go, she joins him.

Once there, Margaret finds a satisfying job, but Howarth falls prey to bouts of deep depression. Mr Thorpe complicates matters further by

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[1] David Storey, *Flight into Camden* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1960), p.217; and Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1964), pp.231-32. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (p.217/P.231-32).

trying—and failing—to take Margaret home. When her brother, Michael, eventually forces her to visit their parents, Howarth takes the opportunity to flee once more—this time, alone. Emotionally shattered, Margaret remains at home. Later, Howarth returns to his wife and children. Within this framework of their cyclic journeys, Storey examines a complex network of relationships.

The theme of domestic conflict is introduced in the first chapter. Margaret and Michael have been given educational opportunities that set them apart from their parents and the working-class community in which they live. Michael is a university lecturer, Margaret a secretary. Yet, far from ensuring a satisfying life their achievements contribute to the family's disunity. On the one hand, Mr Thorpe, a coal-miner, cannot countenance his children's lack of gratitude and humility, considering the great sacrifices he has made to finance their education. On the other, Michael questions the value of such education and the resultant obligations he feels his parents impose on him. For example, he rejects their request that he be married in church. (As in *This Sporting Life*, Storey shows the paradoxical situation of well-intentioned parents encouraging their children towards a better life and then resenting their changed attitudes.) Only Alec, the youngest child, has realised his parents' hopes while retaining sympathy for the working-class outlook. Distressed by Margaret's affair with Howarth, Mr Thorpe bitterly regrets having educated his elder children. Although he accuses Michael of a "great educated emptiness" (p.120/P.128), his remarks are aimed equally at Margaret and convey his despairing suspicion that past hardships may have been suffered to no purpose. "Ideally, he would have granted them an education on condition that, though it kept them away from the pits, the process would not have changed any of

their social or moral attitudes".[1]

Yet descriptions of the Thorpes' home environment, and of the colliery where Mr Thorpe works, amply justify the parents' desire for their children's escape. Margaret's unplanned visit to her father's pit vividly shows the colliery's overpowering presence; its dirt and noise; its reduction of men to insignificant objects. With sudden insight, she realises her father has deliberately concealed from her the nature of his work and his fear of it. Bereft of any rapport with him and filled with a sudden desire to flee, she rushes home, intensely aware of her alienation from her local community. Her description of Upton's "endless interlocking rows of houses bound up in one tormented shape of winding roads and twisting crescents" (p.79/P.85), echoes the imprisoning working-class environment Arthur Machin tries to leave.

Tensions within the Thorpe household worsen, dispelling an initial impression of Margaret as compliant. Michael antagonises her and condemns her association with Howarth. She is driven further away from her family when Michael unexpectedly becomes engaged to Gwen Morris. Gwen readily accepts Mr and Mrs Thorpe; they are delighted by her potential as a home-maker. (Some time before this, Mrs Thorpe, often exasperated that Margaret lives at home and hoping she will soon be married, is horrified when she emphatically rejects motherhood as futile.) After Michael's marriage, Margaret largely blames the way he treated her when she was younger for her present physical and emotional inhibitions. She feels Gwen's abundant sexuality embodies everything he encouraged her to suppress. By marrying Gwen, he appears to mock Margaret's outlook. In fact his marriage shows how uncertain

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[1] Gindin, *Postwar British Fiction*, p.92.

he really is and how he cannot reject his parents' attitudes completely.

It is not surprising that Margaret, estranged at home, is drawn to Howarth, another outsider. By alternating scenes showing her at home and then with Howarth, Storey deftly develops her increasing withdrawal from her family and firmly establishes Howarth's isolation.[1] Yet from the start their relationship seems unlikely to alter the solitariness of either. During their early encounters at the university's Christmas dance, the Miners' Gala, and the meeting of a literary group, they remain remote from each other and the surrounding communal enjoyment. At the Miners' Gala, Margaret shows a wariness of emotional and physical involvement, rather like Mrs Hammond, though less extreme. When Howarth declares he dislikes people who fear commitment, a potential source of conflict appears.

Although her family disapproves of him, and she herself worries about the destructive quality of his loneliness and the stumbling-block of his marriage, Margaret remains interested in Howarth as she rebels against the combined pressures exerted by her family and by society's stereotyped view of a woman's role. But early on she does not consider her growing friendship with him as a positive alternative to her life at home.

Storey, by continually using images of death and decay,[2] stresses the improbability of their establishing a successful home together.

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[1] As to these alternations, Janelle Reinelt differs somewhat, seeing the contrast as one between "mobile, changing environments" and "staid, repressive ones" ("Novels and Plays", p.68).

[2] This aspect of Storey's technique has been noted by others (Malcolm Bradbury, "On the Road to Truth Some Tolls Must Be Paid", *New York Times Book Review*, 27 August 1961, p.4; Clark, "David Storey", p.29; Froeb, "Storey, Fowles and Murdoch", pp.38-39; Harris, "Unholy Encounter", p.104; and Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", pp.71-74).

Throughout the narrative, he and Margaret liken themselves to hounded animals, emphasising their affair's fugitive nature. The skull on the cabinet beside Howarth at the Christmas dance hints at the sterility of any relationship with him. The Ponds near Lindley Mill (their trysting place) are a stifling combination of lifelessness and decay. When they first make love there, it is raining and Margaret associates Howarth with "the heavy dampness of the dead undergrowth" surrounding them. The passing train, with its "hoarse panting...of nauseous liberation" (p.57/P.61), suggests her reaction to love-making.

Far from being a joyous release, sex confronts them with their increasingly complex situation. Margaret's inhibitions distress them both and when Howarth decides to end his marriage, he intensifies her growing dilemma. Although an outsider within her own home, she cannot yet abandon the conventional morality that stresses the sanctity of the family. But Howarth denies the family's life-giving role:

> Families to me are just like vicious animals, radiant with solicitude, and affection until you touch them. Then they rear up like crazed beasts. They seem to be the worst parasites of the lot, living off everything around them that they can: neighbours, jobs, friends, anything....In my experience they've destroyed far more than they ever created.
> (p.64/P.68-69)

This passage not only encapsulates an attitude often reflected in Storey's writing, but also comments on what we already know about the Thorpes and foreshadows events to come. By leaving his family and resigning from the art college, Howarth tries to start afresh. But the unprepossessing accommodation he finds, combined with his indecision and pessimism, brings little change.

Margaret also reaches the point where she must break away from her family. Her decision, taken while travelling to Michael's wedding, shocks them and conflicts with her family loyalty. When she returns

to her parents' home with Howarth, her attitude reflects the significance of her rebellion: "The house was empty and strange....There was nothing about it that belonged to me now" (p.92/P.99).

By devoting an entire chapter to the weekend Margaret and Howarth spend together, Storey can explore unhurriedly their deepening relationship. The slow narrative pace also creates an impression of their sheltering from outside forces, secure within her parental home. (This reminds us of the Christmas Eve in *This Sporting Life* when Arthur and Mrs Hammond experience an intimacy they never recapture.) As her confidence grows, Margaret sees her surroundings differently. Earlier, Upton seemed "small and cut-off", but now with Howarth it is "large again, and warm and reassuring" (p.106/P.114). Whereas her home was like a stranger's when she deserted her family, now she and Howarth seem in possession.

> My parents could never come back at all. They were intruders. I couldn't imagine them ever again in the house. We'd taken it away, and it no longer was theirs. (p.109/P.117)

During this weekend, as she emerges from her unresponsive state, she becomes increasingly sensual. (In this way she differs radically from Mrs Hammond who still tends to withdraw.) But not all Margaret's inhibitions are removed, and Howarth often accuses her of being prompted by obligation rather than emotion. Both dislike what they see as the other's destructive outlook. She fears that he is trying to make her reliant on him by alienating her from her family, and he maintains that she seeks to undermine his self-respect. Margaret also notes something about Howarth that suggests they will not find fulfilment together. His wanting to light a fire he cannot bother to keep going reflects the recklessness of "his sudden passions and wants and amusements" (p.104/P.112). Her observation unconsciously foreshadows his decision

to leave his "left-over life" (p.112/P.120) for London, and also foreshadows the ultimate end of their affair. Margaret, by bringing Howarth home, has tried to make him part of her life. But he needs to leave the community "before he can make a decisive break with the past".[1]

When Margaret's parents return home, their selfish disregard for her feelings removes her initial uncertainty about joining Howarth in London. She realises that her actions have forced into the open much of the simmering resentment that always existed. Her father's hatred of the pit and its exhausting demands; his despair at the futility of his life; his regret about his children's education; her mother's concern for the family's reputation rather than her daughter's well-being; her own resentment towards Michael—all erupt, tearing the family apart. Margaret's turmoil is all the greater because she loves her father and Howarth equally: "It was as if Howarth's coming to the house had suddenly separated the family into its components, isolating each one, and fragmenting the domesticity into its final pattern of disruption and decay" (p.119/P.127).

It becomes imperative that she leave her parents' home with its malign and destructive tensions. But she realises the limitations of flight to London with Howarth: "We're not really going away - at all....We're carrying it all with us" (p.123/P.132). Once in London, on the other hand, it is Howarth who sees things in perspective. When she dismisses everything about her life in Upton, he replies, "You can't cut things off like that....If we've to have any chance at all we've got to look at what's there" (p.126/P.135). Yet his spirit of

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[1] Reinelt, "Novels and Plays", p.69.

compromise belies his repeated departures from situations he finds untenable. And when, after reaching London, his initial surge of vitality and confidence fades, Margaret realises that he has nothing from which to draw strength.

Comparing him with Michael (whose success in life despite his doubts she foresees), Margaret admits that Howarth's withdrawal signals submission rather than a new start. Their shared desire for freedom from their repressive homes has led to a flight that seems unprofitable. Her description of the life-denying elements of their new home—a flat in Camden Town—echoes the clusters of negative images surrounding their early meetings.

> The very area we'd moved to seemed steeped in our dilemma: the rot and the decay. It was a refuse area, full of detritus and rotting space. We'd come to it like so many others, with a bird's instinct, purposeless, drawn to it unthinkingly, like a natural migration. (p.133/P.143)

Isolated from everything familiar, they find their attitudes changing. While Margaret, happily ensconced in a new job, becomes increasingly confident, feminine and sensual, Howarth retreats into self-imposed solitude. His despair worsens when he returns to teaching, a profession he considers degrading and to which he is ill-suited. Several incidents increase the widening gap between them. Howarth is deeply hurt by friends who snub him when visiting London. Joyce, his wife, refuses to divorce him and Margaret, very insecure because of this, leaves him for a brief spell. Ironically, her father's unexpected arrival brings her back to him.

Mr Thorpe's visit harshly reminds Margaret of her familial obligations. Failing to arouse the repentance he wants by denigrating her affair with Howarth, her father applies the thumbscrews of emotional blackmail: he begs her to consider her family, even if she

disregards Howarth's; and stresses her mother's suffering. When she refuses to co-operate, he falls into a characteristic, stony silence. As she sees her father on to the train, Margaret's love for her parents again overwhelms her, and she is desolate that her father apparently rejects her. She returns to Camden with Howarth, numbed with despair and loneliness. Both have sought refuge in a relationship they hope will shelter them from the world. But the cumulative force of the incidents emphasises the impossibility of ignoring families, other people and past events.

Howarth becomes more aloof, hiding behind "a defensive mechanical shield which forbids even Margaret from trespassing on his private feelings".[1] Gradually it becomes clear that they are as thwarted in their quest for a spiritual home as they were before coming to Camden. Their families refuse to relinquish their respective holds on the fugitives. When Howarth decides to visit Joyce, he mirrors Margaret's ambivalent feelings towards her family. Any pleasure he feels about her belated revelation that she relies on him is offset by his family's relief at his short-lived return. It is ironic that at the moment Margaret is least inhibited, Howarth's family tightens its grip.

With sudden violence, Michael adds his weight to this emotional tug-of-war. Accusing Margaret of destroying their parents' lives and claiming he cannot help them, he demands that she return home. She refuses, but he finds an unexpected ally in Howarth who, using his visit to Joyce as a comparison, urges Margaret to try to alleviate her parents' distress. Helpless in the face of their combined pressure, she reluctantly agrees to return home briefly.

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[1] Jonathan Raban, *The Technique of Modern Fiction* (London: Edward Arnold, 1968), p.178.

Howarth has earlier described a family's destructive power. We see it in the Thorpes' tactics. Margaret is appalled at their selfishness; their refusal to understand her feelings; their concern for their neighbourhood reputation; her father's reminder of past sacrifices; and the implied threat behind Michael's claim that she is solely to blame for her mother's illness. Her parents' exhaustion shows deep and genuine distress. But Margaret, her earlier loyalty to her family crushed, refuses to capitulate, insisting that she will return to Howarth.

Now completely isolated from any possible reassurance her family home might have provided, Margaret receives another blow when she loses Howarth's support. In a letter ending their affair, he admits that he has failed to establish a new life in London. And, although he claims to love her still, he declares that he can no longer contribute to the suffering their relationship is causing others. He is not returning to his family, however, but having "one more run before the hounds really get me" (p.216/P.231). Margaret, filled with anguished disbelief, collapses.[1]

The novel ends with a tranquil garden scene, notable for its ambiguity.

> Michael stretched himself out in his deck chair in the middle of the lawn. Gwen, gently rounded with her first pregnancy, sat closer to the back door of the house, in the shade. Both of them were pleased and really taken with John Fawcett. His unspoken curiosity roused Michael....
> Both the men screwed up their eyes slightly in

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[1] Jeanne Froeb notes that, underlying his apparent concern for others' feelings, Howarth is full of self-pity. The letter he writes is "couched almost entirely in terms of what the ending of the affair means to him, rather than to Margaret, to whom the letter brings heartbreak" ("Storey, Fowles and Murdoch", p.36).

> the heat of the afternoon sun....I liked seeing them together—they were so oddly contrasted. Their liking for one another may have sprung from that. They went on talking in the slow, easeful sun, while I drowsed on a blanket, close to the flowers. (pp.217-18/P.232)

Michael and Gwen in contented domesticity, with Margaret as dozy onlooker, may suggest either her reintegration within her family or her continuing isolation. The snippet of news about Howarth's return to his family—indicative of his failure, yet again, to escape—perhaps confirms that his desertion of Margaret was inevitable. But it can also be taken to mean that he has submitted to his family's demands. Even the presence of John Fawcett, an acquaintance, whose concern for her half-promises another, more acceptable, relationship, does not prove that the positive interpretation is the more plausible. He could, after all, be merely a sympathetic bystander.[1] Finally, there is the ambivalence of Gwen's remark, "We've been waiting for you, love" (p.219/P.234). While it may be purely perfunctory, it is difficult, in the circumstances, to avoid observing cynically that the family has been doing precisely that: waiting for Margaret to turn her back on Howarth and come home.

What, then, is the significance of the cyclic journeys Margaret

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[1] Janelle Reinelt reads too much into Fawcett's presence in this final scene. She claims that "Margaret has brought Fawcett to meet her brother, and she seems to have an intimate relationship with him". But she does helpfully note how his presence suggests that Margaret has not withdrawn behind her earlier, defensive barrier ("Novels and Plays", p.63). Jeanne Froeb's conclusion that Margaret is "obviously falling in love with a young preacher, Johnnie Fawcett, who hopes to marry her" ("Storey, Fowles and Murdoch", p.33), is also an overstatement with no textual evidence to support it.

and Howarth undertake? Storey himself sees Margaret's home-coming as the triumph of her family's destructive power.

> The moral blackmail of society and of her family were too much for her; her love for her family was exploited in order to imprison her. She took to another victim, another weak character, Howarth, whom she felt was as oppressed as she was....The irony is that at the end her family are discussing her as though she's the sacrificial goat brought back to the altar to be bled.[1]

It cannot be denied that, like Arthur Machin, Margaret and Howarth discover to their chagrin the folly of running away from problems. But although their families' self-centred demands cannot be minimised or overlooked, their flight can be seen as a valiant attempt to establish their individuality. So certain points should be considered before dismissing it as a total failure.

Unlike Arthur and Mrs Hammond, Margaret and Howarth try to find a satisfying life together—with limited success. Instead of withdrawing into an increasing and ultimately devastating state of alienation as Mrs Hammond does, Margaret, encouraged by Howarth, learns to express her physical and emotional feelings. In the final scene she has grown in self-awareness: a growth suggested in the sensual imagery of her lying outstretched in the sun, overcome by the scent of flowers and freshly-mown grass.[2] Howarth on his part finds renewed optimism, "freedom and...peace" (p.216/P.231) with Margaret. Such positive developments, though perhaps temporary, cannot be dismissed as negligible.

The narrator does not tell us how Howarth reacts to his home-coming. This makes it difficult to assess finally the beneficial effects of his

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[1] Haffenden interview, pp.21-22.

[2] Reinelt, "Novels and Plays", p.63.

flight with Margaret. If anything, his situation must be viewed more pessimistically than hers. Howarth has no alternative or temporary solace (like Arthur Machin's in football). He has no artistic outlet and his contempt for all teaching, together with his appalling experiences in a London school, make it unlikely that he will find that profession satisfying. But in Margaret's case there are glimmerings of a brighter future.

Towards the end of the novel there are two quiet hints that if she can reconcile herself to what has happened, she can continue striving for self-fulfilment. Earlier, Howarth tells her that she cannot ignore the past; and on her return home she thinks (about the living-room): "The room was lived in. It was warm and cosy, and its familiarity was something that couldn't be spoiled" (p.214/P.229). This suggests that her family home is not without positive attributes if she is prepared to recognise this possibility and build on it. Part of her dilemma is that her flight has taught her that "She can never simply adhere to or simply rebel against home and class again".[1] Moreover, Howarth's letter ends with his plea that she should continue unbowed by adverse pressures. Though a strange request from someone ending an affair, it does imply that he acknowledges her inner strength and ability to make something of her life. These points enhance the positive tone of the final scene, but her future must be forever a matter for speculation because Storey witholds any substantial indications about it.

The lingering effect of the novel is gloomy. Although Margaret has achieved a greater understanding of life, and her personal growth hints at a brighter future, there is no reassurance that either she or Howarth

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[1] Gindin, *Postwar British Fiction*, p.99.

can break free from their earlier, debilitating isolation. As was the case in *This Sporting Life*, the causes of their alienation remain unchanged.

CHAPTER 3

NO PLACE FOR POSSESSION

> It's like being damned before you've even been given a choice.
>
> Leonard Radcliffe

The documentary quality of Storey's first two novels did not prepare anyone for *Radcliffe*, which followed soon after. The novel's brooding malevolence, enormous emotional power and horrifying physical violence might seem an unexpected departure, but this was quite deliberate. Storey had embarked upon a group of novels which he hoped would resolve the conflict caused by his dualistic vision,[1] and the critical reception of the first two frustrated him. Whereas he saw them in terms of the dichotomy he experienced between the physical—or outer—world and the spiritual—or inner—world, many critics assessed them as sociological novels.[2] *Radcliffe*'s unusual features stem mainly from his determination that no one would misunderstand his intentions again. Surrealistic imagery, unexplained figures in a misty garden, mysterious appearances of black dogs, the near-ruin of a large, imposing house (the walls of which reverberate with three portentous blows one night), homosexuality, incest, suicide and murder combine to give *Radcliffe* a Gothic quality

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[1] See pp.2-4 above, on Storey's acute awareness of a split between the physical and spiritual within himself and in his surrounding world, the anguish this caused him, and his therapeutic use of writing.

[2] See Haffenden interview, p.22; and Taylor, *Second Wave*, p.142.

absent from Storey's other writing. This sets it apart from the social realism of *This Sporting Life* and *Flight into Camden* with their recognisable settings in Yorkshire and London. At the same time, Storey has not neglected his characteristic, painstaking recreation of everyday life, so that much of *Radcliffe* remains rooted in reality. And its thematic concerns link it firmly to the rest of his work.

Once again we find him exploring the repercussions of isolating oneself from the mainstream of life while searching for a spiritual home. John Radcliffe, at the age of thirty, decides to withdraw completely from a society which he abhors and cannot change. Turning his back on his successful life, he becomes caretaker of the Radcliffe family home, the Place, where he finds the seclusion he seeks. His decision is reminiscent of Mrs Hammond's withdrawal from social contact, and of the flight of Howarth and Margaret to solve their problems away from home. Yet soon after his son Leonard is born, John contemplates "returning to his old job and to a more normal way of life".[1] This suggests that he cannot commit himself wholeheartedly to the life of a recluse. But he delays making a change and begins investing Leonard with a special significance. While remaining hidden at the Place, John hopes that his existential problems will be solved by Leonard's participating in society. Many of John's actions, such as sending Leonard to a council school and encouraging his friendship with Victor Tolson, are motivated by his parasitic ambition to break his self-imposed isolation through his son. Indeed, John recognises that his "incoherent and almost meaningless hopes" (p.59/P.57) rest upon Tolson.

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[1] David Storey, *Radcliffe* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1963), p.28; and Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1965), p.27. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (p.28/P.27).

Years later Leonard confronts his father with the self-defeating implications of his seclusion:

> And if you've hidden yourself away here all your life, until your muscles are too stiff and your bones too corroded to move, why, there's always your son to rise up in your stead! What has your isolation meant if it can't be measured in *him*! (p.303/P.283)

Towards the end of *Radcliffe*, John acknowledges his erroneous philosophy. He tells Leonard that individuals are offered two alternatives: "either to live in isolation or to be absorbed" (p.358/P.333-34). Belatedly he understands that participation in society is imperative. But Leonard's trial for Tolson's murder, and his subsequent insanity and death, prevent John from even attempting to break free from his self-imposed exile. Becoming "silent, self-absorbed and unapproachable" (p.375/P.349), he sinks into a melancholia bordering on insanity. It has been suggested that although John's and Leonard's searches for a rigid criterion by which to live have certain similarities, John's is not so disastrous.[1] This overlooks the dreary purposelessness of most of his life: the same lack of real achievement that characterises Mrs Hammond's existence. In both instances, Storey suggests that such deliberate and extreme withdrawal from others is valueless.

If John chooses isolation, Leonard has it thrust upon him, with equally debilitating results. Despite attempts to free himself from a "morbid self-preoccupation" he despises (p.46/P.44), he cannot overcome his alienation. From birth he reluctantly submits to life which appears to force its way into his unwilling body. His continued physical weakness implies a denial of his very being. John's remark

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[1] Peter Faulkner, *Humanism in the English Novel* (London: Elek/Pemberton, 1975), pp.182-83.

that "He seems determined not to exist. He's like a person of no importance, interest or significance whatsoever" (p.49/P.47), matches Arthur's assessment of Mrs Hammond.[1] Apart from Leonard's natural preference for solitude, his parents' isolated existence hardly encourages a changed outlook in their son. At school he tries to win acceptance with his artistic ability, but this soon fails. It is only through his relationship with Tolson, who becomes his "first direct human contact", that he interacts socially to a limited extent. In addition, his visits to Tolson's home produce "a spontaneity and directness which he had never experienced before" (pp.37-38/P.35-36). But this friendship has serious drawbacks.

While Leonard is established immediately as a physically weak, lonely individual, Tolson is presented as a boy whose immense strength attracts others. Yet despite his popularity and physical prowess, Tolson succumbs unexpectedly to bouts of weeping and despair. His frustrations frequently give rise to "a scarcely suppressed antagonism" which results in "sudden and irrational bursts of violence" (p.38/P.36). Leonard is the target he most often attacks. Repelled and fascinated by each other, they combine moments of "frenzied rivalry" (p.44/P.42) with others of genuine companionship.

These unusual friends are separated when Leonard wins a scholarship to a grammar school. During his six years there his isolation increases and his physical well-being declines. Turning to drawing again, he works obsessively on tiny fragments of paper: an activity from which he derives some satisfaction. A period of ill-health and fluctuating emotional extremes follows until, in his twenties, Leonard tries to

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[1] See p.17 above.

find a job. He chooses work that is physically demanding, as if trying to recapture the physicality he experienced as a boy with his mother[1] and with Tolson. But his attempt "to touch on those ordinary experiences of life" from which he feels shut off is misunderstood by onlookers who think he is "assuming the guise of an idiot" (p.48/P.46). Ostracised by almost everyone, he becomes increasingly alienated as he drifts from one unsuccessful occupation to another.

Left to himself and having long since lost contact with Tolson, Leonard spends hours walking and drawing: solitary pursuits that ensure his continued loneliness. But Austen, his uncle, intervenes, securing him a job with Ewbank's tent-erecting firm. There he meets Tolson again. The impact on Leonard is marked. John suppresses any misgivings he feels about their renewed friendship because "out of that dull opacity of character he saw his son come suddenly alive. Even his drawing had ceased, as though in some way his self-absorption had been averted and broken at last" (p.60/P.57).

Tolson also seems relieved to see Leonard again. Since leaving school, marrying, and being conscripted into the army, he has tried several jobs before starting at Ewbank's which shows that he, too, is dissatisfied and restless. His superior physical strength has not helped him find a niche in society. He continually releases his pent-up emotions through physical activity in much the same way as Arthur Machin plunges wholeheartedly into football. But Tolson favours destructive violence more frequently than Arthur. He is closely associated with his motor-bike: a machine capable of great force. Both

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[1] Usually "physically docile and acquiescent; mentally...quick and alert", he becomes "physically active, almost militantly decisive, yet slow in understanding" when with his mother (p.34/P.32).

his bike and the various hammers he uses seem extensions of himself, introducing a mechanical quality to his muscular strength.[1] His first homosexual experience with Leonard (while they are looking after tents Ewbank's firm has erected for a show) leaves him unhappy and frustrated. Walking among the tents after the show, he desultorily knocks his sledge-hammer against empty barrels, turns over tables and smashes piles of damaged plates. Neither these random activities nor an evening spent with a young girl assuage his guilt. His emotional turmoil explodes in a staggering display of physical power when he dismantles most of the tents single-handed.

Like Arthur's, Tolson's strength encourages others to classify him as a "mindless bloody gorilla" or an "ape" (pp.96,105/P.91,100). But apart from their physical power, the two characters have little in common. Tolson is not concerned about Leonard's alienation, whereas Arthur, as we saw, tries to encourage Mrs Hammond to overcome her neurotic withdrawal. Only on one occasion does Tolson use his great strength to protect Leonard. As a boy he stops the extreme bullying Leonard suffers at the council school by fighting one of his tormentors. While Arthur derives a certain satisfaction from his involvement in a communal sport, Tolson usually works alone. He works with great ease and skill—whether hammering in stakes for a large tent or laying a smooth oak dance floor in a marquee—but his inner thoughts are not revealed. By withholding them, Storey prevents any conclusions being drawn about the relationship between Tolson's mental and emotional well-being and his work; but we do learn that he often finds his

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[1] For a more detailed discussion of this aspect of Tolson's character, see Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", pp.84-85; and Clark, "David Storey", pp.32-34.

violent physical activities exhilarating.

Yet there are pointers to Storey's continued belief in the efficacy of physical exertion to reduce, briefly, existential distress. Soon after his arrival at the Place, John sets about restoring sections of the decaying building. Working hard, he is "thankful that the sense of desolation could be alleviated by physical activity" (p.25/P.23). Leonard's health improves when he starts work for Ewbank, and despite the enormous differences in their strength, he and Tolson work "in rhythm", "instinctively together" (pp.81-82/P.77). This same rapport reappears when Ewbank's men are erecting the wedding marquee at Meerstone Park. Here Tolson's "hurried accuracy" and absorption in his movements has "the men responding to every swinging gesture of his arm" (p.151/P.142). Yet, in contrast to his approach in *This Sporting Life*, Storey places little emphasis on the beneficial effects of this kind of physical involvement.

In *Radcliffe* Storey also views from a different angle another important theme that appears in his first two novels. He re-examines the possibility of a relationship's providing an emotional home. When Leonard and Tolson meet again, they slowly pick up the threads of their earlier friendship and later become lovers. For a time this homosexual affair lessens the intensely isolated state into which Leonard has withdrawn. But as an essentially unstable relationship, it cannot contain the emotional tumult of the two participants, and Leonard rightly sees that it will end in one of two extremes: love or destruction (p.141/P.133).

For one thing, Tolson genuinely cares for his family, despite his unorthodox behaviour. During a visit, Leonard watches Tolson gently and carefully bathing his eldest son. On another occasion he

interrupts him giving the boy some milk before tucking him into bed. Both domestic scenes support Tolson's claim: "It's a family and a home. I've got two kids in there. I care about them. Nobody else does" (p.132/P.125). Apart from this obstacle, there is his overwhelming desire to dominate—even destroy—others, despite his apparent affection for them. He seems driven "to attack, to *consume* people in whom he recognises some sort of spiritual quality" (p.173/P.163). Throughout the novel he viciously assaults Leonard, but his paradoxical nature is best seen during the incident when he accosts him in the Radcliffe family church. He grabs his wrist in a vice-like grip and "tenderly covered with kisses the screaming face" (p.223/P.209). Beside Leonard's agony, Mrs Hammond's cry that Arthur is destroying her pales into insignificance.

The two men's relationship is complicated further by tensions arising from class distinctions. Early in the narrative, Tolson's aggressive behaviour towards Leonard and the Place reveals his dislike of the upper classes. Years later, Leonard believes Tolson constantly belittles him because he can accept him only after reducing him to his workman's level. This partly accounts for the way Tolson humiliates Leonard (raping his sister, Elizabeth, putting excrement in his sandwiches, and orally raping him), yet the question of Tolson's guilt must also be considered. Given the allegedly conservative outlook of the working class and the strong emphasis placed on home and family,[1] it is certain that his exploits cause him great conflict. Leonard's

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[1] See Mary Eagleton and David Pierce, *Attitudes to Class in the English Novel* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1979), pp.132-33; Gray, *Silent Majority*, pp.13,201,206; and Lockwood, "Four Working-Class Novelists", pp.9-10.

conversation with Elizabeth confirms this:

> He has a conscience. But all his actions are directed against admitting it. That's why he can't forgive me. Why he torments himself. I *insist* on him having a conscience. (p.233/P.218)

The stress of such a love-hate relationship becomes unbearable. Tolson's actions grow more violent and repulsive. Goaded by Tolson's aggression towards him, Leonard becomes increasingly unstable. When he batters his tormentor to death with a hammer, his last vestiges of mental control are swept away. He spends some time in a mental hospital before returning home. Then, shunning everyone, he starts drawing and painting. One night a large black dog disturbs him. As if distressed by it, he climbs to the top of the Place and traps the animal (which has followed him) in a small room. This strange episode marks a change in Leonard's behaviour. He now alternates between painting, listening for the dog's occasional barking, and peering out of the window—as if expecting a visitor. But he stops painting after hearing that information given by one of Ewbank's former workmen has started a new investigation into Tolson's death. Several nights later, his father discovers a burning pile of his paintings and drawings, with a dog's head protruding from them. If the dog has any symbolic value, Storey gives no clue to its nature. But Leonard appears as threatened by the animal's pungent physicality as he was by Tolson's; and again he is driven to kill. After this bizarre incident, he gives himself up to the police. Found guilty of murdering Tolson, he is not held responsible for his actions. In prison he behaves unacceptably and so is transferred to a mental institution. Here he becomes increasingly violent and outrageous until death releases him from his torment.

