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AN UNHOLY ENCOUNTER: THE EARLY WORKS
OF DAVID STOREY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1974

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INTRODUCTION

A professional painter, novelist, and playwright, David Storey is a member of that phenomenal generation of alienated and angry young artists freed by John Osborne's unexpected success in 1956. Twelve years ago with his three novels *This Sporting Life*, *Flight into Camden*, and *Radcliffe*, Storey was considered a young working-class novelist with reasonable talent and promise. "If John Braine is a good regional novelist," John Coleman assured readers of *The Spectator*, "Storey is a better one,"¹ while the *Daily Telegraph* called him "the leading novelist of his generation."² Storey was publicly silent, however, during the years between 1963 and 1967. Then he suddenly erupted in a torrent of extraordinary playwrighting, offering English playgoers five full-length plays in five years: *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* (1967), *In Celebration* (1969), *The Contractor* (1969), *Home* (1970), and *The Changing Room* (1971). Now considered primarily a playwright, Storey is a remarkable example of an artist whose career has successfully spanned not only two genres but also several waves of the so-called British "angry" movement which began in the middle fifties and has continued with fluctuating vitality during the two decades since.
The purpose of this study is to critically examine David Storey's early work—the three novels and five plays mentioned above—the fictional world each presents, the technical means used to achieve those worlds, and ultimately, the total world vision the works comprise. Obviously the major thrust of this study will be thematic, but careful consideration will be given to Storey's fictional and dramatic methods as well. This study's primary thesis will rest upon the argument that in his early work David Storey's artistic vision underwent a profound change from the novels to the plays, that this progression can be easily traced in the works by careful critical examination, and that certain fairly direct correspondences exist between the vision that the works express and Storey's own life experience. In this study Storey shall be considered primarily a playwright and greater emphasis shall be given the plays, although the place of the novels in the overall body of Storey's work must certainly be considered.

Storey's early work falls clearly into two separate but not altogether equal parts: a) the novels, written between 1959 and 1963, which reflect the mood and concerns of post-war Britain and the angry young men; and b) the plays, a larger and more recent body of work prepared since 1966 with an emphasis on the need for individual responsibility in the social milieu and for affirmation of existence in general. All of Storey's work, critics have agreed, is
well-written, intelligent, and technically competent. Many have called him fascinating and some, brilliant. The plays comprise a wider and more intricate world view than the novels, however, and for many critics, a far more interesting one. In addition, the plays offer greater technical variety and skill.

In his novels Storey poses questions about the nature of existence and man's place in relation to other men. Characters in the novels are unhappy, searching, unfree creatures who struggle fruitlessly for understanding and acceptance. In the plays, however, Storey answers with increasing vigor the problems which plagued him in the novels, and he does so with a growing sense of affirmation. Characters in the plays, from Arnold Middleton to the rugby team of The Changing Room, learn that the human condition requires acceptance of social demands and that there are ways in which one can accept those demands and become absorbed in the society at large while still retaining a measure of identity and integrity. Storey is not a playwright of protest, but a poet of reconciliation.

Although Storey is still a young man, he clearly expresses in his eight early works a total artistic vision, a world view which denies the legitimacy of perpetual alienation and ultimately affirms reconciliation with, and adjustment to, the surrounding society. Storey expressed his attitude toward human existence in a review of
R. D. Laing's *The Politics of Experience* prepared for the New Society:

Society, however condemned, is the medium we live in. Its disease, its insanity, has to be suffered. Having washed his hands of the world in an act of self-absolution, it must now be Laing's task to come back and reclaim it. For the crucified the resurrection is the thing of the deepest meaning. For the beautiful and the terrible thing is that the birds still sing.

Reclaiming the world is ultimately the task Storey embraces as an artist.

The overall movement in Storey's early work can be traced in a steady rise from the bitter negation of Arthur Machin's deterministic universe to the swelling of pride and pleasure felt by the individual members of *The Changing Room*'s rugby team who, working as a unit, overcome the opposing team on a cold and bitter day. The emphasis clearly moves from the isolation and failure of an individual to the success of a society existing by mutual consent of its members. The primary theme and overriding concern of Storey's novels is, in fact, isolation, while that of the plays is tolerance for the engagement with other human beings.

Arthur Machin, Margaret Thorpe, and Leonard Radcliffe, the leading characters in the three novels, are alienated individuals, alienated first from their societies, and more fundamentally, from themselves. Implicit in the first two novels, and quite explicit in *Radcliffe*, is the suggestion that integration of the self must precede
integration of the individual with the society, a goal that is held as the ultimate one. The plays examine the means and the manner integral to both necessities. Arnold Middleton discovers that insanity is no refuge from the anguish of daily living, and after a pained retreat from himself, his marriage, and his place in the world, he chooses to become a whole individual and at the same time becomes a whole with his society. Andrew, the eldest son of In Celebration, likewise gains an important perspective on and tolerance for himself when he chooses not to attack his mother for the wrongs, real or imagined, that he feels she has committed against him. The tent-raising crew of The Contractor are not men who are significantly alienated from themselves, and together they form a society in which everyone has a place and thus is assured of security; the contractor himself, in contrast, is unhappy, unable to justify his existence, and uncomfortable on any social level. The wretched creatures who people Home are rejects from the world at large. They never escaped their isolation and never really achieved any degree of self-understanding; the ultimate result of their failures was assignation to that last and most horrifying zone of isolation, insanity. And yet, in a modest way, they too are learning to form a society from which they can derive some comfort and sense of identity as they wait for the final closing of death's door. The Changing Room, like The Contractor, takes a positive view of social effort: the
rugby team members individually are interesting and likeable men, but only together can they accomplish a task of any significance. Accepting their places in the scheme of things, the ruggers receive as compensation identity, warm fellowship, and satisfaction in the completion of an awesome task.

Choice is a significant factor in Storey's view: an individual must choose his own image and knowingly accept the role that accompanies it. The characters in Storey's world who are most satisfied and obviously most approved of by the author are those who, in Sartrean terms, have chosen essences, those existing in a state of being. None of Storey's characters actually exist in a state of becoming; the situation common to those who have not chosen an essence is that they have one thrust upon them by the outside world. Storey apparently does not see the world as a place in which one can exercise the celebrated existential freedom which Sartre described. "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself," Sartre has said, but Storey apparently believes that a man is not solely responsible for nor to himself. Those of his characters who try to be, such as Arthur Machin and Margaret Thorpe, are utter and miserable failures. Fundamentally, Storey denies the popular contemporary concept that existence is unordered and a supreme deity no longer existent. His stance is well summarized by Stuart Holroyd, a passionate young proselytizer at the vanguard of
the early angry movement.

Man is not born free—and the statement that he is is one of the great lies of our humanist culture. He is born an unfree, restricted, instinct-driven little animal. . . . The free man is he who has a firm grasp on himself, a control over his faculties and his passions. . . . He is, above all, the man who realizes that absolute freedom is a fiction, except for the insane, and that in fact freedom is defined as a condition of tension maintained between an aspiration and a limiting factor. In external freedom, the aspiration is towards the gratification of one's own self-will and the limiting factor is the responsibility to the society in which one lives.5

By choosing to engage in one's society, one gains a measure of freedom, Storey suggests, a freedom that is not his by inherent birthright. Choosing not to engage in one's society is in the first place not altogether possible and in the second leads to isolation, bitterness and ineffectiveness. It is not escape, either, since social prescriptions operate upon an individual from birth and will assign him an identity and a social function against his will if he tries to deny society. Such is the situation in which Arthur Machin, Margaret Thorpe, Leonard Radcliffe, and Arnold Middleton find themselves. The first two characters try fruitlessly to escape it; Radcliffe escapes only by means of a bizarre murder and his own death, while Arnold discovers and embraces the fact that there is no way out of social existence: one must live, and the quality of his life depends upon the adjustments he chooses to make with his fellow human beings.
Storey's world view affirms society and the individual working with other individuals as a unit. The unit itself does not become the primary object, as with the Fascist state, but the cooperation of men forming the unit, their agreement to establish and abide by an order beneficial to all members, is the most significant factor. In Storey's world one cannot choose not to live, and he does not see living in isolation as a viable alternative. "Society is the medium we live in," he says, and we must make the most agreeable conditions in it that we can. Changing the society is an action which Storey does not preclude, but which he does not demand, as do most of the recent alienated artists. Storey wants first to operate upon human nature itself, and believes that then the recovery of human society will follow. In this respect, he stands opposed to most of the contemporary British playwrights who affirm the sovereignty of the individual personality (Osborne) or the possibility of altering basic human nature by the institution of an incorruptible social system (Wesker). Although his medium may be most often realism, in both thought and technique Storey is fundamentally a classicist.

Wyndham Lewis, for whom Storey has expressed great admiration, points out in his autobiography Rude Assignment that "the work is implicated in the life of the worker, so as a rule it is difficult to treat the former in isolation." In Storey's case such a relationship is quite clear. Storey
has himself in various published interviews pointed unequivocably to the genesis of his literary effort. His writings grew originally, Storey has said, out of a long, agonizing situation he found himself in about seventeen years ago, in the late fifties. When in his middle twenties, Storey was simultaneously an art student in London during the week and a rugby footballer in the northern province of West Riding during the weekend. The psychic split which resulted from this peculiar situation led Storey to feel that his physical and emotional sensibilities were separate and operating on different planes. Unhappy with this development, unable to accept either side of his nature exclusively, and unable to form a genuine and acceptable image of himself, Storey began to withdraw from contact with other people. The isolation into which this alienation plunged him, however, left him miserable and yearning for a sense of humanity and comradeship. Through the act of writing, as the following chapter will discuss in detail, Storey felt that he could more easily break down the barriers that separated the different aspects of his own nature and then dissolve those barriers which had for so long isolated him in an alien society. Storey's characters, particularly in the novels, are at the same time archetypal figures as well as personifications of the different aspects of his own splintered nature. The plays chronicle the fusion of distraught characters first with themselves (Arnold Middleton,
In Celebration) and finally with the society around them (The Contractor, The Changing Room). At the same time he was producing such works of completion, Storey had received recognition and high praise for his artistic work and was quite clearly moving in the direction of self-fulfillment and self-acceptance.

The question of Storey's worth as a subject for a study of this kind can be answered in several ways. In the first place, David Storey is virtually the only young playwright in the British experimental theatre with an unblemished record of success, both popular and critical. Beginning in 1967 with The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, his first play, Storey's plays have moved regularly, one each year since, from the Royal Court's experimental situation to a West End house, and thence, in the case of Home and The Changing Room, to Broadway, or in the case of In Celebration and The Contractor, to professional productions on both coasts in the United States. None of the young playwrights who have emerged since 1956, except perhaps Osborne himself, can claim such a remarkable success record. Furthermore, not even Osborne has been recognized, as Storey has, for an unwavering standard of artistic excellence. And at a time when playwrights acclaimed early in the movement have stopped producing (such as Delaney), or lost their faith (as Osborne and Wesker seem to have done), or turned their backs altogether on the dramatic situation (as Pinter
does in his later plays), Storey continues to offer the public coherent and satisfying dramatic works. Storey's commitment to the human beings in his audience has not wavered and his technical skill as a dramatist seems only to increase. T. E. Kalem has recognized Storey as "an impressive successor to Osborne and Pinter," and the British new wave's own critic, John Russell Taylor, has said of Storey that "there is no dramatist in England at the moment towards whose future one looks with more complete confidence of satisfactions in store."  

Furthermore, critical response to Storey's work from the publication of the first novel through the closing performance of the latest play has been overwhelming. Storey's talent, intelligence, and skill have been lauded repeatedly by critics and reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic. When This Sporting Life appeared in 1960, fellow writer Keith Waterhouse admitted that "Mr. Storey has a real live talent," and in a glowing review of the same novel Malcolm Bradbury in The New York Times Book Review found Storey "an impressive and assured writer." Storey's second novel, Flight into Camden, was generally received as "that rarity, a successful second novel, despite the author's daring in using a device which for most male novelists proves fatal." That daring device, of course, was the use of a female narrator. For Camden Bradbury again praised Storey, pointing out that the author "can depict
shades of feeling with an intense perception, and he is committed not to propagandizing for, but to understanding, the class he writes about." Radcliffe left most critics puzzled, although many were willing to acknowledge with Encounter that "there hasn't been an English novel of such force and originality for years." Richard Buckle of the Sunday Times found the novel "the greatest study of obsessive passion since Wuthering Heights."

When Storey emerged as a playwright in 1964 after four years of silence, he was greeted by a chorus of welcomes. "Mr. Storey has come to the theatre after writing novels, poetry, filmscripts," wrote Michael Billington in his review of The Restoration of Arnold Middleton. "I only hope that the theatre will now be able to keep hold of him." John Russell Taylor found this first theatre piece "a remarkably successful play, keeping its knife-edge balance between reality and fantasy with stunning professional aplomb." Critical consensus voiced louder and stronger approval as each of the four remaining plays appeared. In Celebration was received as "solid, substantial drama" and Robert Waterhouse called The Contractor "new heights in . . . satisfying entertainment from David Storey." Home captured the attention and admiration of writers everywhere: Gerald Weales found it "easily the best theatre to reach New York this season," and Newsweek's perceptive review called the play "immensely appealing,
extremely intelligent in its use of tradition from Coward to Pinter, and subtle in its balance between grand metaphor and a close embrace of realism."20 Helen Dawson of the Observer staff found Storey's latest play The Changing Room "often funny, frequently beautiful, and always warmly humane. In extending the boundaries of dramatic shape, in paring down traditional theatrical scales," Dawson continues, "Storey communicates more deeply—and, I suspect, in a more truly 'popular' sense—than many noisier avant-garde experimenters who are ostensibly trying to prop up the theatre's last legs."21

Storey's strength as a literary artist and the source of his audience's satisfaction lies in his talent for creating not just novels or plays but whole, organic works of art. In the novels theme, plot, characterization and language all fuse to communicate a remarkable sense of what it is like to be a specific human being in a specific, human situation. Each of Storey's plays contains the previously-mentioned elements in harmonious proportion in addition to having a style and structure natural to its expression. Storey's remarkable mastery of theatricality and the use of theatrical detail further serves to intensify his artistry. Small wonder that critics speak of having seen "pictures [on stage] that will stick in the memory,"22 of scenes that are "compellingly real,"23 of work with "immense compassion and substance."24 John Hall, a fellow playwright of Storey's,
has said that "a writer of any size must seem to throw open doors." Storey certainly does open doors, on both realistic and metaphorical levels, and unlike many contemporary playwrights, he makes it possible and even desirable for his audiences to pass through those doors.

In view of the relatively extended period of Storey's production and the respectably large body of work he has accumulated—not to mention the general critical acclaim he has received—it is surprising that no major study exists of his work. There are a few isolated articles dealing primarily with the novels and a scattering of reviews in the monthly periodicals focusing on particular productions of the plays. Several interviews with Storey have appeared in British publications and one American dissertation has dealt with Storey's novels as part of a larger study of the British working-class novel. But none of these writings has dealt adequately with Storey's work as a whole, and certainly none of them has offered elucidation of Storey's total artistic vision. Given the admiration which already exists for Storey, his growing stature, and the excellence of his work, a need exists for a good critical study of Storey's early literary output. It is the hope and intention of this study to fill that void. Only the first eight works will be dealt with here because this writer believes that those eight together form a total artistic vision and that Storey's most recent works, both plays
and novels, reiterate the same themes and styles of his earlier works.

The primary method upon which this study will rely is critical textual analysis. The biographical material is certainly important and can enrich understanding of Storey's art, but his eight works are excellent in and of themselves and ought to first be considered from that viewpoint. The eight works will be dealt with in chronological order, from *This Sporting Life* to *The Changing Room*. Such an approach will demonstrate the evolution of Storey's vision as well as the direction and development of his technical means. It will also clearly show the vital relationship that exists between the novels and the plays. After each work is analyzed for theme and world view, a careful analysis of style, structure, characterization, and language will be provided.

Secondary methods of analysis, in addition to the already mentioned biographical material, will include references from interviews with Storey and comments provided by professional critics who have seen and studied Storey's works. This study shall also operate with a knowledge of writings by Storey's contemporaries, both novelists and playwrights. Lindsay Anderson's contribution to Storey's dramatic writing cannot be ignored, either, since it was Anderson who encouraged Storey to write for the stage and who has directed not only the film of Storey's novel *This*
Sporting Life but also four of his five plays. A variety of published material about Anderson exists, including interviews with him and articles he has written himself. The study's major method remains textual analysis, however; the remaining means mentioned here will serve as supportive sources of information and evidence.

This study does not undertake to deal with the sociological, including the political, implications of Storey's work or that of his contemporaries. To date much of the critical work that has been done in the area of the new British drama has taken just such a viewpoint, and consequently excellent material is already available on the sociological and political aspects of the fiction and drama in Britain since 1950, and particularly since 1956. For those who are interested in that particular concern, this study recommends John Russell Taylor's *The Angry Theatre*, Kenneth Allsop's excellent sociological approach to the novels, *The Angry Decade*, Gerald Rabkin's *Drama and Commitment*, or Carl Hare's shorter article "Creativity and Commitment in the New British Drama." In addition, reference to this study's bibliography is advised.

This study's major concern is, again, an examination of the vision of playwright David Storey. Storey's vision is an intensely personal one, one which explores first the private world and then the social. He works in a metaphysical dimension with an impulse to affirm the reality and
the value of man in a threatening universe. Thus in spite of the superficially realistic style of most of his work, he is neither a social realist nor a playwright of protest. Certainly his work gives some attention to grass-roots heritage and alienation and the problems of its working-class characters, but a literary work of art, particularly a play, must take place in some social milieu, and a writer has a greater chance of success using one with which he is familiar. That does not necessarily mean he is writing about the milieu rather than about the human beings who people it. In a review of In Celebration, on the surface an apparent case of documentary realism, Albert Hunt explains:

As in This Sporting Life, Storey is 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.29

Certain critics have felt, however, that there is enough evidence in some of the plays, particularly The Contractor and Home, to make them political commentaries in a metaphorical sense. "Is [The Contractor]," Robert Waterhouse asks,

about the particular English penchant for unconscious and ineffective revolution? Could the rise and fall of the tent (and I agree this is unlikely) have something to do with the rise and fall of the British Empire?30

Henry Hewes pushes Waterhouse's questions further in his review of Home: "These elements [the set pieces] obviously represent a contemporary England that is run down and has
lost its illusions of glory and pride in supremacy." This study submits that such elements are not "obviously" the case Mr. Hewes sees, but are certainly possible. Storey himself has refused to speculate about the possible political implications in his works, adding opaquely that his work lives most for him when he feels that he really doesn't know what it is about—"it lives for me almost in the measure that it escapes and refuses definition." To the degree that the structures of Storey's plays may strongly reflect metaphors which contain wider political implications, this study will commit itself to explore them. But Storey the literary artist reveals no specific commitment to party or political ideology in his novels or plays.

Fundamentally, of course, political is a term which can simply imply men living together in any kind of social structure. "Man living in society," Wyndham Lewis has dryly observed, "is an animal who is governed." Thus the term political can also be more narrowly applied to Storey's work in the sense that it also implies, as Laing points out, that "definitions and consequences have been imposed on an individual by a social system." Since such politics are inherent in the nature of working-class life and thus in the experience of any of its members that Storey might choose to portray, his works can be called political. In a wide, philosophical sense, then, David Storey is a political playwright. But he is not to be confused with those gentlemen
who have axes to grind on the public stage, such as Osborne, Behan, Wesker, or even Arden. Storey appears at this juncture to be practically alone among contemporary British playwrights in his engagement with the real world and his ability to affirm the need and responsibility a man has to live in that world.

For the moment, attention must turn to the structure of the remainder of this study. Chapter I will concern itself with a brief presentation of the cultural backgrounds against which Storey emerged as a novelist and later as a playwright. More detailed biographical material will be provided in Chapter I as well, with specific parallels established between Storey's life experience and his literary work. Chapter II will be devoted to a study of the three novels, *This Sporting Life*, *Flight into Camden* and *Radcliffe*, with brief attention given to Storey's adaptation of his first novel for the screen. It is in the novels, as has been pointed out, that Storey's characters struggle violently and unsuccessfully to be whole and free. Chapter III will treat *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* and *In Celebration*, the two plays whose major characters learn about themselves and grow into more complete human beings, thus opening the way for reconciliation with their families and the society at large. Chapter IV will be concerned with *The Contractor*, *Home*, and *The Changing Room*, since all three deal with societies in which men have or
utterly have not come to understand themselves and work together to overcome the obstacles the world presents to living a full, decent human life. The Conclusion will offer the conclusions of this study, and will center on a final statement of Storey's artistic vision in juxtaposition with the visions of his contemporaries in the British theatre.
FOOTNOTES


The articles which have attempted to deal with the whole body of Storey's work have wound up concentrating primarily on his transitional and perplexing third novel, *Radcliffe*. These include J. M. Newton, "Two Men Who Matter?" (Cambridge Quarterly, Summer, 1966, pp. 284-295) and Mike Bygrave, "David Storey: Novelist or Playwright?" (Theatre Quarterly, April/June, 1971, pp. 31-36). Of these two, Newton's article is quite interesting and contains generally helpful observations about the nature of Storey's work; Bygrave's is superficial, adolescent, and contributes more to an understanding of Bygrave's critical shortcomings than to an understanding of any aspect of Storey's writing. The other study of Storey's work deals with the novels. Thomas Churchill, "Waterhouse, Storey and Fowles: Which Way Out of the Room?" (Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction, X, 72-87) is short and fairly interesting, but deals only with *This Sporting Life* and less in general with Storey than with the two other novelists included.
Quite recently an article appeared (William J. Free, "The Ironic Anger of David Storey," Modern Drama, XVI (December, 1973), 307-316) dealing with In Celebration and The Contractor as two Storey works which show his ironic, half-bitter vision of the world as a place where nothing ever changes. There is a certain irony of the author's inability to understand that Storey wants to maintain old structures and traditions, believing that they hold for human beings the greatest security and possibility of happiness.


28That dissertation is Bernard Lockwood's unpublished Ph.D. thesis, "Four Contemporary British Working-Class Novelists: A Thematic and Critical Approach to the Fiction of Raymond Williams, John Braine, David Storey, and Alan Sillitoe" (University of Wisconsin, 1966). The work on Storey is limited to one chapter and deals only with the working-class nature of his work. As such it largely ignores
the substance and value of the third novel Radcliffe, calling it merely a grotesque failure.


30 Waterhouse, p. 21.


33 Lewis, p. 9.

CHAPTER I

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND

When David Storey emerged from Yorkshire obscurity in 1959 to publish This Sporting Life, he was immediately tagged an Angry Young Man. Although he has said since that "I wasn't aware in the fifties that English society was in an interesting state," the naturalistic surface of his first (and second) novel led critics to class him with the documentary realists and social protestors. "Like John Braine and Alan Sillitoe," Malcolm Bradbury wrote of This Sporting Life, "the author of this impressive first novel is writing about the sturdy young workingman, full of vigor and independence, who seeks a richer life." Other reviewers consistently used the term "slice of life" to describe Storey's first novel, and one of the few unfavorable reviews of the second novel called Flight into Camden nothing more than "a grey special statement of sociology." Although such an evaluation was not true of Storey's intentions nor of his achievement, as this study shall later demonstrate, it may be helpful at this point to summarize briefly the cultural ferment against which Storey first emerged in order to understand fully his role as a novelist.
and to understand the novels themselves.  

Most discussions of the cultural revolution in Britain in the nineteen-fifties begin with John Osborne's triumph on May 8, 1956, when *Look Back in Anger* took the theatrical and journalistic scenes by storm. A strong foundation already existed, however, both politically and culturally, to insure Osborne's coup. Following the war, the political horizon had never looked darker to most Englishmen. After the humiliation of the Suez crisis, England's decline as a world power was painfully evident. The shadow of the H-Bomb loomed menacingly over everyday life, and the end of the war had brought not a generation of peace but the endless ugly threats of the cold war in Europe and the hot one in Korea. Disappointment with the growing welfare state was acute, all the more so because hundreds of Englishmen had adamently believed in and actively sought socialist ideals during the thirties and early forties. The leadership of both parties was indecisive, incompetent, and appeared quite indistinguishable; there seemed, in fact, to be an establishment conspiracy to retain all power and maintain the chafing class structure. Although employment was available for nearly everyone and there was a greater general affluence than there had been before the war, the country was overpopulated, housing was limited, competition for openings in education, industry, and government was stiff, and the economy was at a
standstill. Finally, and perhaps least tolerable of all, middle and working-class members of the older generation were for the most part eager after the insecurities of the past war to settle down comfortably with their accumulation of material goods. A self-defensive apathy reigned among them, and they had little sympathy for the anguish and frustrations of their children, who, they believed, "had never had it so good." Thus while Britain was busy producing the welfare state, Allsop suggests darkly, it was also busy producing Jimmy Porter.

Culturally, a precedent for Osborne's triumph had been in the making for at least a decade. The introduction first of the radio and then of television into the living rooms of most British citizens exposed for the first time a large segment of the population who had before regarded the theatre with hostility to the pleasure of drama, comedy, news features, and documentaries. Discussing the post-war revolution in British drama, Glynne Wickham comments:

No one who had been subjected over ten years or more of sound broadcasting to so many plays could easily undergo this experience without questioning in some measure the validity of the traditional taboos on plays and theatre-going; and for the young, at any rate, an appetite had been whetted for sampling the genuine article instead of the echo.

On the crest of this interest and feeling, both Fry and Eliot achieved surprising commercial success in the theatre with productions of *The Lady's Not for Burning* and *The Cocktail Party*; both were experiments in poetic drama, a
form which does not often enjoy public acceptance. In addition, the ambitious if somewhat unsuccessful Festival of Britain in 1951, the sudden popular interest in ballet, the introduction on television of such avant-garde playwrights as Beckett and Ionesco,9 and the emergence of brilliant new theatrical companies and directors10 all signalled the possibility of a bewilderingly rich future in the arts. "Revolution," Wickham remarks sagely, "was in the air."11

But the cultural revolution was not confined to performing media: the novel simultaneously experienced an extraordinary renaissance in form, tone, and content. Large numbers of working-class young men who had received scholarships to further their educations and had attended the red-brick universities graduated to find themselves unacceptable, by virtue of their backgrounds, to the higher levels of the social strata, and yet removed, because of their education and wider interests, from genuine communication with members of their own class. Frustrated and highly articulate, many of them turned to the novel as a suitable means of expression. Books such as Sillitoe's Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Braine's Room at the Top, Wilson's The Outsider and Wain's Hurry on Down exploded with anger and contempt for the old, effete order which had enforced class distinctions and a strict Victorian code of ethics for so long to its own comfort and advantage. For the first time then, the new literary artists in Britain in the
mid-fifties, both dramatists and novelists, were trying to make explicit the social revolution which had overtaken British society since the outbreak of the war. They discussed, Wickham points out,

in an intelligent fashion almost every major issue of present-day concern: the freedom of the individual within societies where mass conformity is the order of the day, colonialism, the function of the family in modern society, the colour-bar, war, and the H-bomb. It is for the most part a literature of protest ..., in which the modern tyrannies of apathy, of conformity, and of tolerance of violence are remorselessly exposed and questioned. And on this account it cannot avoid rousing a hornets' nest of shocked, angered, and bewildered critics; but by the same token it is winning for itself a large new audience of young people who recognize ..., an honest attempt to give expression to their own anxieties, their own aspirations.12

Because these rebellious young working-class artists suddenly filled a vacuum which had existed in the arts for two decades or more, and because of their self-dramatizing flamboyance, the press seized on them and their extraordinary new works with eagerness. Calling them "angry young men" in recognition of one of the main aspects of Jimmy Porter's character, journalists and critics spoke glibly of an "angry movement" and began analyzing every new artistic effort in terms of its relation—either resemblance or dissemblance—to that so-called movement. Thus David Storey, with his apish football hero Arthur Machin and the industrial backdrop against which Machin was placed, immediately suggested to many critics that Storey's concerns were of a social protest nature. He was, they decided,
an Angry Young Man.

"Angry Young Man" is a term which was bantered about a good deal during the latter half of the nineteen-fifties and which undoubtedly had a variety of connotations. The speed with which the term came to be accepted was a measure of what it represented:

The important thing is that, with justification, the phrase illuminated for large numbers of people a new state of mind in Britain of the Nineteen-Fifties. Look Back in Anger, arriving at that particular moment, caught and crystallized a floating mood. It was as if the pin-table ball that many young people feel themselves to be today [1958] had hit the right peg. Lights flashed. Bells rang. Overnight 'angry' became the code word.13

In his fascinating study The Angry Decade Kenneth Allsop gives an extended definition of an "angry young man" which seems surely to cover all the possibilities:

The phrase Angry Young Man carries multiple overtones which might be listed as irreverence, stridency, impatience with tradition, vigour, vulgarity, sulky resentment against the cultivated and a hard-boiled muscling-in on culture, adventurousness, self-pity, deliberate disengagement from politics, fascist ambitions, schizophrenia, rude dislike of anything phoney or fey, a broad sense of humor but low on wit, a general intellectual nihilism, honesty, a neurotic discontent and a defeated, reconciled acquiescence that is the last flimsy shelter against complete despondency.14

A listing of colorful adjectives, however, is hardly a sufficient explanation for an entire generation of disenchanted writers. Speaking both of the literary figures and for himself, Allsop describes what common experience lay in the backgrounds of the young men who burst onto the cultural
scene in the late fifties—and of the young people for whom they wrote:

He [Jimmy Porter] and his generation are those aged between twenty-five and thirty-five—that is, who were born between the early Twenties and the early Thirties. It has been a lifetime incessantly criss-crossed by catastrophe from all directions, roaring and lurching like tanks over a battle ground, the crises have never stopped coming. Being autobiographical for a moment, when I glance back I see down my thirty-seven years the symbols of disruption set close as a picket fence, individual memories starting with a child's view of the General Strike, the cold grey shadow that the Depression threw into even a disengaged suburban household, the fear that was communicated to a disinterested teenager by the flickering menace of Hitler and Mussolini in the newsreels, the first physical encounter with real suffering when, as a junior reporter, I met hunger marchers trudging up from the coalfields, the friends who were killed in Spain, then the major black-out of the war and its epilogue of dreary years, and the dawning of the H-bomb era.19

David Storey's early experience embraces the one described by Allsop perfectly. Born in 1933, he lived his earliest life in the grip of the Great Depression and was barely ten years old during the most critical period of Germany's war on Britain. He had just begun his teenage years when the world was first made aware of the H-bomb. Furthermore, his upbringing was desperately poor working-class and his early education quite limited. If qualifications were necessary to be an Angry Young Man, Storey certainly had them. His response to this situation, coupled with his own social experience, produced a highly individual—if not a unique—response, however.
It is important to understand that these angry young men were not in any way united behind a common banner despite the similarities of their backgrounds. As a group they were perhaps most remarkable for the variety in form and ideology of their works. John Russell Taylor describes it as their "patent unwillingness to fall neatly behind any one standard or leader." In fact, a panoramic view of creative work in the fifties, Allsop suggests, shows it to be "intensely introspective," exploring not a unified social protest but a "multitude of private worlds."

The literary productions of these young men do not constitute a movement, in the strict sense of the term; they represent a sociological phenomenon, a mood, an attitude. Not that the writers betray any unanimity on political issues, but they are agreed that something drastic must be done to change the social order so that the young will not have to drift idly, their constructive energies going to waste.

The so-called "angry" movement was simply a wide case of like-mindedness and a sudden opportunity to express it.

David Storey has never felt himself to be an "angry young man," despite critical evaluations that labelled him as such. There were ample reasons, of course, for critics to assume that Storey was part of the current "angry" phenomenon, in spite of his dismayed disclaimers to the contrary. His background was distinctly working-class, his style basically naturalistic, his heroes from the proletariat and his surface themes similar to those of the widely publicized "angry young men." Storey's impetus to
write, however, derived from a slightly different source than that of many of the writers of his generation. For Storey private concerns (especially the integration of the inner with the outer man) were of primary interest in his early novels. The centering of his attention on the wider social view (the integration of the whole man with his society) was a highly significant but less immediate interest which was to be explored in the plays a decade later. In contrast, the "angry young men" seemed by and large to see themselves as talented and deserving young men who were being discriminated against by a malevolent socio-economic system. It is against the system that the early "angry" novelists pit themselves and only after they achieve success in that quarter do they (often as middle-aged men) begin to examine themselves more thoughtfully, or allow their characters to do so. The famous conniving social climber Joe Lampton of Braine's Room at the Top reminisces about the naivete he possessed before his determination to become a success and regretfully would now have again:

But I looked well enough that morning ten years ago; I hadn't then begun to acquire a middle-aged spread and--whether it sounds sentimental or not--I had a sort of eagerness and lack of disillusion which more than made up for the coat and hat ensemble like a uniform. The other evening I found a photo of myself taken shortly after I came to live at Warley... My face is not innocent exactly, but unused. I mean unused by sex, by money, by making friends and influencing people, hardly touched by any of the muck one's forced to wade through to get what one wants.
Joe Lampton is a character who confronted the social milieu immediately in order to become absorbed into the Establishment mainstream of material luxury and social importance. Only later did he find himself an empty man, torn in two by having achieved his goal and found it unfulfilling. Likewise, Bill Maitland of *Inadmissible Evidence* has been described as the middle-aged Jimmy Porter, who had his complaints against the social system satisfied only to find that it left him a shattered man. David Storey's fictional characters, on the other hand, are isolated by choice from the surrounding society and have little urge to become part of it simply to embrace Establishment values of social and monetary success. Storey's early characters hate their isolation, however, and wish desperately to escape it in order to engage in real human relationships with others, but they simply do not know how. Their main concern is to find a means to dissolve the psychological barriers that divide them from their real selves and from others. The young Joe Lampton or the youthful Bill Maitland, in contrast, deliberately constructs barriers in self-defense or as an offense against the people around them whom they perceive as threats or, at best, as competitors.

In other words, the difference between Storey's point of view in his earliest work and that of the contemporary "angry young men" was one of emphasis. The cynical "angry young men" stridently demanded attention,
appreciation by the upper classes, and a taste of material success. Storey demonstrated in his first work—through Arthur Machin's shattering defeat—that he knew these were empty goals. The only real happiness, he felt, lay in developing one's full potential as a human being, in synchronizing one's internal impulses with one's external activities, in order to find a compatibility with life regardless of the social or material level on which it is lived. In the earliest work (the novels), however, Storey forlornly believed such a state only a vague ideal. In his later work, the plays, he explores a world in which such a situation can indeed come about. Thus Storey was never quite an "angry" young man in the truest sense. He was rather an anguished, confused young man. As his writing developed and extended into other genres, however, a new idealism began to impinge on his artistic vision, a development which tends to set him apart from most of his fellow writers, both the early "angry" artists and his more recent contemporaries.

From his first novel, Storey's concerns have been psychological and personal, not sociological. His intention was to write not about the social milieu surrounding Arthur Machin but rather the state of Machin's psyche and his relationship with Valerie Hammond. Likewise in Flight into Camden Storey was concerned with Margaret Thorpe's psychological and physical disorientation, not her family's
working-class attitudes nor even the employment and social status forced upon her by her birth. So frustrated did Storey become by the continued critical misunderstanding he received that he sought in his third novel *Radcliffe* to make his interests explicit. He more than did so, as spiteful critics pointed out and Storey himself later admitted, but at least no one accused him in this third novel of writing "a slice of life." In summary, Storey has in common with the angry young men such as Braine, Sillitoe, and Osborne certain thematic emphases and a common milieu, but his world vision from his earliest to his latest work is uniquely his own.

The remaining point of similarity between Storey and the angry young men is his working-class upbringing. Its significance to his work cannot be ignored. The son of an uneducated coalminer in the West Riding industrial area of Yorkshire, Storey's background was almost classically working-class. Unlike writers such as Sillitoe or Wesker who managed to find strength and security in the warmth of their childhoods, Storey's response to his own upbringing was bitter unhappiness. His early experience caused him to suffer a psychological trauma from which he had serious difficulty emerging. This situation caused in Storey a unique response for a member of his generation: he turned his attention toward adjusting to the world rather than ignoring or overcoming it, the common "angry" responses.
Storey's need to adjust to the world and to find a place in it where he was genuinely welcome were, in fact, the major factors behind his effort to write.

Exposed from birth to an environment and local culture which stressed physical labor and almost violently discouraged mental or artistic work, Storey felt even as a child a severe psychic split in his own impulses:

I was brought up in a mining village where everyone worked with their hands and the few who didn't were looked upon as rather poor, weedy, inferior beings, and all the pleasure, desires, and ambitions which were socially acceptable were purely physical. Everything exterior and immediate, and the interior, the spiritual, if you like, was looked on as something slightly shameful, to know its place and be kept out of the public view. Well, I used to feel as though I was all inside and hardly any outside at all, and my life was one long plunge into the physical to disguise this from myself and others.