In this calamitous relationship Storey offers an extreme version of those appearing in his earlier novels. And in *Radcliffe* there is

far less likelihood of the characters creating a successful home together. Ironically, the more Leonard relies on Tolson and the greater their involvement, the more Tolson suffers from guilt and the greater his violence. Yet there are some positive elements. Although Tolson precipitates Leonard's collapse, he also draws him briefly out of his debilitating seclusion. For a time Leonard becomes healthier and more aware of his physical being. This is an important change, as his dreams, hallucinations and unusual perception of things around him, usually show that his inner life detrimentally dominates his experience of the external world. As he admits, "Vic's the only real touch I have on things" (p.140/P.132). Tolson alone can lead him to the "wholeness and completeness" (p.286/P.267) for which he longs.[1]

Leonard describes his lifelong alienation as "being damned before you've even been given a choice" (p.366/P.341). Yet from a life of almost unrelieved anguish he gains something he considers valuable. Despair, he claims, "breeds a kind of warmth which is intolerable yet a confirmation of something absolute, something final and secure" p.367/P.342). Eventually his insanity brings him the sense of unity he has sought so desperately. This cold comfort signals a shift in Storey's outlook. In his first two novels he rejects isolation as a

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[1] R.D. Laing's explanation of what is meant by "schizoid" comes close to defining Leonard. He says that "the totality" of such an individual's experience "is split in two main ways...there is a rent in his relation with his world and...there is a disruption of his relation with himself. Such a person is not able to experience himself 'together with' others or 'at home in' the world but, on the contrary, he experiences himself in despairing aloneness and isolation; moreover, he does not experience himself as a complete person but rather as 'split' in various ways, perhaps as a mind more or less tenuously linked to a body, as two or more selves, and so on" (*Divided Self*, p.15).

potential refuge. But in *Radcliffe* he is less sure. Although John demonstrates the detrimental effects of withdrawing from society, the mental aberration of other characters suggests that insanity—the ultimate isolation—may be a refuge for those who cannot cope with their daily lives. Leonard is not the only mentally disturbed character in the novel. John's deep depression after Leonard's trial effectively removes him from normal activities. And Tolson's behaviour shows great instability, as does Denis Blakeley's.

Like others in *Radcliffe*, Blakeley is "a man trying to escape his predicament" (p.53/P.50). An ex-miner who now performs in working-men's clubs, he is peculiarly dependent on others and his opinions are largely second-hand, obtained from Austen. Blakeley ostensibly rejects his working-class roots, yet a surprising ambivalence remains. Although he casts Leonard in the role of his saviour, his ardent pursuit of Tolson suggests that the working class still attracts him. Apart from his homosexuality, his incestuous relationship with his daughter, Kathleen (by whom he has fathered three children), complicates his situation still further. He may declare he would be lost without his family, but he also says, "Nothing stays in one piece for long in this house....Not even the people. We get broken up amongst one another" (p.168/P.158-59). Reminiscent of Howarth's condemnation of family life,[1] Blakeley's remark foreshadows the catastrophe ahead. Torn between conflicting emotions and often filled with pessimism, he becomes increasingly convinced that unless he takes an absolute decision

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[1] See p.33 above. A possible reason for Storey's not developing this theme (in a family fraught with tension) is his declared aim to prevent *Radcliffe* from being labelled a sociological novel.

about something, life is meaningless. To achieve the finality he craves (p.266/P.248), he murders his entire family and then commits suicide.

Among the characters, Blakeley is not alone in hoping that Leonard can solve his existential problems. If we consider his extremely alienated state, it is ironic that Leonard is the focus of so much vicarious ambition.[1] Austen, like his brother John, "tends to turn Leonard into some sort of mirror in which he can view his imperfections and disabilities" (p.247/P.231). Throughout the narrative he intervenes in affairs at the Place. If his arrangements for Leonard's early private school education are beneficial, other episodes show a rather sinister self-interest. He witnesses Tolson's attack on Leonard in the York Room, but does nothing to stop it. Later he chooses the job at Ewbank's for Leonard, disregarding any difficulties his renewed contact with Tolson might bring. He arranges visits of the remaining Radcliffe brothers to the Place, "like carefully planned assaults" (p.52/P.50), intent on dislodging John and Leonard from their seclusion. When this fails, he forms a friendship with Blakeley, deserting him

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[1] Thomas Radcliffe, one of Leonard's uncles, also tries to exist through another individual. But he chooses John as his life-source. After the death of his two children, Thomas retreats into an isolated state and follows "not so much his own existence as that of his fellows with a relentless and unabating sympathy" (p.50/P.48). After a brief spell of intimacy, John suspects that his brother feeds "on adversity instinctively as a leech on blood" (p.51/P.48). He tires of Thomas's company and they lose contact.

when the relationship veers towards homosexuality.[1] After two years of aimless travel, he returns home filled with "a quiet determination and sense of purpose regarding...Leonard" (p.54/P.51). From this point on, Storey's handling of the narrative situation excludes Austen's inner thoughts, so we have to rely on Leonard (through whose eyes most of the action is now seen) to interpret his uncle's behaviour. He declares that Austen sees him as an avenger, destroying the lower and middle classes (p.356/P.331-32). More specifically, he believes Austen desperately seeks power, and he accuses him of wishing to take control of the Place. Although Austen seems motivated by ambition, his intentions are never clarified and, because of this flaw in the novel, he remains a rather shadowy, somewhat malevolent, figure with a suspect interest in Leonard.

Apart from the unusual, tormented relationships in *Radcliffe*, much of its powerful ambience and its Gothic overtones[2] come from the spatial details Storey selects. Once more, physical setting provides a further

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[1] It is interesting to speculate whether Storey's determination to avoid having *Radcliffe* interpreted along sociological lines (explaining as it may his evasion of family conflict in the novel) also accounts for the appearance of several homosexuals in it. In *This Sporting Life* and *Flight into Camden*, the characters' conflicts concern families and heterosexual affairs. But in *Radcliffe* Storey draws attention away from such major social issues by focusing on three characters who seek homosexual experiences (Leonard, Tolson and Blakeley) and touching on Austen's latent homosexuality. If these characters had been involved in heterosexual affairs, the novel might have seemed yet another social documentary. It is also possible that Storey felt two male characters embroiled in a love-hate relationship would help to clarify his dualistic vision, whereas heterosexual intimacy would encourage readers to see the opposing characters in a conventional light.

[2] Susan Clark discusses in greater detail Storey's use of characteristic Gothic elements in *Radcliffe*'s landscapes ("David Storey", pp.34-36).

perspective on his thematic concerns. The Place, in particular, dominates *Radcliffe*'s world-view. Once the home of a wealthy family, surrounded by a park and farmland, this decaying mansion with its huge, empty rooms and passages, broods alone amidst a housing estate that threatens its very existence. Storey vividly describes the estate's creeping destructiveness: "absorbing first the stone cottages of a heathland village, then several towering oak trees and a wide avenue of elms, and finally surrounding the Place and its attendant church within a denuded perimeter of shrubbery and trees", it then "expanded and forced its way over the remaining green park and pasture" (p.14/P.14).

This tension between the Place and the housing estate where Tolson lives, symbolises something of the battle between himself and Leonard. When they are young, Tolson, faced by the "crumbled façade" of the Place, is reassured by a backward glance "at the brick houses of the estate where he lived" (p.16/P.15-16). And sometimes Leonard races "from the restrained atmosphere of the Place" to find refuge in "Tolson's small and crowded home" (p.44/P.41-42). These positive experiences reflect the comfort Tolson derives from his working-class life (despite his frustration) and his beneficial, if brief, effect on Leonard. But the negative description of the estate warns ominously of the catastrophe to come, as does Tolson's attitude towards the Place. From the start he finds it threatening and, as we have seen, his dislike of the upper classes partly motivates his aggressive treatment of Leonard. Yet for Leonard, the Place is a central part of his existence. It seems "the only constant, the only absolute in that vast geometric confusion of other people's houses" (p.111/P.106). When Leonard dreams or hallucinates, the Place frequently becomes an extension of his mind. It is the starting-point for his excursions into interior landscapes, filled with surrealistic imagery. These threatening images increase

the atmosphere of impending doom that pervades the novel.

From the beginning, Storey highlights the Place's disturbing desolation. John's childhood memories of this once proud estate were of "something dark and even frightening....like an animal crouched at the summit of the hill" (p.21/P.20). Yet when he returns as caretaker, the challenging proximity of the housing estate disturbs him more than the Place itself. By likening the crumbling Place to a mutilated giant lying on a battlefield, menaced by the "endless vista of houses" (p.22/P.21), Storey emphasises John's sense of foreboding and also prepares for the eventual destruction of the building. After the violent deaths of Tolson, the Blakeley family and Leonard, the remnant of the Radcliffe family drift away. In a marvellous passage that has "the force of a moral judgement",[1] Storey presents the final onslaught by the estate. Within two years the Place is demolished, houses are built on the site and all traces of the Radcliffes obliterated.

Storey does not limit images of destruction to the Place and its surroundings. His description of Leonard and Tolson's meeting near a ruined castle carries similar overtones. (Thorn trees lay siege to the castle's "aggressive immobility, their structures withered like bone" (p.78/P.74). As the sun sets, "red fangs of cloud"—"vicious and searing over the fused purple of the moor"—grope "ferociously eastwards", and the land begins "to eat into the sun" (p.80/P.76).) On the other hand he avoids creating a lasting impression of Tolson's home. Only his motor-bike's dominating presence is established, and there are hints of a claustrophobic, lifeless environment. (The motor-bike stands on a strip of grass "matted with a long accumulation

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[1] Taylor, *David Storey*, p.27.

of oil; all round the machine stretched a black pond of earth. Beyond...the ground had been massively dug. Nothing grew there" (p.127/P.121). Tolson's living-room is oppressive, filled with a "bulbous suite and square table". The low ceiling and "Large rose patterns" on the wallpaper diminish the room. "Everything was as if inflated to fill a space several times this size" (p.131/P.124). When we consider the graphic passages dealing with the Place, the sparse description of the Tolson home surprises and disappoints. Laura Weaver notes that the first three novels are linked stylistically by the "alternations between two places: rugby field and home, Yorkshire and London, housing estate and Beaumont estate". She does not develop this interesting observation but confines her few remarks to the "theme of self-division".[1] Yet these places are very important as either literal or metaphorical homes for the major, alienated characters in these novels. Whereas the opposing areas are vividly presented in *This Sporting Life* and *Flight into Camden*, this is not true of *Radcliffe*. By minimising anything that could be used to classify this novel as a working-class documentary, Storey has avoided this balance, with not entirely satisfactory results.

Whereas his first two novels drew rather ambiguously to a close, the catacylsmic events in *Radcliffe* ensure an uncompromising end. Yet, not unlike the faint beams of hope flickering amidst the strewn corpses at the end of a Shakespearean tragedy, Elizabeth's child offers a hint of reconciliation in the sombre closing pages. The result of Tolson's rape, her child combines his father's and Leonard's characteristics, suggesting that a balance between such extremes is possible. But Storey qualifies this suggestion by placing the annihilation of the

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[1] "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.102.

Place immediately afterwards.

In some ways *Radcliffe* marks the end of a period in Storey's work. The promised fourth novel[1] (containing further exploration of his dichotomy between the physical and spiritual worlds) failed to appear, and he has described the highly successful plays that followed as "largely unconscious attempts to extricate myself from the dead ends which *Radcliffe* had brought me to".[2] By considering his handling of the narrative situation in the first three novels, we can discover possible reasons for this block.

Storey has often said that his choice of narrators was greatly influenced by his dualistic vision of himself and his surroundings.[3] After isolating and exploring the physical world in *This Sporting Life*, he turned to the spiritual world in *Flight into Camden*. Because the main characters in these novels represented the two poles of a deeply-felt personal division, his use of first-person central narrators

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[1] See Frank Cox, "Writing for the Stage", *Plays and Players* 14 (September 1967), p.50; Hennessy interview, pp.5-6; and "Speaking of Writing", p.15.

[2] De Jongh, "Storey's Line", p.10.

[3] See my Chapter 1, pp.2-4 above; Hayman, *Playback*, p.18; Hennessy interview, p.6; Storey, "Journey Through a Tunnel", pp.160-61; and "Speaking of Writing", p.15.

seems logical.[1] The choice of a male narrator, Arthur, for the physical side also follows naturally. But his decision to use a woman as narrator in his second novel is less obvious. Once again Storey has explained the reasons for this. During repeated journeys from London to fulfil his playing commitments for the Leeds Rugby Club, he came to associate the north with "a masculine temperament" and the south with "femininity, with a woman's sensibility and responses".[2] *This Sporting Life* focuses on the very masculine game of Rugby League football and is set in Yorkshire. In *Flight into Camden* much of the narrative is set in London with Margaret as narrator. Recently Storey has offered another reason for choosing a woman to mediate events in *Flight into Camden*:

> It was something I felt I could identify with, seeing society as an oppressive system which denied every kind of feeling and ambition she might have had. I felt it was my own experience, and it was true of what I felt was the feminine experience at that time.[3]

By plotting Margaret's and Arthur's position on Stanzel's typological circle, we discover that gender and personality traits are not their only distinguishing feature. In *This Sporting Life* the use of flashbacks increases the distance between Arthur's experiencing and

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[1] I am using Franz Stanzel's categories of narrators (in preference to those suggested by Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*) because of the clarity and ease of classification offered by Stanzel's typological circle. Unlike Booth, he emphasises the importance of person: a method especially useful when considering Storey's first three novels. Details concerning Stanzel's typological circle can be found in *Narrative Situations in the Novel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), pp.162-66. His discussion on the important differences between first- and third-person narration appears in "Towards a 'Grammar of Fiction'", *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 11 (Spring 1978), pp.254-57.

[2] "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.161.

[3] Haffenden interview, p.21.

narrating selves. So the narrative situation shifts slightly towards that of the authorial novel. But in *Flight into Camden*, Margaret seldom recalls her past and so her experiencing self predominates. Thus the narrative situation here approaches (but never becomes identical with) that of the figural novel.[1]

Storey's clear-cut scheme for exploring the two poles of his dichotomy in separate novels favoured first-person narration. But by deciding to confront these extremes in different characters in his third novel, he was forced to consider another method. *Radcliffe* starts and ends as an authorial novel with its greater freedom of point of view.[2] Yet within this framework, the narrative process fluctuates from authorial to figural and back again. As the story unfolds, Leonard mediates events more frequently until we see most of them from his point of view.[3] By changing perspective in this way, Storey modifies the narrative situation until it nears the figural pole of Stanzel's typological circle.[4] This has several important effects.

Tolson's inner thoughts and emotions are never revealed to us. We have to assess this unusual character solely from his words and actions and other characters' opinions. Faced with this uncertainty, we may reach simplistic conclusions about Tolson or misinterpret his behaviour. The shift in the narrative situation also goes against

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[1] Stanzel, *Narrative Situations*, pp.68-70, 163-64.

[2] Ibid., pp.27,53.

[3] Wayne C. Booth would describe *Radcliffe* as starting with an "implied author" or "undramatized narrator" and he would see Leonard as a "third-person reflector" (*The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp.151-53).

[4] *Narrative Situations*, p.163.

Storey's declared aim of using Leonard and Tolson as the vehicles for the opposing elements of his dualistic vision. By withholding Tolson's point of view, Storey disturbs the balance for which he seems to have been striving. The spiritual side, with its characteristic tendency to withdraw (embodied in Leonard), outweighs the physical one (embodied in Tolson). This suggests that Storey's own preoccupation with his experience of the physical world had reached a point of stasis. By favouring Leonard as narrator, Storey negatively affects our assessment of other characters, too. This is especially true of Austen, as we have seen.[1]

While it is dangerous to speculate about why a writer's career follows a particular course, it does seem that Storey used his writing less urgently for therapy after *Radcliffe*.[2] Although he considers his concept of duality to be a continuing factor in his creativity,[3] he repeatedly refers to his first three novels to illustrate his dichotomy, theorising less about his later ones. He has also become wary of

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[1] See p.55 above.

[2] Judith Harris comes to the same conclusion. In a letter to her dated 22 May 1972, Storey described his writing as "something I do—or have come to do—in order to earn a living" ("Unholy Encounter", p.45).

[3] See Frances Gibb, "Why David Storey Has Got It In For Academics, the Critics, and 'Literary Whizz-Kids'", *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 4 February 1977, p.9; Hennessy interview, p.6; and Higgins, "Night and Day", p.13.

making categorical statements about his work.[1] For example, he has modified his early, unsympathetic interpretation of Arthur as destructive,[2] acknowledging his positive qualities and the negative influence of society: a broader outlook suggesting that he no longer sees everything in the rigidly schematic way he did earlier:

> ...I set out to create a character who possessed all the attributes I admired in the outside world: he was physically strong, he was ambitious, he had the facility to get on, to make the world work for him on his own terms. With these qualities, however, came others which the world encourages in much the same sort of way: greed, ruthlessness, insensibility, power. These latter qualities...are what happen...to strong people and good people, when they find that their strength has no real purpose, their ambition no real goal, their capacities, in the world that exists, no real meaning.[3]

He regards his early novels as "too explicit",[4] especially *Radcliffe*, which he has dismissed in a number of interviews over the years.[5] "I shan't write another novel like *Radcliffe*", he has said.[6]

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[1] Storey has said that he rather spoilt his handling of Arthur by being too explicit. "This is always a mistake—the writer trying to make everything too clear: I suspect a writer doesn't really know what he's doing" (Hennessy interview, p.5). In a letter to Laura Weaver dated 11 November 1976, he wrote: "The artist's conscious attitude to his own work, in my experience, is invariably at odds with it—since what he has 'found' is by intuition and not reason—and is usually less enlightening than an attitude taken, for instance, by an enlightened reader or spectator....Take whatever attitude you may discern in my work from the work, and not from the author" ("Journey Through a Tunnel", p.33).

[2] "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.160.

[3] Introduction to *This Sporting Life*, p.ix.

[4] Peter Ansorge, "Theatre of Life", *Plays and Players* 20 (September 1973), p.33.

[5] De Jongh, "Storey's Line", p.10; Haffenden interview, p.22; Hennessy interview, p.7; and Taylor, *Second Wave*, p.143.

[6] Interview with Victor Sage, *New Review* 3 (No.31), 1976, p.65.

Yet the excesses of *Radcliffe* have a deeply disturbing power that should not be overlooked.[1] Storey's early response is still worth considering: that it is "in parts really wild...but in a way that is what the book is 'about' for me".[2]

As I have tried to show, Storey's first three novels can be read without any knowledge of his dualistic vision. In fact his distinctions between the physical and spiritual are not as clearly defined as his early statements about his work suggest.[3] Reference to his dichotomy can be illuminating, but too much emphasis on it clouds other, equally important, aspects of his writing. A wider view—one that sees Storey's characters as alienated individuals groping for solutions to their existential problems—admits Storey's theories. But because it is based on a careful reading of the novels without simply applying Storey's dichotomy, it embraces nearly all his characters. Such an approach also includes more readily the remainder of his work, where his dualistic vision is no longer clearly defined.

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[1] Nicholas de Jongh calls it Storey's "most considerable piece of writing". He adds that "in its suggestion of doomed personalities pulsing with irresistible pressures they do not understand there is the kind of density of effect and width of ambition that a novel paced along more conventional lines would fail to accommodate. Its failure is that of exaggeration, of over-reaching: but these faults are of emphasis not of design" ("Storey's Line", p.10).

[2] "Speaking of Writing", p.15.

[3] Laura Weaver discusses this point in some detail ("Journey Through a Tunnel", pp.35,41,49,89-96,101-102).

CHAPTER 4

INSANITY AND REFUGE

> Insanity, you know, is the one refuge I've always felt I was able to afford.
>
> Arnold Middleton

Many of Storey's characters cannot withstand the relentless pressure of alienation and choose, or are compelled, to withdraw from their families and communities. An early example of this reaction is Mrs Hammond. Her inability to cope does not result in insanity, yet Storey does often show such acute introversion and its accompanying stress leading to emotional and mental breakdown.

For some characters their collapse is the culmination of prolonged pressure. This is the fate of several people in *Radcliffe* and also of Adrienne in *Sisters*. For others their breakdown is triggered off by a particular, traumatic event. Margaret, in *Cromwell*, is grief-stricken by the death of her father. Being interrogated and physically maltreated proves too much for her fragile mental health. In *Saville*, Mrs Reagan becomes ill soon after the death of her husband and is taken to a mental institution.

In these texts Storey does not focus primarily on mental collapse, but in *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton*, *Pasmore*, *A Temporary Life*,

and *Home*, he highlights this "obsessive theme".[1]

Although *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* is an undeniably humorous play, full of witty dialogue, it concerns a man trapped in an existence he finds deeply distressing. The opening reveals how far-reaching Arnold's isolation is. His home-life is complex and frustrating. Joan, his wife, is clearly unhappy and, like so many couples in Storey's work, the Middletons struggle to communicate. Although Storey emphasises Arnold's alienation rather than Joan's, there are moments during the play when her anxiety is clearly shown. Whenever she confronts Arnold with the realities of their strained relationship, he rebuffs her. Echoing Mrs Hammond's cry to Arthur,[2] Joan says, "You make me feel I don't exist".[3]

Her self-confidence is undermined further by Mrs Ellis, her mother, who lives with them, and declares that Joan robs her of her self-assurance. She tells Arnold, "I don't want to cause any bother. I don't. But Joan's always making me feel I haven't got anything at all ... nothing" (p.22/P.209). There are indications that Arnold is attracted to his mother-in-law and that she finds his attentions flattering. Indeed, far from providing a refuge from pressures in the

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[1] Taylor, *David Storey*, p.10. Other critics have also noted Storey's preoccupation with mental breakdown (Reinelt, "Novels and Plays", p.137; and Stinson, "Dualism and Paradox", p.132).

[2] See p.23 above.

[3] David Storey, *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), p.48; and Penguin collection (Harmondsworth, 1982), p.231. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (p.48/P.231).

outside world, Arnold's home increases stress. His profession as a history teacher provides no self-fulfilment either. He longs for "a proper job and a decent home", but declares, "I teach in a madhouse all day, then come home to another at night" (pp.21,22/P.208). Yet it soon becomes apparent that he is partly responsible for the tense home atmosphere.

Joan tries to cope with her own frustrations by trying to maintain a scrupulously clean house, but Arnold's need to surround himself with objects constantly thwarts this. His collection of carefully preserved and presented objects fills their living-room and suggests that he may be establishing a private museum. The objects create an effective cocoon into which he can retreat,[1] shutting out the external world and defying Joan's desire for order. But she does not understand that this is how Arnold bolsters his inadequate self-confidence. She views his behaviour as provocative and directs much of her anger at his collection. She calls the house a "museum" and "an institution" (p.14/P.202), implying that it lacks life. (Of course, her compulsive cleaning may, ironically, have the same effect.)

The play opens with a suit of armour (recently delivered) dominating the stage. The armour symbolises several things. Its traditional, defensive function represents Arnold's longing for self-protection. Paradoxically, he is also near breaking-point, and the armour's arrival, with its two-handed sword, signals his subconscious need to attack the mounting pressures in his life. At first he declares he has always wanted a suit of armour; later he says it is a

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[1] Ernest Nolan, "Beyond Realism" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1975), p.42.

present for his parents. But he may have sent it home to precipitate a crisis, knowing that Joan will demand its removal. Other critics have offered alternative suggestions: the armour epitomises Arnold's "inner, spiritual hollowness";[1] or it reflects his insight into the insincerity and pretensions of people around him—it at least is *verifiably* hollow.[2] Whatever the armour symbolises, its arrival sorely tests the Middletons' unhappy marriage.

Arnold's collection is not the only overt sign of his unhappiness. Throughout the play he resorts to various tactics to conceal the anguish he feels[3] and to ward off the attentions of others. Like Simon Gray's Butley, and many of Harold Pinter's characters, he tries to hide behind "a torrent of language".[4] By constantly using "an obsessive barrage of music-hall comedy and nursery rhyme nonsense" Arnold masks his vulnerability.[5] Or when asked something specific, he simply refuses to reply if the answer will be too revealing. For instance, when Mrs Ellis asks whether he had a happy childhood, he merely asks her if *she* did (p.21/P.207). Later he evades answering Joan's questions, despite her evident distress.

> JOAN (*quietly*). Do you have any feeling left for me at all?
> ARNIE. Are you trying to be frivolous? (p.48/P.231)

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[1] Clark, "David Storey", p.82.

[2] See Kalson, "Insanity and the Rational Man", p.113; and Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.184.

[3] Storey has drawn attention to Arnold's verbal defence mechanism (Cox, "Writing for the Stage", p.50; and Hennessy interview, p.7).

[4] Harold Pinter's phrase, quoted by Martin Esslin in *Pinter*, 3rd ed., exp., (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977), p.46.

[5] John Russell Taylor, "David Storey/Novelist into Dramatist", *Plays and Players* 17 (June 1970), p.24.

And he seems cruelly flippant when Joan asks him why he stays with her.

> ARNIE. Go knot your nose.
> JOAN. Tell me. Why do you stay here?
> ARNIE. Run up a flag.
> JOAN. Try and answer me.
> ARNIE. Leave me alone.
> JOAN (*slowly*). Why do you stay with me, Arnie?
> (ARNIE *glances round at the doors.*)
> Well off you go then.
> ARNIE. I can detect a piece of dust. Wait a minute, yes. It's under the near left-hand leg of the dressing-table in your mother's bedroom: a quick outflanking manoeuvre and it will be within your grasp. (p.49/P.231-32)

Behind the verbal smoke-screen, Arnold is deeply unhappy, and his military phraseology, like the armour's arrival, adds to the image of their home as a battlefield.

During the course of the play his loneliness is clearly shown. Even his bantering camaraderie with Jeffrey Hanson (supposedly his best friend) is rather superficial.[1] Joan says that he despises Hanson (p.48/P.231), and eventually Arnold no longer hides his contempt. Telling him that his thoughts are "superfluous", Arnold claims that his own "weaknesses stand higher than [Hanson's] greatest virtues" (p.73/P.252). Only Mrs Ellis tries to comfort Arnold but, ironically, her concern disrupts even further his precarious relationship with Joan.

Arnold's fluctuating emotions about Joan and Mrs Ellis, together with their continual demands for affirmation of his love, increase his agony. At one point it seems as if Joan and her mother unite to force

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[1] Ernest Nolan first drew my attention to this aspect of their friendship ("Beyond Realism", pp.46-47). He also pointed out that Irving Wardle noted the difference between the two men: "Here two forms of humour—one a personal way of coping with life, and one a façade of second-hand manners—meet in deadly combat". (" Mr Storey Brilliant When in Focus", *The Times*, 6 July 1967, p.8. This article does not appear in the airmail edition.)

him into submission. After asking him to decide who has the better legs, they abruptly stop competing and cut off some of his hair (symbolically emasculating him).[1] Forced to choose, Arnold says Mrs Ellis's legs are superior. The women's tussle for his love can no longer be ignored. Joan wants him to tell her mother to go; Mrs Ellis asks him to refuse. Faced with their clamorous demands, Arnold gabbles doggerel and so evades the crisis. But he also prevents any resolution of their triangular conflict. In an accelerating spiral of events, his game-playing becomes increasingly provocative as his suffering intensifies: suffering which either he is unwilling to discuss or cannot express coherently. Joan upsets both Arnold and her mother by insisting that he remove his collection and that she find alternative accommodation.

He receives another bitter blow when his parents send a telegram cancelling their proposed visit: their first for some years.[2] During an impromptu party with some of his teaching colleagues (and a rather precocious schoolgirl) the mounting tensions can no longer be contained. The party ends with Arnold drunkenly pretending to shoot Hanson and then lurching off to bed where he has intercourse with Mrs Ellis.

This startling train of events does not purge his seething brain. Reflecting Leonard Radcliffe's attitude towards suffering,[3] Arnold almost envies the grief his actions have caused Mrs Ellis, because it

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[1] Kalson, "Insanity and the Rational Man", p.112.

[2] In his interview with Frank Cox, Storey has indicated the intensity of Arnold's disappointment ("Writing for the Stage", p.50).

[3] See p.52 above.

brings reassurance. He says:

> Perhaps I could go mad. Insanity, you know, is the one refuge I've always felt I was able to afford. (p.87/P.263-64)

His collapse, which lasts several days, is the climax of many years of mental and emotional strain. Just before he succumbs to despair, he recites a piece of his defensive yet revealing doggerel. In it he hints that his mother has projected onto him her hopes for their family. The final couplet implies that she is dissatisfied with his father's achievements:

> "Please, please my son,
> Don't fail me like your father done." (p.88/P.264)

Storey returns to his theme of parasitic ambition, but does not feature it prominently this time.[1]

The play ends with Arnold's recovery amidst numerous household changes. Joan has found a job: something her mother suggested earlier she should do to cure her restlessness. But whether this will have the desired effect is uncertain. Mrs Ellis has found a room and Arnold's possessions have been cleared away. Although these actions immediately alter the Middletons' domestic life, their long-term effects cannot be gauged. Storey has again provided a rather ambiguous ending.