As he reached adulthood, Storey began playing football and planning to become a miner, in order to integrate himself with his culture from which he felt isolated by his private, artistic interests. At this point, fortunately for the British theatre, the outside world intruded into Storey's life. He won a scholarship to the Slade School of Fine Art in London where he could pursue the drawing and painting which had always fascinated him and which for years he had done secretly. It was not possible, however, for him to escape entirely the world in the north:

Then when I'd been playing football for a year I won a scholarship to the Slade, and my life became a nightmare, as I went on playing football at the weekends while living in London during the weeks. I
had four hours in the train each way, and adapting
myself from one life to the other, and trying to
make sense of my schizophrenic condition. Finally
I couldn't take it anymore and dropped the football
to concentrate on the painting.22

Thus Storey's engagement with the artistic life in London
served not to relieve his anguish but rather intensified
it. At the art school he was regarded as something of an
ill-bred provencial and was left to himself. He sought
spiritual refuge in his painting, trying to escape through
his art the terrible isolation he felt from both northern
and southern cultures, both of which seemed to be growing
more alien. Storey found that painting alone, however,
could not assuage his pain nor resolve his metaphysical
schizophrenia. The very act of painting itself increased
his feeling of isolation rather than ameliorating it, so he
turned to keeping a diary in which he wrote about his sensa-
tions during that weekly journey between London and West
Riding, which he was later to describe as long, bleak, and
despairing. That diary eventually became Storey's first
novel, This Sporting Life. In writing, Storey found, there
was

a kind of social contact, a relationship with people
and with social events which, within the conventions
of a particular novel, worked. It was fiction, it
was invention and make-believe, yet in another and
profonder sense it was real. In creating a certain
character, for example, who represented all the
alien, physical forces of this life—a creature pro-
duced, it seemed, to be the very physique of the
north itself—it was possible to exorcise the very
feeling of alienation.23

Storey constructed such a character and called him Machin.
Around Machin Storey created the environment and culture that he knew as an inhabitant of the industrial and mining area of West Riding. His intention was not to indict the environment specifically, but rather to make Machin more an intensely real artistic creation for his (Storey's) own benefit:

I was, as far as I was aware, isolating that half of my temperament which confused and frightened me the most and giving it, I hoped, accommodation and understanding.24

The part of his temperament which irritated Storey most was, of course, the physical side, a side he had consciously had to adopt and maintain while a boy but for which he had little appreciation.

Storey's second novel Flight into Camden appeared shortly after This Sporting Life and served a similar purpose in Storey's personal development, but from a different point of view. Flight into Camden attempted to explore the world of artistic sensibility to which Arthur Machin is violently opposed and which he tries to destroy. Although written in a first person narrative just as was This Sporting Life, the second novel reflects a significant change: this time the narrator is a woman. Since Storey associated the northern destination of his weekly journey, where he was forced to play the hated rugby, with a masculine temperament, when he came to write about its southern counterpart, he says
The precious world to which I felt I had escaped immediately associated with femininity, with a woman's sensibility and responses. The north-south dichotomy became a masculine-femine one.

Thus the result of Storey's earlier feeling that he needed to suppress his artistic impulses, which comforted him, and emphasize the physical aspect he disliked grew completely out of his control when he was forced to give them equal attention and, in fact, divide himself quite literally between the two. The jump from a physical/spiritual dichotomy to a masculine/feminine one is easy to follow, and it is important to note here because of the major effect it had on Storey's later writing.

Desperately aware of his splintered psyche and just as desperately concerned to ameliorate it, Storey deliberately turned his part-time writing into a major program to be used, in his own words, to sort himself out:

You see, I then conceived of a sequence of four novels which would constitute a sort of campaign for reintegrating myself. In the first I tried to isolate and come to terms with the physical side of the footballer Nachin. In Flight into Camden I isolate the other half, the spiritual, interior, and—as I conceived it—feminine part of my nature by writing a first-person narrative in which the narrator is a woman. In Radcliffe I bring the two halves face to face embodied in two separate characters.

The two halves of Storey's nature in his third novel were embodied in its two major characters to create Leonard Radcliffe, a sickly, ethereal aristocratic scion of a dying line and Victor Tolson, a violently physical and uncontrolled laborer who lives in the shabby housing
development on the Radcliffe estate. On the level of plot, these two characters clash in an anguished and antagonistic homosexual love affair. On the level of the physical/spiritual metaphor the two halves of one nature are finally united when Radcliffe murders Tolson and grows into a strange fulfillment shortly before his own death. On yet another level, of course, the biographical one, Storey appears to be symbolically allowing his artistic spirituality to overcome his brute physicality.

That victory is not completely clear in Radcliffe, however; it was in Storey's fourth novel that he intended to explore fully the solution to his personal dichotomy:

In the fourth, the key work, which I am writing now, [he said in an interview in 1963] I am trying to reconcile them into one person: the conflict moves inside, and is fought out in one man's brain.

That fourth novel was destined not to find completion for a decade, however.

What happened to David Storey at this point is not altogether clear. The only verifiable fact is that, after five intensely productive years, he simply stopped publishing. He did not discontinue his writing, but found himself, John Russell Taylor suggests, in the grip of a creative malaise and was not satisfied with any of his current writing. The distinctly autobiographical character Steven in In Celebration also suggests this possibility, since he seems to be paralyzed by an inability to complete a book
which he had begun eight years before. Story was disgusted as well with the critical misinterpretation his first two novels had received and also with the critical storm which had greeted his third. At any rate, Lindsay Anderson, an old friend who was then associated with the English Stage Company (formed with the express purpose of producing the work of new playwrights), suggested that Storey turn his hand to writing for the stage. The idea had never seriously occurred to him, since he says he had little interest in the theatre and rarely went, but nonetheless in a few days' time he had prepared the script for The Restoration of Arnold Middleton. Storey's first play, then, in which a schoolteacher fights an internal battle which drives him past the edge of sanity and back again, takes the place of the fourth novel he had intended to write at that point in his career. In the sense that it is a work which finally deals with a character who is a whole creature (although not comfortably so), it is Storey's key work and might also be called the restoration of David Storey.

The four plays which follow Arnold Middleton contain evidence that Storey's psychic wound has gradually healed. In Celebration, the second play, argues that the needs of other people, particularly one's family, can be more important than one's own. In this play three sons gather to celebrate their parents' fortieth wedding anniversary. Despite appearances this is not a happy
family, and before the following day dawns the eldest son is determined to confront his mother with her weaknesses and the toll they have taken in his and the family's spiritual development. Before morning comes, however, he learns that certain compromises are necessary if people are to live with each other in the world. Nothing would be gained by the confrontation, the son learns, and a great deal that is valuable would be lost if the series of understandings and tolerances that cement the family together were shattered. By ignoring his own desires of the moment, Andrew grows in understanding and stature.

The Contractor centers on a society of misfits: a derelict, an ex-convict, a malcontent, an idiot, who form a tent-raising crew. Although individually each man is of little significance in the world, together they form a productive unit which gives them both financial and social support. The pretentious contractor, in contrast, is an isolated, miserable man "who has never really found his station in life." That is, there is nowhere he really belongs.

Home, the fourth play, explores a world at the opposite pole from The Contractor. The characters in Home have never realized a useful place in any society. Their self-images are dim or non-existent, they have serious difficulty communicating, they suffer a paralysis of movement. The five characters presented are institutionalized,
the play suggests, because they could not function ade­quately in the real world, the world outside the institu­tion. Human beings in isolation, the play further suggests, are helpless and hopeless creatures.

The Changing Room is Storey's latest play and his most positive statement about the nature of human society. Since In Celebration Storey has been exploring the different aspects of social alliance. The Contractor, Home, and The Changing Room, in other words, are all sides of the same coin. Very much like The Contractor in its vision of the importance of communal effort, The Changing Room nonetheless has an even more affirmative statement to make. Rather than a society of misfits, this latest play is peopled by respectable, healthy middle-class citizens. Rather than bickering and jesting bitterly as they work, the rugby team cooperates good-naturedly. Rather than seeing the results of their effort in shambles the following day, as the tent crew does, the rugby team wins a decisive victory accompanied by the roaring approval of the offstage fans. The Changing Room establishes conclusively the desirability of human tolerance, involvement, and cooperation. Storey has finally groped and fought his way out of the stifling isola­tion which plagued him both as an artist and as a man when his writing first began.

Storey has made no further comment about the rela­tionship of his life to his art since he began writing
plays, except to refer occasionally to that earlier period of despair which spawned the novels. There is, in fact, evidence that Storey's attitude toward his writing has changed altogether. No longer needing to use his writing as a therapeutic device to cauterize his psyche, Storey has, in wake of his continued success, adopted writing as a means of economic support. He has become, and sees himself as, a professional writer. In a recent letter to the author of this study, Storey said of his writing, "It's something I do—or have come to do—in order to earn a living."32

With Storey's change in attitude toward his writing has come, clearly, a change in technique, a change in genre, a change in vision. He has moved from the interior world of the novel through the peculiar perspective of the screenplay to the objective world of the stage. With that move necessarily has come a change in his technique, which he learned about primarily, he says, when adapting his novel This Sporting Life for Lindsay Anderson's film. There have been other technical changes, too, in style, mood, and language, from the novel to the drama, most of them necessitated by the difference in artistic form, but some of them the result of Storey's progressive change in vision. Where in the novels Storey's characters are caught in a deterministic and menacing universe, trapped in complete isolation, with their essences tragically and unalterably fixed, in the plays Storey deals with human beings who know or who learn how to
avoid being isolated from their fellow creatures, and although the universe is still menacing, Storey's dramatic characters work together to establish a brave and unified front.
FOOTNOTES


4 Early in Chapter III, which will begin a treatment of the plays, this study will offer a brief discussion of the changes of cultural climate which occurred during the almost ten years which separated Storey's emergence as a novelist from his later emergence as a playwright.


6 For the above discussion on the political scene in Britain during the fifties this study is particularly indebted to Carl Hare, pp. 21-25.

7 Allsop, p. 17.

8 Wickham, p. 9.

9 Beckett and Ionesco, generally regarded as Absurdist, especially after Esslin's definitive Theatre of the Absurd, set the British public on its ear with broadcast performances of Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Act Without Words, The Bald Prima Donna, and Rhinoceros. Works by Anouilh were also imported, and the Berliner Ensemble brought the theories and practice of Bertolt Brecht from East Germany.
Emerging young directors in the late fifties who have since been acclaimed and absorbed to some degree by the Establishment were Peter Brook, Peter Hall, Charles Wood, Tony Richardson, and Lindsay Anderson (then in film). The two best-known companies, of course, were Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, which produced work by Behan and Delaney, and the English Stage Company at the Royal Court under the direction of George Devine, the company most responsible for the encouragement of the new drama.

11 Wickham, p. 10.

12 Wickham, pp. 15-16. Wickham here is specifically discussing the new theatre, but every statement above applies equally to the novel, and indeed, broadly speaking, to every aspect of the cultural revolution of the period.

13 Allsop, p. 16.

14 Allsop, p. 10.

15 Allsop, p. 17.


17 Allsop, p. 29.


22 "Speaking of Writing II: David Storey," p. 16.


It is important to note that Storey was not actually medically diagnosed as schizophrenic; during the early sixties after his art training was completed he functioned quite well as a secondary school teacher, married, and began a family. The condition referred to is more a spiritual than a mental one (although the two can be closely related). Thus Storey's real problem was more metaphysical than psychological.

26 "Speaking of Writing II: David Storey," p. 10.

27 This clash is in fact the unholy encounter of this study's title, and the term is taken from a quotation in Storey's third novel. The discussion of Radcliffe in Chapter II will more clearly illuminate its specific applicability to Storey's vision.

28 "Speaking of Writing II: David Storey," p. 10.


31 The letter is dated May 22, 1972.
CHAPTER II

THE EARLY NOVELS

Storey's first three novels form a neat package and for this reason they are being considered together. In view of Storey's overall work they were published one after another and all before the plays appeared. Beyond this, however, they lay out in great detail Storey's attitude toward the individual, the individual's conflict with himself and with his society; in short, they clarify Storey's early world view and show the genesis of his artistic concerns. Storey's earliest work is engaged with the problem of freedom: where does the individual stand in relation to freedom? Can he make himself free? What are the social implications of his individual freedom? In the novels Storey clearly delineates this problem.

Mesmerized by the physical/spiritual dichotomy he saw in the nature of man, Storey set about in his novel to isolate and examine each aspect in order to learn how the two might be united. Arthur Machin, the footballer hero of This Sporting Life, is a laconic, ape-like, cold-hearted individual largely incapable of emotional depth or expression. He is the physical aspect of human nature personified.
Margaret Thorpe, the heroine of *Flight into Camden* is, on the other hand, the embodiment of an intense and unwavering sensitivity in the face of all forces that would seek to dissolve it. While Machin understands love only as a matter of sex, for Margaret love and lovemaking are the equivalent of a communion of souls. In the first two novels the main characters struggle to be free and independent, but this independence only leaves them isolated and alienated from their fellow creatures. They struggle to communicate, each in his own way, but they cannot. They struggle to achieve independently, but they fail. They try to leave behind the attitudes and experiences of their working-class heritage, but it trails after them inescapably. In the first two novels the center of interest lies in the conflict between the main character and his society; both novels have a naturalistic surface, with a working-class setting and realistic human relationships.

The third novel, *Radcliffe*, is a departure from Storey's earlier work. In *Radcliffe* Storey seeks to make extremely explicit what he had intended to be understood in *This Sporting Life* and *Flight into Camden*. Frustration at being misinterpreted as a working-class artist of the socialist ilk may have driven him to exaggerate his artistic intentions. In *Radcliffe* both of Storey's earlier characters appear, the physical manifestation and the spiritual, as separate people in conflict with each other. There lies
the center of interest; thus in the third novel specifically social considerations fade into the background. The third novel focuses on Leonard Radcliffe, the intense, artistic aristocrat who meets, loves, and eventually kills Victor Tolson, a brutish working-class laborer. The conflict here is between the two major aspects of human nature—as Storey sees them—and their struggle toward unity, not between an individual and the society which surrounds him. Storey's third novel can be considered neither naturalistic nor working-class. It is rather a colorful and overwrought gothic romance striving to make a serious philosophical statement. As such, the book is strewn with metaphor and symbol, while intense discussions on the nature of art and the nature of man frequently interrupt plot development. Relationships between individuals are again less realistic than in the two previous novels; rather, they represent philosophical natures in conflict and ordinary conversation between characters is always pregnant with significant overtones. At his trial, where he tries to explain to a puzzled jury why he bludgeoned his friend Tolson to death, Radcliffe cries, "I wanted an absolute! . . . I wanted an order for things!" An order for things does not come in third novel, however, despite Radcliffe's—and perhaps his author's—anguish at the helplessness that results from a divided entity in conflict with itself. A solution to this bitter problem was not fully arrived at, in fact, until
Storey completed his fifth play.

**THIS SPORTING LIFE**

When *This Sporting Life* appeared in 1959, the novel was taken by critics to be just another slightly above-average exploitation of the fashionable working-class trend. "Like John Braine and Alan Sillitoe," Malcolm Bradbury wrote in the *New York Times Book Review*,

the author of this impressive first novel is writing about the sturdy young workingman, full of vigor and independence, who seeks a richer life—a life richer, of course, not in cultivation but in material rewards and in prestige.¹

Other critics, however, chose not to assign such complacent bourgeois motives to Arthur Machin's headlong plunge into the rugby world. Robert Donald Spector of the *New York Herald-Tribune Book Review* agrees in essence that "Machin's sole talents are in rugby, but he tries to use them to gain status in the northern England industrial city that his team represents." Such an observation cannot be denied, but Spector perceptively notes in the same review that "It is this world of false and empty values that Storey uses to enclose his novel about class struggle and the individual's battle for identity" [emphasis mine].²

The key factor in understanding Arthur Machin's character lies precisely here: in his struggle for identity, and then in his battle as an individual to remain intensely individualistic and yet have the contact he
desires with another human being. Four years after his first novel was published Storey himself wrote that "This Sporting Life [has] . . . the supreme virtue of seeing a man in terms of his soul and not his social environment."³

As Storey has repeatedly explained, the character and dilemma of Arthur Machin grew out of the somewhat frightening schizophrenic life he was forced to lead for several years in the late fifties while he was a sensitive art student in London during the week and a brutalized rugby player on the weekends in northern England. Regarding the specific genesis of his writing, Storey has written,

I find I have not chosen to write novels on a "subject" or a "situation" but that they have appeared rather like acts of despair. A drowning man cries out and begins to swim. I find that, metaphorically, in the same darkness and distress, I began to write novels.⁴

Furthermore, as Storey explained in a biographical piece for the B.B.C. publication The Listener, that in order to exorcise the feeling of alienation he suffered at the time, he created a character who represented all the alien, physical forces in his life. "I called him Machin and within the terms of the materialistic society which I felt had bred him watched him, a physical dynamo, careen down his crude path to destruction."⁵ Concerning the specific genesis of this novel, Storey recently confided in an interview:

This Sporting Life was triggered off by hearing a relative say: I went to find some lodgings and
at the first house I called on, there was a widow with two children and so I thought "Christ! I won't stop there." 6

Plot

Taking these dramatic situations and juxtaposing them, Storey allowed his brutalized, intensely physical character Arthur Machin to appear at the door of widow Valerie Hammond 7 and accept lodgings there, although the neighborhood was not a good one and his lodging situation far from perfect. At the time Arthur was working a lathe in the factory of a local industrialist (Weaver) and Mrs. Hammond still mourned the death of her husband, recently killed in an accident in Weaver's factory. From the first the landlady and her boarder have a peculiar relationship: she affects to ignore him and his abilities, even after his rugby triumphs, and he tries desperately to force her to acknowledge his extraordinary importance in the small closed world of the northern industrial city in which they live.

After a year of trying to get an audition opportunity with the most prestigious rugby team in the city, primarily aided by the efforts of a perpetually unemployed social washout named Johnson, Arthur plays four trial matches to prove his prowess and is signed on by the city team. He is extremely pleased with himself and realizes that the secret of his successful playing lies not in any particular skill, but rather in his brute strength.
As the team's star player, Arthur quickly becomes the town's pampered hero. However, Mrs. Hammond persists in her refusal to be impressed. Both frustrated and aroused, Arthur becomes increasingly determined that she too shall appreciate what an extraordinary man he has become, while Mrs. Hammond fiercely and fearfully resists any such acknowledgment. They become desultory lovers, Arthur possessing the woman physically in an effort to touch her wilted spirit, and she responding to his advances coldly, dutifully, yet desperately in need of reassurance that he does indeed see something of importance in her. The tragedy becomes that he cannot care for her in the way that she needs, and she cannot dare give him the adoration and devotion he expects and demands.

In their final violent argument Mrs. Hammond sends Arthur away to find other lodgings, a move he tries to resist. The break numbs him, turning him into a player who plays with machine-like precision, but with no interest in the outcome. He begins to see himself as "the super-ape beyond reproach."  

Several years after their separation, Arthur receives notice that Valerie Hammond has been hospitalized and is not expected to live. He speeds to her bedside and stands gaunt and silent watch for weeks that stretch into months. In a coma, helpless, Valerie can no longer deny him. In this sense he finally possesses her, but she never
recognizes him. Then suddenly she dies, embracing a death she had been preparing for since before Arthur met her.

Arthur's response to this final loss is to become more machine-like than ever. Rugby becomes his life, and he entertains no hopes of any other. He grows older, more tired, and more scarred, yet he continues to play: there is nothing left for him. Paul West in The New Statesman has said of him:

Arthur Machin, thoughtful but awkward, lumbers through the elations of eventual stardom, seeking an antithesis to brutish prowess and his growing realization that all—skill, fame, lust, even tenderness—diminishes in the very flourishing. He searches and learns: no more.9

Arthur does not learn enough to save himself from a stifling stalemate, however. His thick and selfish mind only begins to glimmer with some realization of his position in the world as the book closes on his final resignation to isolation and numb despair.

Major Themes

Actually Arthur Machin cannot hope to perceive his situation clearly because Storey has so effectively limited his potentiality in a number of ways. Arthur may appear to be "all man," in the conventional sense of the term, but he is only half a human being—the tough, physical, instinct-driven exterior man. A man who can only give orders and apply brute force to see that they are obeyed, Arthur never participates in two-way communication with other human
beings. In an argument early in the novel, shortly after Arthur and his landlady have become lovers, she assesses his character quite accurately:

You just bluster about. Anybody who gets in your way--you just knock them down. Anybody who's stopped being useful--you just throw over on one side. You just use people . . . you don't know what you're like with people (136).

Arthur's response to this attack, which he can neither understand nor accept, is to hit Mrs. Hammond across the face. As this exchange and the foregoing discussion indicate, Arthur by his own actions isolates himself without realizing what he is doing and what fearful consequences it will bring. Again and again through This Sporting Life this major theme is stressed: an incomplete human being--in this case the wholly physical brute Arthur Machin--is doomed to alienation from other human beings because he can neither make sense to them nor understand their response to him.

It is a truism that physiological needs are not the only imperative part of man's nature. An individual's need to be related to the world outside himself--the need to avoid aloneness--is just as compelling and is rooted in the human essence. Avoiding aloneness, of course, is not the same as being among people: an individual may live among many people and yet be overcome with a feeling of utter isolation. Arthur is a prime example of this situation. By virtue of his status as football hero, Arthur is always the inevitable focus of attention and rarely left alone. At
first Arthur takes this as proof of his importance, and he is so busy grasping for material success that he feels quite independent of everyone. He says to Mrs. Hammond, who is concerned what people think of her, "I don't bother about what people feel. . . . You don't have to take any notice at all, so why bother?" (136).

But as people turn away from him one by one, hurt and alienated, Arthur dimly begins to realize that he is doing something wrong. Particularly in his relationship with Valerie Hammond Arthur is perplexed and eventually hurt because she cannot respond to him in the way he wants. After a rare moment of warmth between them, Arthur reaches for Mrs. Hammond and demands that she commit herself to him. Confused by her contradictory feelings for Arthur and terrified that he will use her, Mrs. Hammond runs from him. The response puzzles and frightens Machin:

When I went out early to training I already felt it had been the last chance, and I'd never see her happy. I couldn't understand what she wanted from me. . . . It'd been her last chance. And it'd been mine. I felt like a big ape given something precious to hold, but only squashing it in my big, clumsy, useless hands (153).

At this point Arthur realizes that he is separated from the rest of humanity, and particularly from Mrs. Hammond, but he does not understand the source of the separation. The result of it, however, is Arthur's growing sense of alienation and non-humanness. As time passes he feels like a thing, an animal, not a whole man.
I might like all these nods and waves and nervous twitches that my passage along the road created, but they were always some distance away. People wouldn't act that way if they were close. I wanted a bit more than a wave. I wanted to have something there for good. I wasn't going to be a footballer forever. 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. It paid me to have none. People looked at me as if I was an ape. Walking up the road like this they looked at me exactly as they'd look at an ape walking about without a cage. They liked to see me walking about like this, as if the fact I tried to act and behave like them added just the right touch the next time they saw me perform... I was just what they needed when they next saw me run onto the field, just the thing to make them stare in awe, and wonder if after all I might be like them. I might be human (155).

This passage clearly expresses Arthur's feeling of utter isolation in an alien world. There seems to be no possibility of his ever establishing any kind of communion with his fellow beings, and indeed, he never quite does. But the need to feel at one with others is a strong, almost mysterious quality in man, and an individual cannot really live without that sense of cooperation and communion. Thus Arthur, after making arrangements for the helpless, hospitalized Valerie Hammond, feels a momentary sense of peace:

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 (223).

This inexplicable feeling of completeness is fleeting, however, because it isn't real. Mrs. Hammond is unconscious and cannot deny Arthur's possession of her. Arthur feels as
if they are one because she is utterly dependent upon him—but again, that dependence is only material. He arranges a private room and the best medical care for her, but even when she regains consciousness, she fails to recognize him. In her last moments Mrs. Hammond recognizes and embraces her children, but Arthur remains a stranger.

With Mrs. Hammond's death Arthur's life loses what little meaning it ever had. Unless an individual belongs somewhere, unless his life has some meaning and direction and purpose, he will be overcome by his individual insignificance. Arthur begins this descent into emptiness near the end of *This Sporting Life*. By the time Mrs. Hammond dies, Arthur has been a footballer for ten years and is growing old and weary. He is no longer as strong as he once was and knows it. He becomes aware of a younger player on the team at first with jealousy and then with a kind of sad wisdom:

I watched, fascinated, the flesh of the kid's heavy shoulders, the lithe muscles sliding across his back. It seemed a greater flexibility than anyone else's, fluid, without hesitation. Had I been like that? I found it better not to look at Arnie for too long (234). . . . Young Arnie. . . . In ten years, I started thinking, he'll be like me. Then it's all over (235).

Arthur stops driving his prized Jaguar because it too is growing old and must be cared for properly. Finally, in the book's last paragraph, Arthur suffers a final indignity: his physical body, which all his life has been both his glory and the source of his dumb misery, the total
expression of his human essence, gives out. During yet another rugby match in the endless series Arthur has played:

'A shape came toward me in the gloom... I glimpsed the fierce and brilliant whiteness of its eyes and clenched teeth through its mask of mud, flashing with a useless hostility. It avoided my preparations to delay it, veering past out of reach. I put my foot out, and as the man stumbled took a swing with my fist. I missed, and fell down with a huge sound from the crowd. The man recovered and went on running. He ran between the posts. Frank picked me up, the mud covering my tears. Where's the bleeding fullback? I wanted to shout. But I could only stare unbelievingly at my legs which had betrayed me (242).

In the final analysis, Arthur Machin is a failure as a human being because he cannot break out of the isolation into which his incomplete nature has plunged him. Isolation from other human beings leads inevitably to ineffective action and thus to numb despair. Storey's character is a victim of a situation he is incapable of changing, even after he begins dimly to understand it. Storey's view of the world in his first novel is bitter and uncompromising.

Not one of the characters in This Sporting Life entirely escapes the debilitation of isolation. Some deal with it more effectively than others, while some have already given up the struggle. Mr. Weaver, the industrialist and team co-owner, for example, tries to escape the isolation caused by his social position and his financial holdings by doing favors for anyone who will allow him to. Arthur at first finds this tendency a disgusting character flaw, but after Arthur has experienced repeated rejection at
Mrs. Hammond's hands and has grown in understanding, he admits that he may have misjudged Weaver. "He was one of the few people who'd treated me as a person—as an oddity, perhaps, but still, an oddity with feelings" (159).

Weaver's stratagem for reaching out to other people is more failure than success, although he has certain moments of understanding with others through continual effort to do so. After his retirement as co-director of the team, Weaver, in apparent fatigue, withdraws altogether from the city and the people who inhabit it.

Johnson is another character who tries to escape isolation from the people around him, but who fails utterly. An old man, Johnson has always been outside the mainstream with no visible means of support and no clear purpose for being. When Arthur first goes to him asking for his aid in getting an audition for the city team, Johnson is dubious. He soon decides, however, that there is pleasure in being needed, and he works diligently on Arthur's behalf. Before Arthur is approved he and Johnson spend much time together, an association Johnson enjoys intensely but which Arthur finds annoying. Johnson's motive in helping him is never clear to Arthur; spitefully Mrs. Hammond hints of homosexuality by saying to Arthur, "he looks at you as if you were a girl" (24). On the night he is signed by the team, Arthur is met by an anxious Johnson who has been waiting on the street several hours to learn the outcome of Arthur's
trial games, in order, Arthur thinks, to share in any bonus money he received for signing. Arthur is obviously wrong, however:

"Do you want to see the check? . . ." I took the check out and held it under the lamp. He put both hands round the paper, like it was a delicate moth, and studied it carefully.

He looked at me then. "You and me, Arthur," he said . . . "We did it together." . . . When I said, "How much of it do you want?" he stopped dead. I'd shot him.

"What d'you mean, Arthur?"
"How much of it do you want? Five hundred quid. You put me in the way of it. How much do you think you should have?"
"Oh, no Arthur."
"How d'you mean, 'Oh, no'?"
"You know I didn't do it for that."
"I don't know at all," I said, irritated, thinking he was trying to be modest before he took a big cut. "What did you do it for?" . . . "It's not any of that."
"What is it then?"
"I wanted--you know. You know what it was" (57-58).

But Arthur does not know because he has not yet come to understand that relationships with other people can have any basis except a financial one. Hurt, and embarrassed to admit it, Johnson's real motivation in helping Arthur was his hope of a genuine friendship. Having recognized the possibility that a real relationship between the two might be built, Johnson tries to buy Arthur with his devotion in much the same way Weaver allows himself and his financial resources to be used. Arthur repeatedly turns Johnson away, his excuses growing flimsier each time. The fact is that Arthur comes to regard Johnson simply as "a withered arm of my ambition" (57). Eventually Johnson becomes alienated
from Arthur and virtually disappears from the story line, more alone than when he first appeared.

In contrast to those who reach out for contact, Mrs. Hammond has already withdrawn from life and is just cementing into place the last few blocks that will isolate her forever when Arthur first meets her. She has been deeply hurt by the recent death of her husband; she keeps his polished boots on the hearth as if to maintain contact with him that way. It is contact with the dead, however, not the living. On returning from an early match Arthur finds her "still stuck in her den of unventilated air" (37), and on another occasion when he tries to talk to her, he sees that "her eyes, usually vague in any case, were now almost completely absent. Empty holes" (61).

Upon reflection, an uncommon practice for him, Arthur discovers that:

Her life, while I'd known her, had been taken up with making herself as small, as negligible, as possible. So small that she didn't exist. That was her aim. And it was exactly opposite to mine. . . . Living had turned up so many bad cards for her that she was refusing any more deals. She was withdrawing and lying down (62).

One of the major conflicts between Arthur and Mrs. Hammond lies here: she has withdrawn from life and he, with his bullish energy, demands that she come back into it. She comes back only to the extent that she allows him physical privileges, but refuses to be touched by his entreaties of love. Herein lies Arthur's greatest frustration and the
seed of the only real lesson he learns: human beings are not self-sufficient. People need each other in order to have a happy existence, because Arthur senses somewhere deep inside himself that he needs Mrs. Hammond in order to be complete.

Two other themes which were destined to emerge in Storey's later works are buried in the action of *This Sporting Life*. The first is the danger of leaving one's upbringing and one's class in order to try to be something one is not. Even in his earliest work, Storey pictures the world as a structure in which every man has his place, to the benefit of all other men; one is happiest if he accepts that place and miserable if he rejects it. When Arthur returns home briefly with the signs of his financial success apparent, his father is troubled:

"I don't know what you're coming to Arthur," my dad summed it up, staring into the fire, and shaking his head slowly, provocatively. "I honestly don't know. . . . And that Weaver you seem to mix with," he went on. "That crowd were never your sort, Arthur. They're not your kind" (103-104).

Arthur does not understand this approach and is angry at what he considers his father's ignorance. Neither does he understand Mrs. Weaver's musing that "Taking ordinary people like yourself, and putting them into a sudden limelight can have extraordinary results" (163). Mrs. Hammond does understand, however, and tries unsuccessfully to get Arthur to see how grotesque he has become as a result of his ambition and pretentions:
They laugh at you—they all point you out. And they point me out. And Lynda. And Ian. We're not proper people now because of you. Because you show off every Sat'day in front of thousands of them. We're like cripples that daren't show ourselves. You've put your stenching mark on all of us (168) [emphasis mine].

Because Arthur has chosen to reject his proper social place, he is not really a "proper person," in addition to being an incomplete human being. He has more money than he needs, and he doesn't work to get it. He feels and acts superior to those of his own ilk and is ludicrous as a result.

Frank, the team captain, who has continued to work in the mines and live his working-class in spite of years of successful playing, tells Arthur, "Football— that's all you are, Art, socially or any other road. . . . Any trouble you're in now, Art, stems from you being too big for your bloody boots" (177).

The other common Storey theme only faintly suggested in this first work is the ultimate futility of individual efforts. It is individuals working as a unit, as in the rugby team, who make the most efficient and lasting contribution. The only real trace of this attitude is in team manager George Wade's long-time conviction that the ultimate and most reasonable fate of the team is to be run by a committee rather than by the eccentric co-owners, Weaver and the hunchbacked Slomer:

Well—it goes back a long way, Arthur. Some time before you could remember what Primstone was once like. But I've always looked at the club—the ground,
the people in it, those who were responsible for running it— as a sort of society. I like to think I've taken a hand in running it. Do you know what I mean? It's been a place I've been partly responsible for governing. I know it sounds a bit of a shut-in attitude. But right from the beginning, over thirty years ago, that's how I've looked on it. And for as long as that it's been dominated by one individual or another. One minute Weaver, the next Slomer, and so on, squabbling and changing about. Now they've both gone. One of them— well, he might just have been disillusioned— the other one has died. You could say Weaver tried to be too kind, and he was abused, and that Slomer didn't have the physical strength. But there it is. They've both gone now. And for the first time we'll have a committee running the club.

The way you're talking, George [Arthur answers], I'm beginning to think you've been looking forward to this (215-216).

Wade is not sure he has been looking forward to a committee rule— he has only been expecting it. Storey at this point is also not clear how he feels about committee effort, because he mentions the possibility only here and then drops it quickly. But the seed is planted even in this first novel to be harvested in the later plays.

In summary, the overriding concern of all normal human beings is the need for contact and cooperation with other people and the need to feel a part of an ongoing system. All the major characters in This Sporting Life struggle against the problem of psychological isolation from their fellows. Weaver is partially successful in his effort to be kind to everyone as a silent plea for love and acceptance. Johnson thinks Arthur will be grateful for efforts on his behalf and that the two will fall into a fast friendship as a result of their joint efforts to get Arthur
on the team. Mrs. Hammond has already stopped trying to reach out to others, and has just enough strength left to will her own death. The primary focus of *This Sporting Life*, of course, is the brutish footballer Arthur Machin, who has been deliberately constructed by the author as a huge physical specimen with a tiny soul. Early in the story, fired by ambition and greed, Arthur is incapable of responding to the needs of the people around him. He comes to understand that an individual can need other people when the only person he really desires is denied him, first through lack of understanding and then by death. But the lesson has come too late, and Arthur returns machine-like to the brutality of his rugby games, with a sense that his only opportunity to be fulfilled as a person has been lost.

In addition, two lesser themes can be discerned in this plot which will occur repeatedly in later Storey works: the futility of trying to escape one's station in life, and the greater efficiency of people united in a common effort as opposed to the isolated struggle of the individual to achieve. When the individual who works alone does accomplish something, as Storey points out with Machin, he must use other people mercilessly in order to do it, and even then his victory is bound to turn to ashes.
Fictional Technique

Since Storey was so repeatedly called a "working-class" novelist when *This Sporting Life* was published, it is worth the necessary effort to clarify what the term "working-class" means before a consideration of Storey's fictional methods is begun. In his dissertation "Four Contemporary British Working-Class Novelists," a study which deals with Storey's novels, Bernard Lockwood defines the term "working-class" with regard to literary artists in the following way:

If a writer's parents are working-class, and if his novels are written from a working-class perspective, then the writer may be said to be a working-class novelist, and the novels he writes, working-class novels, whatever their subject matter.12

Certainly David Storey is a working-class writer in this sense, and he will always be one. His origins give him the highest credentials. Furthermore, Storey's attitude toward the world and the people who inhabit it is deeply rooted in working-class values. Such values include, as Richard Hoggart explains in *The Uses of Literacy*, a great pressure to conform to group values and to gain a sense of identity through group participation—a "trust yer own sort" attitude; strong puritanism with regard to sexual matters; distinctive sex-related social roles; a deep need for respectability; the valuing of work but the limitation of ambition; and generally little response to abstract ideas, from the political area to the metaphysical. In addition—and this
is particularly interesting with regard to Storey's technical methods as a writer—Hoggart sums up the idea "working-class" this way:

If we want to capture something of the essence of working-class life in a phrase, we must say that it is the "dense and concrete life," a life whose main stress is on the intimate, the sensory, the detailed, and the personal.13

All the foregoing terms which constitute the essence of working-class life also constitute the essence of David Storey's fictional worlds.

Although the most noticeable aspect of This Sporting Life at first glance is its working-class surface, the book's most striking features, which are in fact derived from that surface, are Storey's use of point of view, time sequences, and imagery. Point of view is of major importance in This Sporting Life; with it Storey creates a strong sense of what it is to be the physical creature Arthur Machin. The prime focus of the novel, Arthur is a first-person narrator who relates events by describing what he sees, smells, touchés, tastes, and hears.

Because Arthur's vision is limited only to the world of the senses, the material world, he is not a very reliable narrator, particularly in the first half of the book (Part I). Arthur is often very perceptive, particularly about surfaces, but he is quite dense about people's motives, their real interests, and the connection between people or events. For example, in the first bloom of his rugby career,
Machin encounters Mrs. Weaver at a charity event and insults her slightly so that she is rude to him. She apologizes later by note and invites him to tea some afternoon. Machin immediately jumps to the conclusion that Mrs. Weaver is setting the stage for a proposed love affair and reads that meaning into everything he observes at the Weavers' home when he does come rather unexpectedly for tea:

May opened the door when I knocked, and I went in. "Hello, Arthur. You're a stranger at this time of day... and week. I thought you knew Mr. Weaver was away."

"I came to see Mrs. Weaver," I told her, and... began to worry. "Hasn't she told you?"

May shook her head thoughtfully. "She's said nothing to me. I'll just nip in and see."

Whereas on Saturday nights I ran through the house like a dog, now I stood frozen in the hall, my feet molded in the carpet which was taken up at weekends. I saw it was a mistake coming here. She might have expected me to reply to her note. Perhaps she didn't even expect me to come at all.