In the final moments of the play there are hints of healing. Joan shows greater understanding of Arnold's predicament.

> JOAN. Arnie.
> (*He looks up, still holding his head.*)
> Come on, now.
> ARNIE. Oh. Oh.
> (*His hands are clasped to the top of his head.*)
> What am I to do?
> JOAN. Here.
> (*She holds out her hand.*) (p.103/P.278)

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[1] This theme appears, with varying emphasis, in his first three novels. (See pp.27,30,33,44,53-54 above.)

He seems prepared to "reconcile himself to what experience has made him".[1] Looking at the palms of his hands he remarks on the metaphorical scars he sees there:

> They inhabit the skin. They grow there after a while like natural features. Deformities actually acquire that authority....Remove them—and you remove life itself. (p.98/P.273)

Yet the tentative nature of Arnold's restoration cannot be overlooked. It is worth noticing that in an earlier version of the play, entitled *To Die with the Philistines*, he commits suicide. Storey's decision to keep him alive reflects his own experience. Although he questions the validity of altering the ending, he was in "a rather despairing state" when he first wrote the play. But by the time he revised it, his outlook had changed:

> ...I said to myself, but I'm still alive, and working, so I must see some sort of possibility of going on and getting somewhere, so in a certain sense the original ending was not really "true" either.[2]

Despite Storey's more positive outlook, some of the despair lingers. Although he says that Arnold breaks "out of the shell he has created for himself",[3] at the end of the play his conflicts "actually remain unresolved".[4]

Accepting the importance of his past does not mean he will overcome the problem of his mother's demands. There is nothing to suggest that

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[1] Benedict Nightingale, *Contemporary Dramatists* (London: St James Press, 1973), p.740. Laura Weaver comes to a similar conclusion ("Journey Through a Tunnel", p.186).

[2] Taylor, "Novelist into Dramatist", p.23.

[3] Hennessy interview, p.8.

[4] Nolan, "Beyond Realism", p.35.

he will find teaching more enjoyable, although he does envisage work following after rest and recuperation (p.102/P.277). Joan's compassion must be weighed against her successful removal of Arnold's collection, which reflects her refusal to compromise. The loss of his objects perhaps represents Arnold's decision to stop erecting barriers between himself and others. But he may find the overneat living-room lacks a comforting atmosphere.[1] The hints that better prospects lie ahead do not guarantee a happy future. Yet the final image of Arnold and Joan facing each other (although not quite within touching distance) gives the impression that they are prepared to get on with living, even in the face of great odds.[2] Their possible reconciliation, coupled with Storey's revised ending, encourages a muted optimism.

The very nature of naturalistic drama ensures a largely exterior view of Arnold's mental collapse. In his novel, *Pasmore*, Storey's use of a mainly figural narrative situation gives a fuller picture of Colin Pasmore's nervous breakdown. Becoming neurotically withdrawn because of his life's apparent purposelessness, Pasmore's mental health deteriorates. Like Arnold, he is aware of "missing elements of his existence"[3] which neither his work nor his private life provides. Yet

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[1] As Laura Weaver notes, Arnold's recovery suggests that he is now able to cope with reality, but his "restoration" also leaves the impression that he has submitted to his family's demands ("Journey Through a Tunnel", pp.186,190-91).

[2] Taylor, *Second Wave*, p.148.

[3] David Storey, *Pasmore* (London: Longman Group, 1972), p.19; and Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1976), p.21. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (p.19/P.21).

he does not know where else to look, or for what he is seeking.[1] There seems little basis for Pasmore's futility. He acknowledges that Kay (his wife), his children, his home, the other members of his family and his position as a college history teacher should satisfy him. But he cannot suppress a profound questioning of "his life, the complacency and confinement of his existence, the irony of its securities, its inertia" (p.57/P.52). The novel shows three possible homes—his marital and parental homes, and his flat—failing as suitable refuges from his growing existential despair.[2]

Part of Pasmore's problem stems from his feeling trapped by others' expectations. As he tries to explain to Coles, his friend and teaching colleague, he is terrified of asserting his own needs. He fears what would happen to Kay, their parents, his children and "tribes of people back home who see me as some God-given appeaser of all their private hysterias and doubts". The stress of being "merely an appendage to a long line of stifled obsessions" (p.15/P.17) starts to tell.[3] Having been a devoted husband, teacher and son for so long, everything

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[1] Storey's characters, with very rare exceptions, never turn to religion for answers to their existential problems. Their failure to do so probably reflects their creator's attitude. Storey has said, "Organised religion I find touching but irrelevant" (Sage interview, p.65).

[2] Laura Weaver's conclusion about Pasmore's various homes endorses my findings ("Journey Through a Tunnel", pp.191-92,200-203).

[3] Storey has said that the "unnatural allegiance he owes to his father's ambitions for him, and how he can't fulfil them, are really the core of his self-dissatisfaction" (Haffenden interview, p.21).

that gives meaning to his life suddenly becomes suspect.[1]

For some months he swings between extremes: first loving and then loathing Kay and his children. Then he decides to look for a room, hoping that by leaving home he will minimise his growing conflict. But his search confuses him further. The world of single individuals, which pretends to offer a type of freedom, is "worse than prison....a kind of hell" (p.27/P.27).

At about this time Pasmore meets Helen, an enigmatic woman, who attends some of his evening lectures. Although they meet a few times for drinks, he is always pleased and relieved to return home to Kay. But his interest in Helen revives his search for alternative accommodation. Just as Margaret and Howarth attempt to solve their problems by journeying away from their homes, Pasmore finds a flat. Storey foreshadows the failure of his relationship with Helen by stressing the negative aspects of their association and the environment: a technique used earlier in *Flight into Camden*. On one occasion their reflection in a mirror reminds Pasmore of "two figures waiting in a station, at a roadside. Like refugees" (p.41/P.39). The flat is situated in a shopping arcade: a busy area during the day, but invaded at night by "an army of scavengers....picking their way through the mounds of rubbish" (p.43/P.40). Pasmore's description of the tiny

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[1] R.D. Laing notes, "Being good is not, however, done out of any positive desire on the individual's own part to do the things that are said by others to be good, but is a negative conformity to a standard that is the other's standard and not one's own, and is prompted by the dread of what might happen if one were to be oneself in actuality" (*Divided Self*, p.104). If so, Pasmore's fear is a common reaction to such circumstances. Laura Weaver drew my attention to Laing's findings ("Journey Through a Tunnel", p.213).

flat as a "Home from home" (p.44/P.41) is ironic in a way he does not intend. As Margaret and Howarth find, problems are not easily left behind. The promise that another place can offer the solace one expects from a home is largely illusory.

For a while Pasmore uses the flat on a temporary basis, until the combined pressures of his affair with Helen, the breakdown of his family life and his increasing despondency, impel him to move there permanently. Yet when he leaves home he is acutely aware that this move neither solves his dilemma nor relieves his mental and emotional distress.

> He was broken-hearted. He didn't know what he was doing. The more he tried to sort things out the more complicated they became. (p.58/P.53)

Although he realises the meagreness of Helen's support, there is a brief interlude when she represents the inner peace and sense of life he seeks. But she seems to withdraw when he discloses these feelings.

Helen's husband visits Pasmore and offers to pay him to stop seeing her. He refuses. The next day a coffin, several wreaths and bunches of flowers are delivered intermittently to the flat. Then Pasmore is assaulted one evening and a few days later Helen ends their relationship.

Throughout this period he has been seeing Kay and the children, but their grief repels him. Slowly the flat becomes the only environment that has "any kind of meaning" (p.66/P.59). Later, when Kay hears of Helen's existence, her added distress leads to her virtual collapse. Sickened by her vulnerability, Pasmore returns home less often.

Asked by Kay to forestall an unexpected trip to London by his parents, Pasmore goes to see them: the stark winter scenery foreshadowing his bleak home-coming. This episode shows the debilitating working-class life that his better education has enabled him to escape. His

father, a coal-miner, comes back from the pit too exhausted to eat. Recalling bygone years, he tells Pasmore how he dug out each piece of coal, grateful that his son would never have to do the same gruelling work. When Pasmore tells his parents he has left Kay, they are shattered. Past sacrifices seem worthless. His mother says he does not understand the far-reaching implications of his decision. His father accuses him of ruining everything and declares he wishes Pasmore had never been born. Although more sympathetic, his sisters, Eileen and Wendy, also comment on the distress their parents will feel. Denied familial support, Pasmore returns to London. Storey again emphasises the destructive effect of existing through one's children. As Neil Roberts observes:

> Both parent and child are crippled by this transference: the parent feeds parasitically on the child, who experiences a curious emptiness in the supposedly "fulfilling" middle-class life he has achieved. Usually the crisis occurs when the child's life takes a turn that the parent cannot accept, confronting him with the futility of his investment.[1]

The parents' expectations thwarted, they turn against their children.

As Pasmore's relationships with Helen, with his parents and with Kay fail, his alienation is underlined by either the metaphorical or literal closing of a door.[2] When Helen refuses to see him again he feels "as if, somewhere, a last door had closed" (p.74/P.65). His father banishes him as he leaves his parents' home:

> "Don't come again," his father said. "Not ever."
> "No," he said. "All right."
> He went out and closed the door. (p.120/P.103)

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[1] "Fathers and Children", *Delta*, No.53 (1975), p.13.

[2] Janelle Reinelt drew my attention to this ("Novels and Plays", pp.49-50).

Pasmore returns home to find the house locked and everyone away (pp.158-59/P.136-37). With this final rejection his isolation is ensured.

While looking into the cracked mirror in his parents' bathroom, Pasmore notices that regardless of the way he moves, he cannot bring the two halves of his face together. This split image symbolises his inability to unite his fragmented existence. He has not found satisfactory alternatives to his roles determined by familial responsibilities. His career does not fill the existential void left by his unsuccessful relationships. Yet "All he had ever wanted, from the very beginning, was a feeling of wholeness" (p.124/P.108). Shunned by everyone, he becomes increasingly withdrawn. As in Mrs Hammond's case, and to a lesser extent in Howarth's, this inward turning is destructive and exacerbates anguish.

Throughout the novel Storey counterbalances Pasmore's sense of social and familial pressures with his conviction that everything is futile. Although his working-class background and the obligations his parents expect him to fulfil are clearly part of his problem,[1] the onset and worsening of endogenous depression also contribute to it. From the start his despondency is inexplicable. He is troubled by dreams which, although trivial, leave him with "a sense of terror" (p.18/P.20). Like Leonard Radcliffe and Arnold Middleton, Pasmore derives a certain perverse comfort from his suffering: "his consolation coming from feeling extraneous, self-tortured, lonely and confused" (p.21/P.22).

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[1] Both Anita Guiton and Neil Roberts warn against using only such external pressures to explain Pasmore's mental collapse (Anita Guiton, "Comments on David Storey's *Pasmore* and *A Temporary Life*", *Delta*, No.53 (1975), p.21; and Roberts, "Fathers and Children", p.15).

But as his frustration mounts, he fears for his sanity. He perceives his home differently, depending on his fluctuating moods. When helpless and furious, he finds it claustrophobic; when optimistic, he feels it enlarges (pp.28,39/P.28,38). His despair also adversely affects his relationships with everyone.[1]

When Helen ends their affair, and again after his abortive trip to see his parents, Pasmore withdraws into his flat. He stops his periodic visits to his wife and children. Slumped into inertia, unable to shake off the destructive grip of endogenous depression, he watches "the shadows moving on the ceiling, reflections from the street below" (p.89/P.78). He sees no solutions to his despair—only "debt and ruin" (p.123/P.107). Then a sudden desire to see Kay and the children takes him home. His decision brings a surge of enthusiasm, but Kay's cool reception renews his despondency. Subsequent visits show him how much the children have rejected him. Slowly it dawns on Pasmore that Kay is making a life without him. When he realises that she has a relationship with Fowler (who is himself recovering from a nervous breakdown), his remnants of hope disappear.

Visiting his family has deepened Pasmore's anguish and he is tormented by Kay's affair with Fowler. On one occasion he behaves rather like Saul Bellow's Herzog: he writes numerous threatening and abusive telegrams to Fowler that he never sends. Almost immobilised by despair, he spends most of his time in his flat, often not eating. At night he listens to the police radio; during the day he makes abortive

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[1] Anita Guiton, too, has suggested that part of Pasmore's breakdown is caused by endogenous despair which negatively colours his perception of people and events ("Comments", pp.21-22).

attempts to write down ideas. Sometimes he is racked by fits of weeping. He becomes less and less conscious of himself and his surroundings.

> Everything had been consumed; it was as if he had been eaten up....There was no way back, no way forward. He was, he knew now, extinct. (p.163/P.140)[1]

In this way he experiences a fear common to several of Storey's characters: that others will deny their right to exist.

His father's unexpected arrival proves too much for his precarious mental state. After an initial skirmish concerning Pasmore's responsibility towards his children, his father delivers the final blow. Looking around "at the street, at the stalls and the people", he observes bitterly, "I've given up all my life...so that you can live here". Pasmore replies, "I don't think so....You handed it over. Don't ask me to get it back" (p.167/P.143). By refusing to feel responsible for his father's past sacrifices, Pasmore rejects his guilt-ridden sense of duty. In a moment of truth he frees himself from his parents' emotional hold on him and simultaneously annihilates his father's motivation for living. This brutal severing of long-held familial ties destroys any vestiges of Pasmore's mental control.

His insanity lasts for many days. Then, aided by Coles, he regains a tenuous grip on himself and slowly ventures back into the world. But he is acutely aware of remaining isolated. A distressing visit home reveals "a place of which he no longer possessed any part" (p.176/P.150). Kay remains suspicious and wary of him despite his

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[1] As Susan Clark remarks, "Robbed of his 'masks' as husband, father, teacher, and lover, Pasmore, reminiscent of Peer Gynt, who peels the onion only to discover it has no core, finds that he has no inner being" ("David Storey", p.46).

weeping apology for what has happened. His newly acquired self-control disintegrates and Newsome (a friend of Kay's but a man he scarcely knows) takes him back to the flat. Again Pasmore's mental anguish threatens to overwhelm him. But Newsome tells him that Fowler has left Kay and this calms him. A few days later Pasmore tells Kay he wants to come home.

Now he also visits his parents again. Their home has "a kind of weariness, like a battlefield" (p.189/P.161). He notices that the table in the living-room has been "polished obsessively to a glassy shine" (p.191/P.163). Mrs Pasmore, like other mothers in Storey's work, seeks to relieve her frustrations by cleaning the house. His father has obviously suffered greatly, and tells Pasmore, "If you'd have cut me heart out you couldn't have hurt me more" (p.197/P.168). Yet there are hints of forgiveness, confirmed by Storey's description of the dawn. As Pasmore accompanies his father to the colliery, the light begins "to spread beyond the roofs, faintly at first, illuminating banks of dark cloud" (p.198/P.168). The two men shake hands as they say goodbye, Pasmore holding his father's hand "a moment before releasing it" (p.198/P.169). When he reaches his parents' home, he notices that the sun has "risen above the horizon and the banks of cloud [have] begun to move away" (p.199/P.169), and he leaves for London under a clear sky.

Nevertheless, the end of the novel is equivocal. Like Arnold Middleton, Pasmore has regained his sanity and been "restored" to his family without any certainty that the causes of his breakdown have been eliminated.[1] He admits little has outwardly changed. He still feels

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[1] Laura Weaver states that their "problems may recur and the journeys may need to be taken again" ("Journey Through a Tunnel", p.219).

despair, still dreams of the pit and the blackness that engulfed him. His departure from home and subsequent return echo the ambiguity of Margaret's and Howarth's cyclic journeys.[1] While the whole idea of escaping from an untenable situation can be seen as a praiseworthy search for self, it may also be a means of evading one's responsibilities.[2] A home-coming can also be viewed in two ways. It may be an "heroic resumption of commitments or a servile conformity"[3] to the expectations of one's family and society. Pasmore himself cannot assess whether the lasting effects of his breakdown are a "presentiment of love, or violence" (p.201/P.171). Yet he has survived an arduous spiritual journey and he does sense some change. This awareness, his mental recovery, his reunion with his family and his possible reconciliation with his parents, all suggest a positive outcome.

Some doubt remains. By rebelling against parental pressure and thus denying much of his past, Pasmore has caused some of his own emotional anguish. Storey indicates that it has also been caused by his discovery that "the elusive fruits of middle-class security...don't exist when he gets there".[4] As in his earlier novels, Storey implies that life does not offer permanent states of well-being, but whether

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[1] See pp.38-40 above.

[2] John Russell Taylor comments on this faintly discreditable idea of flight (*David Storey*, p.16).

[3] Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.214.

[4] Haffenden interview, p.21.

Pasmore has achieved this insight is not revealed. Ending the novel on an ambiguous note enables Storey to emphasise this. He is also able to imply that any favourable changes in Pasmore's life may be temporary.[1] But above all he draws attention to "people's capacity to endure and remake their lives, having broken them into pieces".[2] This is an important ingredient in Storey's work.

By using Pasmore as the figural medium, Storey forces us to judge the novel's fictional world as it is viewed through the mirror of Pasmore's consciousness.[3] Paul Bailey has objected that Pasmore, Kay and Helen "scarcely begin to exist". Although he acknowledges "that Colin Pasmore is in such a bad way that everything and everybody strike [*sic*] him as being inexplicable",[4] he underestimates the effect of using the figural narrative situation which enables the writer to portray the "authenticity of subjective consciousness".[5] As Pasmore loses

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[1] Richard Eyre, who directed the televised adaptation of *Pasmore*, told Henry Fenwick that he views the end of the novel as "a trial reconciliation" between Kay and Pasmore. Eyre's comments are to be found in Fenwick, "First Storey", *Radio Times*, 18-24 October 1980, p.27.

[2] Despite his muted optimism about Pasmore's home-coming, Eyre notes this positive side of the novel (Ibid., p.27).

[3] This description is based on Stanzel's explanation of the figural narrative situation (*Narrative Situations*, p.150).

[4] Paul Bailey, "Loss of Faith", *London Magazine* n.s. 12 (February/March 1973), p.158.

[5] David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), p.116. Although not discussing narrative situation, Lodge's remarks concerning "the movements of the individual consciousness as it encounters a reality, a context" (Ibid.) made me aware of this element in *Pasmore*.

mental control he barely perceives himself and others. Because we see the fictional world through his consciousness, it is entirely appropriate that our perception of Pasmore and other characters should be equally indistinct at these times. Such limited perspective does carry the inherent danger that we may misinterpret certain occurrences or malign some characters. This is especially likely if the figural medium suffers from endogenous depression which confuses his assessment of things.[1] Storey forestalls this problem by having other characters reveal their personal doubts, fears and distress to Pasmore. In this way we are made aware that others are also struggling to handle the pressures facing them.[2] So any danger of our considering Pasmore a self-indulgent weakling is adroitly removed.[3]

Kay is shattered by Pasmore's decision to leave home and she withdraws into a numbed state of despair when he tells her of his involvement with Helen. For some time, overwhelmed by grief, she neglects herself and the children. But partly as a result of her mother's visit, she makes a determined effort to rebuild her life. The other important factor in her recovery is her relationship with Fowler, himself a temporary victim of despair. Although Pasmore calls them "a couple of cripples" (p.153/P.132), they do help each other over their respective crises. Through Pasmore we witness Kay's growing incomprehension as her world crumbles: her weeping, her disregard for

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[1] See pp.78-79 above.

[2] Jeanne Froeb observes "that not only Pasmore, but several other characters in the novel, undergo experiences of extreme dislocation" ("Storey, Fowles and Murdoch", p.59).

[3] This counters Paul Bailey's criticism that Storey uses Pasmore's inexplicable breakdown "to opt out of enriching the background, and thereby making the hero a man worth feeling for" ("Loss of Faith", p.158).

the chaotic state of the house and her immobilising despair, which even the distress of her children cannot penetrate. Then, through his reactions, we learn of her renewed interest in her physical appearance and the improvements at home as she regains control over her life.

Pasmore's separation from Kay uncovers tensions in the lives of other family members. When his sister Eileen hears the news, her innate fear of a similar fate quickly surfaces. Her husband's observation that one should not continue a marriage against one's will makes her suspect an instability in their own relationship. Her anxious questioning and sudden anger show her basic insecurity (pp.109-110/P.95). Wendy, Pasmore's other sister, is not really happy although living an apparently ideal life combining wealth, social position and an active participation in civic affairs. Towards the end of the narrative, her alienation from her family becomes clearer. She and her father hardly greet each other. Pasmore observes inwardly:

> ...in a way she'd fulfilled all his father's dreams and yet, because she was a woman, had fulfilled none of them. She was an embarrassment, a liability: without children, wealthy, apparently enlightened. It was as if her sex disgusted him. (p.193/P.165)

Yet her final remark to Pasmore suggests that despite their isolation, they cannot sever the roots that bind them together and to their parental home. "At least, we have that in common", she says, signalling to her parents' house (p.196/P.167).

Nor are Pasmore's family the only ones to display these tensions. Even the dependable Coles seems acquainted with something akin to Pasmore's early discontent. When Pasmore asks him if—where Coles lives—they have ways of dealing with existential distress, Coles

hesitates before dismissing the possibility.

> "I see." Pasmore watched his friend intently. "You think I should face up to myself and these things would vanish."
> "Not vanish." Coles's smile had disappeared.
> (pp.15-16/P.17)

Cole's mood changes as if Pasmore has reminded him of some personal conflict. And Pasmore's acquaintance, Bill Newsome, is burdened by futility. An artist who was able to paint "in bold, heavy strokes and bright, aggressive colours" (p.88/P.76) ten years before, he has spent several months working on a canvas which is bare except for "a single speck of red paint" (p.85/P.75). He says that to paint anything the artist needs "a sense of space that, at one level, [he] can presume is secure". He maintains that contemporary life cannot provide such certainty, and his single dot of paint symbolises his impasse. He shrugs off his intimate disclosure by suggesting that it is not Pasmore's problem. Yet, ironically, when he asks, "What does one believe in, do you think?" (p.87/P.76), he strikes at the heart of their common dilemma.

Early in Storey's work appears the idea that some artists' existential questioning and self-doubt inhibits their ability to give concrete expression to their thoughts and feelings. In *Flight into Camden*, Howarth tries to substitute Margaret for his thwarted creativity.[1] Allott, an art teacher in *Life Class*, is separated from his wife and cannot find an alternative existence through art. He is "more thoroughly alienated from his work than any of those sad and self-doubting young men who have populated Storey's previous plays".

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[1] See p.29 above.

Like Arnold, Allott has a social mask. He "conceals his sense of inadequacy and frustration behind a cool and measured display of irony".[1] Yet he drops this façade briefly and admits that he sometimes doubts his sanity.[2] His isolation is emphasised by his behaviour while teaching. He likes escaping to the lavatory to write poetry, and his speech (a complex mixture of mock-heroic and serious statements) is largely incomprehensible to his students. He remains aloof, even when some male students simulate raping the model. Partly responsible for this event (p.88/P.234), Allott is dismissed.

Colin Freestone in *A Temporary Life* resembles Allott in his apparent detachment from the art classes he teaches, and he too is dismissed from his job. Anticipating a description of Allott as a "purveyor of the invisible event" (p.70/P.216), Freestone says his work is "so modern that it's practically invisible".[3] Both characters attempt to conceal their futility beneath a pretence of non-involvement.[4] Yet Freestone

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[1] Benedict Nightingale, "Everyman on His Uppers", *New Statesman* 87 (April 1974), p.558.

[2] David Storey, *Life Class* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), p.56; and Penguin collection (Harmondsworth, 1980), pp.202-203. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (p.56/P.202-203).

[3] David Storey, *A Temporary Life* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), p.46; and Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1978), p.48. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers with a capital P, thus: (p.46/P.48).

[4] Lindsay Anderson described David Storey to me as having very much Allott's attitude to life. He said, "He both is and is not responsible. He sets up a whole situation and then he'll walk around and let it happen....He has that strange ambiguous relationship...of involvement and non-involvement simultaneously" (unpublished material from my interview with Lindsay Anderson in London, 8 July 1980).

cannot divorce himself from art. He tells Mrs Sherman, his mother-in-law, that he has always been an artist even when trying other occupations. He says, "It's like having a club-foot. However hard you try, you can never quite disguise it" (p.58/P.60).

Freestone teaches art on a temporary basis at a college. A newcomer to the town, he has moved there because his wife, Yvonne, has voluntarily admitted herself to the mental hospital. The narrative covers a few months—from autumn to winter. During this period Freestone visits Yvonne and sometimes takes her for permitted outings. He also sees Mrs Sherman who is dismayed by her daughter's breakdown. He meets Elizabeth Newman, the wife of a wealthy industrialist, and has a brief affair with her. Yet he remains rather aloof from these women. His detachment from his work is even more marked. Questioned about art, he says he does not "go in for it at all". He also denies teaching it (p.84/P.83) and declares himself unable to express any views on the subject (p.90/P.88). Although his remarks stem partly from his delight in provoking others (p.191/P.181), Freestone's lack of involvement in the college confirms his disinterest.

Becoming entangled with the Newman family increases his alienation. Neville Newman pursues wealth ruthlessly and employs several bully-boys to discourage any who oppose his ideas. Freestone, an ex-boxer, cannot tolerate their rude aggressiveness and retaliates physically on occasions. His punches are reminiscent of attempts by Arthur Machin and Victor Tolson to solve problems by violence: a comparison strengthened when he is called "the ape-man" (p.92/P.90). By employing a detective—rather stereotyped in belted raincoat and trilby hat—to watch Freestone and Elizabeth, Newman discovers their affair. He meets Freestone, but

fails to dissuade him from seeing her. So Freestone is viciously assaulted.[1]

Shortly after this, Freestone and Kendal (a colleague) discover that the principal, Wilcox, keeps bottles of his urine in his office and an amazing collection of objects in his lavatory.[2] Among these are many casts and stuffed animals which have been disappearing for months from the college.

That evening Freestone attends the eighteenth birthday of the Newmans' daughter—a party to which Wilcox has also been invited. He starts fighting with one of Newman's bodyguards and is overpowered. He and Elizabeth are taken to an isolated house where Newman first tells him he has lost his job and then starts beating Elizabeth. When Freestone returns to the college some days later, Wilcox will not discuss his dismissal. Freestone cannot capitalise on his discovery

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[1] This incident closely resembles an episode in *Pasmore*. Pasmore and Helen are also followed by a private detective and Helen's husband, like Newman, tries to end their affair himself. When this fails, Pasmore is attacked.

[2] Besides the resemblance between Allott and Freestone, there are other striking similarities between *Life Class* and *A Temporary Life*. Both works involve art colleges whose principals behave in the same highly unorthodox way. Both men are contemptuous about modern students and have unusual ideas linking food, digestion and art. Foley (of *Life Class*) steals coke from the college, as does Wilcox. In each work there is a teacher more interested in sport than in art—Hendricks in *A Temporary Life* and Abercrombie in *Life Class*. Storey even uses certain images in both texts. Foley refers to a student's drawing as "The Black Hole of Calcutta" and Freestone uses the same description. Allott describes a drawing as an "advertisement...for rubber tyres" while Freestone thinks a student's effort resembles "motor car inner tubes and tyres". Although it over-simplifies, there is much evidence for Janelle Reinelt's statement that "*A Temporary Life* might actually be seen as *Life Class* in another genre, as the situations and characters are nearly identical" ("Novels and Plays", p.159). Kenneth Hurren also draws attention to the similarities in these works ("Still Life", *Spectator*, 20 April 1974, p.490).

of Wilcox's eccentric behaviour because Kendal (whose avant-garde experiments annoy Wilcox) has already used the knowledge to advance his own insecure position at the college. All Freestone achieves is Wilcox's assurance that Mathews, a rebellious student who became involved in the brawl, will not be sent away.

Freestone leaves the college and only returns to see the enormous boot that Kendal has built, explode amidst flashing lights, a muffled tune and rockets. The novel ends with Freestone employed as a manual labourer clearing refuse from the streets. Like Allott, who leaves his job "sans means ... sans wife ... sans recognition" (p.88/P.235), he faces a very uncertain future. Still, his work suggests that there is dignity in manual labour, especially if chosen by the individual concerned. He has also renounced a society that allows the Newmans and the Wilcoxes of the world to carry on unchecked. Wilcox has remained at the college despite signs of neurosis and the Newmans continue their way of life apparently without remorse.

Of all Storey's narrators, Freestone is the most enigmatic: a quality disliked by some critics.[1] Anita Guiton condemns him as "a psychopathic personality, highly plausible in his battles with the world, but essentially cold and indifferent to others' welfare".[2] To support her view, she cites his insensitivity towards Mrs Sherman's distress about Yvonne's mental collapse.[3] She also claims that he

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[1] In a scathing review of *A Temporary Life*, Paul Bailey lumps Storey's major characters together, describing them as "bloody boring heroes" ("It's a Knockout", *New Statesman* 86 (September 1973), p.393).

[2] "Comments", p.22.

[3] Laura Weaver also maintains that Freestone treats Mrs Sherman unfeelingly ("Journey Through a Tunnel", p.235).

contributes to his wife's alienation: "His intervention, or lack of it, in Yvonne's problems seems to be a factor in pushing her further into a world of unreason".[1] Neil Roberts finds the novel and Freestone "unnerving". He dislikes his nonchalance towards art and his affair with Elizabeth, but feels the contrast between Freestone and Yvonne most harshly illuminates his character. Yvonne cannot shut her mind to the world's suffering and so becomes mentally disturbed. Although "Freestone rationalises her pain as a befogging tyranny of abstractions...when he confronts her about 'caring', the cases are very particular: her mother and an elderly patient". Yvonne says no-one will care for them unless she does; Freestone callously replies that they must care for themselves.[2]

Storey's handling of the first-person narrative situation in *A Temporary Life* is partly to blame for such critical responses. The tone of Freestone's narration is markedly detached (the present tense—this is the only one of Storey's novels to use it throughout instead of the past tense—helps to create this impression); and, because the other characters seldom recall events outside his experience, we see the fictional world through his eyes. We learn very little about his thoughts and feelings and so must rely heavily on our own judgement. For example, his dinner with Wilcox and his wife is described in great detail, yet, despite the evening's bizarre nature, Freestone's account resembles that of a disinterested bystander. The three characters communicate so little that Wilcox delivers a near monologue. Even when describing how his host's fungus-and-toadstool brew prostrates him,

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[1] Guiton, "Comments", p.25.