"This is a surprise, Mr. Machin," she said coming through the lounge doorway, and I could see by her neckline she was expecting me. "I'm very sorry, but I must have mislaid your letter... or did you phone?... She looked at me expectantly. May was standing just behind her.

"I mentioned it to Mr. Weaver," I told her heavily. "He said Wednesday afternoon would be your free day. He must have forgotten to tell you about this charity..."

"Well. At least his information is correct." She sighed. "You had better come in the lounge and let me hear all about it."

This sounded so rough I thought May must be hiding a laugh...

We went into the lounge and she shut the door. There was a green-leaved wallpaper that had me quietly scratching... (93).

After an exchange of polite conversation, primarily about gardening and flowers, Arthur says something to Mrs. Weaver
which is vaguely witty and she laughs, putting her hand on his arm lightly for a moment as she does so. Arthur's response: "I heated up." A few moments later May wheels in a tea trolley:

"I'll be going now, Mrs. Weaver, if there's nothing else to do."

Mrs. Weaver looked surprised. "So soon?" She glanced at a clock shaped like a ship's wheel. "You said I could go an hour early today, Mrs. Weaver."

We seemed to be back with the bad-memory act again, and both Mrs. Weaver and May played their parts seriously, though they must have known it was something of a flop (95).

Although Machin describes what happens in the above scene with a reasonably objective eye, he puts a very personal interpretation on the events. Yet there is never any real evidence provided by other characters or by the course of events to substantiate Machin's assumptions. No affair with Mrs. Weaver ever develops. Her interest in him may have been entirely in his own mind; the reader can never be sure.

Arthur may never fully understand what he sees, but his reporting of what he actually sees and does becomes more reliable later in the novel. It is during the period of Mrs. Hammond's hospitalization that Arthur begins to experience a glimmer of feeling. That touch of emotional experience makes him a wiser, more objective man, but it comes too late and is too incomplete (no one shares it) to give him a totally clear perspective. The very muddy pool of his mind clears enough to reflect a fairly accurate image of what passes by, but remains too much subject to currents beneath
the surface to provide a mirror-image.

The structure of *This Sporting Life* depends heavily upon the complicated time scheme. In the first place, the book is divided in two parts, each covering approximately five years. Part I has the peculiar convention of one day's events, related in the present tense, threaded through two long flashbacks, while Part II consists of a straight line narrative, moving from the present situation at the end of Part I sequentially through five years of further events. Furthermore, the time structuring is closely tied into the novel's point of view.

Part I opens with a short paragraph setting the scene on a rugby field in the past tense; then Arthur is knocked unconscious by a tackle and when he regains consciousness begins his narration in the present tense, describing events around him minute by minute. The time is the afternoon of Christmas Eve day. This pattern of present tense when the narrator is conscious and past tense when the narrator is unconscious follows throughout Part I. When he is tackled, Arthur's front teeth are broken, and he is taken to a dentist to have the stubs removed. As he slips into unconsciousness under the anesthetic, a long flashback in the past tense begins. As Arthur groggily emerges from the anesthetic, he resumes his narration in the present tense. The time is now Christmas Eve itself and Arthur finds himself a guest at Mr. Weaver's annual Christmas party, sans
teeth. He stumbles upstairs to a bed and sinks into sleep in order to avoid the ache in his gums. As he does so, the previous past-tense flashback resumes, picking up where it had stopped. Again, when Arthur awakes, the narrative jerks back into present tense and present time. The flashbacks are some definite aid in clarifying what has been happening to Arthur. Without them the novel would be even more puzzling than it is. With them, however, one must read carefully or risk losing the thread which holds events in order. Storey's reason for using this mechanism, and only in Part I, is curious and will be discussed soon.

Part II picks up shortly after present tense events in Part I have ended and proceeds in a direct narrative to the conclusion of the plot. Past tense dominates Part II entirely, yet nothing in the second part is a flashback. At first glance this would appear to be a very convoluted structure for a novel, particularly one dominated by an unreliable narrator. There is certainly some danger of confusing the sequence of events. However, the novel's time structure is deliberately designed to reflect both the nature of Arthur's experience and the progressive change in his character through several years.

In Part I Arthur is a brash, self-centered, and utterly physical man who perceives only the surface of things. He describes, in remarkably concrete detail, exactly and only those events or actions in which he figures. The
use of present tense through much of Part I lends immediacy and impact to Arthur's narrative. It also tends to focus the reader's attention closely on Arthur in much the same way that an extreme close-up camera shot does in film. In the present tense sequence, Arthur's presence is overwhelming, and the reader can experience to some degree the same reaction that other characters in the novel have towards him. But Arthur's looming presence and minute-by-minute description does cause a certain crisis of confidence in the narration. How many of Arthur's conclusions can the reader accept? To what degree is Arthur an "unreliable narrator"? The flashback sequences in Part I provide part of the answer. Presented in the past tense, they present a slightly more objective picture of immediately past events. Although those events are still described by Arthur, they are at a distance and help put him into perspective as he moves against a background of characters and action. Thus some judgment of Arthur's perceptive abilities can be made.

Part II, the straight-line, past-tense narrative from present to future action reflects Arthur's own growing ability to perceive the world more objectively. He no longer lives utterly in the present moment as he becomes more reflective about what is wrong with Mrs. Hammond and what has caused her to become the person she is. It is also in Part II that Arthur makes dramatic discoveries about himself and the way he is regarded by other people. Arthur's
reliability as a narrator in Part II grows as time passes and experience touches him. But he never becomes completely reliable because he never really understands what he lacks and what causes him to be so unhappy.

The imagery of Storey's work is always fascinating, and *This Sporting Life* is no exception. The major and most recurring image in the book is that of Arthur as an ape. He is, first of all, a big rugby player and he points out early in the novel that when playing he relies not upon skill but on brute force. Judith Parke, who is attracted to Arthur but marries his friend Maurice, calls him "Tarzan."

Mrs. Weaver, in a moment of sympathy, "was staring at me as if I might be a person." Repeatedly Arthur himself returns to the same image. He tells Mrs. Hammond's doctor that he "was just like an . . . ape with her" (223). When Arthur walks down a street, he feels people staring at him "as if I was an ape. Walking up the road like this they looked at me exactly as they'd look at an ape walking about without a cage" (155). In the most elaborate ape metaphor in the entire novel, Storey sets Arthur to go swinging hand over hand along the edge of Weaver's roof in order to escape an upstairs bedroom in which he finds himself locked up—a metaphor as well for his spiritual condition. The frequency with which the word "ape"—or a symbolic representation of it—occurs increases until near the end of the book the association is overwhelming. Storey makes Arthur's nature
perfectly clear in this manner.

Storey also does a good job of characterizing other people in the novel by the image clusters which surround them. Mrs. Hammond is an excellent example. Returning from a successful match Arthur finds her "still stuck in her den of unventilated air, cluttered spaces, unused rows of crockery, completely unaware of the success I brought into the room" (37). Coming home late one evening, he finds that "her [window] was in darkness, its usual gloom." Her "shabby underwear" puts Arthur off when he first approaches her sexually, and she has an "eaten face" when he stops by to try to patch things up after their separation. By and large the character of Mrs. Hammond comes through by way of negative expressions and descriptions of what she is not, rather than by what she is. In this manner Storey reinforces her effort to withdraw from life and "make herself as small as possible."

In addition, Storey structures events in the plot so that they become a metaphor for other action occurring at that moment or for action that will soon occur. After Arthur has swung ape-like to safety along Weaver's roof and slid down his drainpipe to safety, he barges into a strained, private meeting involving Mr. and Mrs. Weaver and Slomer. The three turn their attention to him, relieved at the interruption, yet boiling with antagonism that needs expression in some manner. Immediately Arthur becomes the target
of their polite hostility, and at the same moment he notices that "Behind me, stretching the length of the wall, is an elaborate tapestry of a hunting scene: the dogs have just got their teeth into a small, pale animal, and it is already dripping blood" (110). The parallel is clear.

At another point in the plot, as an overshadowing of Mrs. Hammond’s forthcoming sexual capitulation, Storey gives the reader the whole scene in a sexual allegory. On a Sunday afternoon drive Arthur takes Mrs. Hammond and her children to the ruins of Markham Abbey, which are situated by a river. The daughter Lynda indicates that she would like to go across the river at a shallow place where steppingstones are available. Her mother recognizes the danger and refuses permission, but Arthur picks Lynda up anyway and starts carrying her across.

Her mother knew what I was going to do. She didn't say anything. She started to make a move, then stopped, and stood frozen to the spot. She watched us on to the first, then the second stone, and turned away. She looked toward the ruins, stiff, small, and erect (74).

Halfway across the river Arthur finds the stones insecure and begins to slip; Lynda becomes frightened. They pause and Arthur looks about trying to find a bridge:

... but downstream the river disappeared into a wood, which seemed an unlikely place to accommodate one, and upstream it tumbled down by the side of a rocky escarpement, fringed and surrounded by heath and moor (75).

The previous description is clearly a symbol for the opening to the female sexual organ, and Lynda is just as obviously a
stand-in for her mother in this thinly-veiled allegory. As Arthur and Lynda start back across to the bank at which they had begun, suggestions of sexual intercourse grow strong:

She [Lynda] began to moan as we got nearer the middle and she heard me panting hard, breathing in gasps as I balanced from stone to stone. I stopped to rest. The water drowned every other noise (75).

When Arthur triumphantly returns Lynda to her mother, Mrs. Hammond blushes and watches Arthur closely:

She had been flushed altogether since the moment Lynda had jumped down from me to her, as if the excitement had brought the blood up in her, and made it surge in parts she'd thought or felt dead (76).

This incident is both the prelude and the metaphor for the coming sexual liaison between Mrs. Hammond and Arthur. One might argue here and elsewhere that Storey's symbolism is a trifle heavy-handed. However, in this novel it is not particularly obtrusive. The tendency grows more uncontrolled in later Storey fiction, particularly with Radcliffe. For the moment it can be said that This Sporting Life leans heavily, but by no means disastrously, on metaphor and symbol for its depth and texture.

As a final note, it seems fitting to point out that the structure of the entire novel is a reflection of Arthur's career from beginning to end, just as various technical means reflect various aspects of his character. For instance, the novel opens and closes with a rugby match. In the opener, the team is victorious, largely due, the reader is led to believe, to Arthur's contribution. In the final
match, the team appears to be beaten, and it is Arthur's loss of strength which allows an opposing team member to score. In the opening game, Arthur goes back onto the field with an injury even when he is not needed; in the final game he is apparently unable to perform any further action after a lesser injury. And finally, in the opening game, Arthur has six of his upper front teeth knocked out by a tackle, and much of the early narrative is taken up with Arthur's wandering around unabashedly with no teeth. Following the final game, on the other hand, in the last line of the novel, Arthur says, "I had my ankles strapped, got dressed, and put my teeth in" (243).

Ultimately, Arthur's life is a circle which leads nowhere. Caught on a spiritual treadmill within that circle, Arthur simply grows older, weaker, and more despairing, having momentarily glimpsed a path that might have led him out, but unable to find its beginning. Thus he remains alone in the circle, which provides temporary refuge and perpetual isolation.

This Sporting Life has been considered at length for several reasons. First, it is an excellent novel, and was duly recognized as such by receiving the Macmillan Fiction Award for 1960. Second, the novel is Storey's first published effort and the piece of fiction generally considered by critics to be his best. Third, This Sporting Life contains most of the major themes and concerns that appear, in
various guises, in the two following novels. Flight into Camden and Radcliffe will be discussed because they are both important in showing the progressive development of Storey's world view, but they will not be discussed in as much detail as this first novel has been.

**THIS SPORTING LIFE: THE FILM**

A consideration of the film of *This Sporting Life* is important for at least two reasons: Storey adapted his own novel for the film script, and the experience began a long and fruitful relationship between Storey and the film's director, Lindsay Anderson.

Produced by Karel Reisz and directed by Anderson as his first full-length feature film, the film took approximately two and one half years to complete and was Britain's winning entry in the Cannes Film Festival of 1963. Critical response to the film in Britain was generally negative, however, with critics feeling that they had had enough of working-class heroes in drab environments after the recent successes of *Room at the Top*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, and *A Taste of Honey*. Many American critics were somewhat more sympathetic, although *Time* magazine chose to see the film as "a hunk of baloney."

Hollis Alpert of the *Saturday Review* staff, on the other hand, found that

There are some flaws in the film, but first it ought to be stressed that the harsh, brilliant treatment of a seldom explored corner of the British
scene engages one firmly, and, buttressed by fine acting, reaches a level that is close to poetry and tragedy.  

Before their collaboration on the film of Storey's first novel, David Storey and Lindsay Anderson had never met. Anderson's interest was stirred, as he explains, from the first moment he heard of Storey's forthcoming book:

In a strange way I have never quite felt that I chose to direct *This Sporting Life*. It seemed rather to choose me. Though, also strangely, I suppose I must have been one of the first people who ever thought about it as a film subject. That was as a result of reading a paragraph about the book in the *Sunday Times* before it was published. I was intrigued, and ordered a copy.

So much has happened since then that it is difficult to recall exactly what my first impressions were. Certainly I realized at once that this was something much more complex, and much more distinguished, than the story of a footballer's success and disillusion... What struck me at first, I think, was the quality of the writing, vivid and immediate, yet also clearly the work of a writer with the most subtle psychological preceptions, and a sense of poetry dark, passionate, and wholly his own.  

Anderson thought he had little chance to direct a film of this book he admired, mostly for economic reasons, until Reisz was offered the role of director. Reisz chose to produce the film and suggested Anderson for the director's spot. Together they decided that only Storey himself could produce an adequate script for this novel.

The book was such a personal piece of work that Karel and I both felt that no one but its author could write the script. We met David Storey and were as impressed by him as we had been by his novel. He had never written for the screen before, and he had some hesitation at the idea of trying to recreate for a strange medium a work which he had already achieved
and put behind him. But he did not hesitate for long—for David... has an immense appetite (and a gift) for artistic experience.\textsuperscript{18}

Anderson continues with the comment that "What I wanted was a script that had his sanction, and an artistic authority equal to that of the book."\textsuperscript{19}

The task proved an immensely difficult one for all involved, however; in spite of the harmony of the men working together, the business of putting together an acceptable script which was at the same time an artistic equal to the novel became a frustrating and exhausting experience. Storey himself has said:

\begin{quote}
We worked on it for quite a while. I was very reluctant to script the book as it was and really wanted to use it as a starting-off point... Neither of us really knew what the other was like or really understood the material in terms of making a film of it... I think Lindsay's tendency with actors and with writers is to let them have their head and if what happens is real, then accepts it and if not, will say so.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

The project's salvation finally came through Anderson's tendency to let actors "have their head" when Richard Harris, playing Machin,\textsuperscript{21} insisted that the film treatment had no choice but to follow the book closely in both structure and action. Harris' advice was accepted; consequently, the construction of Storey's script is very similar to that of his novel. The script of \textit{This Sporting Life} tells its story in the first person as does the novel. But because it is a cinematic treatment, the script uses scenes or images that take us backward and forward in time and suggests close or
medium camera shots to intensify the personal element. The film is also more consciously dramatic than the novel, and consequently creaks a little.22

The script's basic thematic flaw is a confusion of emphasis. In the novel Machin's love affair with Mrs. Hammond is only part, if a dramatic part, of his struggle to make contact with the world around him. The film, however, is about the initiation, flowering, and decline of the affair itself rather than about Machin's personal dilemma. But to confuse the situation, many of the characters and certainly much of the social and industrial background, in addition to most plot elements, remain in the film. The result of all this is that Machin's life as a footballer, which occupies much of the film, seems to have no connection to his affair with Mrs. Hammond. Stanley Kaufmann complains:

If Harris had never become a football star, it would have had no substantial effect on his relations with the widow. They would have taken a bus to the country instead of his big car, he would have got her a cloth coat instead of a fur coat. It was not his money or celebrity that swayed her (or else their whole story collapses). Conversely, if the widow had never existed, it would not have affected his football career a jot. It was not to impress her that he tried out for the team nor did she have any important relation to his cockiness and trouble there.23

In the novel Machin is the center of interest and he provides the link. With the filmscript Storey apparently decided that the love relationship would be more interesting to film audiences than Machin himself, but was unwilling to
relinquish his own interest in Machin's whole existence.

In terms of plot and structure, the film and the novel have striking similarities. For the first two thirds of the film, past and present interweave, just as they do in the book. That mingling of flashback with present reality stops in the film at precisely the same moment it does in the novel, and from thenceforth the story in both moves in a straight line to the climax. Nearly all the same incidents that occur in the book are depicted in the film, and certainly all the important ones. Only a few incidents or images have been added or altered, and only a few eliminated. In terms of structure and plot the film is a close rendition of the novel.

For the most part, Anderson has achieved in the film a close approximation to Storey's first-person point of view. The film of This Sporting Life, like the book, takes place in a tangible world of the senses. Frank Machin is presented subjectively in the sense that we are shown his whole area of experience—where he is, what he sees, thinks, remembers, feels. We are inside the character, and the construction is based on an effort to reveal Machin without recourse to any of the usual artificial devices like interior monologues or voice-overs. The camera provides close-ups or medium shots, which are useful for revealing emotion and attitude. Furthermore, Anderson opens the film with the camera close into the center of the rugby game, establishing
at once the closeness and immediacy which suffuse the film. It is an effort to have the viewer confront emotion directly, to involve and disturb him. The film's ending works to achieve an opposite goal. The last shot is a long one, showing Machin receding from the camera to join the rest of the rugby team at the other end of the field. Here at the end an "anonymity closes in on the character whose personal crisis has been played out with such personal intimacy," Elizabeth Sussex suggests.²⁸ Anderson clarifies both through technical means and cinematic images quite exactly the feeling and experience Storey offers his readers in the novel. However, occasionally the film's first-person viewpoint falters when a scene is shown objectively, as when we see Mrs. Hammond sitting on her bed listening to the drunken Machin come upstairs to his room. This sort of fault is not merely academic, but as Kaufmann points out, "it weakens the artistic consistency, our feeling of the man pounding at the gates wondering what is really within."²⁹ But on the whole, this early collaboration between Storey and Anderson proved fruitful for them both.