[2] "Fathers and Children", pp.17-18.

Freestone sounds like a patient passively recounting symptoms to a doctor. Terse exchanges with Yvonne suggest that he shares her pessimism.

> "I was proud to be with you at that lunch today." I stroke her hair.
> "I can't communicate the things I feel."
> "I feel them, too."
> "There seems no point."
> "There isn't any point. That's why we're here." (p.81/P.81)

But whether he questions the purpose of existence as she does, or merely agrees with her to console her, is never clarified. Although he seldom comments on his own activities, he remarks that he discontinued professional boxing because he dislikes feeling exploited. And his claim that his "radicalism is treated as insanity" (p.65/P.66) suggests that being a newcomer may not be the only cause of his isolation at the college. Yet both observations reveal little more than his individualism.

Not only does Freestone offer little reflection. The other characters seldom discuss his behaviour, and if they do, they see him as unfeeling. Newman says he gives everyone the impression that he does not care (p.196/P.186), and Freestone says he does not "give a sod" for anyone who tries to manipulate him (p.224/P.212). Yet his physical aggression belies such indifference. Although Yvonne sees him as wanting "to break things all the time" (p.141/P.135), and Elizabeth queries the honesty of his violent reactions (p.231/P.218),[1] Freestone's behaviour can be seen as a firm stand against unruly social elements.[2]

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[1] Their attitude echoes Storey's presentation of violence as a useless problem-solver in *This Sporting Life* and *Radcliffe*.

[2] Neil Roberts first drew my attention to Freestone's paradoxical behaviour ("Fathers and Children", pp.17-18).

Unlike Pasmore, he possesses "wholeness" and "a refusal to compromise".[1] His callousness may be a variation of the defence mechanisms adopted by Arnold Middleton and Allott when faced with suspect values.

Many events in the novel show that Freestone has reasons for such an attitude. Neville Newman enjoys proclaiming himself and his associates as "the harbingers....of progress" who "spread enlightenment" everywhere (p.225/P.213), but a description of his latest building site leaves little doubt about his power's destructive quality.

> Trees, uprooted and dismembered, lie strewn across what at one time might have been a park. Closer at hand a tractor is filling in a dried-up lake. A balustraded bridge stands, partly dismembered, at its narrowest end, and at the other, where it disappears beyond a belt of trees, stands a roofless stone pagoda. (pp.194-95/P.184-85)

(Newman's rapacious ambition is an excellent example of the negative attributes often linked, in Storey, to those who make a "success" of their lives.)[2] Newman violently attacks his wife as well as any rivals. Like Helen in *Pasmore* and Mrs Weaver in *This Sporting Life*, Elizabeth tries to forget her discontent by committing adultery. Yet the retaliation this engenders is also a necessary part of the Newmans' existence: "It's the one thing, it seems, that keeps them going. That and the provocation necessary, preceding it" (p.238/P.224). Rebecca, their daughter, describes their lives as "a kind of circus" in which Newman's associates "all have parts...as well" (p.219/P.207). Elizabeth also sees the situation as "a game" (p.208/P.197). It is a dangerous one in which the innocent suffer, yet Newman and Elizabeth appear indifferent to any distress they may cause. The corruption they bring

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[1] Roberts, "Fathers and Children", p.17.

[2] See p.63 above.

to the area filters into the uninspiring college. Wilcox tries to curry favour with Newman in the hope of securing his patronage. Kendal jockeys for more favourable prospects. Neither considers the moral repercussions of his actions on himself or others.

Freestone also perceives the destructive role played by Yvonne's parents in their pursuit of illusory goals.[1] Like so many of Storey's working-class parents, the Shermans have sacrificed a great deal to help Yvonne escape from a house that is "a kind of a tomb" where one "can smell the decay, the neglect of life itself" (p.52/P.54). After her husband's death, Mrs Sherman's entire being has focused on Yvonne. Unable to understand her daughter's anguish, desperately lonely, and with her world crumbling, she cries, "It makes you wonder why you live at all. All that effort" (p.212/P.200). Yet when Freestone remarks that Yvonne can still give meaning to her life, Mrs Sherman seems unsure. Her distress stems more from her shattered hopes (and those of her dead husband) than from worry about her daughter's insanity. Although she is concerned about Yvonne's welfare, her attitude is mainly self-centred. Instead of condemning Freestone as indifferent to Mrs Sherman's suffering, we can see his objective appraisal of her situation as an attempt to enlighten her. His apparent callous handling of Yvonne is an example of the same thing.

By using a first-person narrator and the present tense, Storey imparts a great immediacy to events in the novel, thereby highlighting the transient nature of existence implicit in the title. He relies

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[1] Both Laura Weaver and Neil Roberts find that Freestone displays a sensitive understanding of Yvonne's problems (Roberts, "Fathers and Children", p.18; and Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.229).

mainly on scenic presentation, using small narrative details to break up the rhythm of the dialogue in much the same way as pauses are used in drama such as Harold Pinter's. In this way he often shows transitions in the characters' thoughts, and also conveys something of the subtextual quality of modern dramatic dialogue.[1]

Throughout the novel he reminds us that the characters' lives are "temporary". He combines this with the narrative techniques mentioned to capture the ephemeral—often inexplicable—quality of existence. Freestone does not anticipate that Yvonne will be in hospital for very long. So his approach to life is that of someone preparing to move on. He is laconic, indifferent towards his teaching, and he fails to establish relationships with others. Although his attitude stems from a disenchanted assessment of the world around him, this may not be the sole cause. He may also be seen as unwilling to forge ties that are soon to be broken. The Newmans seldom live anywhere for long and flit from one affair to another. When they meet, Elizabeth tells Freestone they are not planning to become permanent residents (p.90/P.89), and at the end of the novel, she announces their departure for London. Even Mrs Sherman, who has lived in her house for about fifty years, faces an imminent move. The neighbouring houses give no air of permanency either. Their inhabitants—people Mrs Sherman knew—have left, and "Some of the houses have been boarded up: on one or two the roofs have gone" (p.61/P.62).

Freestone visits several houses during the narrative: Wilcox's

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[1] This technique occurs throughout the novel. See for example, Freestone's walk with Elizabeth (pp.98-100/P.96-98); his discussion with Yvonne (pp.134-41/P.129-35); and his conversation with Rebecca and Mathews (pp.149-51/P.143-45).

bleak house, the Newmans' impressive but threatening establishment, Mrs Sherman's damp and gloomy home, and the dower-house belonging to one of Newman's associates. The last has a monastic quality that contrasts incongruously with the violent beating Newman gives his wife when she and Freestone are taken there. Most of these houses are isolated, as if to underline their owners' lack of communal integration. None are hospitable. Freestone lives in a dilapidated flat, and the mental hospital where Yvonne is being treated is a converted ancestral home.

Yvonne has tried to alleviate her growing conflict by worrying about things she cannot control. Other countries and their problems, enviromental issues and lost causes are some of the abstract concerns that fill her thoughts and simultaneously increase her despondency. She does not find teaching fulfilling either. Like other teachers in Storey's work, she finds little to recommend it, saying, "It drives you mad" (p.79/P.78). In addition to these pressures, her recent miscarriage may be a partial cause of her nervous breakdown. Like Freestone, she also moves from one "home" to another during the narrative. Two of them provide little comfort; the third offers shelter of a dubious kind.

After some time in the hospital, Yvonne is allowed to spend a weekend with Freestone who suggests they go to his flat. She swiftly points out how ironic it is that he calls it "a place of our own" (p.171/P.162). It has none of the traditional reassurance of a married couple's home. She has never been there and it is small and cold. She becomes disorientated and increasingly upset. Reluctantly, in view of the doctor's suggestion that Yvonne be kept away from her mother, Freestone takes her to visit Mrs Sherman the next day. This house provides all the familiarity, nourishment, warmth and comfort

usually associated with a home. But this positive image must be seen also in the light of Freestone's earlier condemnation of its lifeless atmosphere. Yvonne's childhood home is inextricably bound up with some of the pressures that caused her mental collapse. Yet she has an equivocal attitude towards it. She cannot sever the ties that bind her to this environment, and swiftly regresses into a highly disturbed state when she returns.

Like Pasmore, Yvonne finds that her parental home creates rather than excludes problems. Both she and Pasmore try to be good[1] by realising their parents' expectations. Yet neither the Pasmores nor Mrs Sherman understand that their children's conformity is slowly eroding their well-being. Freestone remarks that the Shermans have struggled to educate Yvonne, "to raise her...to a better life: yet without any awareness that, when you resurrect the dead, you've got to provide them with something to go on living for" (p.57/P.59). Mrs Sherman (like the Thorpes of *Flight into Camden*, and like the Pasmore parents) cannot realise that achieving a goal may destroy the much-loved child for whom it was sought with the best possible intentions. She says, "I can't make it out. The chances that she's had: it ends like this". And Freestone replies, "That's probably her trouble, on the whole....Not that it makes much difference. To Yvonne, I mean" (p.183/P.173).

Like Pasmore, Yvonne seeks refuge in three homes.[2] And, like him, she finds her parental and marital homes offer little solace. Pasmore's

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[1] See p.75 above for R.D. Laing's ideas about "being good".

[2] Laura Weaver also draws attention to Yvonne's three homes ("Journey Through a Tunnel", p.242).

extra-marital home fails him and her withdrawal into the mental hospital cannot be viewed as totally successful either.

In *A Temporary Life* Storey is concerned, among other things, with the ramifications of a mental institution as a place of refuge—a home, an "asylum" in both senses of the word. Because his play *Home* also looks at the lives of five characters who are in such an institution, I shall consider their situation and Yvonne's together.

Although Storey offers reasons for Yvonne's collapse, he only hints at possible causes for the mental instability of the characters in *Home*. This is understandable when we remember that he did not intend writing about a mental institution.[1] And, while admitting their emotional imbalance, he does not consider the characters "actually insane".[2] He keeps the setting vague, and it is only when the two women enter that we become aware that they are in a mental hospital. During their fractured attempts to communicate, Jack and Harry reveal information about their unsuccessful marriages, their purposeless lives and their underlying despair. Sometimes they weep. Although Marjorie and Kathleen seem more prepared to confront reality,[3] this does not minimise their distress. Kathleen has suicidal tendencies and welcomes the

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[1] In an interview with Ronald Hayman, Storey explained how the white metalwork table and chairs left onstage at the end of *The Contractor* initially inspired him to write *Home* ("Conversation with David Storey", *Drama*, No.99 (1970), p.50). But he did not know where the table was, or what the characters were like when he started. "It was only when the ladies had come on that I began to feel perhaps they were in a mental home and not where I thought they were, in a hotel" (Ibid., p.49).

[2] Hayman, *Playback*, p.17.

[3] Harris, "Unholy Encounter", pp.227-28.

thought of dying; Marjorie, a frequent inmate of mental hospitals, succumbs to uncontrollable bouts of crying. Alfred, who seems to have had a lobotomy, is suspended in a twilight mental stasis. Marjorie says he painted "rude letters in the road"[1] and so was admitted to the home. Jack conveys the poignancy of Alfred's condition (an idea Marjorie takes up) by suggesting he is waiting to be born.

Given the bleak picture of Yvonne's world outside the hospital and hints about similarly depressing circumstances concerning the individuals in *Home*, Storey appears to believe that insanity provides a possible relief from despair. His published comments on the topic add credibility to such a conclusion. He has said:

> Insanity gives you the same kind of reassurance as work. It unifies your particular condition in an asylum. It's easy to generalise your condition in madness, you can inhabit it and become one with other people. It provides a reassurance to life which it wouldn't otherwise possess. The longer you stay bonkers the safer you are. It's that kind of fantasy in *Home*.[2]

Freestone directly reflects Storey's attitude. He cannot understand why Mrs Sherman is so anxious about Yvonne because her daughter, in her "madness", "is safer than she is herself" (p.51/P.53). Yet he also accuses Yvonne of escaping into the hospital: "You take refuge in ideas. In service, in selflessness; you take refuge, at times, in a place like this" (p.138/P.132).[3] This overturning of conventional values appears

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[1] David Storey, *Home* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), p.67; and Penguin collection (Harmondsworth, 1978), p.70. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers with a capital P, thus: (p.67/P.70).

[2] Ansorge, "Theatre of Life", p.35.

[3] The Penguin edition has "selfishness" instead of "selflessness". This is a typographical error.

in *Home*, too. Although the asylum is not all they desire, Jack and Marjorie agree that going home is "Hardly worth the trouble" (pp.64-65/P.68).

If we accept that insanity offers reassurance of a kind, then it follows that a mental institution can be seen as a home: not solely in the euphemistic sense.

> MARJORIE. One thing you can say about this place ...
> KATHLEEN. Yes.
> MARJORIE. 'S not like home.
> KATHLEEN. Thank Gawd. (p.70/P.73-74)

Laura Weaver observes:

> These women can speak for the men in *Home*, for Yvonne, and indeed for Arnold and Pasmore; they all need and appreciate a place that is not like home. A mental hospital may, despite its limitations, offer a haven slightly superior to their own homes.[1]

She also suggests that such an institution may have the qualities Jack attributes, "whether idealistically or realistically",[2] to the war.

> JACK. One of the great things, of course, about the war was its feeling of camaraderie.
> HARRY. Friendship.
> JACK. You found that too? On the airfield where I was stationed it was really like one great big happy family. My word. The things one did for one another. (pp.31-32/P.34)

But Storey displays a characteristic ambivalence towards insanity. Neither *A Temporary Life* nor *Home* conveys a wholly attractive picture of life within a mental institution. Freestone draws attention to the inadequacies of the hospital where Yvonne is being treated. He feels

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[1] Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.226.

[2] Ibid., p.268. I am indebted to Laura Weaver for much of the discussion that follows on the presentation of mental hospitals as homes in Storey's work (Ibid., pp.242-46,267-68).

such places should not attempt to recreate, by means of interior decorating, "the standards of the very world which, in the first place, has driven the poor old patient crazy" (p.57/P.58). He claims that removing doors and gates could persuade patients they are deluded in their anguish and so still part of the outside world from which they are trying to escape. Yet certain restrictions are placed on the patients' mobility. When Yvonne has a relapse she is placed in the Flora Bundy Ward which has barred windows. So there is a wry humour in the paradox of a mental hospital attempting to disguise itself as a home.

The non-action of *Home* and the triteness of the dialogue have been seen as "the superficial expression...of the total blankness of existence in a mental home".[1] Although the characters apparently gain something worthwhile from their brief encounters, Alfred clears the stage of the table and chairs at the end of the play; Jack and Harry weep. This elegiac conclusion hardly anticipates further meetings and conversation.

The idea that Yvonne and the characters of *Home* have substituted one stultifying abode for another is not without foundation. As we have seen, this idea is most clearly discernible in Yvonne's situation as she moves unsuccessfully from one home to another.

Both homes and hospitals set up procedures that those living there must follow in order to win approval and gain acceptance.[2] Parents demand that the child must be conscientious, display common sense and conform to the house rules. In a hospital the patient is expected to abide by the routine governing visiting hours, pill-taking, tests,

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[1] Michael Anderson et al., *A Handbook of Contemporary Drama* (London: Pitman Publishing, 1972), p.430.

[2] Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", pp.243-44.

meal-times, exercises and so on. And yet, amidst all this activity, the genuine despair of the patient may be ignored. Freestone observes that Yvonne co-operates less willingly after a time, "as if somewhere her real complaint, her real anguish, has gone unnoticed" (p.35/P.38). Paradoxically, the inmates of mental institutions must also show evidence of insanity. Freestone comments that Yvonne weeps frequently, "as if she were presenting me her grief, a credential to reassure me that she had, after all, come to the proper place" (p.32/P.36). He later inwardly assesses her general appearance and behaviour thus: "It's like a game; a certain eccentricity, it seems, is demanded of her: she presents it, at times, as if to reassure herself, and me: 'If I act like this I *must* be mad'" (p.74/P.74).

There is a further parallel between the regimentation of the individual by parents and by hospital authorities. Both Mrs Sherman and, later, the nurse in the Flora Bundy Ward, equate Yvonne's inertia with an improvement in her mental state: "Just as passivity constituted goodness during childhood, artificial tranquility now means being better".[1]

A final point about the negative aspects of mental institutions as homes. By achieving the admission of someone it cannot handle, the family regains control of him. This idea may be directly expressed as a threat, or it may underlie the action taken against the distressed person. Freestone restrains Yvonne by summoning aid from the hospital when she collapses so dramatically at her mother's house. Ironically, in *Home*, Kathleen's discharge from hospital unleashes her urge to break

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[1] Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.244.

up (literally) her home. Back in the hospital, the authorities thwart her attempts to commit suicide by allowing her only strap shoes, or so she claims. In *Sisters*, Adrienne is forcibly returned to the institution from which she has escaped—her sister Carol being unable to curb the rising tension caused by Adrienne's arrival in her home. And Arthur Benson, in *Early Days*, threatens to use a strait-jacket if Kitchen's senile antics continue. Characters may escape into a mental hospital from the pressures of the outside world, but it is a refuge of debatable value.

Both Yvonne and some of the characters in *Home* are aware of this dichotomy. Despite Yvonne's voluntary admission to the hospital, and her claim that she is "better off...in there" (p.75/P.75), she also expresses an eagerness to leave. When Jack, Harry, Kathleen and Marjorie dispute the possible merits of a rockery in the hospital grounds, their dialogue, too, symbolises the ambivalent nature of the asylum (pp.42-43/P.46). And when Kathleen and Harry differ about the advantages of where they are sitting, their comments have a wider frame of reference than the literal meaning. These homes offer advantages and disadvantages. Harry unconsciously sums up the characters' equivocal situation when he remarks, "The one is incurred at the expense of the other" (p.55/P.58).

Finally, another commonly held view of insanity must be briefly considered. It is often maintained that insanity can bring with it some insights and benefits withheld from the so-called normal populace. "Madness need not be all breakdown. It may also be break-through. It is potentially liberation and renewal as well as enslavement and existential death".[1] The characters discussed in this chapter show

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[1] R.D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), p.110.

evidence of both possibilities. For Arnold Middleton, Pasmore and Yvonne, there is a chance that they can be "restored" to their families with all the ambiguity this implies. Although *A Temporary Life* ends without confirming Yvonne's recovery and Freestone doubts whether she will ever get well, her final appearance shows her laughing and apparently much better. This is a marked difference from her earlier distress. (Perhaps the equivocal title refers to her stay in the hospital as well as to the lives of the other characters in the novel.) But Storey withholds any explicit evidence about the experiences of these characters after their mental collapses. So we cannot determine whether such anguish brings with it special insights or not. There is no "apparent attempt on Storey's part to suggest that the insane (as the world judges them) have access to some kind of wisdom and illumination denied to the sane".[1]

The four main characters in *Home* are poised in an intermediate stage. They may recover; they may deteriorate. But their prospects seem forlorn. Jack remarks: "One endeavours ... but it is in the nature of things, I believe, that, on the whole, one fails" (p.41/P.44). Marjorie and Kathleen show similar pessimism.

> MARJORIE. Try and make something. What you get for it?
> KATHLEEN. Get nothing if you don't try, girl.
> MARJORIE. No.
> KATHLEEN. Get nothing if you do, either. (p.73/P.76)

We feel for these characters because their futility touches our own innate fear of "man's homeless end".[2] They may struggle to communicate

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[1] Taylor, *David Storey*, p.16.

[2] T.E. Kalem, "Duet of Dynasts", *Time*, 30 November 1970, p.54.

with each other, but we understand. We also dislike exposing our doubts, our fears, our inadequacies. Jack and Harry speak for all Storey's characters—and for us, too.

> JACK. One works. One looks around. One meets people. But very little communication actually takes place.
> HARRY. Very.
> JACK. None at all in most cases! (*Laughs*.)
> HARRY. Oh, absolutely.
> JACK. The agonies and frustrations. I can assure you. In the end one gives up in absolute despair. (p.21/P.23)

Another reason why these characters in *Home* communicate so successfully with us is the lack of definition Storey gives to the setting. Had he established from the start that they were in a mental institution, we might have been distanced from the play. He is aware of this, maintaining that "the reviews did a disservice to the play in saying that it was about a madhouse". He feels it "diminishes the play and the conception, making it a special case" and creating a gap between the emotion and the suffering.[1] Yet our knowledge of the situation does not affect a second viewing (or reading) of the play. The additional information enables us to appreciate subtleties in the fragmented dialogue which we miss the first time.

Storey explores characters who withdraw into isolated states—sometimes even insanity—as an escape from an existence they find overwhelming. In doing so he reveals the major alternative to searching for different ways of living that involve the individual's participation. Whereas we may see this retreat as a negative solution to existential despair, Storey claims that it may offer a refuge of sorts. Yet he

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[1] Hayman, *Playback*, pp.16-17.

presents it in an uninviting way. Although Albert Kalson was referring to *The Contractor* when he said that "to lose one's mind is not necessarily to gain one's happiness",[1] his statement may be applied to all Storey's characters who suffer some form of mental aberration.

In Storey's work the causes for the mental breakdowns may be understood, but the idea is equally strong that an individual's withdrawal from society can lead to his social and personal destruction.[2] Mrs Hammond and Leonard Radcliffe both suffer an existential death before dying physically. Pasmore, Arnold and Yvonne cause others a great deal of suffering and almost ruin their own lives. Storey negates the tempting view that neurotic withdrawal offers more than a temporary refuge. Accordingly, Arnold, Pasmore and Yvonne are seen on the threshold of recovery. The optimism this reflects lies at the heart of Storey's artistic vision. He has written:

> It is no virtue to feel oneself torn apart, either from the world, or from one's own spirit or soul; neither is it any virtue to be unable to find any resolution. However, although for some reason there is no choice, for all of us there is, I believe, the obligation to try and bring the pieces together; and if not together, at least in touching distance.[3]

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[1] "Insanity and the Rational Man", p.117.

[2] Jeanne Froeb's conclusions about Leonard, Howarth and Pasmore confirm my opinion ("Storey, Fowles and Murdoch", p.47).

[3] Introduction to *This Sporting Life*, p.x.

CHAPTER 5

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MOULD

> The mould may be the most precious thing you have.
>
> Elizabeth Bennett in *Saville*

In many works Storey considers the effects of parental ambition on children. As we have seen, this theme appears only briefly in *This Sporting Life* and *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton*, but it forms an important part of *Flight into Camden*, *Pasmore* and *A Temporary Life*. In these novels he shows how the children who achieve the middle-class status desired by their parents usually discover that the promised security is an illusion. Filled with a "great educated emptiness"[1] and alienated from their roots, they struggle to find a purposeful existence. Their parents, who believe education offers the only escape from the dismal prison of working-class life, cannot understand their distress, and communication among the family members often becomes impossible. This problem is the central concern of *In Celebration* and *Saville*.

In Celebration is ostensibly about the fortieth wedding anniversary of the Shaws, a coal-miner and his wife. The play begins

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[1] Storey, *Flight into Camden*, p.120/P.128.

with their three sons, Andrew, Colin and Steven, returning home to celebrate the occasion, and ends when they leave the following morning. During this brief period, reminiscences about the past and several stormy arguments gradually reveal how the sons have been influenced by their parents and the harsh working-class environment of their childhood. By placing the actual celebration—a dinner at a local restaurant—in the interval between the two acts, Storey ensures an unwavering focus on the tensions within the Shaw family.

Determined that his sons would not become coal-miners, Mr Shaw has encouraged them to further their education. (The stress he places on education is echoed by Mr Reardon, his neighbour.) But their apparent success is of doubtful value. Steven confesses that teaching has its drawbacks,[1] and Andrew has given up his career as a solicitor to become an artist. Only Colin, a works' liaison officer in a car factory, seems satisfied with his life.

Shaw's ambition for his sons has not been the only formative influence. We learn that Mrs Shaw, the fairly well-educated daughter of a pig-breeder (and her husband's social superior), had to marry him because she was pregnant. Their son, Jamey, born three months after their marriage, was a quiet, artistic child who died from pneumonia when he was seven.[2] In addition, the beatings his parents gave him

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[1] David Storey, *In Celebration* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), p.13; and Penguin collection (Harmondsworth, 1982), p.15. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (p.13/P.15).

[2] The night Jamey dies, the Shaws are frightened by three inexplicable blows on the wall above their bed. This ominous sign is like the three great crashes that reverberate one night through the Place and which John Radcliffe relates "portentously to Leonard's birth" (*Radcliffe*, p.30/P.29).

may have weakened his constitution (p.48/P.45). Distressed by Jamey's death and six months pregnant with Steven, Mrs Shaw tried to commit suicide, but her husband returned from work in time to stop her. These events, coupled with her straitened circumstances, warped Mrs Shaw's approach to life, and Andrew claims she has exacted penance from the family ever since. He maintains that her reaction to the consequences of her sexuality has contributed to the vision held before them of "a home, a car, a wife ... a child ... a rug that didn't have holes in, a pocket that never leaked" (p.83/P.75).

Mrs Shaw lives behind a barrier of reserve. Mrs Burnett, a neighbour, remarks, "It all goes on inside. She's that sort of woman" (p.14/P.16). But Mr Shaw (perhaps determined to deny the power of past events) blames something else for his wife's aloofness: "One woman in a house of men. She'd have given aught, you know, to have had a daughter. You know, somebody to talk to" (p.53/P.49-50). Like Joan Middleton, Mrs Shaw gives vent to her suppressed feelings by being excessively concerned about cleanliness and a tidy house. She, too, uses "surface order to control the deep-seated disorder",[1] creating a restrictive and inhibited home-life.

Andrew, Colin and Steven have each been influenced differently by this tense environment.[2] Storey consciously uses them to illustrate

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[1] Nolan, "Beyond Realism", p.61.

[2] William Free maintains that the "explicit explanation for the sons' disorders" is a flaw which "robs the play of universality" ("The Ironic Anger of David Storey", *Modern Drama* 16 (December 1973), p.310). Yet most dramatists provide clear-cut motivation for their characters' actions. The reactions of the Shaws' three sons—confrontation, compromise and withdrawal—are typical and therefore widely applicable.

three contrasting reactions to such a past. He has said that *In Celebration* "was the most deliberately written of the plays. Beforehand I decided there would be three arguments in the play. One was the ascetic, silent temperament; there would also be the latently revolutionary one; the third man...says this is the best of all possible worlds and you've got to make a go of it".[1] It has been suggested that this schematic approach is unconvincing.[2] But it seems quite plausible that each character would be affected differently, depending on his personality. One of the play's strengths is that there is something to be said both for the sons' and their parents' points of view.[3]

Steven is the one most profoundly affected. Having achieved the goals his parents misguidedly desired for him, he realises everything he has worked for may be worthless. Neither his wife and children nor his teaching offer him any fulfilment. Called "Silent Steven" (p.40/P.38) at school, he barely communicates now. He has even stopped writing his scathing assessment of modern society —a book on which he has been working for seven years. His youthful contempt for "the proven way" (p.42/P.40) has turned into immobilising despair. He questions the value of the work he and his brothers do, describing it as "at the best a pastime, at the worst a sort of soulless stirring of the pot" (p.86/P.77).

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[1] Hayman, *Playback*, pp.18-19.

[2] John Holmstrom, "Keep It Mum", *Plays and Players* 16 (June 1969), p.29.

[3] Benedict Nightingale, "Three Sons", *New Statesman* 77 (May 1969), p.632; and Susan Shrapnel, " No Goodness and No Kings", *Cambridge Quarterly* 5 (Autumn 1970), p.183.

Of Shaw's sons, Steven best understands his parents' well-meaning but destructive ambition for their children. He is the most aware of the appalling irony inherent in "this crushing, bloody sense of injury ... inflicted", as Andrew says,"by wholly innocent hands". Trapped between compassion for his father and mother and an overwhelming desire to rid himself of his "feeling of disfigurement" (p.86/P.77), he refuses to revenge himself on his parents—a course advocated by Andrew. But because he cannot agree whole-heartedly with Colin's attitude of compromise, he is "like a man with one foot on either side of an ever-widening chasm" (pp.51-52/P.48). Unable to act, he has withdrawn into anguished silence. His nightmares about Jamey (whom he never knew), and his weeping, show his precarious mental state. His problems are similar to those of Arnold Middleton, Colin Pasmore and Yvonne Freestone, and he, too, may be expected to suffer a nervous breakdown.

As disillusioned as Steven, Andrew reacts very differently. Like Arnold and like Allott (in *Life Class*), he often hides his distress beneath a mask of self-mocking amusement.[1] Unable to find a niche in life, he decides to jeopardise the security of his wife and children by becoming an artist. Yet he seems cynically aware that this new direction will not solve his problems.[2]

A source of Andrew's inner turmoil is his sense of childhood rejection by his family. To give his mother some rest after Steven's

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[1] Despite its intensity, *In Celebration* contains much humour which often emanates from Andrew. Lindsay Anderson has remarked on the comic element in Storey's plays, saying that "if you had a tape of his plays being performed in front of an audience, you would hear a great deal of laughter on it" (Claerwen Howie, "*Scenaria* Interviews Lindsay Anderson", *Scenaria*, No.25 (1981), p.39).

[2] Free, "Ironic Anger", p.309.

birth, he was sent to spend six weeks with the Reardons while Colin remained at home.[1] Throughout the play Andrew maintains that his mother's role has been destructive. But he is also deeply angry because he is convinced that by insisting on education his parents have ruined their children's lives. Gesturing upward to his parents' room, he declares that he and his brothers are "Dead. Zombies. Killed by good intentions administered by the ones above" (p.46/P.43). Although describing Steven's plight, Andrew speaks for them all when accusing his parents of "Projecting him into a world they didn't understand. Educating him for a society which existed wholly in their imaginations" (p.51/P.48). Confronting his father with the possibility that all past sacrifices and effort may have been in vain, Andrew asserts that he and his brothers are "less than nothing ... has-beens, wash-outs, semblances ... a pathetic vision of a better life" (p.84/P.75). Like Margaret Thorpe, Pasmore, and to a lesser extent Arthur Machin, he shatters a belief on which his father's life is based.[2]

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[1] Both William Free and John Holmstrom consider this too contrived a reason for Andrew's alienation (Free, "Ironic Anger", p.310; and Holmstrom, "Keep It Mum", p.29). But it offers an acceptable explanation, given the tensions that must have existed at home with Mrs Shaw feeling suicidal and the arrival of another brother. While conceding that he may have simplified the motivation behind Andrew's actions, Storey counters this criticism by stating that Andrew's "main weakness is self-pity" which leads to a naïve and self-conscious "rationalisation of his own disabilities". Storey adds, "That is *his* reason, not the play's reason" (Hennessy interview, p.9).