Anderson was a good choice as a director for the film of Storey's book. Although he is a middle-class product, Anderson's feel for and work in the working-class milieu had already been established in his documentaries, even from the earliest one, Meet the Pioneers. Anderson had twice used the semi-industrial West Rising (Yorkshire)
landscape as the background for documentaries which preceded *This Sporting Life*. In fact, while work on the script for *This Sporting Life* was going on and trips were made to Yorkshire to look for locations in the places where Storey had grown up and set his novel, it emerged that Storey had been living about a ten minute walk away from the location where Anderson made his first film. In addition, Anderson had always indicated greatest approval of individuals in his films who do their work well and who have a sense of belonging in their community. He puts an implicit stress on moral and social duties of the individual, which may be most properly described as classical, and which corresponds to Storey's own attitudes in this respect.30

Furthermore, and this may be the major source of sympathy between the two artists, Anderson has always been interested in portraying the essence of truth found beneath the surface of things. Anderson has said:

> Probably all my work, even when it has been very realistic, has struggled for a poetic quality—for larger implications than the surface realities may suggest. I think the most important challenge is to get beyond pure naturalism into poetry... I think Brecht said that realism didn't show what things really "look like" but how they really are.31

Thus when Anderson found in Storey's novel "subtle psychological perceptions and a sense of poetry dark, passionate and wholly his own," he had found a sympathetic collaborator.
The association between these two men has continued uninterrupted for the last decade. After the completion of the film *This Sporting Life* Storey set to work to create a script of *Wuthering Heights* for Anderson and Harris. It was a project which never materialized. However, it was Anderson who urged Storey to turn his hand to playwriting when the author suffered a slump after the publication of *Radcliffe*, and it is Anderson who has directed the first production of four of the five Storey plays which are under consideration here.

In an interview in 1970, Storey explained to Ronald Hayman the benefit he has derived from his association with Lindsay Anderson. Anderson, in his collaboration with both Storey's stage and screen writing, has helped wean him away from his natural novelistic inclinations, Storey says:

I think what I meant there was in two or three scenes in *Sporting Life* when I first wrote them, we discussed them and Lindsay said, "Yes, that's very good, but what are these other three characters doing while these two are talking?" And in my naive literary fashion, as in writing novels, I'd shoved them to the back of the room somewhere. You sort of forget while you get on with what has to be expressed or what comes out. And if no one speaks for a half an hour it doesn't matter, whereas you can't have people fidgeting around on stage, waiting to come out with the next bit when it's required. It was only then I cottoned on that when you're actually watching dialogue that it has to have a completely different inner dynamic, that they've all got to be engaged and even if they are quiet they've got to be engaged in ways that are just as important, as informative as the people who are talking. So I felt it was a turning point.
Although the film of *This Sporting Life* was a project in which everyone involved—producer, director, screenwriter, and central actor—were performing in their various capacities for the first time, they managed to make a good film in spite of some loss of the novel's artistic integrity. Furthermore, Storey's work with Anderson opened for Storey the way to a whole new area of artistic development, the theatre, and the production of his major work, the plays.

**FLIGHT INTO CAMDEN**

*Flight into Camden* appeared in 1960 and within three years received both the Somerset Maugham Award and the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize for its excellence. Curiously, the book was not well received by English critics. "It does not come to much more than a grey special statement of sociology," wrote Geoffrey Grigson. Many American critics were undecided exactly how to receive the frank relationship between Howarth and Margaret and the detailed intimacy of English working-class life, but most were obviously impressed with Storey's skill. "Although the subject is somewhat sordid," the *Springfield Republican* found, "the novel is lifted above the average by the literary ability of the writer." Malcolm Bradbury agreed: "*Flight into Camden* shows its author to be a very skilled and very intelligent writer indeed." Storey's special ability, the *Times*
Literary Supplement decided, is that

he creates a human contact... from the smallest episodes, to a great dramatic scene of departure. The complete exclusion of any contrivance or artificiality, and the honesty in the presentation of this tragedy of morals, makes this more than a worthy successor to his notable This Sporting Life. 36

Plot

Like This Sporting Life, Flight into Camden involves a forbidden love affair set against a working-class backdrop. But the second book is far more a working-class novel than the first. Centered entirely on working-class characters and their intimate relationships with each other, Flight into Camden is a domestic novel, almost sociological in the extent to which it exposes the inner workings of daily working-class life. In this second novel, Margaret Thorpe, the secretarial-trained daughter of a miner, tells in the first person the story of her thwarted love affair with Gordon Howarth, an unhappily married and discontented teacher of industrial design at the local art college.

Margaret meets Howarth 37 at a Christmas party to which her brother Michael takes her, at the insistence of their parents. Margaret has little social life. Margaret and Howarth are immediately drawn to each other; each recognizes the other as an outsider. When Howarth explains to Margaret that he is not a university lecturer like her brother but a teacher in the art college nearby, she says to
him, "You're the odd man out." He replies, "Aren't we all," including Margaret in his apartness.

Margaret and Howarth continue to see each other, in spite of her family's objections when they discover Howarth is married. In a dramatic attempt to find freedom, Howarth leaves his wife and two children, to escape "the uselessness . . . the inevitability of everything" (139). In a similar break with her background, Margaret goes to London with Howarth to await the finalization of his divorce. They take a drab bed-sitting room in a grimy section of the city called Camden. Margaret soon finds a job as a secretary with the B.B.C.'s Overseas Department and is "astonished by my new confidence" (137). Howarth has difficulty finding work, however, and finally takes a job teaching English and history to adolescents, a job he despises. Their fortunes plunge. Howarth is gripped by depression, his wife withdraws the divorce petition and begs him to come home, Margaret's father comes down from the North to persuade her to leave Howarth and return to her parents' home. "But what sort of life is here, pray? It's the back of the beyond . . . you can't go on ignoring your family like this, Margaret" (172), her father pleads unsuccessfully. Michael visits shortly afterward, however, and forces Margaret home for a brief visit against her will. While at home Margaret receives a letter from Howarth which begins "I've called an end to it and I'm going away. . . . You might say the hounds
have got me at last" (215). Isolated by both inclination and choice from their surroundings, driven to find freedom on their own terms, Margaret and Howarth are doomed from the beginning of their flight. "We seemed to have been chased the whole of the journey" (123), Margaret says of their trip to London. Social and family pressures then split them apart and chase them back.

Major Themes

The theme of isolation so important to the central meaning of This Sporting Life surfaces again in Flight into Camden. The situation is different this time because the central character, Margaret Thorpe, is a sensitive and thoughtful individual, but the outcome is little more agreeable for her than it is for Arthur Machin. Margaret is both isolated from her family and burdened by them, and she yearns to escape her increasingly unbearable position. Her major problem is that she is uncomfortable in her role as a woman because she can fulfill neither the expectations of those around her nor her own desires. She bleakly watches spinsterhood approach while her mother tells her that marriage is "the biggest thing in a woman's life" (74). She jealously watches Michael's new fiancee Gwen because

Everything that he[Michael] had reproached and derided in me was embodied in her. My femininity, my original wish for education, my domesticity, my concern with my clothes and appearance; he had ridiculed these in his youth, then more subtly and implicitly in his maturity; only to resurrect them in Gwen. In his way he had embittered me and
encouraged me to destroy much that was wholesome and necessary in a woman for the sake of some unintelligible and sexless rivalry (118).

Margaret speaks of her "distrust of domesticity and the fatefulness of motherhood" (118) which causes her personal goals and values to be radically different from those of her class. "But I don't want to be a mother," Margaret tells her own shocked mother. "Being a mother—it's just the end of everything. . . . It makes nothing of me. . . . It all seems so hopeless and useless" (55). Margaret desires to be fulfilled as an individual, whatever the price. Her parents find her spinsterhood an increasing embarrassment and pity what they consider her social maladjustment. Her mother resents her intrusion in the house—"she disliked having two women contending for the housework" (52). In many significant ways, Margaret is excluded from the life of her family and her class.

Howarth's isolation is even more radical than Margaret's. To begin with, he has no roots as she does; he rarely mentions his family, and then with distaste. His father, Howarth explains to Margaret "was a down-and-out" (18). At another point when he is raging about the compulsive possessiveness of her family, he says "You should all have been pigs like my parents" (99). Furthermore, Howarth is intensely aware that his background is not working-class like that of the people around him ("I'm even sentimental about the working-class, so I always treat them
suspiciously" (86)). The second time Margaret and Howarth meet she discovers this sense of isolation about him:

"You sound shut in. Your opinions and things . . . as if they're your opinions only."
"How else should I have them?"
"You could have shared opinions, like other people's . . ."
"I think you're trying to suggest you find me lonely" . . . I said, "I think you are" (32).

In a world where shared class values are extremely important, Howarth is a class unto himself. Finally, Howarth sees his marriage and family life as a trap. "I'm past the stage of making new compromises!" Howarth tells Margaret. "If I wanted I could stay with her, and everything would go on as usual. It'd be a terrible business, but we both could manage it" (64). But, he adds, "I'm not a coward. If I stay with them I am (65). . . . You can sacrifice the wrong things for people" (66).

Thus when Howarth and Margaret meet, the need for action in response to their respective situations hangs heavily on both of them. The final connection is made when they are drawn inexorably towards one another. Just as Arthur Machin represents the intensely physical aspect of a man's nature and Mrs. Hammond the sensitive, emotional aspect, although dead, so Margaret and Howarth represent the same kind of psychic split. Again, the female character is the sensitive, spiritual half, and the male the more physical, spiritually empty aspect. They are drawn together because each has what the other needs to be complete. Each
character makes his weakness clear during their second meeting. Margaret notices that the parade crowd milling around them makes Howarth nervous:

"You don't like people coming near you?"

He waited and then said, "I like to keep them at their distance, if that's what you mean."

"Then you're like me," I told him, almost vehemently.

"Am I?" He smiled to himself. . . . "You don't like to be touched. . . . It's the emotional kind of touching I draw away from" (30).

The distinction between physical and emotional touching is made throughout Flight into Camden, with constant use of the term "feeling." With regard to the expression of what they take to be their "feelings," Margaret and Howarth have exactly opposite meanings for the term. For Margaret "feeling" represents emotional contact, for Howarth it means a physical display. Margaret is tightly in control of her emotional expression;39 Howarth, on the other hand, believes in spontaneity of expression, and he believes that the physical expression of feeling reflects deeper emotions. It is this tendency, normally thought of as characteristic of the artistic personality, which causes so many people to react to Howarth as if he were an artist. He is not, however. Margaret cannot help but see Howarth's spiritual emptiness when she looks at a portfolio of his drafting designs:

If he had been an artist as Michael insisted he was, he would have had something. But his portfolio of work had nothing to do with him; it was some
mechanical process; nothing of Howarth himself showed in it. He had only a vast emptiness to turn to (132).

Thus Howarth's physical expression, his "feelings," are meaningless because they reflect only the depths of his emptiness.

Their life in London acts to free Margaret from her emotional constraints, but it only confirms and intensifies Howarth's "vast emptiness." "It became apparent," Margaret explains, "how we were feeding off one another, and only I seemed to be thriving. . . . I was like a girl again, and full of quiet sensuality. I had never been so alive.

Howarth, on the contrary, "collapsed into his bitter, empty shell" (138). Apparently Storey intends us to see here that when the physical is subdued, the spiritual, which has a stronger foundation, soars. It is a traditional and conservative view.

Howarth is bewildered by his uncontrollable plunge into depression. "I didn't come here to feel like this," he says. "I came here for something fresh, a new start of some kind. . . . I shouldn't be doing this, I know. I'm throwing too much away." When Margaret suggests "some part of you--it must feel you've done wrong," Howarth replies, "But it can't be true. I'd never punish myself for leaving her and all that she meant. . . . Don't tell me I've done it all for nothing. . . . No!" (139).
In this novel Storey emerges as a strict, traditional moralist. The world has order; right and wrong exist, and right becomes allied with what is best for the society at large rather than what the individual considers best for himself. A character in the book who gets an obvious nod from Storey is Fawcett, a cool and controlled but sympathetic young clergyman whom Margaret regards as "sincere . . . and decent" (152). Fawcett claims to understand and appreciate the pressures which led Howarth to leave his family, even though he can't endorse it. "I don't think you've disgraced yourself coming to London like this. If you went back to your wife it might even have been all to the good" (150).

The pressures for both Howarth and Margaret to return to the duties of the lives they left behind grow. Margaret acknowledges to Howarth that she can no longer "ignore that you have a wife and children, and that they still have a right to make demands on you" (163). Margaret's father pleads "You might have some consideration for us. For your mother, if nobody else" (172). He threatens her with the possibility of becoming alienated from her family completely: "If you get shut on all of us what will you have got?" (173). When Michael arrives, he demands that Margaret return home to visit her sick mother, a move she fiercely resists. Michael's simply reply: "You'll have to, Margaret, whether you want it or not. . . .
How can you go on, when . . . it's against everything in us."

"It's against everything in you!" I cried at him. "In you and my mother and my dad. But this is me. This is what I've got. It's got nothing to do with you."

"You're wrong." He shook his head, looking up at me, past Howarth, with half-fearing eyes. "It's not only you it concerns. And it's not all you've got left" (201).

Margaret's close-knit, smothering family reaches out to claim her, and Howarth guiltily urges her to go. When Margaret receives his letter of goodbye while she is still at home, she reads, "it was wrong of me to share my uselessness with you. . . . I can't destroy everything merely because I want to live" (216). Although Howarth decides that he will have "one more run before the hounds really get me," he gives Margaret the key to what he has discovered in the hope that it will help her survive: she has been his art. If he had been an artist as he had wanted, his work might have taken her place. But now only Margaret can show what Howarth has really been and thus he says to her, "You must go on. . . . At least I've shown you that if nothing else. You must go on and on. There's nothing more important than that: it's magnificent . . ." (217).

Storey has arrived here, as he leads Howarth to do, at the very difficult decision to deny self-centered individual needs in favor of fulfilling one's place and performing one's study in the society at large. It is not a
decision easily accepted by Howarth or Margaret; in fact, the plot's culmination tests emotional credibility. Throughout the book glimpses of weakness in Howarth occur repeatedly, and in one sense this is an uncharacteristically strong move for Howarth to make. On the other hand, working-class values, which disapprove their affair, exert a strong pull on members of her family and to a large degree on Margaret herself. Furthermore, their situation in London, with his wife's refusal to grant a divorce and his increasingly hateful job, becomes unbearable for Howarth, and Margaret has already noticed "his technique of escape to solve anything that grew unbearable" (132).

At any rate, Storey's solution to the moral dilemma he has created with Margaret and Howarth is to condemn it. He presents it as self-indulgent and morally wrong. But the decision is an unpalatable one and it sounds hollow and strained. It is an adequate conclusion for this second novel, Storey's examination of "the spiritual, interior, and --as I conceived it--feminine part of my nature," but it does not yet seem that Storey has resolved the "schizophrenic condition" which drove him to write novels in the first place. Storey's third novel Radcliffe validates such an argument with its treatment of the same crisis: the division between physical and spiritual with two characters clearly designated as such. If the problem had been solved in Flight into Camden, Storey would have had no need to take
it up again in Radcliffe. His solution to the same problem in Radcliffe is quite different, and will be discussed later in this chapter. Thus at this point in Storey's work, we have one potential solution to his dilemma, but it is a hard one, and not a solution which Storey seems to endorse with any enthusiasm.

**Fictional Technique**

When Eric Moon reviewed *Flight into Camden* for the *Library Journal* he wrote, "This is that rarity, a successful second novel, despite the author's daring in using a device which for most male novelists proves fatal." The device Moon refers to is Storey's use of the female persona for his first-person narrator. Margaret Thorpe indeed has an authentic feel about her; she seems "a genuine woman" (171), a term her father uses in another context. Perhaps Storey has eased the difficulty of his task slightly by creating Margaret as a woman whose aspirations are toward personal freedom rather than toward traditional female domesticity, but the lovemaking and domestic experiences which Margaret describes seem very feminine in nature. Apparently Storey's engagement with the "spiritual, interior, and . . . feminine" part of his nature was genuine when he wrote his second novel.

Margaret's narration of events, like Arthur Machin's, is limited to what she herself experiences directly. Her descriptions are very concrete, but in a different manner.
from Machin's. Margaret's particular ability lies in making her feelings exceptionally real. She manages to concretize the abstract, as opposed to Arthur's total engagement with the senses. Thus while Arthur gives the reader a physical sense of his experience, Margaret recreates in the reader the intensity of the emotions she's feeling. A critic for the *New Statesman* testifies to her—and Storey's—success:

Raw, ragged and imperfect, it [the book] filled me with a black and bitter despair, left me trembling with that impatient fever sometimes called a stricken conscience. Now, nearly a week after my encounter with it, what comes to the surface is the glow of feeling better for it.¹²

Unlike Machin, Margaret remains a shrewd, steady and reliable narrator throughout, with one exception: her interpretation of events is colored by her working-class attitudes. Her upbringing has implanted in her a sense of values by which she renders automatic judgments in some situations. This tendency is particularly clear in Margaret's judgments of Howarth, many of whose values (and the actions predicated on them) are middle-class. For example, the first time Margaret takes Howarth home in her parents' absence, he struggles to light the fireplace, a chore he is unaccustomed to, as good-natured proof of his manliness and capability. After the fire is lit, they make love, and when Margaret comes downstairs afterwards to make tea, she finds the fire almost out. "Howarth might want to light the fire," she muses, "but he wouldn't want the trouble of keeping it in. There was something reckless
about his sudden passions and wants and amusements" (104). In such manner Margaret burdens her perceptions of Howarth with working-class prejudice, in this case a puritanical uneasiness about spontaneity and self-indulgence.

The structure of Flight into Camden involves a straight narrative from beginning to end, presented in the past tense. There is a sense of the immediacy of re-lived experience about the book rather than a feeling of the current unfolding of present experience as in much of This Sporting Life. The time period covered by events in Flight into Camden is approximately six months: Margaret and Howarth meet at Christmas, and they separate in the early summer. Curiously Storey has woven into his time structure a deliberate movement from winter to summer, from death to birth. Such movement would indicate that Storey feels Margaret's experience with Howarth has been rich and productive for her but still best in its unhappy conclusion. In the last scene Margaret gently dozes in Michael's backyard, "overwhelmed by the scent of the flowers, the heavy scent of the newly mown grass" (218), while Fawcett and Michael discuss Howarth's recent return to his wife. There is even some suggestion that Fawcett and Margaret may find happiness together as he watches her "openly anxious" and tells Michael, "I'd count myself a very lucky man if I ended up in a house and garden like this" (218).
One of Storey's most predominate imagistic tendencies in *Flight into Camden* is the use of landscape to reflect mood. For example, after an early argument between Margaret and Howarth which seems as if it will dissolve their relationship, they unhappily return to town by train.

Outside,

the landscape on either side of the track was dampened down, hanging low and murkey... the wet trees and foliage collected shadows, holding them together in simple, stark clumps, which slowly converged on the track, then disappeared to be replaced by isolated trees... (67).

In this and many other situations Storey used description of landscape to illuminate Margaret's feelings or as a way to express her attitudes; it is interior landscaping. When she and Howarth finally arrive in Camden, the scene of their immoral behavior—"muck" (171), as Margaret's father calls it—Margaret has

a vague impression of streets narrower and buildings dirtier than I had ever expected; of row after row of sordid houses, filthier than anything I had seen at home. The area we went through was one of disintegration and decay... (124).