[2] Discussing *In Celebration*, Storey has said that he felt the basic tragedy "was that education has alienated everyone in the family, *all* of them, rather than enhancing their lives" (T.E. Kalem, "Family Communion", *Time*, 10 June 1974, p.106; quoted in Harris, "Unholy Encounter", p.171).

At first Colin seems to have escaped the negative influences of his parents' home. Apparently the least frustrated of Shaw's sons, he is neither vengeful like Andrew nor silent and morose like Steven. He buys furniture for his parents and offers to help them purchase a car and a house. He denies feeling injured (p.86/P.77) and maintains: "The fact is...it's a privilege sleeping in this house....I honour what my mother and father have done" (p.74/P.67). Once a card-carrying member of the communist party, he now appears satisfied with his middle-class life: a position of compromise Andrew despises. Colin's insincerity[1] is best seen in his attitude to marriage. He says he might have to marry because it is "less embarrassing to *be* married than not to be" (p.42/P.40). And towards the end of the play he unenthusiastically announces that he might be marrying a dentist.

Rather unsympathetically presented, he either has little insight into the family tensions or he chooses to overlook them. Yet he cannot suppress all his emotions about the past. He confesses he still dreams about how a teacher snubbed him after visiting the Shaw's humble home, and adds, "I often wake up trying to convince him that we're not as poor as that any longer" (p.41/P.39). His "emotional and spiritual barrenness"[2] is as debilitating as his brothers' distress.

While clearly showing how destructive the Shaws' ambition has been, Storey partly justifies it: home for the family was synonymous with deprivation.[3] The "pain of poverty" (p.41/P.39) emerges when the

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[1] Ronald Hayman says that Colin is "the least capable of sincerity" (Introduction to *In Celebration* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973), p.4).

[2] Stinson, "Dualism and Paradox", p.137.

[3] Clark, "David Storey", p.92.

brothers recall their childhood: salt used instead of toothpaste; too few chairs for all to be seated at the table; jam tarts or sponge roll reserved for Sunday treats; bare floors; holes in the linoleum; newspaper used for table-cloths and toilet paper (pp.40-41/P.38-39). Although the Shaws' house now has greater physical comfort, Andrew echoes Storey's other descriptions of parental homes as sterile environments and declares that his is "Like a museum" that "Hasn't changed in five thousand years" (p.24/P.24). Mr Shaw, who deplores the adverse effects of technological progress on their surroundings, describes the town as extending "From the muck-heap at one end to the muck-heap at the other" (p.62/P.56). Andrew also condemns the industrial pollution permeating the atmosphere, and with cynical humour blames it for his wayward behaviour. But his remark encompasses more than the literal meaning. It also implies that such an environment damages all who live there (p.94/P.84). Yet Storey does not dismiss life amidst the closely-knit working-class community. Through the warm relationships between the Shaws and their neighbours, Mr Reardon[1] and Mrs Burnett, he shows us some of the compensations.

Their impoverished existence has not been the only factor affecting the Shaws' outlook on life; Mr Shaw's work as a miner is another. There are frequent reminders that coal-mining is a dangerous and physically exhausting job with little financial reward. Describing the thirteen-inch high Rawcliffe seam, Mr Shaw reveals his appallingly

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[1] In the film version of *In Celebration*, Reardon does not appear and so his humour, his rather cynical view of life, and his apocalyptic vision are lost. But his presence is not missed, which suggests that he is somewhat extraneous.

difficult working conditions. Yet despite the hardships, he refuses to retire early.[1] His work gives him a sense of purpose and dignity which is not lost on either his wife or Steven and Andrew. Steven's comment on his father's ambivalence is similar to Storey's description of his own father's attitude:

> The funny thing is that he...raised us to better things which, in his heart—my dad—he despises even more than Andrew ... I mean, his work actually has significance for him ... while the work he's educated us to do ... is nothing ... (p.86/P.77)[2]

Another dichotomy exists in Mr Shaw's outlook. He praises family life, but it "is as though he is trying to talk himself into the benefits of his situation in order to forget its drawbacks".[3] For example, he says, "I've had a good life. With a lovely woman. Can't ask for anything more ... Still ... " (p.15/P.17). Keenly aware that his wife regrets marrying a social inferior, he tries to compensate by spending his life shielding her from every possible difficulty. He tries to keep the family together, disregarding past arguments and present friction. Like the fathers in *Flight into Camden* and *Pasmore*, he quickly counters any threat to family stability.[4] Yet all his efforts cannot conceal the anguish. As Andrew says, Steven's nightmares about

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[1] Mr Shaw and Mr Pasmore closely resemble each other. Apart from using almost identical dialogue at times (as mentioned in Chapter 1 above, p.6), Mr Pasmore also works on a thirteen-inch seam and, despite the danger and the arduous nature of mining, he too refuses to retire early. Both men have made sacrifices to educate their sons so that they would not follow them into the pit.

[2] See p.1 above.

[3] Bettina Knapp, "David Storey's *In Celebration* and Gabriel Cousin's *Journey to the Mountain Beyond*", *Theatre Annual* 33 (1977), p.43.

[4] Nolan, "Beyond Realism", p.83.

Jamey crying out for his mother's forgiveness symbolise a cry that "comes from the family" (p.50/P.47).

The tension increases until a confrontation between Andrew and his mother seems inevitable. But it is narrowly averted as he asks her to dance and talks of salvation and compassion (pp.99-100/P.89-90). He also tries to ease the pain he has inflicted earlier on his father. Having previously used mining as a metaphor for his father's senseless striving after an illusory goal, Andrew now asks him to "Dig one out for me" (p.101/P.90). This request, coupled with their slightly lingering handshake, conveys a mood of reconciliation,[1] as does a similar moment of silent communication between Pasmore and his father.[2] Andrew, who could have destroyed the family, foregoes the opportunity. Storey has commented on this somewhat unconventional ending.

> In a way the explosion has already taken place off or outside or away and this is really the aftermath of the battle....It's not a question of stripping off hypocrisies and deceits and complacencies but of realising that once you have, there's nothing much really there afterwards. All the illusions have gone....It really is a question of soldiering on or of compromise or forgiveness, as the play tentatively suggests at the end.[3]

By denying the audience a catharsis, Storey emphasises the significance of Andrew's decision. He suggests that Andrew matures by being restrained.[4] But, more importantly, Andrew comes closer to

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[1] Albert Hunt comes to a similar conclusion ("Too Far Above Ground", *New Society* 13 (May 1969), p.681).

[2] See p.81 above.

[3] Hayman, "Conversation", p.49.

[4] Hennessy interview, p.9.

accepting Steven's view (which is more positive than his emotional state) that one can participate in life without compromising oneself (pp.44,52/P.42,49). He may also realise, as Steven has, the unavoidable influence of one's upbringing. When Andrew cries out for revenge, Steven quietly counters this, saying, "Believe me: remove any part and the rest all goes with it....You've lived here half your life—Reardon—Mrs Burnett....What sort of vengeance do you have in mind?" (p.46/P.44). The characters of *In Celebration*, like so many others in Storey's work, "must accept their scars and learn to make the best of them".[1] As we see from his revised ending of *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton*, Storey admires the ability of individuals "to keep going, even when everything seems impossible".[2] When he takes his mother in his arms to dance with her, Andrew

> ...unites himself with the family by making the same choice that his mother had made when she married his father, that Steven had made in abandoning his book, that his father had made in accepting the limitations of his relationship with Mrs Shaw, and that Colin had made in building his life in spite of, rather than because of, the emotional pressures of the family—a decision to make the best of what you cannot change. And with it a recognition that such acceptance has not only characteristics of defeat, but also characteristics of a certain kind of victory—a victory worthy indeed of occasional celebration.[3]

If we consider Storey's problems during the writing of

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[1] Nightingale, *Contemporary Dramatists*, p.741.

[2] Taylor, *Second Wave*, p.148.

[3] Austin Quigley, "The Emblematic Structure and Setting of David Storey's Plays", *Modern Drama* 22 (September 1979), p.261.

Saville[1] and the close thematic relationship between that novel and *In Celebration*, it is hardly surprising that the Saville and Shaw families "are practically interchangeable".[2] There are marked similarities between Helen Shaw and Ellen Saville apart from the sound of their first names. Each woman is the daughter of a pig-breeder called Swanson.[3] Like her counterpart, Mrs Saville—who also attained a higher level of education than most of her associates—was forced to marry her coal-miner husband, Harry, because she was pregnant. The Shaws' and the Savilles' eldest child, aged seven, dies from pneumonia, but not before showing a precocious talent for drawing. There are hints that Jamey Shaw and Andrew Saville (who both produce pictures of three apples) pursue this solitary interest partly to avoid parental demands. Like Mrs Shaw, Ellen Saville is pregnant again when her son dies, and is also saved from a suicide attempt by her husband's timely return home. Both families suffer because they feel compelled to atone for their tragic loss.

The resemblances do not stop there. To ease pressures at home, Colin Saville and Andrew Shaw spend time with neighbours when another brother (in each case called Steven) is born. Both families send their three

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[1] Mel Gussow recounts how Storey struggled to continue *Saville* after writing the first few chapters. "In despair he put aside the novel and, using similar material and transposing characters, he wrote *In Celebration*, which became a dramatic success" ("Talk with David Storey", p.29).

[2] Reinelt, "Novels and Plays", p.82. Michael Ratcliffe also sees strong links between the two works ("Novelist as Lowry", p.11).

[3] *In Celebration* (p.22/P.22-23) and *Saville* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976), pp.94-95; and Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1978), p.103. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (pp.94-95/P.103).

sons to Sunday School where the same emblems on banners identify the pews where the various age-groups sit: a fish with huge eyes for St Peter and a bird for St Francis. During the Second World War, Mr Shaw and Mr Saville build bomb shelters that prove unsuccessful because they fill with water, and the families take refuge during air-raids in a cupboard beneath the stairs. Both men coach their eldest sons to help them pass their entrance examinations for grammar schools. In each case a teacher, who comes to discuss a son's prospects for further education, has to contend with springs protruding from the chair in which he sits.

Despite these close parallels, in *Saville* Storey is not fettered by the restrictive dramatic form and so can explore more facets of the parents' ambition and its possible negative effects on their children. Whereas *In Celebration* revolves around the three sons' different reactions, *Saville* shows the impact on three families. Storey focuses mainly on the Savilles, but the Reagans and the Bletchleys offer additional perspectives on this central theme.

Into *Saville*'s rich tapestry of social detail, Storey weaves the sombre threads of working-class life. The mining village of Saxton, where the three families live, is a gloomy environment that justifies the parents' determined efforts to secure a better life for their children. The village is divided into two. The older part consists of "several old stone houses, still inhabited, an old manor house, deserted and falling into ruin, and the stone church which had once belonged to the manor". The more recent section is dominated by "the colliery with its twin headgears and its dykes and pyramids of slag... the grey mounds of ash and rubble tumbling down finally at the edges of the nearest wood" (p.43/P.45). Strongly reminiscent of the

claustrophobic environments in Storey's other novels, Saxton scarcely promises fulfilling homes for its inhabitants.

Late in the novel Margaret Dorman, Colin's girlfriend, draws his attention to the neighbourhood's poverty.

> Only when seeing it with her eyes did he notice the broken doors, the blackened inside walls, the smears of grease and dirt around the switches, the latches, the bare tracts of earth and ash, the crumbling brickwork, the rusted drains and pipes. Periodically, in the past, attempts had been made to renovate the houses, areas of new brick had been inserted, new mortar, a concrete path laid down; in a matter of weeks the soot and smoke had absorbed them within the texture of the old. (pp.406-407/P.447)

This rapid submerging of anything new points to the futile struggle of the miners and their wives to better their living conditions. Margaret's reaction crystallises Colin's attitude to the village. Otherwise we could claim that depression has distorted his later view of Saxton. Now a teacher, he finds life at home and in the village increasingly unbearable.

> Colin came home each evening from school as he might to a prison; he dreaded the street, he dreaded the houses, he dreaded the pit; the village was like a hole in the ground. In the winter all he was aware of was its greyness, the soot, the perpetual cloud of smoke, the smell of sulphur, the stench which penetrated to every corner of every room, which infected clothes and, seemingly, the brick and stone: no one could escape it. The village was derelict; it was like a wreck, cast up in the wilderness of the fields and on the shores of that ever-growing heap. (p.441/P.484-85)

Against this bleak background, the families battle with the additional problems endemic to working-class life. Concentrating on the Saville family, Storey shows the crushing burdens such a life imposes.

Unlike Helen Shaw, Ellen Saville is portrayed as a woman defeated by her rigorous existence. She more closely resembles Mrs Hammond, Mrs Machin, Mrs Thorpe and Mrs Sherman: working-class women wearied

by the demands made upon them.[1] Because most of the narrative is seen from Colin's perspective, his observations about his mother best convey this defeat. He is constantly aware of her tiredness and loss of vitality: "torn out with each of the children, torn out by the struggle to make ends meet" (p.486/P.533). Visiting his mother's parents makes him aware that each generation experiences the harshness of working-class life. Her fatigue mirrors theirs: "the same air of exhaustion, some senseless defeat by life, like flies dying in a corner" (p.405/P.446). By including Mrs Saville's parents, Storey clearly demonstrates how people remain imprisoned in the working class unless they make a supreme effort to escape.

Storey shows his other miners only as older men straining to withstand their arduous working conditions, but in *Saville* he traces almost thirty years of Harry Saville's life. At first Mr Saville's cheery self-confidence contrasts sharply with his wife's despair. But he slowly and inexorably declines as the unrelenting pressures of his existence erode his spirit. Periods of renewed vigour cannot prevent him from breaking under the hardships of life, as do so many of Storey's fathers.

> He was wearied now almost to extinction by the pit....Each time he came home he seemed physically smaller: he shrank before them, lying prostrated by the fire, too tired to go to bed, too sick from exhaustion even to eat; his presence was a constant reproach, one he deliberately cultivated, flaunting himself before them, his tiredness, his diminution.
> (p.491/P.539-40)

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[1] Although Judith Harris is concerned only with Storey's early work, it is difficult to agree with her generalisation that he presents women as having "an overpowering sense of biological destiny, which in itself provides them with definition and purpose" ("Unholy Encounter", pp.116-17). Her conclusion that they "do not suffer metaphysical anguish as men do" (Ibid., p.116) also seems unfounded.

Like Mr Shaw and Mr Pasmore, Harry Saville's experience of mining makes him determined that his sons will not follow him. Hoping that education will avoid the pit, the Savilles direct all their efforts to this end. After Andrew dies, they centre their attention on Colin. Mrs Saville seems to place "an almost mystical interpretation" on his birth, seeing Andrew as "the transgressed" and Colin as "a figure of atonement" (p.20/P.21). She shares her husband's ambition, although she intervenes if she considers he is driving the boy too hard. When Colin starts attending King Edward's—a well-known grammar school—his father admits, "Thy being at that school means everything to me" (p.187/P.205).

Most of *Saville* concerns Colin's development from birth to early adulthood. Characterised by "a dull, brooding, almost melancholic awareness" (p.27/P.28) from the start, he tries to come to terms with life in his parents' home. He agrees to many of their demands and rather passively allows others to make decisions for him. Even his hope of being a poet he confides only to a teacher, not his parents. But gradually he kicks against these restraints.

Although his early childhood is not easy, the first real stresses Colin encounters stem from the Savilles' decision to enter him for the scholarship examination. His father sets him extra homework, badgering him despite Colin's growing fatigue. When Ellen protests, her husband threatens her with the wretchedness he would endure as a miner. Although delighted when Colin wins the scholarship, the Savilles (like Storey's other well-intentioned but misguided parents) do not understand the world into which they have thrust him. And just as Arthur Machin discovers that he does not automatically join Weaver's social circle, so Colin finds that the community of King Edward's is

reluctant to accept him.

Ellen buys his school uniform several sizes too large, an economy measure that accentuates the impression of a misfit. Floundering in an unfamiliar world, and sometimes inadvertently overstepping the bounds of expected behaviour, Colin struggles with school-work. He also infuriates Hodges, a teacher who seems prejudiced against him from the start. (A singularly unflattering picture of Colin's schooling emerges during the narrative.) When Colin tells his father about this, Mr Saville goes to see the headmaster. The visit, like his enthusiastic shouting as sole spectator at Colin's first rugby match, does nothing to enhance his son's position.

Life at home also becomes more difficult for Colin. When his mother returns "worn and faded" (p.183/P.200) after Richard's birth, he has to help her with the shopping and the washing. As Richard gets older, Colin is expected to take him out in his pram. During his summer holidays he works hard as a farm labourer to earn extra money—being paid "a boy's wages for a man's work (p.206/P.225).[1] The next year his mother collapses and goes to hospital. On her return, she is too weak to do much. Colin has to look after his brothers and do many household tasks. These time-consuming demands isolate him from other school-children and thwart his early relationships with girls. (And his parents intervene if they consider a girl unsuitable.) He does make friends with Neville Stafford. But Stafford holds himself aloof

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[1] This exploitation echoes Storey's own experience when working during school holidays for a tent-erecting firm. He has said, "They advertised for men and I did a man's work but they always paid me a boy's rate" (Billington, "Making Life Work", p.21).

from school activities and so Colin remains an outsider. Throughout his school career Stafford seems determined to remain uncommitted in every area of his life. He tells Colin that he doubts whether anything is worth much effort (p.331/P.363). But Margaret Dorman remarks perceptively—and with unconscious foresight—that Stafford is never "fatalistic when any of his interests are threatened" (p.358/P.392). Her insight is supported by one of Colin's teaching colleagues who sees Stafford as someone who does things "by calculation" (p.419/P.461). Stafford's determined play for Margaret's affections proves their opinions correct. He wins her away from Colin.

As the years pass, Colin's inability to feel at home anywhere becomes more acute. By attending a grammar school he loses touch with miners' children such as Batty and Stringer, who have not won scholarships. He feels alienated from the village community without achieving a niche at King Edward's. His position is clearly illustrated during festivities to celebrate the end of the Second World War. His mother suggests that he does not participate in the fun because he feels "above it all" (p.303/P.333). Colin denies this, saying, "I suppose I feel apart". When his mother wonders if King Edward's is to blame, he replies, "I don't feel I'm part of anything there, either" (p.304/P.333).[1] Eventually, after he has started at college, he cannot suppress his feelings any longer and they erupt in an

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[1] Mas'ud Zavarzadeh explains the dilemma of those who win scholarships: "Theirs was the problem of living in an unwelcoming, still class-ridden society which had robbed them of their own original class identity, and now, by refusing to accept them on equal terms, had practically exiled them to social limbo" ("Anti-Intellectual Intellectualism in the Postwar British Novel", *Ball State University Forum* 12 (Autumn 1971), p.69).

uncharacteristic outburst to Margaret, who is closest to him:

> Ever since I've known anything I've been fulfilling other people's obligations. I've been educated to fulfil certain obligations; I've worked at manual jobs to fulfil obligations. I've never actually once sat down, or been able to sit down, to decide what I actually want to do. I've been set off like a clockwork mouse, and whenever the spring runs down a parent or someone in authority comes along to wind it up again. (pp.355-56/P.390)

Colin's relationship with Margaret does not ease his loneliness. She fails to understand his sense of duty towards his parents, describing it as "One tyranny" being "replaced by another" (p.365/P.400). She earnestly rejects the conventional roles for women,[1] scornfully dismissing marriage and motherhood (as Margaret Thorpe does in *Flight into Camden*). She also condemns her mother for failing to make more of her higher education and her liberated experience at Oxford. Finally Colin and Margaret start drifting apart because she wants to study: something her parents actively support. When Stafford returns from the army and takes an immediate interest in her, her remaining ties with Colin are snapped and he loses the chance of making a home with her. In a rare confession of his vulnerability, Colin tells his mother that Margaret is the only girl he can ever love (p.409/P.450).

As Colin grows older, Mr Saville harps on the sacrifices made for his education. And Mr Reagan urges him not to forget "the ones who've been swept beneath the carpet, emptied in the trash cans of the world; the waste that has gone to produce the flower of your intellectual emancipation" (pp.400-401/P.440). At the same time Colin is discovering

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[1] There are close parallels between Margaret's attitudes and those of the female students in *Life Class* (pp.33-35/P.179-81).

that his parents have been deluded by their vision of a brighter future. Although disillusioned himself by teaching, he struggles to understand his father's ambivalence. Having educated Colin, he seems to despise his son's profession. He fails to see, as Mrs Saville can, that "Sitting down is a different kind of work" (p.84/P.92). Like so many of Storey's working-class fathers, Mr Saville remains loyal to his class although he is "fiercely resolved that his children should achieve a life better than his own".[1] And like many of these fathers' offspring, Colin is caught in the emotional cross-currents.

His life is complicated further by a growing feeling that his parents have seen in him the possibility of atoning for Andrew's death. He claims they have shaped him to their desires, rather than giving him the freedom they allow to his brother Steven. This cuts his father to the quick because it implies that all the effort and all the sacrifices have been pointless.[2] Colin does realise that the driving force behind their ambition is love (p.430/P.472); yet he quarrels increasingly with his family. Finally acknowledging the "tyranny" Margaret earlier condemned, he objects strongly to the obligations his parents expect him to fulfil. While he helps to support the family (who rely increasingly on his financial aid), he remains trapped at home.

> A new three-piece suite, the deposit paid down as a result of his first month's salary, now occupied the room; a new dining-table had recently followed it; there were plans to put linoleum on the floor.

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[1] Stinson, "Dualism and Paradox", p.135.

[2] Once again Storey shows the importance of the parents' altruistic goals for their children: remove this motivation and the parents become directionless.

> His father was thinking of buying a better wireless. "These are things that we deserve," he said. "We need these things. It's what we've struggled for together." (p.442/P.485)

Colin accuses his parents of prostituting him. They are deeply shocked and the gulf between parents and son widens.

Colin resents his family's claims, yet remains loyal to them. He dislikes teaching, but cannot suggest alternative employment. Elizabeth Bennett, a married woman with whom he is having an affair, bluntly outlines his dilemma:

> You don't really belong to anything....You're not really a teacher. You're not really anything. You don't belong to any class, since you live with one class, respond like another, and feel attachments to none. (p.462/P.508)

Yet his attachment to his family remains strong. On the brink of his first sexual experience with Elizabeth he hallucinates, seeing her as his mother, and this totally deters him. Moreover, his dreams about his dead brother, like Steven Shaw's, show his inability to dismiss family ties. In a predicament common to many sons in Storey's writing, his distress increases as he is torn between conflicting needs.

More problems follow. After disagreeing with the headmaster about the purpose of educating working-class children, Colin is asked to leave the school where he teaches. He barely communicates with his family. For three years he moves restlessly from school to school and his relationship with Elizabeth fluctuates "from one extreme to another" (p.483/P.530). When her estranged husband asks him to leave her alone, a turning-point is reached. Again Colin's situation reflects those found in earlier novels. Pasmore has a visit from Helen's husband, and in *A Temporary Life* Neville Newman makes it plain that Freestone's affair with Elizabeth must stop. As we have seen, the ends of these relationships mark a significant change in Pasmore's and Freestone's

lives as well. Pasmore succumbs to despair and Freestone loses his job at the college.

Utterly against Colin's extra-marital involvement, and alarmed by the visit of Elizabeth's husband, Ellen Saville seems to "cut some final cord" (p.486/P.534). After years of quarrelling, "it was as if he had fought his last fight in the house" (p.487/P.535). He also sees less of Elizabeth. Unlike Pasmore,who slumps into inertia as he loses touch with external reality, Colin feels stronger as he loosens emotional ties. He inwardly observes that "As the world faded all about him, as the people faded, as the bonds faded with his family he felt a new vigour growing inside" (p.490/P.538). For a while he cannot make the final break. While he remains at home, he vents his frustration on Steven. Colin urges him not to become a miner, equating it with slavery. And when Steven signs a professional football contract, he argues that it traps him further.

Eventually Colin's growing turmoil forces him to act. Telling Elizabeth he has no choice, he decides to leave Saxton. Although he has no destination in mind, he believes "that life is limitless, that experience is limitless: yet it can't be conceived by standing still" (p.504/P.553). Elizabeth warns him not to reject his background completely: "It's an illusion to think you've to break the mould. The mould may be the most precious thing you have (p.503/P.552). But as Margaret Thorpe, Howarth and Pasmore find, Colin discovers that his need to escape from home outweighs other considerations. Although he feels guilty about rejecting his family and Elizabeth, he leaves for London. "There was nothing to detain him. The shell had cracked" (p.505/P.554). Again Story ends a work inconclusively and so reflects the uncertainty of any new beginning—whether in the same geographical

place or not. Events in *Saville* justify Colin's desire to go away, but there is no promise that life elsewhere will be more rewarding. If anything, his uncharted future raises the question of whether it is possible to start afresh. Perhaps he abandons everything worthwhile when he leaves his present home.

Of Colin's brothers, only Steven is old enough (by the end of the novel) to interest us as a possible victim of parental ambition. At first he seems to comply with his parents' demands. But after a quiet childhood, he develops into a gregarious youth with a "robust, undemanding confidence" (p.426/P.469). He is unperturbed when he fails his scholarship examination, and happily accepts the prospect of working at the colliery and living in Saxton forever. When Colin challenges what he considers to be Steven's lack of will power, his parents defend their younger son. Like Colin Shaw (of *In Celebration*), Steven accepts life for what it is. But Colin Shaw seems compromised by his decision to conform, whereas Steven is secure, independent, and infinitely more likeable. In his quiet way he avoids bowing to parental pressure.

The Savilles' youngest son, Richard, resists Colin's attempts to teach him. Added to his natural disinclination for the work, he appears delicate, which makes his mother protective and his father concerned (p.441/P.484). Yet towards the end of the novel we learn that he is a highly promising pupil at grammar school. But aside from noting that he has endured less parental pressure than Colin, we cannot judge whether education will make him the outsider his eldest brother has become.

The Savilles' home is "like some cave they'd lived inside, worn, eroded, hollowed out by the vehemence of their use" (p.486/P.534). Yet it offers the family far greater warmth, love and security than

the Reagans' divided one. Much of their conflict concerns their only child, Michael. Mr Reagan resents his wife's approach to rearing the boy. She supports his violin-playing, makes him rather effeminate clothes and encourages him to pray. Moreover, her obsessive cleaning, like that of Mrs Shaw and Joan Middleton, inhibits a homely atmosphere. Her actions, together with her husband's apparent disregard for her, suggests that she finds as little joy in their marriage as he does. Eventually she flourishes when Mr Reagan, partially paralysed by a stroke, becomes totally dependent on her.

This parasitic prospering of one partner when the other is depressed, exhausted or suffering in some way, can be found in several of the relationships Storey explores, and is a variation of the manner in which some of his characters participate vicariously in the lives of others. In *Flight into Camden*, Margaret Thorpe finds a job in London and gains in confidence while Howarth becomes increasingly despondent. She silently observes, "It became apparent how we were feeding off one another, and only I seemed to be thriving" (pp.137-38/P.147). Sometimes (as in most marriages) circumstances cause the dominance of either husband or wife to be reversed. Harry Saville's early confidence is undermined by Andrew's death. When Colin is born he is uncertain, but his wife, who was so insecure before, gains purposefulness. And although Mrs Saville is physically frail, she becomes much stronger after her husband breaks his legs (p.63/P.68). Yet after her parents die, she seems to fade away. Now *her* illness brings all Mr Saville's resourcefulness to the fore. In marked contrast with his parents' mutual support, Colin is accused of exploiting others. Echoing Kathleen Blakeley's claim in *Radcliffe* that Victor Tolson consumes people, Elizabeth Bennett asserts that Colin draws strength from other women. "You suck the meat out", she says (p.490/P.537).

So Storey demonstrates that such alternating dominance within a relationship can either benefit the couple or be detrimental.

Mr Reagan, who is deprived of family companionship, cannot easily make friends amongst the miners. His work in the colliery office and his habit of dressing as a gentleman set him apart. Possibly to compensate for his frustrating home-life, he gets vicarious pleasure from watching other men's physical activities—as do Weaver, Slomer and Johnson in *This Sporting Life*. Mr Reagan exhorts those playing cricket to hit the ball harder, and his emotions are similarly heightened when he encourages aggression amongst the boys. He compels Ian Bletchley to give Michael a piggyback while his son beats him with a stick, thus punishing Ian for his similar treatment of Michael (pp.81-82/P.88-90). He urges Colin to hit another boy with greater force during a fight. Yet the only time Mr Reagan becomes violent himself is if he thinks someone has insulted him while he is drinking at the Institute.

He turns increasingly to alcohol as an escape, gradually becoming addicted. Mr Saville describes him as "a wasted talent" and blames this on his unhappy marriage (p.398/P.438). Michael's failure to "take the world by the scruff of the neck" also contributes to his disillusionment. He often shows an interest in Colin (who apparently represents what he hoped his own son would become) and suggests that he sit for the scholarship examinations. After Mr Reagan's death, his wife gives Colin her husband's gold watch, saying, "He looked on you with special favour....The one nugget out of all this dross" (p.465/P.511).