The description of landscape here is a prelude to and metaphor for the experience the two lovers will have in London.

Another consistent image throughout the novel is that of Howarth as a clown, a large gawky creature who is "helpless" and "useless" (two words which recur frequently) and good only for amusement. Margaret first describes Howarth in this manner as he sits brooding "with a clownish air of independence" which "emphasized the strangeness of
his physique." He even looks like a clown: "his face was white, with small patches of color on the cheekbones" (68). Furthermore, Howarth has a "strange power of disturbing small things, and causing their flight" (83). Again, as Howarth sits tensely after his first day of teaching in London "his smile turned his face into that clown-like remoteness" (142). For Margaret Howarth seems clown-like often because he wears a cheerful mask which hides a great emptiness and because he is physically impetuous and "not conscious of a lot of things about [him]self" (97). For Storey Howarth is a clown-artist, a man with artistic abilities who nonetheless has no spiritual depth and cannot distinguish between physical impulses and spiritual sensitivity. Thus he cannot be a serious artist. This concept of clown-artist concerns Storey a great deal, since he deals with it at length in the character of Blakeley, the grotesque ne'er-do-well, in *Radcliffe* as part of an exploration of the nature of art.

In conclusion, *Flight into Camden* is an investigation into the limits of individual freedom set against a working-class backdrop. Furthermore, the relationship between Margaret and Howarth in an allegorical fashion parallels the manner in which the human aspects of physicality and spirituality struggle to unite with one another in spite of metaphysical pressure to remain separated. Because of Storey's skill at depicting feeling with intense
perception and his commitment to the class he writes about, this second novel is a remarkable tour de force which leaves a strong and lasting impression. Paul Scott points out in his review of Flight into Camden that "Novels that work their way in through your mind and heart are comparatively rare; those that attack you in the belly are rarer still." 44

RADCLIFFE

Storey's third novel Radcliffe, which follows the decline and final dissolution of a once-great but now impoverished aristocratic family, is a departure from his previous work in several ways. Lockwood states:

From the very beginning it is apparent that Storey conceived this novel in more grandiose terms --larger themes, bolder passions, bloodier violence --and as an effort, finally, to transcend the limited scope of the contemporary British novel. 45


American critics, however, tended to be passionate in their dislike of the book. In a review entitled
"Wuthering Depths," Time's reviewer complained that "Weighty issues are mentioned weightily, and the kettledrums are almost never silent."\textsuperscript{49} Marvin Mudrick found the book "one of the sweatiest and most ludicrously symbolified novels in years,"\textsuperscript{50} while the New Statesman's critic came to the conclusion that "Mr. Storey has sacrificed the authenticity and authority of his earlier books."\textsuperscript{51} Saturday Review found it simply "a tissue of hysteria."\textsuperscript{52} More judicious critics sought more even ground. Stephen Spender decided

The attempt is not altogether successful, but one must be grateful for a large ambitious work in which a writer who has been trained as a painter uses his painter's eye to describe very large scenes.\textsuperscript{53}

Concurring, John Gross concluded that

His [Storey's] gifts are indisputable, and he has shown courage in grasping at a major theme instead of trying to repeat the success of his first two novels. But if ever a book needed editing, cutting, and re-thinking, it is this one.\textsuperscript{54} It is true that Radcliffe's plot and themes seem far-flung and uncoordinated. Moreover, there are several levels of meaning in the novel, and characters invariably have more than one identity. Since this long, complex novel is badly planned and inconsistent, elements are introduced whose purpose is obscure. At other times Storey's excessive personal involvement in the outcome of the struggle between the two central characters creates implications, particularly homosexual ones, which are clearly counter to his intentions. "No novel which is fundamentally poetic in
conception can afford to be quite so clumsily written," asserts John Gross. He continues: "This is in many ways a rather adolescent novel, with all kinds of moods and aspirations just lying around." Storey himself now agrees, calling Radcliffe "a mere regression, an absurd attempt to put all the pieces together."*56

**Plot**

On the level of plot Radcliffe concerns a frenzied love affair and its ultimate conclusion between Leonard Radcliffe, the sickly ethereal scion of a dying line, and Victor Tolson, a brutish workingman who lives in a housing estate on the grounds of the decaying Radcliffe manor. Before Leonard is born, his father John, by an "instinctive process which seemed to have taken complete possession of his life," gives up a comfortable managerial position to lead the life of a recluse, caretaking on the decayed family manor ("the Place") in order, Storey suggests, that Leonard might be born: "he felt that Leonard was less the outcome than the purpose of his retreat" (28). Leonard is a sickly baby—"there seemed to be a resistance to life in that slight, scraggly and perpetually flushed body" (29)—and a year after his birth as he is suffering convulsions, the grotesquely decayed Place is shaken by three portentous crashes which seem to come from deep in the earth beneath it. Leonard's fits stop and never recur. His father "still retained a desire that Leonard should be portentous. He
even began to look on his son with an almost evangelical zeal" (30).

The novel opens as Leonard, at the age of nine, a "small boy, very slight with an intense, Spanish kind of face, narrowly featured and pale" (?), transfers from a private school to the local council school. There he establishes a bitter rivalry with Tolson, who is "tall and thickset," with a "frank, unwittingly surly face," and a "muscular figure" (?). A peculiar but strong friendship which grows between the two boys is broken off when Radcliffe wins an unsolicited scholarship to a grammar school. The relationship is reestablished some years later when Radcliffe at the age of nineteen takes a job with a tent-erecting firm, a job arranged by his ubiquitous uncle Austen. Tolson is head of the crew to which Radcliffe is assigned, and shortly after the reunion a homosexual relationship evolves between the two men, in spite of the existence of Tolson's wife and two children. Leonard has an intense, gentle and unwavering love for Tolson, but Tolson's affection for Leonard, although unmistakeable, is expressed in short violent physical encounters interspersed with cruel rejections.

Radcliffe gradually loses touch with reality, feeling himself merge psychically with the Place ("The building was like the vast instrument of his thoughts" (?)), and suffering from horrible nightmares of cosmic battles between
huge, dark, unidentifiable forces. Tolson, although Radcliffe considers him "ugly and spiritless," is Radcliffe's only touch with reality. "With him I have a hold on things I'd never have otherwise" (139), he tells his father.

The sexual encounters between Radcliffe and Tolson become more obsessive and painful, complicated by the introduction of Denis Blakeley, a workingman turned grotesque music-hall comedian, a bisexual who is at the same time passionately in love with Tolson and yet the father of his own daughter Kathleen's three illegitimate children. In ultimate response to Tolson's repeated outrages against him, (which include, in chronological and sensational order, Leonard's being tricked into eating a sandwich containing Tolson's excrement, Kathleen's rape of Leonard while Tolson watches, Tolson's rape of Radcliffe's virgin sister Elizabeth, and finally Tolson's oral rape of Leonard himself), Leonard murders Tolson by smashing him repeatedly over the head with a hammer. Blakeley, in a strained effort to perform a complete artistic act, confesses to the murder of Tolson and then kills his entire family and himself. Leonard retreats into the vast recesses of the Place, painting obsessively, trailed perpetually by a huge black dog whose actual existence is never absolutely established. As he reaches a feverish pinnacle of creativity, Leonard confesses to Tolson's murder, and is committed to a mental institution just as he begins to feel "that he'd been
released. Something was now so complete and whole as to be unbreakable" (373). In the hospital, Leonard "unless restrained, tended to rush at people, flinging himself upon them in violent attempts to embrace them ... shouting the word 'Love!' until he was finally subdued" (374). Suddenly Leonard dies just as his sister Elizabeth gives birth to a boy, "with a physique peculiar for a Radcliffe in its size and strength. It had, however, unmistakeable Radcliffe eyes, dark and enigmatic" (375). Leonard's family then leaves the Place, which is demolished and replaced by the growth of the surrounding housing estate.

Full of sheer gothic horror, centering on an intense battle for unity between two strong and uncompromising personalities, a battle seemingly attended by cosmic forces, Radcliffe has been called "the greatest study of obsessive passion since Wuthering Heights."58 Lockwood points out, however, that

for all [Radcliffe's] Brontesque and even Dostoevskian analogies, its lurid violence and Gothic overtones, these grand themes are realized only intellectually, and not emotionally, if realized at all.59

Story himself explains the difference between Wuthering Heights and his own novel:

Passion and discipline should not be incompatible: look at Wuthering Heights—the extraordinary effect Emily Bronte gets there by having Ellen Dean, a perfectly reasonable, sensible, prosaic woman, narrating these wild, mad, unbelievable happenings. You can hardly believe that the two sides of the book could have come from the same mind. I would like to achieve that sort of effect in my novels, but of
course it is not always possible. Radcliffe in particular is in parts really wild; it sometimes goes right off the rails. . . .

Radcliffe does indeed frequently leave the track. Its various themes and turns of plot collide almost randomly, sometimes reinforcing—and occasionally contradicting—each other. The overall effect is of passion dominating form and thought.

**Major Themes**

An examination of the themes in Radcliffe should begin with the most obvious: the need to heal the destructive split between the physical and spiritual aspects of human nature, a split which is perpetrated by Christianity and which pervades all of Western society. This is, again, the same concern of Storey's two previous novels, but here an attempt is made to give the struggle a wider significance. Storey makes the point early in the novel that Leonard suffers from extreme isolation, "absolute loneliness, so that even the houses, the buildings I passed seemed to exude something . . . so somber and remorseless. It terrifies me" (367). The result of this isolation is that "it seemed as though he were physically disintegrating" (48). The key to Leonard's salvation is communion with the wholly physical Tolson, who is in turn mindlessly driven to merge with Leonard. As Radcliffe explains to his father after Tolson's death: "I don't think you realize what I found in Vic . . . Vic was my body, and I was his soul. We were one" (367).
Furthermore, he explains to the prosecutor at his trial, "The battle was so intense between us because we could see something beyond it. It was the split between us that tormented us; the split in the whole of Western society" (370).

That split came about as a result of the peculiar nature of Christ which Leonard discovers as he demands an answer to his metaphysiological despair from the priggish and morally-dwarfed Provost:

But if you say Christ invested the physical apparatus of man, just how much of it did He invest? How much? And where did He draw the line? (284). . . . If He could bleed and sweat and be exhausted why couldn't He feel equally the natural desire for a woman, or for another man? What is it that a man wants from such love that Christ Himself had no need of? How on earth can we accept Him as an example when He was half a man Himself? (285).

With the Provost's reply that "To separate the body from the soul was Our Lord's gift to man. He freed the soul from the human body and gave us the true gift of immortality" (286), Leonard screams: "His gift! It was His damnation! His curse!" (286). He continues:

What a trivial thing you've made of Christ. You've cut His body away from His soul, and condemned us to live with the body and to be ever wanting for the soul. You've condemned us to be separate things when our only salvation lies in wholeness and completeness. When the body and the soul are the one thing (286).

With the rejection of Christ as a model of existence, Radcliffe by his own example offers another:61 It is the communal, impersonal, accepting love that men are capable of
bearing for each other if they are whole men. Such love is the basis of civilization. Leonard tells the prosecutor:

You've got to accept that there is a love that exists between men which is neither obscene nor degrading, but is as powerful and as profound, and as fruitful, as that love which bears children. The love that we have for other men, as men, may be beyond some people's powers of comprehension. But it has a subtlety and a flexibility, a power that created order. Politics, art, religion: these things are the products of men's loving. And by that I mean their hatred, their antagonism, their affection, as men, and their curiosity in one another as men. It isn't that women have been deprived of these things, but simply that they can't love in this way. They have been given something less abstract, more physical, something more easily understood. Law, art, politics, religion: these are the creation of men as men (371).

Thus the unification of flesh with spirit to create a whole, independent, integrated creature is extremely significant to the existence of those forms which constitute civilization. Civilization itself is the creation of a moral order, as a celebration of mutual commitment and interaction, an act which can only be performed by superior beings—that is, by beings who are complete, absolute. Leonard shouts at the conclusion of his testimony: "I wanted an absolute! I wanted an ideal! I wanted an order for things!" (371).

The entire encounter between Radcliffe and Tolson, the Soul and the Body, is the " unholy encounter" in the title of this study. In a discussion with Blakeley on the nature of the soul just before he goes to kill Tolson, Leonard makes the following statement:

But just think what if this separate thing [the soul] were in one man, and the body, the acting part,
in another? What if these two qualities were typified ideally in two separate men? Then, just imagine . . . just imagine the unholy encounter of two such people! (319).

Thus the encounter between Radcliffe and Tolson is "unholy" not because it does not involve divinity (see footnote 61), but rather because it involves the two separate aspects of man. Originally, by taking the form of a man, it was Christ who separated spirit from flesh; it now becomes man's job to reunite them. It was a terrible sundering when it first occurred, and the coming together can be no less terrible. However, the whole future of Western society, according to Storey, depends upon that successful unification.

With regard to Storey's more personal dilemma, his metaphysical anguish at having been split in two, there seems to be an answer emerging here as well: a vast, impersonal, communal love for his fellow creatures is the key to unlock the door of his isolation and give meaning to his life. But the solution is inadequately developed on a personal level because Radcliffe, the standard bearer is, in conventional terms, insane. Is insanity the price one must pay for revelation? The answer to this question will be explored in Chapter III in the discussion of The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, Storey's next work in his deliberate "campaign for reintegrating myself." For the moment it is a hopeful sign to note that the child Elizabeth bears—as Radcliffe dies—is essentially the child of two fathers, a
creature who successfully integrates both natures:

Elizabeth saw in its face the gaze of her brother, quiet and uncompromising. But then some energetic movement of its body would dispel the brief impression and, as it grew, its look of confidence, its peculiar independence, became a source of consolation to her (375).

Another theme which emerges from the action in *Radcliffe* and which ties into that just discussed is John Radcliffe's discovery that withdrawal from involvement in the world is impossible. The only reason he could recognize for his original withdrawal from his job and associates to become caretaker of the Place was a disgust at the relative values by which men live their lives. "Whatever society we create men will consistently abuse it" (20), was his disgruntled parting statement to a corrupt world. Near the end of the book John tells his son what he has learned from twenty years of isolation:

> When I was younger . . . I suddenly made what I thought was a discovery: that you have only two choices, either to live in isolation or be absorbed. Well, I made my choice. And it was the wrong one. I never realized that you must be absorbed. That you must take your part, and *then* you must fight (358). This is a lesson which Leonard has already learned, and it is similar to the advice Howarth sends Margaret in his final letter.

An interesting facet of Storey's work is that it is nearly all written about (and perhaps for) men. In his view of the world, women do not suffer metaphysical anguish as men do. The vehicle of their escape is an overpowering
sense of biological destiny, which in itself provides them with definition and purpose. For this reason, nearly all of Storey's women are presented as mothers, and nearly all are presented condescendingly. Women who respond positively to their biological role do not suffer the sense of division underlying John Radcliffe's painful inquiry: "Why isn't there a unity between what I feel and what I do?" (25). Women for the most part are what they feel and do: mothering. Thus women in Storey's work often have an intuitive wisdom, learn to tolerate difficulty by absorbing it, and are dependably comforting. They are not thinkers, however, and are usually dull-witted, narrow-minded and preoccupied with trivialities. Only Margaret Thorpe escapes this fate by rejecting her fundamental female role: she refuses to become a mother. As a result, Margaret to a large extent suffers from the inability to discover who she is or where she belongs, just as men do.

The final major theme which provides an amorphous structure for the novel is a kind of Chekhovian sense of the inevitable decline of the decadent, aristocratic class. When the novel opens the Place, the ancestral family home of a once great line, stands gaunt and decaying, surrounded by the gradually encroaching housing estate whose inhabitants are entirely one class--the working-class. At an early age Leonard "was made aware that his family as well as he himself were somehow different from other people" (32). In a
communal, democratic age, there is no place for magnificent families who stand apart, whether they act in compassion or in tyranny. There is, in fact, a close correspondence between the fortunes of the Place and Leonard's career, since he is the last of the line. After his death the Place is razed and "the housing estate that had previously enclosed the Place on all sides seized quickly on this last piece of ground" (376). Two years later, Storey writes, "there is no evidence that the Place stood on this particular spot, or that a family whose history extended over six centuries, had even made its mark on this hard and indomitable landscape" (376). The last aristocrats are absorbed into the mainstream, and Elizabeth's son by Tolson is a new breed in which the two classes are merged. Class distinctions—at least those which depend on anything as arbitrary as an accident of birth—are ended. The theme of unification emerges again.

In spite of the erratic nature of the novel Radcliffe all the major themes converge into one: impersonal love among men and their cooperation with each other is the solution to metaphysical despair in a world where "God's no longer interesting" (267). Through their good will and mutual commitment men themselves can create an order for the world without having to submit to the psychological crippling that religious mysteries bring. This is Radcliffe's—and Storey's—message to the world: men are capable of
saving themselves if they are whole enough to love.

**Fictional Technique**

Storey's fictional methods in *Radcliffe* differ from those in the two previous novels by exaggeration and lack of subtlety. Perhaps the most obvious difference is his switch from a first-person narrator to one who is omniscient. Although the narrator focuses for the most part on Leonard Radcliffe, describing events as if he were at Leonard's elbow, he also gives attention to Leonard's father John and his uncle Austen. The narrator in *Radcliffe* maintains a peculiar balance between subjective and objective reporting, confining himself for the most part to a description of events and the external reactions different characters display toward them. Much of the time it is as if the narrator were watching events on film and adding voice-over descriptive narration as they unfold before him. Following is an example chosen at random:

He [Blakeley] was sweating profusely, and even leaning toward the fire as if deliberately aggravating his discomfort. Yet all the while his eyes never left Leonard's own increasingly distracted face (317).

The description above reveals no subjective knowledge of either character on the narrator's part. He is simply giving a description of minute physical details, as if he were closely watching two people talk. The narrator can see the physical evidence of Blakeley's sweat, his stare at Leonard, and the changing expression on Leonard's face. The other
piece of information, Blakeley's deliberate aggravation of his own discomfort, is an assumption on the narrator's part and is clearly labeled as such by his use of "as if." A result of this objectivity on the narrator's part is that the characters are seen from a distance and are slightly out of focus. Not only does the reader rarely know what Radcliffe or Tolson is thinking, external events are not always explained adequately. For instance, Leonard is knocked to the ground several times in the course of the novel and although we suspect that Tolson is the culprit, we never know, and neither does Leonard. The final result of the narrative technique is a loss of concreteness and reality, so important in the success of Storey's previous work.