Michael's lack of success is not surprising. His father cannot understand him, he is physically weak, and he lives in a mining community where artistic talent is suspect. Although he fails to win a scholarship, his parents remain ambitious for him. His mother wants

him to attend music college; his father suggests clerical work or accountancy (p.323/P.354). Michael views these ideas unfavourably because he longs to join a dance band, or form one of his own. He pursues this dream but never achieves it. For a while he runs an insignificant dance band, but when his father collapses after a stroke, his mother forces him back to clerical work. After a few months of teaching the violin to small boys, his lessons are stopped, allegedly because of a homosexual incident. His mother, having taken his part for so long, now gives his violin away[1] and ignores him, turning her attention to her husband. Bereft of family support and barred from music (which gives his life meaning), Michael becomes a recluse. Although he tells Colin of further plans for a dance band, his immobilising despondency clearly shows that this will remain a fantasy.

> Reagan was undecided which way to turn, his gaze transfixed, abstracted, his hands clenched loosely together. Tears appeared once more on either cheek, his eyes half-hidden beneath the shadow of the cap.
> "I think I might go back to the bridge. I was thinking of something there. I've forgotten what it was."
> Yet he remained, as if suspended, in the middle of the road. (p.417/P.459).

After his father's sudden death and his mother's mental collapse,[2] Michael briefly regains some zest for life. He holds a party at home, and for several weeks rather unusual people are seen frequenting the house. Finally Mr Saville feels obliged to intervene. He returns visibly shocked: Michael has sold virtually everything, the once

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[1] There is an apparent discrepancy in the text. Mrs. Reagan gives Michael's violin away (pp.416-17/P.458), yet he plays his violin in a public house after his father's funeral (p.465/P.511).

[2] Mrs Reagan's illness is alluded to on p.65 above.

immaculate house is filthy, and his attempts to remonstrate with him have failed. Michael seems intent on destroying the "*morbidly* clean" environment in which he has lived, saying "Oh, I can take care of myself....It's the first time, after all, I've had the chance" (p.467/P.514).

One evening he takes Colin home for a drink and tells him he intends going to London. But his plans are no longer grandiose and he assesses his future pessimistically. He collapses in an alcoholic stupor and Colin puts him to bed. He is last heard of "in a seaside town, serving as a waiter, then as a doorman at a cinema" (p.496/P.545). A sad, alienated figure in Saxton, Michael seems doomed to lead an insecure life filled with thwarted visions of a musical career. Emotionally and spiritually crippled by his parents and the village community, he is deprived of the one pursuit in which he felt at home.

Neighbours of the Savilles, the Bletchleys are the third family Storey uses to illustrate how ambition affects parents and their children. Like the Reagans, the Bletchleys have an only son, and like Michael, Ian is a misfit. A fat, unattractive, mean-spirited boy, with an indulgent mother and an ineffectual father, Ian is despised at school and in the village. Michael, the usual target of Ian's spite, is nevertheless a friend of his. Possibly because he recognises Bletchley as another outsider, Colin also feels "a strange loyalty" to him whenever he is ridiculed or attacked. He even fights Batty when he taunts Ian (p.213/P.233).

Few glimpses are given of the Bletchleys at home, but one brief scene shows an unusual family life. When Mr Bletchley is demobilised after the war, Ian suddenly starts smoking and trying to grow a moustache. The two men are apparently vying for Mrs Bletchley's

attention and she relishes their efforts, taking on "a new life and vigour" (p.306/P.336). But his son's behaviour does stir Mr Bletchley into asserting his authority for the first time.

Like Colin, Ian wins a scholarship and, after a successful school career, goes to university to study chemical engineering. He remains contemptuous of others, dismissing Batty and Stringer (miners' sons Colin played with as a child) as "Factory fodder". He tells Colin that "Some men grow out of their environment. Whereas others just seem to sink into it" (p.396/P.435). His attitude clearly shows that he would scoff at Elizabeth's idea of the mould.[1] He ruthlessly pursues his career, even at his father's expense. As Mr Bletchley cycles past, they ignore each other. Ian grudgingly admits that his father is doing overtime to pay for the bills he incurs at university. When Colin suggests he take a holiday job, Ian rejects the idea, saying cynically, "After all...there's nothing else the old man can do....It gives him a goal to work towards, a motive, you see, beyond himself" (p.397/P.436-37). Utterly self-centred, he is not stirred by duty as Colin is.

After leaving university, Ian achieves a good position and does help his parents financially. Ironically, Mr Saville equates this material aid with genuine care, overlooking his brief and infrequent visits home. On one such occasion Ian and Colin meet, and Colin is struck by Ian's lack of feeling for his home and the village. Although highly successful, Ian remains alienated. Having discarded his childhood community, he has found no alternative spiritual home.

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[1] See p.128 above.

Saville's three families illustrate variations of the difficulties caused by parental ambition, education and class mobility. Storey does not present the problem simplistically or offer easy answers. Life in Saxton *is* harsh, so we sympathise with parents striving to help their children find a better life elsewhere. Education is the only available stepping-stone. Yet it is also the wedge that drives families apart: parents against child; brothers and sisters against one another. Storey is not objecting to education itself, but rather to "notions of something higher or finer that vaguely cling to certain terms for the older generation". As the children become aware of "the multiple facts of individual and social experience", they realise that their parents' blurred ideals are invalid. So education may help to dismantle the class structure, but it is also "the focal point of conflict between the old allegiances and the new skepticism".[1]

Lest we condemn such parents for the rift they cause in their families, Storey paints a sombre picture of the alternatives. At best the children face a lifetime of drudgery which eventually saps all vitality. Steven Saville happily remains in Saxton, but this does not guarantee that he will avoid following his father's downward curve from optimism to defeated resignation. At worst the pressures of working-class life can turn individuals to lawlessness. Batty's family includes several convicts, and early scenes involving a youthful Batty have undertones of petty crime. At the end of the novel he has just been released from prison while his two brothers are still there. The inference is clear: deprivation can lead to unlawful behaviour which, once established, may trap a family in a vicious cycle.

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[1] Gindin, *Postwar British Fiction*, p.93.

But is Storey's canvas one of unrelieved gloom? No. With characteristic ambivalence he balances the hardships with positive elements. Although families work hard, they also enjoy periods of relaxation. Great camaraderie exists between the men when they play cricket or football on a nearby field. After the game they lie on the grass, smoking and talking. During the war they drill with gusto as members of the local defence volunteer force and, when the war ends, the whole village celebrates. This party vividly captures the wonderful spirit found in tightly-knit communities. Sledge races, which pit father-and-son combinations against each other in friendly rivalry, relieve winter's dreary monotony.

Storey draws attention, too, to another, even more important aspect of working-class life. The rigorous existence stimulates resourcefulness.[1] Mr Saville improvises a bomb shelter (a praiseworthy effort even though it fails); works hard in his vegetable allotment during the war; sews and cooks when his wife is ill. Colin helps with household chores, too, and works during his holidays. Toil they may, but it is useful toil. A working-class individual struggles against his circumstances with admirable tenacity. Colin finds middle-class life devoid of such worth—as do Andrew and Steven Shaw of *In Celebration*.

The Savilles, despite their mistaken belief in education as a panacea for all ills, provide a home that nurtures. Members of the family may quarrel fiercely, but they also do things together—whether it be going

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[1] James Gindin observes that contemporary writers turn to the working-class because its members know "how to assert and defend [themselves] in the midst of chaos and indifference". This is the predicament in which "many of the thoughtful men in the whole society" find themselves (*Postwar British Fiction*, p.105).

for Sunday walks, working for scholarships or helping with the daily drudgery. If Colin's brave new world fails to materialise, he still has a home. Unfortunately not all families demonstrate such qualities. The Reagans and the Bletchleys derive little or no solace from each other. Even Ian's success cannot outweigh his spiritual aridness. Nor does the Batty family seem to offer its children any positive values. For these characters the formative influences of their early homes may be worthless.

A paradox lies at the heart of *Saville* and *In Celebration*. It is important for individuals to escape from the dismal prison of working-class life and assert themselves. But at the same time the connecting roots to their parents and childhood community must not be severed—provided sustenance can be drawn from them. Storey shows that "certain spiritual needs" depend "for their fulfilment on the very material oppression that is in other ways so thwarting".[1] This is the "mould" to which Elizabeth refers.[2] It is the idea justifying the equivocal ending of *Saville*. And it is the source of the possible reconciliation at the end of *In Celebration*.

The characters of *Home* speak at times for us all, and so do those of *In Celebration* and *Saville*. Storey's themes embrace universal issues, not solely those of the working class. Everyone experiences the pain of failed relationships—whether between parent and child, husband and wife, lovers or friends. We agree with Storey's parents

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[1] Roberts, "Fathers and Children", p.19.

[2] See p.128 above.

who long to give their children a brighter future, and we understand their bewildered sorrow when they get what seems like ingratitude in return. We know that, like his characters, we cannot avoid the forces that shape us from birth. We may find that this mould constricts and deforms, scarring the psyche, as Arnold Middleton claims. Or we may find it to be of inestimable worth. Our reactions to the past often mirror those of Storey's characters. We can rebel against it, allow it to reduce us to a grey conformity, or come to value some, if not all, of it. We find it impossible to ignore. Storey himself has been profoundly affected by his particular mould: that of the West Riding. He has said, "The family thing—and the way people relate to one another in *work*—is important to me because most of my experience of life before the age of twenty-one was of the family".[1] Lindsay Anderson confirms this, maintaining that Storey's artistic vision "has been enormously imaginatively fuelled by his youth and childhood and family".[2] Most of his novels and plays end in uncertainty or with the hope of reconciliation between parent and child. This suggests that by accepting the past and drawing on any admirable qualities it offers, an individual can shore up his crumbling existence.

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[1] Sage interview, p.64.

[2] Howie, "*Scenaria* Interviews Lindsay Anderson", p.39.

CHAPTER 6

BRINGING THE PIECES TOGETHER

> ...for all of us there is, I believe, the obligation to try and bring the pieces together; and if not together; at least in touching distance.
>
> David Storey

Like many of his characters, Storey enjoys returning to familiar territory. In the opening description of his recent novel, *A Prodigal Child*, the houses of Stainforth estate engulf "the last of the cottages...the older streets...even Spinney House with its owls and its picked-at walls and long-since empty windows"[1] in a manner that recalls the creeping advance of the red estate houses around the Place in *Radcliffe*.[2] Strongly reminiscent of *Saville*, *A Prodigal Child* "begins with the assembling of a home by a labourer and his wife".[3] Like the Savilles, the Morleys have a young son and they, too, are moving into a small house. For both families this is the first home that they have not shared with others. Yet there are several important differences.

The Savilles' house is permeated by "the stains and the smells of the previous tenant". They have to clean and repair doors, floors and ceilings, distemper the walls and paint the outside woodwork.

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[1] David Storey, *A Prodigal Child* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), p.6. No Penguin edition has yet been published.

[2] See p.56 above.

[3] Kemp, "Homing High-Fliers", p.710.

Ellen Saville disconsolately notes more permanent drawbacks: "No hot water but what we heat, and the lavatory across the yard" (p.7/P.7). But the Morleys' Stainforth estate house is new. On arrival they are greeted by the smell "of plaster, of paint, of cement and mortar, and of the freshly hammered-in and unvarnished wood" (p.9). Their lavatory is inside the bathroom and they have a hot water cistern. Whereas Ellen Saville is despairing, Sarah Morley is filled with hope. These differences suggest that Storey is no longer examining working-class families and their misfortunes, but rather considering a family from the same social class that finds life fulfilling.

For a while he oscillates between this new optimism and his more familiar, elegiac tone. The first two chapters of *A Prodigal Child* convey contradictory impressions of the Morley family. After the happy move into their new home Mrs Morley's initial enjoyment and Mr Morley's hope of beginning life afresh are spoilt when he returns late from a drinking spree. While quarrelling, they are aware of their neighbours' close proximity. (All Storey's working-class families suffer from this lack of privacy.) Mr Morley worries about their argument being heard "through the thin partitioning of the walls between the houses" (p.18). Later, Mrs Morley's comments about his lunch and his suitably flattering reply are all part of a ploy indicating to any eavesdropper that nothing is amiss.

It seems that Storey cannot avoid for long the familiar theme of oppressive family life. But while re-exploring this central area, he opens up fresh paths. A brief flashback at the beginning of Chapter Two shows us that Mrs Morley's married life (even with its problems) is infinitely better than the appalling circumstances she

endured in her parents' home.

> Despised by her brothers and abused by her sisters and disregarded entirely by her parents, she had lived amongst her family with scarcely more security than that of a household pet, condemned to be the last at table and the first to be called upon to do household tasks. (p.20)[1]

She compares her family's existence "in the small, dank houses beside the river...to that of the rats which lived in the dark holes and crevices along the bank" (p.21). Only when she meets Arthur Morley does she experience anything other than embittered anger. If she sees him as a challenge, he sees her as "the animal he was conjuring from its burrow" (p.29).[2] Despite parental disapproval from both sides, they marry. Their first five years together are difficult. Mrs Morley tries desperately to save every penny for a home of their own, so that she can "dig herself out...from the poverty of the houses by the river" (p.22). But Mr Morley spends money freely, believing it essential to enjoy life. Largely due to his wife's perseverance, they are allocated a house on Stainforth estate by the time their son, Alan, is two years old.

Having established this sombre background, Storey no longer uses

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[1] Mrs Morley's situation has parallels with Lily Johnson's more extreme position in Storey's farce, *Mother's Day*. Mrs Johnson ignores Lily's crying, calls her a liar, denies ever loving her and suggests that she should have been strangled at birth. If Lily misbehaves, she is forced to sit in a cupboard. The rest of her family are more tolerant, but seldom protect her from her mother. Ellen Saville's marriage prevents her from suffering a comparable fate. As the youngest child she was "destined traditionally for several years at least to combine the services of a daughter and a domestic servant" (p.10/P.11). Valerie Hammond also married to escape from her demanding father(pp.16-17 above).

[2] In this he resembles Arthur Machin in *This Sporting Life* who tries to coax Mrs Hammond towards a fuller, happier life.

flashbacks. He returns to the main narrative and, in sharp contrast, depicts the idyllic first Sunday the Morleys spend in their new environment. Overlooking her husband's misconduct of the day before, Mrs Morley revels in the home for which she has struggled so tenaciously.

> Looking at the house had involved Sarah in feelings she had never experienced before....The air was fresh; the brick shapes strewn out across the slope were a new beginning; the old world of terraces and cobbles and gas-lit crevices, of smoke-ridden rooms and rat-infested cellars, of poverty and grime, had been discarded; not only was her own face set to the future, but the faces of everyone around her...they were pioneers. (p.23)

Pondering the family's move, and sensing a strong community spirit amongst the estate dwellers, Mrs Morley muses, "We've set out on a journey. We've cast off from the past. We're going home at last" (p.25).[1] But this optimistic outlook, so seldom found in Storey's working-class families, soon fades and reappears only in the narrative's final moments.

Mrs Morley's momentary euphoria and the young family's early hopes are rapidly replaced by the drudgery of working-class life. Mr Morley's poorly-paid job as a labourer on the Spencers' farm allows few luxuries or pleasures. And his fondness for alcohol and his wife's thrifty habits strain their relationship. Eventually she cannot tolerate her husband's drinking and she returns, with Alan, to her parents' home.

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[1] John Mellors draws an interesting comparison between the landscapes of *This Sporting Life* and *A Prodigal Child*. "In the earlier book the emphasis is on the dark Satanic mills in the shadow of which Arthur struggles ineffectively against forces he cannot understand....In the new novel, the view is airier, there is hope and movement, human effort stands more of a chance" ("Life Storeys", *London Magazine* n.s. 22 (July 1982), p.90).

Only when Mrs Spencer intervenes and Mr Morley promises to shun alcohol does she come back. His wife's departure affects Mr Morley deeply. Like Arnold Middleton, he finds that experience wounds, leaving "a scar so deep" that it acquires "the characteristics of a natural feature" (p.51).[1] Storey once again shows a couple struggling against a life-denying environment as the harsh realities of their daily lives slowly trap the Morleys. Although the husband acknowledges that most individuals find life restricting, the constant need for financial discipline makes him feel he is "living in a prison" (p.50). He and his wife seem "linked by a chain, the one unable to move without the other" (p.51). They both see their home as a fortress or castle to be defended at all costs, providing refuge against the darkness that threatens existence on all sides.

Like so many working-class parents in Storey's work, the Morleys see, in their children, a possible solution to their unenviable circumstances. Mr Morley has no clearly defined plan, contenting himself "with the thought that, at some point in the future, his son, or his sons, might be able to resolve his problem for him" (p.55). But when Bryan, the Morleys' second son, is born, his mother watches him intently as if her grave, rather sickly, dark-eyed child can provide an answer.[2] She also realises that only Bryan has a chance to escape because Alan is too like his unambitious father. Much later she tells Bryan, "The only thing I want...is for you not to

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[1] See p.72 above.

[2] Mrs Morley's total absorption in Bryan recalls similar behaviour in John Radcliffe and Ellen Saville who also see a particular significance in their dark-haired, dark-eyed, unusually passive sons (pp.44,122 above).

have to live like we do" (p.265). Yet although everything points to the Morleys trying to live vicariously through their children, this does not happen in Bryan's case, apart from their pride and rather muted enjoyment of the interest the Spencers and the Corrigans show in their younger son.

Having carefully built up the matrix—the working-class community—that Bryan tries to discard,[1] Storey abruptly changes his focus from Mr and Mrs Morley and concentrates on their younger son. He marks this noticeable shift in two ways. Between Chapters Four and Five a gap of several years elapses: when the narrative continues Bryan is a young schoolboy. And following a pattern used earlier in *Radcliffe* and *Saville*, Storey changes the authorial narrative situation of the opening chapters to one more closely resembling figural narration. For the rest of the narrative we see events mainly from Bryan's perspective.

Apart from the early chapters' fleeting optimism, Storey seems unlikely to introduce any real changes in his artistic vision at this stage in *A Prodigal Child*. Yet he does so through the character of Bryan Morley. At first Bryan wants "to be well-known....For something that no one else could do" (p.116). As the years pass and he becomes aware of his artistic talent, this desire crystallises into an ambition to create something that he alone can make (p.264). It is this sense of his own worth and his unwavering determination to succeed that set Bryan apart from most of Storey's characters. He shares their need to find a home, but he has a clearer idea of what he is searching for

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[1] Kemp, "Homing High-Fliers", p.710.

and of how to get there. He also believes that all things that happen to him—both good and bad—are part of a predetermined plan for his life, conceived by a "benevolent spirit"[1] or king (p.106). A succession of short episodes, occupying much of the novel, charts his progress towards his goal.

In some scenes Bryan struggles to understand the apparent callousness of others. These incidents are rather like a series of tests[2] that, aided by his "benevolent spirit" and a certain stoicism, he is determined to overcome. He cannot fathom how the bountiful Christmas Being ignores the suffering of a chicken roasted as part of the celebration. Then he is unfairly punished at school because the girl who sits next to him misbehaves. Yet although physically chastised, he bravely holds his peace. Later on Alan and his friends destroy Bryan's early clay models, the first indication of his prodigal talent. Even his mother unwittingly squashes the edge of a clay table he has made.

But several opportunities counterbalance these experiences of adversity: during a chance visit with his father to the Spencers' farm, Bryan impresses Mrs Spencer as a possible companion for their daughter, Margaret, and she invites him to return whenever he likes. When he

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[1] Bryan's guiding presence is never identified. It springs from a belief in Father Christmas, is transformed into a gigantic, otherworldly figure, and has a possible, albeit tenuous, connection with Christ. Bryan's faith in this external power recalls Leonard Radcliffe's justification for passively accepting events "because they came from some vague source of authority he knew had to be obeyed" (p.45/P.43). John Radcliffe similarly considers occurrences "as tokens of some deterministic force" (p.247/P.231).

[2] I am indebted to John Mellors for certain aspects of the argument that follows ("Life Storeys", pp.89-90).

does so, he is taken ill. But this misfortune elicits great concern from the Spencers and, coupled with Margaret's invitation to the cinema, fosters their growing friendship. The Spencers' acceptance of Bryan gives him the greatest opportunity of all: he meets Mrs Corrigan.

For someone introduced so late in the novel, Fay Corrigan soon dominates events. Like Mrs Morley, she escapes from the wretched environment near the river. Yet there any resemblance ends. After a period of domestic work, she marries Harold Corrigan, a wealthy furniture manufacturer and retailer. But financial security does not bring happiness. Like other wealthy women in Storey's work,[1] her restlessness manifests itself in her need for men: a weakness she acknowledges (p.289). She has a brief affair with Felix Pemberton, an actor. Later she becomes involved for a short while with Stan Proctor, a former suitor. Each time she returns home grief-stricken. As before, Storey shows that such fleeting sexual relationships offer little more than momentary distractions from problems.[2]

During the narrative, various characters express their often conflicting opinions of Mrs Corrigan. Stan Proctor emphasises her beauty and her ability to fascinate men, but Mr Spencer, her brother,

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[1] Her behaviour echoes that of Mrs Weaver (*This Sporting Life*), Elizabeth Newman (*A Temporary Life*), and Helen (*Pasmore*).

[2] There is one exception in all his works: *Sisters*. In this play several women seem reasonably happy as prostitutes. Joanna most clearly shows this when she explains how she became a prostitute to escape institutional life. Now the brothel she frequents is home to her, offering a temporary haven from marriage to an unemployed man who no longer loves her (*Sisters* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980), p.131; this collection contains the only edition of this play yet published).

comments on her fluctuating emotions and her disregard for the future; and Margaret stresses her selfishness, her vanity and her predilection for sexual dalliance. Mr Corrigan claims his wife "isn't always aware of what she is doing" (p.282). While admitting she is eccentric and often childish, he tells Bryan that "She has a sense of style....A vision. Which is very rare in a place like this" (p.283). And he equates his wife's unusual qualities with Bryan's artistic talent.

Events in the novel suggest that Mrs Corrigan's innate flair makes her receptive to Bryan's unique ability. Having fought to escape restrictive working-class conditions, she is also aware that his home environment will hamper the development of his creativity. At their first meeting Bryan feels a close rapport with her, despite the difference in their ages and social position, seeing her as "a princess to his prince" (p.115). From this moment he considers all associations with the Corrigans as preordained steps in his progress towards his destiny.

When they send him a box of watercolours to thank him for helping Mr Corrigan change a wheel, Bryan's strength of purpose is again tested. Although he has never painted before, and fails at his first attempt (mocked by Alan), he perseveres. He sends the completed picture to his benefactors, and an invitation to tea follows.

He returns home elated after visiting the Corrigans at Chevet, apparently oblivious of Mrs Corrigan's cursory interest in the pictures he brings her (pp.137-38). But he is soon jolted back to the harsh realities of his home-life when he is greeted by an unenthusiastic Alan, has to cope with his father's drunken stupor, and hears that his parents have quarrelled about the Corrigans.

Bryan's next chance comes when the Corrigans offer to pay for his

education at Peterson's, an expensive private school. They also suggest that he lives with them at Chevet, returning home only for weekends. His parents resist the proposal initially, deeming it unfair to Alan who cannot be given similar advantages. They also worry about abdicating their parental responsibilities. But ultimately Mrs Morley persuades her reluctant husband to agree. Later we learn that Mr Morley is the one most upset by Bryan's absence (p.204).

Unlike other characters in Storey's work, Bryan does not struggle to leave his parents' home. Yet despite the greater security offered by the Corrigans, he has further obstacles to overcome. He has to face a furore when a neurotic master at Peterson's condemns as obscene his excellent clay model of a reclining nude. A more serious problem, though, is his deepening dependence on Mrs Corrigan. Questioning his sanity, he wonders if he can only experience things through her (p.237). When he discovers her infidelity, his jealousy increases the tension between them. While the house at Chevet is being redecorated, the Corrigans and Bryan spend a trying six weeks in the Buckingham Hotel. Mrs Corrigan becomes involved with Stan Proctor, blithely disregarding her husband's and Bryan's growing distress. Like outcasts, they retreat to Mr Corrigan's club where he wryly observes that they, together with other members who are present, "have no home to go to" (p.281). When they return, Mr Corrigan accuses his wife of indifference. In the argument that follows, the couple confront each other with unpalatable truths, and Bryan learns that he does not satisfy all Mrs Corrigan's desires.

Their return to Chevet signals a change in Bryan's love for Mrs Corrigan which he feels has been "transformed from the familiarity of the past into something more demanding" (p.287). Although he

realises "She has no centre to her life, other than the clothes she wears, the perfume she puts on, the looks that follow her...wherever she goes" (p.290), and he considers their relationship "odd, maybe even mad" (p.291), he remains enslaved. The growing intensity of their mutual attraction surfaces while Mr Corrigan is in hospital. But Bryan faces his greatest trial when he accompanies Mrs Corrigan and Margaret for a lakeside holiday. No longer able to conceal their love for each other, they also see no solution to the torment it arouses in them. Bryan races into the lake intent on suicide. But an intuition that this is a further test—"not only of his feelings but of his courage" (p.304)—forces him to fight his way to the surface. Later, in a delicately handled scene, Bryan and Mrs Corrigan (whom he calls "Fay" for the first time) succumb to their overwhelming feelings.

Storey abruptly ends the narrative with three short chapters.[1] We learn that Mr Corrigan dies during the war, that Bryan remains at Chevet with Mrs Corrigan and that he is starting to make a name for himself as a sculptor. His relationship with an ageing and increasingly dependent Mrs Corrigan also alters. While she fears that the war is destroying or changing everything, including her relationship with Bryan, he wonders whether the conflagration (and his possible survival) are controlled by those powers directing his destiny (pp.310-12). Her expectations about the future prove correct. Bryan decides to go to London, but contemplates returning home for a while before he leaves. Having overcome all the hurdles in his path and having matured with each success, he gains his independence and the

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[1] Storey told John Haffenden, "I think the conclusion was willed, and to that extent false. I got so fed up with the characters that basically I jacked it in" (Haffenden interview, p.19).

opportunity to "do justice to his 'prodigal talent'".[1]

Although Bryan's determination to succeed is admirable, it is also rather coolly calculating. Even Margaret's claim that his unique destiny frees him from acting within conventional restraints (pp.221,224) does not wholly redeem his behaviour. Nor can it be excused on the grounds that he always feels isolated from those around him. (This is clearly observed when he makes his first clay models. He sits alone, absorbed in his work: a still figure amidst the whirling activity of the other children (pp.102-107).) Although some important factors explain his growing alienation—his youthful belief that he is not really his parents' child (p.106), his friendship with the Spencers[2] and his move to Chevet—they do not minimise his callous treatment of his family that occurs from time to time. When Alan accompanies him on his first visit to Chevet, Bryan unfeelingly dismisses him once he is struck by his elder brother's incongruous appearance (p.135). While shopping with his benefactress, he deliberately snubs his mother.

> He couldn't help but compare her shabbily-coated figure with that of the woman by his side...and he decided in that instant not to point his mother out, turning Mrs Corrigan across the street and into a thoroughfare which led, by a series of yards, back to the road from which they'd come. (p.185)

Learning of this, Mrs Corrigan reprimands him for being "cold-hearted" (p.187) and we readily agree. Bryan should realise, too, that his calculated avoidance of his father whenever he visits the Spencers' farm could cause his actions to be misconstrued. He does not want

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[1] Mellors, "Life Storeys", p.90.

[2] Both Mr Spencer and Mr Morley (as employer and employee) are embarrassed by the way Margaret and Mrs Spencer readily accept Bryan as an equal.

to draw attention to the difference in their relationships with the Spencers; but his father could be deeply hurt by his son's apparent indifference. Only Bryan's belated understanding of his father's devotion softens the earlier blows.

Bryan's home-coming at the end of the novel (although it may only be temporary) is not the only thing that sets him apart from the other artists who appear in Storey's writing. He is not plagued by doubts concerning his abilities (except for his first disastrous attempt at watercolours) and, unlike Leonard Radcliffe, Jamey Shaw and Andrew Saville, he does not use his talent as a refuge from a stultifying environment. But above all, he eventually accepts his family background.[1] In radical contrast to Colin Saville's reluctance to acknowledge the importance of this mould, and moving further towards reconciliation than Andrew Shaw, Bryan admits to his father that he has made mistakes in the past. But he remains convinced that the break from his roots was necessary, saying, "If I'd stayed at home I'd never have been what I am" (p.316). This ambivalence, typical of Storey's home-comers, is evident, too, in Bryan's attitude towards his father. In some ways he despises him, yet suddenly recognises the immutable devotion reflected in his face.

In the final chapter, Bryan again returns to Stainforth estate after further artistic success. Watching the community celebrate Queen Elizabeth's coronation,[2] he muses, "It's strange how everything

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[1] Peter Kemp endorses my opinion about the closing events in the novel ("Homing High-Fliers", p.710).

[2] This scene recalls the village festivities in Saxton at the end of the war (*Saville*, pp.301-302/P.330-32).

that is full of life has come back here". Telling Margaret that he intends continuing his creative pursuits, Bryan mentally recalls his "life-long dream that he was the successor to a line of monarchs". Simultaneously he realises, "But this is my kingdom, the kingdom of the heart; this is my rule: we are all part of it" (p.319). This realisation that his present life is inextricably bound up with past events contrasts strongly with his mother's long-forgotten hope of a new life, when she erroneously believed she could leave her former existence behind.[1] His flash of understanding enables him to bring conflicting emotions about his origins into touching distance[2] in a way never achieved by another major character in Storey's novels and plays.

Not all the characters resolve their conflicts as Bryan does when he returns home like a prodigal son—acknowledging the importance of his parental home and having achieved success with his "prodigal" talent. Long-suffering as an adult, Mr Corrigan, as a youth, tried to escape from the life awaiting him as his father's son. Echoing Arthur Machin's futile attempt to flee from ever-increasing pressures,[3] he tells Bryan how he caught a train to an unknown destination, but soon found that it is impossible to evade problems this way (p.281). His marriage to Fay Spencer demands great tolerance from him and brings neither partner much joy.

Yet there are those who appear relatively free from inner

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[1] See p.142 above.

[2] See pp.106,139 above.

[3] See p.24 above.

conflicts. Although sometimes begrudging Bryan his opportunities, Alan enjoys life. Like Steven Saville, he is uninterested in furthering his education and, finding that his abilities are physical ones, he hopes to become a boxer. While Bryan feels this ambition to better himself will flicker out as his mother's has, Alan does win a boxing match. This gives him and his father enormous satisfaction (p.265).[1] But because Storey allows Alan to slip into the background (apart from a brief reference to his married state in the final chapter) we cannot judge whether he remains contented.

Like Sarah Morley and Fay Corrigan, Stan Proctor and Freddie Spencer escape from unfavourable working-class backgrounds. But the men's lives are more fulfilling. Mr Proctor becomes a successful butcher and, apart from his thwarted desire to capture Kay's undivided attention, apparently lacks nothing. Mr Spencer, like his sister, Fay, has prospered by marrying judiciously. Initially a farm labourer, he married his employer's daughter and eventually assumed control of the farm. The happy stability of his home suffers a blow when Mrs Spencer dies, but Margaret soon ably assumes her mother's role.

Margaret is another well-adjusted character. As a young girl she tells Bryan, "You have to accept things as they are. It doesn't have to add up to anything, does it?" (p.95). And this pragmatic approach serves her well—apart from occasional questioning about the purpose of living (p.218). Strongly attracted to Bryan, she remains friendly while he becomes totally absorbed in Mrs Corrigan. Twice she tries to

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[1] This incident (the only one in *A Prodigal Child* that shows the vicarious enjoyment parents experience from their children's activities) resembles Mr Saville's short-lived pleasure about Steven's football contract (*Saville*, p.495/P.544).

intervene when she senses his involvement with her aunt could harm him. After he first meets Mrs Corrigan, Margaret suggests he marry her and thus have the farm (p.119): an action that would parallel her father's earlier one. And during their lakeside holiday, she tells Bryan to forget her aunt. He ignores her advice each time. But the novel ends with a slight hint—Margaret reminds him of a youthful Mrs Corrigan—that their friendship may blossom into something deeper.

A Prodigal Child has more characters *not* in search of a home than any of Storey's previous works: even Mr and Mrs Morley have drawn closer together because of the war (p.316). As he does in *Saville*, Storey shows that working-class life has redeeming features.[1] Events in the early chapters confirm Mrs Morley's opinion of the Stainforth inhabitants as "a vast community, bound on a common venture" (p.24). Neighbours become friendly and help one another when the need arises. The men enjoy playing informal cricket and football games together.

Physical labour, too, has its merits. Mr Morley's hard work at the Spencers' farm and his efforts to improve his garden fill him with pride and purpose. He enjoys showing his wife "the fields and the prospect of the farm as if, in many respects, they were his own creation, the burgeoning crops, the neatly-laid hedges, the fat cattle: it was 'his' world, one where his power was undisputed" (p.54). He admits to himself that if "the land were nationalised", he might receive a better salary. But because he would be working for "no one in particular and for everyone in general" he would lose "his pride in showing Sarah a field of growing corn, or a pasture of well-fed

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[1] See p.136 above.

cows"—the result of no longer being able to relate the farm "to anyone in particular" (p.55).

Storey clearly believes in the therapeutic value of physical exertion as part of a community with a common purpose.

> Personal relationships are constantly breaking down. So the only unifying element is work itself. It's not just a personal thing but demands an impersonal contribution. You subject your responses to a more impersonal thing. It gives a structure and a dignity to life—a unity which otherwise may not be there.[1]

His outlook stems from his own background: the morality of the West Riding which holds

> ...that work is good, and that indolence is not so much deplorable or unfortunate as evil. And in the working class, and in the mining community in particular in which I lived, the code was amended in this way; that physical work is good, and mental work is evil. Invariably mental work implied any activity conducted from a sitting position.[2]

Storey sometimes couples his ideas about the merits of physical activity (of which sport is one form) with those concerning the benefits of group involvement. This is not surprising considering his discovery that being part of a team can transcend personal conflict. Discussing Rugby League football, he has observed:

> The pleasure to me is in the pitch of endeavor, sustaining it, going beyond it. In many ways I hated rugby, but it allowed people to do marvelous things. Often the real expression occurs at the point of physical and mental exhaustion. I recall one very hard game, played in pouring rain on a pitch that seemed to be 15 feet deep in mud. My

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[1] Ansorge, "Theatre of Life", p.35.

[2] Storey, "Journey Through a Tunnel", p.160.

> relations with the team were at their worst. I should have hated every minute of that match, but suddenly something almost spiritual happened. The players were taken over by the identity that was the team. We were genuinely transported.[1]

Storey probably drew on this or similar experiences when writing *This Sporting Life*. At times Arthur Machin also feels transformed while playing football. But he relates this to himself, rather than sensing that the entire team forms a single-minded unit.[2] Only in *The Contractor* and *The Changing Room* does Storey highlight his idea that physical activity and group involvement can offer a temporary refuge from the existential problems of inner conflict and alienation.

As well as sharing this central theme, these plays (which Storey describes as examples of "poetic naturalism")[3] are linked in other ways. Both have their antecedents in novels that Storey wrote earlier. Although he warns us that the relationship is superficial,[4] we come closer to understanding his purpose in the plays by considering the similarities and differences between them and their corresponding novels.

Because *The Changing Room* is concerned with what happens before, during, and after a particular Rugby League match, it clearly echoes the sections in *This Sporting Life* that deal with Arthur Machin's

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[1] Duffy, "Ethic of Work and Play", p.69.

[2] See pp.14,24-25 above.

[3] Ansorge, "Theatre of Life", p.32.

[4] When asked about the parallels between some of his novels and his plays, Storey acknowledged a "superficial relationship" between *Radcliffe* and *The Contractor*, but rightly claimed that "in terms of the experience they present there's very little connection at all" (Haffenden interview, p.21).

football experiences. But whereas the novel concentrates on Arthur's fate, the play focuses on a group of individuals in a football club's changing room. In *This Sporting Life*, through the eyes of Arthur, the first-person narrator, we observe what playing in football matches entails. In *The Changing Room* we never see the match, although we are frequently reminded of it because the noise of the crowd and the announcer's voice are relayed over the Tannoy into the changing room. While the entrance in Act Two of the players in "*stained jerseys, gasping, bruised, exhausted*"[1] underlines the game's strenuous physical demands, Storey directs our attention away from the match itself.

Like *The Changing Room*, *The Contractor* revolves around a specific event. Mr Ewbank, a tent contractor, has his workmen erect a marquee for the wedding of his daughter, Claire. After the wedding the tent is dismantled. These actions closely parallel events in *Radcliffe*. In the novel a tent contractor (also called Ewbank) and his men erect a tent for the wedding of a wealthy man's daughter. Like the workmen in the play's final act, they return to find that the wedding guests have caused considerable damage (pp.144-53,177-82/P.135-44,167-72). In both works Ewbank and his workmen drink champagne after the wedding

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[1] David Storey, *The Changing Room* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972), p.49; and Penguin collection (Harmondsworth, 1978), p.127. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (p.49/P.127).

but the actual wedding reception is not shown.[1] In *Radcliffe* these events form a background to the struggle between Leonard Radcliffe and Victor Tolson. In the play, however, the focus is on the tent and the work being done, and any personal conflict is deliberately avoided.[2] So both plays "deal with aspects of that milieu which the novels don't or can't deal with, and vice versa".[3]

The most unusual feature of *The Contractor* is that the audience sees virtually the entire set being created: a visual representation

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[1] Storey often uses this technique of extending the dimensions of the stage by keeping certain characters and important events offstage. The party celebrating the Shaws' fortieth wedding anniversary takes place between Acts One and Two of *In Celebration*. In *The Farm* Arthur Slattery's fiancée never appears. In *Cromwell* the presence of soldiers and the offstage sounds of battle provide further evidence of the Civil War, and although referred to, Cromwell himself never appears. In *Sisters* Adrienne's home-coming party starts at the end of Act Two and finishes before Act Three begins. And in keeping with the farcical tone of *Mother's Day*, we are conscious of a lot of action taking place offstage, especially in the back bedroom. After coming to this conclusion, I received a copy of an essay which considers in detail this feature of Storey's drama. It deals with all of his plays published so far (William Free and Lynn Whittaker, "The Intrusion Plot in David Storey's Plays", *Papers on Language and Literature* 18 (Spring 1982), pp.151-65).

[2] Storey has said, "I wanted to write something that was not dramatic in the conventional sense: I wanted to do a play without any dramatic gesture where the reality of what people are is the drama rather than the irreconcilable conflicts. There's no other bond in the play than the one that is found in work and things like the edgy father-son relationship are not pursued—are, in fact, deliberately resisted". Denying that he was trying to achieve a Chekhovian quality, Storey added, "I just thought the visual texture of the play should be complementary to the emotional texture" (Billington, "Making Life Work", p.21).

[3] Haffenden interview, p.21.

of the play's major theme.[1] In the first act the workmen erect the canvas exterior of the tent and lay a smooth floor of parquet squares. During the second act they hang a striped muslin lining, transforming the tent's harsh canvas outline into something soft and colourful. They polish the floor, lay out white metalwork chairs and tables, and Paul, Ewbank's son, arranges flowers around the three poles. The final act shows the men dismantling the tent which has been damaged during the wedding reception.

In the first two acts many of the workmen's entrances and exits are motivated by the need to fetch additional materials for the tent—a process largely reversed in Act Three. Their activity contrasts with the movements of the Ewbank family who usually arrive to see what progress is being made and then drift off again. Only Ewbank and Paul actually work on the tent. The erecting, beautifying, and dismantling of the tent provides the framework within which the play unfolds. The audience's attention is frequently divided equally between what the characters are saying and what they are doing. At times their apparently desultory banter serves purely as an aural counterpoint to the physical activity which it thus emphasises. At other times the dialogue reveals something of their inner worries and leads to the momentary surfacing of tension among the characters.

But what is most fascinating about this play is the way Storey uses the work on the tent (and the rhythms it imposes) as an additional

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[1] "The task of putting up and taking down the tent...is not a stage charade. It is real and intricate work, a team effort that requires the subordination of individual and abrasive personalities to the communal effort" (T.E. Kalem, "On to the Triple Crown", *Time*, 5 November 1973, p.64).

means of conveying information about the characters. The workmen, who dominate much of the play, strongly affect its pace and its visual impact. They sometimes work with a single purpose, as we see when they all get the canvas ready, erect the tent, instal the floor, take down the muslin, and, finally, lower the canvas. At other times their activities vary. For instance, some workmen may remain onstage doing individual tasks while others frequently exit and re-enter as they fetch materials for the tent. In Act Two Fitzpatrick and Marshall are taping up the muslin to the tent's sides and teasing Glendenning, an appealing, simple-minded stutterer, who has just finished eating a large bun. Kay (the foreman) and Bennett keep leaving the stage and returning as they carry on white metalwork tables and chairs. Apart from the interesting patterns of movement and contrasting rhythms this seems designed to create, Bennett's concern for Glendenning is also revealed. But because he must continue carrying on furniture, he cannot actually intervene.[1] As the play progresses, the relationships among the workmen fluctuate. When they work together as a group they are usually in harmony (although they are less tolerant of each other during Act Three when they dismantle the tent). Yet whenever they split up and do individual tasks, they either tease one another, often hurtfully, or tension among them develops rapidly.

A workman's reactions to the tent often clarify his inner feelings. When Marshall feels snubbed he "*potters with the ropes, checking them*

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[1] David Storey, *The Contractor* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp.58-59; and Penguin collection (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp.140-41. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (pp.58-59/P.140-41).

with no interest at all" (p.21/P.109). Kay shows his purposefulness by the calm, systematic way he approaches his tasks, whereas Bennett reveals poor motivation by frequently moaning and trying to evade expending energy. Unlike some of Storey's characters, Bennett does not use physical activity to distract himself from his problems. (During the play we learn that his wife has left him for another man).

Fitzpatrick and Marshall often react as a pair: their dialogue is reminiscent of music-hall entertainers or Samuel Beckett's tramps in *Waiting for Godot*.[1] Their comic tendencies are seen early on when they create a routine while carrying on a ridge pole (pp.15-16/P.104). Of all the men, Fitzpatrick shows the greatest concern for tents and for his work. He recalls seeing a field of tents and remarks, "I stood there, looking up at them and thinking, 'It's a damn great pity it is, to take them down at all'" (p.54/P.137). Even Marshall's humour cannot completely mask the serious note in Fitzpatrick's comment. Fitzpatrick genuinely admires the completed marquee and is dismayed at the mess the men discover when they return the next day. (All the men, including Ewbank, are upset by the spoilt tent and we share something of their distress.) References to Fitzpatrick's drinking and his use of humour to conceal his inner feelings suggest that he is a frustrated man, but he derives benefit from his labours. When Kay challenges him, asking if he values anything, Fitzpatrick replies, "I don't know. I put a price on the work I do here. Minimal it may be, but I do put a price on that" (p.101/P.175). Glendenning is the only

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[1] Logan and O'Halloran in *Cromwell* also strongly resemble Marshall and Fitzpatrick.

worker to whom the tent seems of little consequence.

The men sometimes use their duties as an excuse for evading an issue. Although Bennett uses this ploy when provoked by Fitzpatrick and Marshall, it applies particularly to Kay when he is quizzed about spending time in jail.

> MARSHALL. Where were you working, then, Kay, before you came to Ewbank's?
> KAY. I was working.
> BENNETT. Kay was in the nick. Isn't that right?
> (KAY *doesn't answer.*)
> MARSHALL. Well, I never knew that. Is that right, then?
> BENNETT. It is.
> (FITZPATRICK *stops singing.*)
> FITZPATRICK. In the lock-up, Kay, were you?
> (KAY *doesn't answer but continues lacing.*)
> (p.55/P.137)

At other times Kay defuses a tense moment by directing the men's attention to the job in hand. For example, he tells Fitzpatrick to go and load the truck when Bennett has threatened to hit him (p.93/P.167-68).

Throughout *The Contractor* potential conflict among the onstage characters is avoided because others arrive and break the rising friction. This is clearly seen when Fitzpatrick has been fired by Kay during Act Three. As he is leaving, Ewbank enters with characteristic brusqueness. He impatiently brushes aside Fitzpatrick's reasons for leaving and immediately gives the men orders. A possible crisis is averted and the mood soon changes or, at least, the men make a concerted effort to ignore the breach (p.103/P.176).

The play includes many quiet interludes between two individuals that either highlight their inability to communicate or offer a rare glimpse of vulnerability. These moments are often interrupted by other characters coming onstage to attend to the tent. In Act One Mrs Ewbank has a brief exchange with Paul. They discuss Ewbank, his

concern for the tent, and his ability to be frank. Paul adds that he is leaving after the wedding, although he has no destination in mind. The short duologue ends on a slightly tense note as Mrs Ewbank exits to make the workmen's tea. As she leaves, they enter with bags of muslin and Fitzpatrick is heard singing a ribald ditty. The men's sudden entrance and their laughter at Fitzpatrick's song breaks the quieter, almost uneasy atmosphere that has been created (pp.50-51/P.133-34). Later in the play, Paul is left alone with Ewbank for a similarly intimate episode. But this time Paul uses the beautifying of the tent to end their stilted conversation.

> EWBANK. It'll not happen again, you know ...
> (PAUL *looks up at him.*
> EWBANK *gestures round.*)
> This.
> PAUL. There'll not be the chance.
> EWBANK. Too bloody old to start again.
> PAUL. Aye.
> EWBANK. Ah ... well, then ...
> (*Pause.*)
> PAUL. Aye ... Well ... I'll go and fetch some flowers. (pp.80-81/P.158)

The Ewbank family's reactions to the tent, like those of the workmen, reveal something about themselves and their relationships with each other. Throughout the play, Ewbank watches closely over the erecting of the tent. A successful business man, he shifts awkwardly between the role of employer and that of a man who enjoys his work and takes pride in it. He may appear unconcerned about his men's welfare, but he actually employs men who would find difficulty getting alternative work. He says jocularly:

> I employ anybody here, you know. Anybody who'll work. Miners who've coughed their lungs up, fitters who've lost their fingers, madmen who've run away from home. (p.38/P.123)

And he is particularly kind to Glendenning. Beneath his gruff treatment of his men lies an easy relationship with them; a rapport he misses with

his son. Disillusioned, Ewbank realises that giving Paul educational advantages that he himself lacked has not ensured his son's happiness. Feeling out of touch with his children and the world in general, Ewbank finds solace in alcohol[1] and his work.

Paul's inconsistent attitude towards the tent reflects his uncertainty about himself and what he wants from life. At first he deliberately needles his father by assuming the guise of a loafer who is too disinterested to help. Yet he soon becomes absorbed in the tasks he tackles, even showing a flair for arranging the flowers. But he is doubtful about whether he is enjoying himself, and shakes his head when his father asks, "Do you ever fancy this job?" (p.79/P.157). At the end of Act One, the image of him standing alone, whistling a mournful tune, establishes his isolation from his family and from the workmen. The tent provides a temporary distraction, but after the wedding Paul soon leaves, without helping to dismantle it. His constant need to travel shows his restless search for something his parents' home cannot provide.

Paul's senile grandfather, Old Ewbank, potters on and off the stage. A craftsman who distrusts anything modern, he seems to have been cast aimlessly adrift. Only his memories of the useful work he once did have the power to engage his interest. Maurice, the bridegroom, and (to a lesser extent) Claire are surprisingly uninvolved in the tent. Maurice even doubts whether it was necessary to have the marquee at all (p.42/P.126). Although it is being erected for their

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[1] Besides Fitzpatrick and Ewbank, we find the same escapism in Mr Reagan in *Saville*, Mr Morley in *A Prodigal Child*, and Mr Slattery in *The Farm*.

wedding reception, they show little more than dutiful interest in all the activities.

Unlike the workmen, who form a harmonious group several times in the play, the family do so only once. At the end of Act Two they gather to view the completed tent and some of them start dancing. But after the wedding they disperse. Claire and Maurice, of course, do not reappear, and Paul leaves while the tent is being taken down. After enjoying cake and champagne with his workmen, Ewbank becomes increasingly isolated as they leave, one by one. He stands alone on a stripped set before his wife joins him. Although they touch on serious issues, such as the impermanence of everything and what sort of future they face, they lightly shrug off such gloomy thoughts as they go to say goodbye to the old Ewbanks, who are leaving. Ironically, the workmen lead lives that seem to offer less. Yet their job as tent erectors holds the promise of future harmonious and fulfilling experiences—possibly because their ordinary daily round consists in creating special occasions for other people. The play suggests that the members of the family, on the other hand, need a special occasion to bring them together.

Ewbank claims that he and his men are "A lot of bloody misfits" who could be put in a string bag and thrown away without anyone noticing (p.117/P.188). As Kay says, "Some people...have injuries that go deeper than you imagine" (p.101/P.175). Yet although we learn that Bennett's wife has left him, that Marshall has been married three times, and that Kay has been convicted for embezzlement, Storey makes nothing of these problems. Nor does he develop a favourite theme: the son who disappoints his well-meaning but ambitious father. By keeping the characters' troubles subservient to the physical activity,

Storey shows how a group of diverse individuals can experience a sense of unity before going their various ways. Momentarily putting personal worries aside and working hard together, they gain fulfilment within the temporary "home" of the tent that other areas of their lives may lack.

In *The Changing Room*, Storey also highlights the way in which communal involvement—this time in a Rugby League match—helps individuals to forget their troubles for a while. He has given clear reasons for writing it:

> The play was very much prompted by watching the actors rehearse *The Contractor* in England....I found it fascinating to watch 12 people who had really nothing in common apart from the fact that they were actors, being unified by work, by an activity which absorbed them completely for part of the day. When it was over, they broke up and went away. I felt there was a kind of religious feeling to this—people relinquishing their aspirations to be absorbed by a larger community.[1]

But as in *The Contractor*, he does not dwell on the characters' unfulfilled private lives. The play begins and ends with the solitary figure of Harry, the cleaner, sweeping the stage. An eccentric, with strange ideas about Russia, he is usually ignored by the others. He spends most of his time in the changing room and refuses to watch a match. Like Old Ewbank, he claims that everything about the past is superior. Mackendrick, the Club Secretary, challenges this view and draws an uncompromisingly bleak picture of working-class life years before (p.48/P.126). But Harry remains unconvinced, and Storey does not pursue the working-class theme that looms so large in much of his writing.

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[1] Gussow, "A Play Is a 'Holiday'", p.14.

Not all the fifteen players (including the two young reserves) have personal problems. Players like Walsh and Owens appear at home in this sporting world. Still, as the play unfolds amidst the never-ending flow of light-hearted banter, we see that some cheerful faces hide various worries and frustrations. Fielding lives in a house outside the town to suit his wife. Yet he misses the "pit, boozer, bloody dogs", and claims "if I can't see a wall outside on t'window I don't feel as though I'm living in a house" (p.14/P.92). Trevor says very little throughout the play, which suggests he is rather an outsider. While this may be due to his professional status—a teacher amongst mainly working-class men—there are hints that he is not happily married. His wife, an economics graduate, never comes to see him play. And there could be some truth in Walsh's teasing suggestion that her meeting Sandford at a municipal gathering was not really innocent. Like Trevor, Stringer remains aloof from the others, but his problem seems to be a domineering mother (pp.30,87/P.108,165).

Of all the characters, Kendal appears the most wearied by life. Although he does not know how to use it, he buys a tool-set (instead of the raincoat he really needs), hoping it will give him some status in the players' eyes and, more importantly, help him impress his notoriously unfaithful wife. Unlike Walsh, who masterfully evokes and controls the players' mirth, Kendal is the victim of the laughter that accompanies the double entendres about his tool-set.[1] When he breaks his nose during the second half of the match, Mackendrick bluntly comments that Kendal (aged twenty-nine) is getting too old for the game. If dropped

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[1] E.R. Wood, Introduction to *The Changing Room* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1977), p.xii.

from the team, he will lose the only thing at which he succeeds.

Sir Frederick Thornton, the Chairman, does not escape life's pressures either.[1] His remark that he is called "Freddy six days o' the week" but is "Sir Frederick to the wife on Sundays" (p.47/P.125) casts an uncomplimentary light on his marriage. Like Weaver, Slomer and Wade in *This Sporting Life*, Thornton gets vicarious pleasure from his involvement with the football club.[2] Yet two incidents cast doubt on the quality of his enjoyment. His nightmare about robots playing a match (p.49/P.127) and Luke's account of him sitting alone on the stand at ten o'clock one night (p.58/P.136) suggest that he is a troubled man. Perhaps he has realised that when eventually he retires as Chairman he will lose the only meaningful part of his life. He also seems insincere. He thoughtlessly tells Harry to join him in front of the fire when there are no other chairs, and his belated offer to help him stoke the fire rings very hollow (p.44/P.122). He contemptuously dismisses referees, suggesting that they have stunted mentalities (p.46/P.124), but after the match tells Tallon that he admired his handling of the game (p.84/P.162). Moreover, his praise for scoring incidents that he never saw is patently false.

Storey gives mere glimpses of difficulties in some of the characters' domestic lives. (Indeed he shows far more of the worries that beset the characters in *The Contractor*.) When Sandford says,

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[1] Storey says that Thornton is "just as desperate, driven into a corner, as the players who are allegedly being exploited" (Ansorge, "Theatre of Life", p.35).

[2] See p.27 above.

"There are more important things in life than bloody football", Clegg's reply, "Not today there isn't" (p.28/P.106), sums up the play's major preoccupation.

In *The Changing Room*, Storey's particular concern is to show how a group of men from many walks of life can transcend personal worries and individual differences to work together for a common cause. He has said:

> *The Changing Room* was meant to have a double meaning: it was a room that changed because people came into it and also a room in which people were changed *by* it....Each character identifies himself as an individual when he enters and gradually acquires a new identity, just as the room acquires a new identity, and at the end the characters devolve into their individual identities and depart ... in some peculiar way nourished by their complicity in coming there and going through their rituals.[1]

The play's structure corresponds closely to these ideas. In the first act the different characters are slowly moulded into a group with a common objective—to win the game. As they change into their football kit, their individuality is blurred and they become part of the team. In much the same way as the pace of work in *The Contractor* asserts itself (p.23/P.111), the preparations for the game start to fill those in the changing room with expectation (p.31/P.109). Once all the players are ready, they start working together as a group, practising scrumming and passing the ball along the back line. Crosby and Sandford, the trainers, issue instructions and give last-minute reminders. Eventually the room falls silent until, tense and nervous, the players line up and run out to begin the match.

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[1] Haffenden interview, p.23.

In Act Two, following a short scene involving Thornton, Mackendrick and Harry, the players return, mud-bespattered and tired. After a brief rest, they go out for the second half. The remainder of the act deals with Kendal's injury, although we remain conscious of the match because commentary and the crowd's booing and cheering are heard over the Tannoy. In the last act, as the players change back into their everyday garb, they assume their individual identities again. The room appears to change "according to who's looking at it, according to whether it's empty or full".[1] Yet there is a sense in which the changing room never alters. And certain features of the players' lives stay the same. Thornton will remain an outsider who dominates the group, Owens may have to retire after the following season, but another captain will be found, some players are in favour, some are not, "but the game, the system, life itself, continue unchanged and, perhaps unchangeable".[2]

As in *This Sporting Life*, the harsh aspects of the game are emphasised. The players constantly refer to the freezing conditions in which they must play. Several complain about injuries. Patsy declares he has no skin on his shoulder, Fielding has a cut above his eye, and Morley has a sore ankle. In the second act, when they return for half-time, there are more injuries. Fenchurch's hand has been cut by studs, Atkinson has hurt his ankle, Patsy has cramp, Trevor has injured his ear, and the cut above Fielding's eye has reopened. Rugby League football is a hard game where no quarter is given and injuries

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[1] Derek Mahon, "Team-Work", *Listener* 86 (November 1971), p.701.

[2] John Simon, Review of *The Changing Room*, *Hudson Review* 26 (Summer 1973), p.341.

are an accepted hazard. As Crosby tells the players, "No fists. No bloody feet. Remember ... But when you hit them. Hit them bleeding hard" (p.33/P.111). The players make light of any physical problems because they do not want to be dropped from the team and so lose their earnings and their social prestige. Even when Kendal breaks his nose, those helping him do not show undue concern because they are used to treating such things. As Harry notes:

> Three collar-bones we had one week ... Two o' theirs ... the last un ours ... Ankle ... Bloody thigh-bone, once ... Red hair ... He never played again. (p.65/P.143)

Yet despite the physical pain and the appalling playing conditions, the players are exhilarated during half-time. Laughter and a feeling of camaraderie fill the changing room. When they return after winning the match there is the same elation and friendship. For a short period most of the characters have experienced a sense of belonging, of purpose, and of fulfilment. Harry says, "Home's in our house. That's where home is" (p.58/P.136), but for many of the men the changing room is their spiritual home. This significance of the room is implicit in Thornton's comment when he urges the team to keep up the pressure for the rest of the match. "Remember: it's thy advantage second half. Away from home, for them: it always tells" (p.56/P.134). Later, he jokingly draws attention to the time the characters spend in the changing room. He suggests Walsh should pay rent because he "spends more time here than he does at home" (p.79/P.157), and claims that the room is like a "Bloody gossip shop...on a Sunday morning" (p.80/P.158).

The Changing Room, like *The Contractor*, conveys the ephemeral quality of existence. Of these plays, as Austin Quigley suggests,

"*Storey makes the act of gathering, interacting, and disbanding the guiding motif*".[1] The rugby match, like the tent, is short-lived, reflecting the brevity of work, relationships, ambitions, achievements, failures. Indeed it mirrors the brevity of life itself. When Walsh says, "Come today, tha knows ... All gone tomorrer" (p.88/P.166), he echoes Ewbank in *The Contractor* who comments, "Come today. Gone tomorrow" (p.118/P.188). But this sense of loss does not detract from the positive aspects of these plays. The characters, who are not as anguished as the others in Storey's writing, experience the joy of working together and of forgetting any troubles they may have had—even if not for long. At the end of both plays there is a slowing down which, after all the activity, we find sad and yet oddly satisfying because it reproduces the rhythm of renewal and loss we repeatedly experience in our own lives.

In these plays Storey lays special emphasis on communal effort and its advantages, a theme which appears frequently, if less prominently, elsewhere in his work. Mr Slattery in *The Farm* argues, "Work's the only bloody thing that's real".[2] His son, Arthur, has particularly fond memories of the family harvesting together: "I enjoyed those bloody days ... Never seemed to rain ... Can scarcely remember any frost" (p.48/P.321). In *Cromwell*, Proctor has to learn that the one thing that cannot be taken away is "joy in work". He has

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[1] Quigley, "Emblematic Structure and Setting", p.261. The italics are Quigley's.

[2] David Storey, *The Farm* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), p.76; and Penguin collection (Harmondsworth, 1982), p.344. Subsequent references will distinguish the Penguin page-numbers by a capital P, thus: (p.76/P.344).

mistakenly assumed that "The fruits of the labour, not the labouring",[1] were the reward. The notion that work is pleasure is reflected in Allott's Latin maxim in *Life Class*—"Labor Ipse Voluptas Est" (p.57/P.204)—and in the repetition of that phrase as the motto of Colin Saville's school.[2] A positive view of physical activity even appears in *Home* (where it might be least expected), when Harry agrees with Jack that "The athletic life has many attractions" (p.21/P.23).

Storey does not hold that work results in these pleasurable benefits in all circumstances. He distinguishes between physical exertion associated with a particular person or object and that which is done for anyone and everyone. So Mr Morley enjoys his labours on the Spencers' farm, and Ewbank's men in *Radcliffe* and *The Contractor* observe the completed tent with pleasure and pride. Because they identify with this achievement, they are upset when they return to see it damaged. And because they value their work, we do so as well and thus understand their later distress. On the other hand, Arthur Machin gains little satisfaction from working at Weaver's factory. But he and the players in *The Changing Room* can experience elation when participating in a game that means something to them. Storey's miners (a group toiling for a faceless concern) find their work arduous, and only by fixing their eyes on their children's futures can they draw some comfort from their animal-like burrowing. Even the pride that prevents them from

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[1] David Storey, *Cromwell* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), p.73. No Penguin edition, either singly or collectively, has yet been published.

[2] Laura Weaver has also commented on these links between *Cromwell*, *Life Class* and *Saville* ("Journey Through a Tunnel", p.338).

retiring early has a ring of martyrdom about it rather than the air of wanting to finish a job worth doing. When Colin translates his school motto—"Labor Ipse Voluptas" (p.140/P.152)—for his father as "Work is pleasure", Mr Saville (thinking of the exhausting effort mining demands) replies, "Sithee, not where I work, then....The one who wrote that has never been down yon" (p.145/P.158).

There is little mutual understanding, it is true, between the physical labourers on the one hand and the sedentary workers on the other. Yet in *A Prodigal Child*, Bryan Morley does come to realise the value of working-class life with its emphasis on physical activity and group participation. He eventually understands that there are rewards in both kinds of pursuit. In this novel, and in *The Contractor* and *The Changing Room*, Storey shows the value of accepting life for what it is. There are no clear-cut solutions. No single outlook, be it physical or intellectual, can permanently solve existential problems. At best, all that can be offered is a temporary refuge, a short-lived metaphorical "home".

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

It has been said of Storey that the "striking thing about him as a writer is partly that his work is all of a piece".[1] As the preceding chapters have shown, his novels and plays are linked by certain common themes. Most of his characters are searching for something that will alter their situation as despairing outsiders. As Kitchen says in *Early Days*: "throughout our lives we stand, looking up at a multitude of faces, not one of which we shall ever know".[2]

Some of Storey's characters are unable to identify what they hope to find. Mr Slattery (in *The Farm*) expresses their dilemma when he struggles—and fails—to articulate his needs: "All I've looked for ... *always* ... all I've ever looked for ... all my bloody life ... (*Goes.*)" (p.66/P.335). Many feel trapped in their present circumstances and so explore various ways of escaping. They seek refuge in group physical activities; in solitary pursuits like writing or artistic forms of self-expression; or in personal relationships. They leave claustrophobic marital or parental homes; or withdraw behind a barrier of isolation. Usually they discover that any haven

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[1] Billington, "Making Life Work", p.21.

[2] David Storey, *Early Days* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980), p.29; this collection contains the only edition of this play yet published.

reached gives only temporary solace. Few could claim to have the "great life"—"A wife. Home ... children....Hot chocolate by the fire"—that Fitzpatrick and Marshall conjure up (albeit with wry humour) in *The Contractor* (p.104/P.177). Most of them would echo Adrienne's observation in *Sisters*:

> It's not often in life you have anything to celebrate: the prodigal's return: the family united: the discovery of friends ... the feeling that life after all has got a purpose. (p.115)

Earlier discussion has shown that the search by Storey's characters for solutions to their existential problems can be seen as a search for a home, metaphorical, literal, or both.[1] The notion of a home usually includes relationships with other members of a family. As we have found, Storey's view of the world is "through the lens of the family".[2] He himself thinks that "most great literature concerns insoluble family problems"[3] and from his earliest novels he has repeatedly examined the effect—generally detrimental—that domestic affairs have on the people involved.

In *Flight into Camden*, Howarth likens families to "vicious animals":[4] an image that dominates much of Storey's writing. So *Mother's Day*, which seems such a radical departure[5] because it is a "wild farce", has antecedents that "can be found almost everywhere

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[1] Mel Gussow has noted that "it is remarkable how many of Mr Storey's plays could have accurately been entitled 'Home'" ("Storey's Farm", *New York Times*, 15 October 1974, p.44).

[2] Sage interview, p.64.

[3] Duffy, "Ethic of Work and Play", p.69.

[4] See p.33 above.

[5] Storey's use of farce should not be surprising. The dinner Freestone has at Wilcox's house (in *A Temporary Life*) is savagely funny, and there is a strong element of humour in all his work.

one cares to look".[1] Storey, too, claims that "a constant theme runs through all my work and *Mother's Day* is no exception".[2] The Johnson family in the play is an extreme version of his family groups who exploit each other and often outsiders as well.[3] And Storey regards them as "genuinely a microcosm of English domestic life with their delusions, illusions and fantasies, and their inveterate capacity to live in the past".[4] When Harold Johnson admits, "I came on home because I had nowhere else to go",[5] he reflects what many of Storey's characters feel: that they return to the family hearth as a last resort.

Storey seldom shows parental homes as truly nurturing those who live there, although the basic requirements for life are met. Many of the children (even when adults) see these establishments as unchanging environments that stifle prospects of finding fulfilment

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[1] Geoff Brown's review of *Mother's Day* in *Plays and Players* 24 (December 1976), p.36.

[2] Higgins, "Night and Day", p.13.

[3] It is possible that Storey decided to parody some of his major themes because, like Ionesco, he believes that farce can be used to shatter the habitual complacency of audiences. Ionesco has written that plays must be "raised to paroxysm, where the source of tragedy lies. A theatre of violence: violently comic, violently dramatic" (*Notes and Counter Notes* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), p.26). My attention was first drawn to Ionesco's ideas by Arnold Hinchliffe in *British Theatre 1950-70* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), p.15.

[4] Comments made during an interview with John Walker; quoted by Oleg Kerensky in *The New British Drama* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), pp.16-17.

[5] David Storey, *Mother's Day* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), p.209; this collection contains the only edition of this play yet published.

within them. Storey uses his parents to "demonstrate older social attitudes that no longer fit the facts of experience".[1] Alarmed and helpless they watch as, under the pressure of reality, the goal they dreamed of for their children crumbles: an illusory edifice supposedly founded on a higher education, cemented by the misguided belief that their offspring will accept middle-class values, and painted with the glowing colours of a life lived happily ever after. And so the gulf between the generations widens and parents and children struggle to communicate. Estranged from each other, they try to find something that will make them feel at one within themselves and the world.

The exclusively English setting of Storey's novels and plays, populated by such a large number of spiritually homeless individuals, might lead us to conclude that he, like W.H. Auden, is asking: "What do you think about England, this country of ours where nobody is well?"[2] It has been said that Storey's novels "confront the reader with sometimes the threatened existence, sometimes the actual existence of a terrible emptiness, anarchy and brutality in contemporary English life".[3] And John Russell Taylor has observed that Storey is not alone in often including deeply disturbed teachers in his plays. (Of course, this applies to his novels as well.) Suggesting that teachers are possibly "most acutely vulnerable to the pressures of modern life, to fears of fragmentation",[4] Taylor wonders whether dramatists like

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[1] Gindin, *Postwar British Fiction*, p.91.

[2] "Address for a Prize-Day", *The Orators*, 2nd ed., (London: Faber & Faber, 1934), p.12.

[3] Newton, "Two Men Who Matter?", p.285.

[4] "Teach and Be Damned", *Plays and Players* 18 (September 1971), p.15.

Simon Gray, David Caute, Peter Nichols, Peter Terson, David Mercer and Storey (among many others) are merely "writing about people and milieux" they know simply because they know them,[1] or because they suppose them "to have some more general relevance and significance". Although Taylor avoids answering his own question, he adds, "But if what incidentally emerges is an obsession with the teacher and at the same time a pretty disgruntled view of what he is likely to be as a person and what he stands for in our society as a whole, the unanimity of the opinion and the universality of the picture cannot be altogether coincidental".[2]

There can be little doubt that Storey's artistic vision does reflect a deep-seated dissatisfaction with life in Britain. But more fundamentally, his preoccupation with individuals searching for identity and battling to survive in a hostile world exposes a universal existential problem that links not only his characters but his readers as well. In his review of *In Celebration*, Albert Hunt noted that "As in *This Sporting Life*, he's using his inside knowledge of a region and a class to make a metaphysical statement about tensions and contradictions and violence—a violence he feels to be, not so much the stuff of a limited social situation as of the human condition itself".[3] Many of his characters' problem-solving manoeuvres are not unusual: leaving untenable situations, changing jobs, trying to find a fulfilling relationship, seeking temporary relief in group activities or in creative pursuits, turning to alcohol, or shunning society

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[1] Storey's unflattering presentation of teachers and schools throughout his work does reflect his own unfortunate experiences. See p.4 above.

[2] "Teach and Be Damned", p.18.

[3] "Too Far Above Ground", p.681.

altogether.

When Storey portrays the conflict between generations, he is concerned (whether consciously or not) with "one of the central themes of the contemporary drama".[1] When he depicts characters who are "estranged from others in their own society", he is in the company of many writers who repeatedly examine this theme because it is "central to contemporary experience".[2] And the frequent appearance of insanity in his fictional and dramatic worlds is, of course, not a feature peculiar to his work. C.W.E. Bigsby has observed:

> For a period in which boundaries are indeed dissolving, in which roles are no longer as clearly definable and acceptable, in which the dominant images seem to be those of decay and degeneration, and in which society is perceived as a conspiracy against the self or against a class, it is perhaps not surprising that the mental hospital should have become a favourite image and setting for the playwright of the 60s and 70s.[3]

Storey is one of those authors who "continually express their sense of the age in images of fragmentation, the outsider, the refugee, the alien, the exile". His characters' longing for inner peace and a harmonious relationship with their particular world reflects the dilemma of many disillusioned people who experience "a desire for synthesis, together with a despairing recognition of the difficulty of the quest".[4]

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[1] Marjorie Thompson, "The Image of Youth in the Contemporary Theater", *Modern Drama* 7 (February 1965), p.439.

[2] James Gindin, "The Fable Begins to Break Down", *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 8 (Winter 1967), p.17.

[3] "The Language of Crisis in British Theatre", *Contemporary English Drama*, Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies, No.19 (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p.19.

[4] C.B. Cox and A.E. Dyson, Introduction to Vol.3: 1945-1965 of *The Twentieth-Century Mind* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp.xi,xii.

Because Storey's ideas are part of the mainstream of twentieth-century thought, it is not surprising that his writing has been compared with that of others whose themes are similar or whose technique forms an integral part of such preoccupations. His work invites a comparison with that of D.H. Lawrence[1] because, like Lawrence, he comes from a northern working-class background, views industrialisation as destructive, and uses autobiographical details to fire his creativity. His dualistic vision of life as divided between the physical and the spiritual[2] and his belief in man's need to achieve a balance between the two also recalls some of Lawrence's ideas. Lawrence, concerned with the negative effects of inhibited behaviour, clearly envisaged the way men should live, but Storey's attitudes are equivocal. He presents positive and negative aspects of predominantly physical and spiritual approaches to life, shows how they conflict with each other, and only tentatively hints at the possibilities of resolution.

Another factor working against the comparison between Lawrence and Storey is the latter's rejection of Lawrence's "excessive involvement in what he is writing about"[3] and his "intellectualising".[4] Storey admits that he has been "influenced by certain aspects of Lawrence

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[1] See Bernard Bergonzi, *The Situation of the Novel*, rpt., (London: The Macmillan Press, 1971), p.22; Thomas Churchill, "Waterhouse, Storey, and Fowles", *Critique*, 10, No.3 (1968), p.81; Clark, "David Storey", pp.17,25,27; George Fenby, "The Organic Self" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1973), pp.92-96; Froeb, "Storey, Fowles and Murdoch", pp.15-16; and Weaver, "Journey Through a Tunnel", pp.19-20.

[2] See pp.2-4 above.

[3] "Speaking of Writing", p.15.

[4] Gibb, "Academics, Critics, 'Literary Whizz-Kids'", p.9; and Sage interview, p.64.

enormously", and agrees that "if your work is likened to someone else's, it's a starting point for your audience, if nothing else". But he is irritated—quite rightly—when his writing is "used as a peg to get at Lawrence", or if his work "is abused to get at something else".[1]

Parallels have been drawn between Storey's plays and those of Chekhov.[2] The Russian playwright's intentions, like Storey's, often have to be deduced from the subtext. Chekhov, too, favours naturalistic settings, keeps important events offstage, and depicts characters who fail to communicate with one another.

Mention has been made of the similarities between Marshall and Fitzpatrick in *The Contractor* and Samuel Beckett's tramps in *Waiting for Godot*.[3] In his review of *Early Days*, T.E. Kalem observes another parallel, saying: "The sum of Storey's wisdom is as bleak as Beckett's: to make sense of life is impossible, to make terms with death is insufferable".[4] And Julian Hilton describes *Home*, especially the "superb first act", as "a remarkable blend of wit, Beckett-like lapidary dialogue and pathos".[5]

But these comparisons only minimally help our understanding of Storey's drama. The same is true of those which liken it to Pinter's,[6]

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[1] Hennessy interview, p.6.

[2] See John Elsom, *Post-War British Theatre*, rev. ed., (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p.190; Gussow, "Storey's Farm", p.44; and Stinson, "Dualism and Paradox", p.133.

[3] See p.161 above.

[4] "Caustic Imp", *Time*, 8 June 1981, p.48.

[5] "The Court and Its Favours", *Contemporary English Drama*, Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies, No.19 (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p.146.

[6] See Nolan, "Beyond Realism", p.4; Edith Oliver, "David Storey's Tent Show", *New Yorker*, 29 October 1973, p.108; Reinelt, "Novels and Plays", pp.28-31; and Gerald Weales, "Storey Theater", *Commonweal*, 15 January 1971, p.373.

despite the presence of certain elements that are strongly reminiscent of Storey's fellow-countryman.[1] Such observations reveal that both dramatists rely fairly heavily on subtext to convey their play's meaning to the audience. They have captured colloquial speech patterns with uncanny accuracy and both are fond of deliberately withholding information about a character's background (although this applies less frequently to Storey).[2] And the latter's use of memory in *Early Days* recalls the later plays of Pinter.

The echoes of other writers are not always to Storey's credit. Stanley Kauffmann, discussing *Home*, declares: "Put Beckett aside as too cruel a comparison, and Storey shrivels next to Pinter".[3] And, apart from its poor handling of the exposition and patches of surprisingly weak dialogue, *Sisters* is marred by overtones of *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams.[4]

Storey's novels and plays are undeniably part of current literary trends and, as we have seen, twentieth-century preoccupations resonate throughout them. But it is in the circumscribed, intensely personal

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[1] John Russell Taylor observes that the "slight flurry of discussion when [*Home*] opened about whether Storey had undergone an influence from Pinter seemed, more than usual, grotesquely irrelevant" (*Second Wave*, p.153).

[2] In an interview with Guy Flatley, Storey disclaimed Pinter's influence on his plays ("I Never Saw a Pinter Play", *New York Times*, 29 November 1970, Section II, p.5).

[3] This review of the play (dated 12 December 1970) was reprinted in *Persons of the Drama* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p.215.

[4] The similarities between the plays have also been remarked on by Diana Devlin ("Plays in Print", *Drama*, No.140 (1981), p.55); and David Mayer in his review of *Sisters* (*Plays and Players* 26 (November 1978), p.21).

area of dislocation that forms his own fictional and dramatic world, combined with his equivocal outlook, that Storey is distinctive. The preceding discussion of his novels and some of his plays has shown that a pervasive theme is the tension between his characters' need to assert themselves and their desire to belong: opposing forces that can be equated with the common metaphors of leaving a home and reaching one. Ironically, their search for a "home" often involves a loss (maybe a temporary one) of their individuality. Other dominant themes concern the role played by Storey's families, and the pressures exerted on almost everyone by the communities in which they live and the nature of the work they do. Time and again Storey explores families involving disillusioned parents and discontented—often rebellious—children who feel guilty about wanting to break away. In most instances the novel or play ends without resolving the causes of the characters' conflicts.

Faced with this sombre view of contemporary life, it is natural to ask whether the quest for a home is worthwhile, considering that Storey usually shows his characters failing to find a permanent refuge. His novels and plays clearly reveal that it *is* desirable to seek answers to existential problems, and he presents different routes to follow. He also—as we have seen—points out the pitfalls that lie along the way. Despite the variety of possible approaches to living, they are all linked to three important considerations.[1]

Storey has used the example of Cézanne and his preoccupation with

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[1] The following remarks apply generally to Storey's artistic vision and not necessarily to individual works.

painting apples to justify his own repeated exploration of certain major themes.[1] Like Cézanne, he believes that each work provides a different perspective on the chosen subject. So if we consider his novels and plays "as a single imaginative world" (as he himself suggests),[2] we should expect to find that although the same ideas reappear frequently, he views them from different angles and treats them in various ways. The preceding chapters have shown that this is so. But underlying the contrasts, three values consistently inform Storey's work. Firstly, it is vital to seek a better life, no matter what the end result may be. Secondly, once one has reached a "home", there is a threat of becoming imprisoned in a stultified existence; so it is important to remain prepared to move on. Finally, one must come to terms with the past.

In his novels and plays Storey indicates repeatedly that, notwithstanding the illusory nature of a character's goal, there is value in the search itself. He implies that uncertainty about the eventual destination should not deter a would-be seeker.[3] Indeed, the pursuit of inner peace may continue for years; perhaps only ending in

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[1] See p.7 above.

[2] Haffenden interview, p.21.

[3] Benedict Nightingale makes a similar observation when discussing *Cromwell*: "The conclusion that seems to emerge is that it is the struggle and not result of the struggle, the process of work and not its fruits, that should matter to us". Still, he sounds a warning when he questions how we can agree "with a writer who seems to be suggesting that we should absorb ourselves with the means and ignore the end—tirelessly put brick on brick and not worry if we're building the Tower of Babel or the gas-chambers at Belsen" ("Attachments", *New Statesman* 86 (August 1973), p.261).

death. At the end of his life, Kitchen (in *Early Days*) is sustained by his belief that he will reach a home where he will find tranquillity: "I have a cottage waiting for me at the edge of a wood. In winter the snow lies very deep: the howling of wolves comes to me as I'm tucked up warm at night" (p.35).[1]

Although they fail to attain the fulfilling lives they strive for—by travelling to another place or embarking on a voyage of self-discovery—some of Storey's characters reach a better understanding of themselves and become more prepared to make allowances for other people. There are those, however, who refuse to be engaged actively in problem-solving and hold themselves aloof from those around them. At best they passively accept untenable situations, but often they withdraw from social contact, spiritually and emotionally damaging themselves and others in the process.

The second thematic concern is the importance of adaptation to changing circumstances. This involves the notion of people venturing forth—either to assert their individuality or to continue learning about themselves. Perhaps they escape from wretched environments, or leave behind the comforting reassurance of all that is familiar. But

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[1] Looking back over a long life that includes much personal success, Kitchen dwells on certain painful memories that haunt him. One of them concerns the desolation he felt when momentarily losing his parents on a crowded station platform (pp.11,29)—a youthful experience that strongly echoes Margaret Thorpe's recollection in *Flight into Camden*. As she says good-bye to her father on King's Cross station, she remembers hunting along a train for him while on holiday as a child (p.178/P.190). The striking similarities between these two incidents (in works published many years apart), and the contexts in which Margaret and Kitchen both remember them—when feeling desperately lonely—suggest that they reflect something that happened to Storey himself.

by doing so they avoid the very real danger inherent in a fixed way of life—stagnation. This theme appears early in Storey's writing. He has said that in *Radcliffe* "the putting up and dismantling of the tent was a foil to everything that was static and intransigent: the myth of the people who put up tents and move on was opposed to the family who stand still and never develop".[1] And we have seen how often his younger characters comment scornfully, or despairingly, on the living death their parents' homes represent.

Storey often implies that a rigid approach to life is a weakness. This is most clearly expressed in *Cromwell*.[2] From the beginning of the play Proctor is established as a man of strong convictions and clear-cut aims. But as circumstances alter, he is forced to explore several, radically different, alternatives. At first his belief in "principle, honour, virtue" blinds him to the futility of the Civil War. He claims: "without ideals no man can live" (p.50). But later he admits that he can no longer participate. He and Joan (his future wife) decide to return to her deceased parents' farm, hoping that they can begin afresh there. Proctor confesses that he finds it difficult to change his outlook: "I'm used to having conviction on my side ... badges, stripes, emblems, that tell me who and what and where I am" (p.59). He is reluctant to leave the "home" his uniform provides.

For several years he and Joan prosper: a daughter is born and they seem happily settled in their rural "haven" (p.63). But the war

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[1] Billington, "Making Life Work", p.21.

[2] In this play Storey's use of an episodic structure and his treatment of the expediency engendered by war suggests a comparison with Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage*.

intrudes once more. Soldiers set fire to their home and their child dies in the flames. In the face of this violence, Proctor considers fighting again. Grief-stricken, he reasserts his need for "goals, and ways and means". But Joan confronts him with the harmful implications of his search for reassurance in a rigidly defined approach to life. She claims that the absolute he pursues is "a kind of death—the uniform at first, and then a home—inviolable extremes that like a hearse can take you safely to a given end" (p.73). Proctor's dilemma is the paradox that continually reappears in Storey's work: when reaching a home, his characters either discover to their chagrin that the haven is not permanent, or they are forced to move on because the circumstances in which they find themselves keep altering. So today's refuge becomes tomorrow's trap.

Storey has said of Proctor, "He has to learn to live without preconceptions, to accept life for what it is".[1] Proctor does confess, "I dreamed I took conviction down to hell ... cleansed and bathed its empty shell ... and when I drank I found its contents turned to blood" (p.78). But the play ends without indicating whether he can make his newfound insight the principle by which he lives.

The third value common to the various existential choices Storey's characters face is the importance of coming to terms with the past: something that often requires reconciliation with their parents, husbands, or wives. Events in the novels and plays usually justify the characters' departure from their spheres of conflict. The marital homes in his work are fraught with debilitating tensions. The parental

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[1] Ansorge, "Theatre of Life", p.35.

homes exert injurious pressures on all. So it is understandable that many escaping children overlook, or even reject, their damaging formative influence. Many of his parents mould their children in a way almost as ruinous as that so bitterly attacked by R.D. Laing:

> From the moment of birth, when the stone-age baby confronts the twentieth-century mother, the baby is subjected to these forces of violence, called love, as its mother and father have been, and their parents and their parents before them. These forces are mainly concerned with destroying most of its potentialities. This enterprise is on the whole successful. By the time the new human being is fifteen or so, we are left with a being like ourselves. A half-crazed creature, more or less adjusted to a mad world. This is normality in our present age.[1]

In his review of Laing's book, Storey quotes this passage, and another equally telling excerpt which claims that we fear life and love as much as we fear death.[2] Storey maintains that Laing's deep longing to relieve the alienated condition of so many people "is as much a symptom as a rationale of the experience he describes: a cry, passionate and heartrending and not at all inarticulate, from the loveless, from the unwanted, the unknown and the forsaken; a cry, in effect, from us all".[3] But in his own writing he introduces a more positive note. He shows that characters can break the stranglehold of the past if they accept previous experiences as unalterable features of their lives. They should stop rejecting, or trying to suppress, the unpalatable truth that the past has made them what they are. Fighting such a futile battle robs them of the energy needed for more

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[1] *Politics of Experience*, p.50.

[2] David Storey, "Passionate Polemics", *New Society* 9 (January 1967), p.137.

[3] Ibid.

rewarding ends. Once they face this, wounds can heal and scars be accepted. Moreover, they are able to start closing the breach of misunderstanding that exists between themselves and those whose misguided love has created the conditions they condemn.

This idea of reconciliation is closely related to an extremely important difference that exists between Storey and Laing. While agreeing with many of Laing's theories, Storey rejects the implication that we must wash our hands of society, and asserts, "Society, however, condemned, is the medium we live in. Its disease, its insanity, has to be suffered".[1] He has continued to believe this and, nearly a decade later, is quoted as having said: "You are obliged to come to terms with the society in which you live".[2] Even more recently, when asked whether he still felt that life is essentially tragic, he replied:

> I'm trying to get away from that. I find it more and more intolerable as I get older. You have to set it aside and take a more courageous view of life....and in the end I think we're struggling towards grace—the ability to accept life and to live it at the same time. I think in the end you can't accept the despair which underlies my earlier writing.[3]

He considers his stoical approach to life as "the only alternative to despair".[4] This implied fourth value explains the humour in his

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[1] Storey, "Passionate Polemics", p.137.

[2] Philip Howard, "Men in the News", *The Times*, 25 November 1976, p.18.

[3] Haffenden interview, p.22.

[4] Ibid.

plays and, we may assume, in his novels too:

> I *hope* the plays are humorous—not merely amusing but *funny*. The idea of a man smiling at his predicament—and some of the predicaments *are* pretty awful—is part of what the plays are about.[1]

Storey's own "soldiering on"[2] in the face of life's many pressures is reflected in his characters' decisions to accept past events and to forgive (at least partially) those who have caused their suffering. The hope this reflects is something that was present even in his early, unpublished novels. Describing them as "rather dark and brooding", Storey adds that the characters are "usually at odds with the world" and yet, eventually, they achieve "some sort of salvation".[3] Although he explores the violence inherent in existence, his description of it "is not carried through to its necessarily destructive conclusion". In his view of the world, "compromise and resignation are always possible".[4] Inevitably this tension informing Storey's work—tension between the need to escape from restrictive homes and the desirability of reconciliation—is one of the elements that account for his ubiquitous ambivalence.

This ambivalence is heightened by his consistent (and right) refusal to use any of his characters as an authorial mouthpiece. His novels and plays are populated by individuals whose actions, however misguided, always have some justification, and so reflect their

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[1] Hennessy interview, p.8.

[2] See p.116 above.

[3] Introduction to *This Sporting Life*, p.ix.

[4] Hilton, "The Court and Its Favours", p.146.

creator's compassionate understanding. His ability to view his characters sympathetically yet with a certain detachment, and his equivocal handling of his major themes, are distinguishing marks of his work. And they stem from his particular way of seeing the world, rather than from an inability to make up his mind. Discussing experimentation in the arts, he has said, "My own kind of superstition would lead me in writing towards some sort of dispassionate structure—a conflict of several realities—as in *The Contractor*—an equal relevance to opposed elements of the story".[1]

Storey is fond of infusing his novels and plays with personal experiences and with anecdotes he remembers.[2] Yet, though finding it unusually hard to distance himself from his early life, he avoids the trap of self-indulgence.[3] His pool of creative ideas has served him well. But Lindsay Anderson has indicated that it may be a limited resource: "And that's probably...one of his problems...when that area dries up there aren't such rich sources of stimulation".[4]

It would be foolhardy, if not presumptuous, to attempt to draw any final conclusions about Storey's literary success at this stage, especially when armed with the knowledge that he has "written far more

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[1] De Jongh, "Storey's Line", p.10.

[2] Billington, "Making Life Work", p.21.

[3] See pp.4-5 above.

[4] Unpublished material from my interview with Mr Anderson in London, 8 July 1980.

than he has ever seen fit to publish".[1] Given his very disciplined approach to his work,[2] it is clear that novels and plays will continue to appear. He enjoys writing plays, and does so with incredible ease, often completing them in a few days.[3] And although he claims "that the cinema has largely superseded the function of the novel",[4] he admits to feeling a "sentimental attachment" to this form.[5] It is as if once he feels at home in drama, he is compelled to move back to the novel.

All that is certain is that his fondness for reworking a circumscribed area of experience has not led, thus far, to pale recreations of earlier ideas. What does emerge is that none of his works presents a complete picture of his dramatic or fictional worlds.

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[1] Haffenden interview, p.19.

[2] His father's arduous job as a coal-miner profoundly affected his son and when Storey started *This Sporting Life* he was "quite consciously working his shifts, hour against hour" (Higgins, "Night and Day", p.13). His habit of writing daily also shows the influence of his background as a miner's child. He has admitted to Mel Gussow, "It's like working in a coal mine....I sit down to eight hours of slog a day and do a kind of shift of prose....Even if nothing comes out, I do a great black of work each day" ("A Play Is a 'Holiday'", p.14). Storey refers to this metaphor again, saying, "To ask me to take a day off from writing is like asking a prospector to give up—if only temporarily—the rights to his claim, when it might *just* be that day that fate has destined him to dig up a kingsize nugget" (Hayman, *Playback*, p.19).

[3] See Gibb, "Academics, Critics, 'Literary Whizz-Kids'", p.9; Gussow, "A Play Is a 'Holiday'", p.14 and "Talk with David Storey", p.11; and Hayman, *Playback*, p.10.

[4] "Thoughts on Contemporary Theatre", *New Theatre Magazine* 7 (Spring 1967), p.10. He has expressed similar views elsewhere on the decline of the novel (de Jongh, "Storey's Line", p.10; Gibb, "Academics, Critics, 'Literary Whizz-Kids'", p.9; and Hennessy interview, pp.10-11).

[5] Hayman, *Playback*, p.7.

Rather, each one offers a different perspective on his major themes. In this Storey achieves (consciously or intuitively) one of Wyndham Lewis's declared aims: "to elicit a pattern of thinking: to show how any one of my books is connected with every other....No deviation has occurred, the central stimulus has remained throughout the same, although I have made use of various methods".[1] It seems particularly fitting to be able to claim that Storey has attained what Lewis (whose work he has admired) would, in his turn, have found praiseworthy.

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[1] *Rude Assignment* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1951), p.141.

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There are five sections. Some are subdivided. Each item listed is numbered. Full particulars of each source are given only once and, in order to save space, in those cases where two or more items occur in a single source, cross-references are supplied. Cross-referencing is also used to indicate related matter listed elsewhere. The Bibliography is intended not only to record the sources consulted for the thesis, but also to be of some use to subsequent researchers into Storey's work. For this reason there is also an Appendix listing, in alphabetical order, identified sources which for various reasons were unobtainable. These items are not classified according to the divisions in the Bibliography, nor are they numbered. It has not been possible to verify their particulars.

The sections and subdivisions are:

(1) Bibliographies

001 ff.

(2) Primary Sources: Storey

100 ff. Novels

200 ff. Plays

300 ff. Other Writing

(3) Interviews

400 ff.

(4) Secondary Sources I: On Storey

500 ff. Unpublished Dissertations

600 ff. General Criticism on Storey

700 ff. Criticism Dealing with Individual Novels

800 ff. Criticism Dealing with Individual Plays

(5) Secondary Sources II: Miscellaneous

900 ff.

Appendix: Sources Identified but Unobtainable

Further points concerning presentation must be noted.

Asterisks (*) indicate sources of special interest, either for the thesis in particular, or in general.

The section headed "Interviews" includes an edited transcript of a panel discussion in which Storey took part. It also gives cross-references to other sources that include sizable quotations of Storey's opinions and comments.

Where I felt additional information about the nature of an item might be helpful, I have added it.

From October 1981, *Books and Bookmen* dropped volume numbers and retained only the issue numbers.

Other stylistic details have been outlined in Notes on Presentation. See pp.iv-v above.

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