Sexual symbolism in Radcliffe is overdone, with Time magazine's review pointing out in its usual epigrammatic fashion that "sexual symbols parade through the paragraphs wearing sandwich signs." Tents and buildings are forever being "erected," "thighs" are ceaselessly stroked, and "huge" is an adjective used endlessly to describe everything from faces to steering wheels. It is as if Storey, in his effort to build an artistic monument, repeatedly used a few adjectives which define the effect he wished to create in order to create that very effect. Ultimately such words as "huge," "grotesque," and "ominous," when over-used, become ambiguous and confuse rather than intensify the mood they were intended to create. Furthermore, although he often
succeeds in communicating a sense of poetry. Storey just as often strains too far, as when he describes the sun as "a white ball of rabid intensity." Storey does, however, bring his painter's eye with reasonable success to a description of the landscape, as in this passage:

The sun had flooded into the dale, and the whitened rock and hedged fields trembled and pounded upwards. The ground ate up the heat, and the river was the only living thing, boiling and frothing through its grey-rocked bed and past the bare scars on the hillside.

In the final analysis, Radcliffe is an overwrought, gothic melodrama laden with a portentous (and pretentious) seeking for ultimate truth. It explores the question: in a world where God ceases to exist—or at least ceases to have any influence—by what principles or impulses should a human being live? This is indeed the question driving nearly all twentieth century artists. Storey's proposed solution differs from the existentialists (every man must create his own structure) and from the Marxists (create an ideal social system and the nature of man will improve) in that he suggests adherence to long-established social traditions as well as close involvement in one's family and community structure.

Metaphysical despair comes from two directions in Storey's thought: from the conflict between a man's physical appetites and his spiritual responsibilities, a split created and fostered by Christianity; and from isolation,
which breeds inaction and further encourages the kind of personality disassociation mentioned above. Storey suggests in Radcliffe that one "must be absorbed" in the surrounding human world, where a person "must take [his] part, and then [he] must fight." He must fight to establish and maintain a moral order, as well as close and sympathetic contact with his fellow beings. Love and order—these are the bases of civilization in Storey's world.

The much-vaunted "total freedom" of twentieth-century man is in fact a condemnation to isolation and despair. That sort of "freedom" is to be guarded against, while the security an individual gains from the total love and acceptance given him by his fellows, to whom he responds by fulfilling his own social and personal duties, is the most desirable human freedom, in Storey's view.

To recapitulate the main thesis of this chapter, as a young artist Storey was torn by a psychic split which he felt in his very being, and he suffered still further extreme alienation from his working-class roots. In order to try to ameliorate that terrible sense of isolation, he began to explore the nature of it, and his three novels emerged as "acts of despair." This Sporting Life centers on Arthur Machin, a rugby player composed of "alien, physical forces" who wildly "careens down his crude path to destruction" without understanding why he is so separate from those around him, or how he can close the gap. Flight
into Camden explores a nature exactly opposite to Machin's—the "spiritual, interior . . . and feminine part"—as it tells the story of Margaret Thorpe's rejection of her family's values as she engages in a sordid love affair with a married man. That affair ends (rightly, Storey suggests) in Margaret's return to her proper role and place in the midst of a family who loves her. Finally, Radcliffe presents these two opposing natures—physical and spiritual—in cosmic conflict against a huge and threatening landscape. The spiritual creature Radcliffe, who is more sensitive and understanding than the brutish Tolson, overcomes his lover-rival and immediately begins to assume many of Tolson's physical characteristics, feeling suddenly that "something was now so complete and whole as to be unbreakable."

In his novels Storey illustrates in fine detail the problems of freedom, isolation, and alienation which plague him. By his third novel he even presents some tentative solutions, but they are applied for the most part on a grand and unrealistic scale. In the plays Storey grapples with his old problem again as "the conflict moves inside, and is fought out in one man's brain." But primarily in the plays Storey examines his own metaphysic closely as he applies it to the various kinds of human situations, personal, filial, and social, which occur in his plays.
FOOTNOTES


7 The landlady Valerie Hammond will be referred to as "Mrs. Hammond" in this study because this is the name Arthur uses most consistently. It points up the distance between them personally.

8 David Storey, This Sporting Life (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 201. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text.


10 "They" here refers to Mrs. Hammond's neighbors—all members in good standing of the working-class.

11 In this team, however, we see dissension and personal competition between players more than we see their cooperation on the field.

12 Lockwood, p. 1.


14 Anderson was well-established as a filmmaker in 1960, although primarily in the documentary field. When he began work on This Sporting Life his credits included Meet the Pioneers, Idlers that Work, Three Installations,
Wakefield Express, Thursday's Children, O Dreamland, Trunk Conveyer, Green and Pleasant Land, Henry, The Children Upstairs, A Hundred Thousand Children, L 20 a Ton, Foot and Mouth, and Everyday Except Christmas. Of these, perhaps Thursday's Children, O Dreamland, and Everyday Except Christmas are best known. Anderson also had the direction of legitimate stage productions, particularly at the Royal Court, to his credit. Since This Sporting Life, he has produced three full-length feature films, The White Bus, If... and O Lucky Man.

21 For reasons never explained by any of the people involved in the film project, Arthur Machin is called "Frank Machin" in the film.
22 A particular instance which comes to mind is the film sequence where Machin takes Mrs. Hammond to a posh restaurant and proceeds to behave like a boor, embarrassing her and causing her to walk out on him. This scene also occurs in the novel, but it occurs in the context of the Sunday outing with the children where Machin is motivated to wear his football boots into the dining room because he has wet his dress shoes carrying Lynda across the river. In the book his boorishness comes about as a result of circumstances; in the film the dinner seems arranged merely for the purpose of allowing Machin to be a boor.
24 That moment occurs with Machin's arrival home after the Christmas Eve party at the Weavers' home.
25 Machin's loss of teeth and his trip to the dentist; the Christmas Eve party; Machin's early tryout for the team and his signing on for which he received L 1000 pounds (500
in the book); driving home in the new car; taking Mrs. Hammond and her children for an outing in the country; making love to her but getting no response; fending off Mrs. Weaver's sexual aggression; making a boor of himself in a posh restaurant; the bitter arguments with Mrs. Hammond which eventually end with Machin's expulsion from her home; the series of Irish flophouses at which Machin stays after he leaves her; Mrs. Hammond's death; and Machin's resignation to an endless series of grey, hard, and meaningless rugby matches for the duration of his playing life.

26 The pub scene where Machin meets Maurice and two girls and entertains the locals with a rendition of "Here Is My Heart"; the scene in which Machin gives Mrs. Hammond the fur coat, and the neighbor who baby-sits tacitly registers her disapproval by turning her back (there is no babysitter in the novel); and the scene after Mrs. Hammond's death when Machin returns to the house he had shared with her, and finding it empty and devoid of life, grieves.

27 Specifically, the long scenes with Machin's parents and his trip to visit Judith before her baby is born.

28 Elizabeth Sussex, Lindsay Anderson (New York: Frederick Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 50. I am grateful to Ms. Sussex for the guidance and analysis that much of her illustrated monograph on Anderson's work has provided in this section of my study.

29 Although they do not often occur, such slips can act to thrust us right out of the film.

30 Sussex, p. 45.

31 Sussex, p. 12.

32 Hayman, p. 51.


34 "Recent Novels," The Springfield Republican, September 3, 1961, p. 5D.


Although his Christian name is Gordon, Margaret always calls her lover by his last name. Early in their relationship, the following exchange occurs between them:
"Why don't you ever call me by my name?" he said with a pained seriousness.
"I don't know," I looked away from him.
"It's strange, is that."
"I don't like calling people by their names if they mean something to me" (112).
This practice, which Margaret uses when she meets Howarth, develops into habit, and underscores her unwillingness to commit herself. In spite of her response above, this is just one of several tricks Margaret uses to keep herself in reserve. Howarth complains repeatedly of her reluctance to display her feelings.


Howarth accuses Margaret of wearing "a strait-jacket," but Margaret replies, "I don't call it that. It's order, it's discipline. A real person needs it . . . to be a person, not just a selfish lout" (98).

Margaret learns through conversation between Fawcett and Michael at the end of the novel that Howarth has finally returned to his wife.


The book's opening scene is of Margaret's grandfather's burial, the last involves Gwen, "gently rounded with her first pregnancy" (217).

Scott, p. 566.

Lockwood, p. 190.


Deliberately and quite consistently Leonard's birth and career are suggestively paralleled with Christ's; Leonard's parents are named John and Stella (Star); his father feels driven by forces outside himself to procreate; Leonard seems a creature who resists confinement in a physical body; he is entirely spiritual; he, his father, and his uncle all feel that he has a great destiny to fulfill; he is regarded as a "divine idiot" (48); he has apocalyptic visions; he submits to extraordinary physical indignities; through loving one man he loves all ("I wanted to love him for everyone" (372)); he acts "from a will to moral authority" (373); and his message to the world is Love and the brotherhood of man (374). In a sense Radcliffe commits the final act, just as Christ does, by killing the Body, and gains salvation by integrating himself with Tolson's being. Immediately after Tolson's death, when Leonard collapses and John begins to carry his emaciated son to his room, "when he lifted him it was as if he were carrying a muscular and heavy man" (341). Leonard goes through
this in order not only to save himself but to show others the way to salvation, as he uses his trial as a forum to explain the basis of his act. A major difference between Leonard as Christ-figure and Christ Himself, however, is the absence of God in Leonard's scheme of things. The forces which oversaw Leonard's birth and the supernatural character of his uncle Austen's interference with Leonard's life are demonic in the sense that the forces of nature are demonic—dark, chaotic, uncontrolled, impersonal, absolutely powerful, and without the ordering presence of God. For Leonard, and for Storey, it is man himself who must order the world, and he can only do this if he is whole.

CHAPTER III

TWO EARLY PLAYS

By the time David Storey launched his career as a playwright in 1967, the "Angry" period in English drama had somewhat subsided. The term had been bandied about by critics and commentators for a decade; it no longer had any real meaning. A new word to replace "angry," a new term to crystallize the mood of the moment, was hardly possible. Numbed by economic crises, stung by the Common Market's rejection of Britain's bid for membership, torn by the immigration question and the dispute with Rhodesia's apartheid government, the average Englishman lived in an environment where everything seemed permitted. Old standards, values and traditions no longer held; not only were the old dreams of the Empire gone; the post-war hopes of the bourgeoisie for a comfortable daily existence were also slipping away rapidly. The glory of England was irrevocably sullied and the late sixties in Britain was a period of constant political and economic upheaval. Not surprisingly, the cultural climate reflected the country at large; in all the arts, and particularly in the drama, a condition close to
anarchy reigned. The original Angry Young Men had, in many cases (including Osborne), become the theatrical and dramatic establishment, and the second wave of young artists who followed them floundered about, with apparently little to say and in many cases no genuine artistic skills. Many others seemed to be merely taking advantage of the increased permissiveness on the stage which culminated in the abolition of the Lord Chamberlain's power to censor plays on the stage in 1968. Plays about formerly taboo subjects such as homosexuality suddenly abounded.

In an effort to summarize his study of the English theatre during the decade from 1957 to 1967, John Russell Taylor spoke of "increasing fragmentation," "an anarchic spirit," and said flatly that in the case of the newest British drama it was just not possible to conclude with some sort of rounding-off summary, pointing out lines of continuity and development. Taylor added:

Though most of the latest generation of arrivals have their own distinctive styles and areas of interest, so that it is just not possible to hazard a guess about the direction in which any one of them may develop, there is little or no consistency of vision or subject matter from one to another. "Trends" are conspicuous by their absence, and a dramatist newly making his mark today may do so... somewhere on the outer fringe of the professional theatre, or outside it altogether; on the other hand he may... strike lucky with a thoroughly conservative well-made play presented right in the heart of the commercial West End.¹

The year of Storey's theatrical debut saw a wide variety of themes, styles, and efforts in the English theatre. The
Royal Shakespeare Company performed Peter Hall's *Macbeth*; the National Theatre produced plays by Chekov and Strindberg but also by a newcomer, Tom Stoppard (*Rosencranz and Guildenstern Are Dead*); while the Royal Court alternated new plays with old, including Edward Bond's adaption of *The Three Sisters*, an antiwar play by Charles Wood called *Dingo*, the Open Theatre's production of *America Hurrah* and Joe Orton's *Crimes of Passion*, in addition to Storey's first play. The commercial theatre that year had hits with *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Sweet Charity* while John Mortimer's *The Judge* and David Pinner's sexual satire *Fanghorn* failed, among many others. In short, a wide spectrum of efforts appeared on the English stage in 1967.\(^2\)

Story, working closely with Lindsay Anderson, chose a course of entry familiar to a great many new playwrights. His first dramatic work, *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton*, was presented by the state-subsidized, largely experimental English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre seven years after he had entered the literary scene as a novelist.

**THE RESTORATION OF ARNOLD MIDDLETON**

Just as Storey brought forth his novels in a carefully-structured exploration of "the division between those who can make society work for them and those who can't"—that is, those who are adroit at managing both the inner and outer life, being dominated by neither—so too
Storey feels that "that theme is in the plays, certainly in Arnold Middleton, the chap who goes quietly bonkers while he maintains a kind of charade."  

The evolution of Storey's fourth work and first play is instructive in light of his original intent to mount "a sort of campaign for reintegrating myself." At the time he was working on This Sporting Life Storey intended to systematically explore the "two halves" of himself in a series of novels, as this study has documented. "In the fourth, the key work, which I am writing now," he said in 1963, "I am trying to reconcile them into one person: the conflict moves inside and is fought out in one man's brain." This fourth novel, the "key work," however, had some difficulty materializing—as a novel, at least. 

By the end of 1963 Storey had published Radcliffe and had finished the film of This Sporting Life with Lindsay Anderson. Other projects, such as filmscripts of Wuthering Heights and Ned Kelly were considered and abandoned. Depressed over the critics' misunderstanding of his first two novels and their rejection of his third, Storey found himself in the grip of a creative malaise. In addition, "I prepare to spend four or five years on a novel," he said in a recent interview; thus Storey's artistic production slowed considerably. 

After Storey had worked with Anderson on the script of This Sporting Life, Anderson inquired about whether he
had ever written or thought of writing a play. Storey had in fact written a play four years earlier, when he was discouraged by his failure to find a publisher for *This Sporting Life*. Since he was at that time teaching, Storey had taken a few days off and devoted himself to writing a play about a teacher who goes mad and kills himself. The play was entitled *To Die With the Philistines*. It had been languishing on agents' shelves for about four years when Anderson made his suggestion. At nearly the same time a friend of Storey who had once worked at the Royal Court chanced across the play, liked it, and took it to the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, asking for permission to produce the play there. After two years and several extensive revisions, the major of which is that the main character is allowed to live, Storey permitted his play, now titled *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton*, to be produced at the Traverse Theatre in 1966 and the next year, in 1967, at the Royal Court. The production then transferred to the West End; thus Storey arrived in the British theatre.

The early production history of *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* is brief. The play was originally given at the Traverse Theatre Club in Edinburgh on November 22, 1966, under the direction of Gordon McDougall. Primarily as a result of the Edinburgh exposure the play was also done at the Royal Court. Under the direction of Robert Kidd, *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* opened there on
July 4, 1967. Although originally scheduled to close on July 15, the play's run was extended for an additional week and closed instead on July 22. The entire production transferred to the Criterion Theatre, a very small West End house, on August 4, 1967.

Critical response to the London production was positive, if mildly so. When Michael Billington emerged from the Royal Court, he felt "we had seen the baptism of an important theatrical talent" and he considered The Restoration of Arnold Middleton "a remarkable new play." Another critic considered it "better work than the Court has shown for some time." Another reviewer, who saw the play at the Criterion, found that "Mr. Storey's play is on a high level of technical competence." Still another critic believed it a "remarkably successful play, keeping its knife-edge balance between reality and fantasy with stunning professional aplomb." By and large, however, the play did not receive a great deal of attention. It was generally considered, as the London Times referred to it, "the first play by the novelist David Storey." There was at the time no particular reason to consider the play any more than a novelist's experiment in another medium. Recognition of Storey's theatrical blooming was, in fact, very slow in coming in the general press. "The sentimental attachment," Storey himself explains, "is always to a novel."
In announcing that *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* was to be produced at the Royal Court, the *London Times* described the play briefly as a play "about a schoolteacher, and his wife and his wife's mother." The play is a great deal more complex than that.

*The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* concerns several days in the life of a thirties male schoolteacher, focusing primarily on his psychological breakdown and recovery. Forced to the brink of madness by the unbearable distance between his inner and outer lives, Arnold Middleton slips and falls during the play into an abyss of violent fantasy. But through the tolerance of his wife and friends, and through a genuine desire to recover, Arnold climbs unsteadily back into everyday reality during the final moments of the play. In addition, this play examines long and critically the social and private roles played by men and women, and the prerogatives traditionally masculine and those traditionally feminine in the character of Arnold's wife Joan and her mother Edie.

On the strict level of narrative, the following events take place: Arnold Middleton appears as a history teacher with an obsession for assembling objects from the past; both his classroom and his home are cluttered, museum-like, with his burgeoning collection. His wife feels threatened by the clutter and intensely dislikes it. When
an authentic life-sized suit of armor is delivered to their home in Arnold's absence, Joan decides she can bear it no longer. "Tomorrow, first thing," she tells Arnold when he comes home from school, "that's going" (21). After spending the evening at the cinema and a pub, Arnie, his wife and mother-in-law return home mildly drunk. Joan, whose jealousy of her mother's covert sexual attitude toward Arnold has been established, insists that Arnold choose which of the two women has the most attractive legs; he hesitates, then chooses Edie. Act I ends with Joan demanding that Arnold tell her mother to go and live elsewhere.

The second act explores the alienation between Arnold and Joan in more detail, although its roots are not clear. There is clearly sexual disharmony between them; other lines of communication seem broken as well. In this act Geoffrey Hanson, a boyish, effete colleague of Arnold's is introduced. He and Arnold are together producing the school play, a verse drama about the adventures of Robin Hood, which Arnold has written. They engage in verbal horseplay in the first scene, and Hanson describes for Joan the scene earlier that day when Arnold, bringing his evicted suit of armor from home to school, had tried to stealthily slip it by the Headmaster during morning devotions. Displeased at the interruption, the Headmaster had ordered the armor taken to the coal celler until the end of the day. "Has Arnold, my dearest and closest friend," Hanson asks
rhetorically, "taken complete and utter leave of his senses?" (40). Hanson then proceeds to outline to Arnold his admiration for Maureen Wilkinson, the girls' physical education teacher ("a damn fit woman," Arnold replies (43)), but at the same time Hanson feels threatened by women in general. For him, Miss Wilkinson's fitness is a "grave disadvantage":

HANSON. But you do not think it strange ... (He glances round) ... that women are gradually acquiring a physical superiority to men? Do you think ... (Hanson goes to the stairs [where Joan is cleaning], listens, then returns to say slowly, putting his arm round the armour:) Do you think there's some sort of organization behind it?

ARNIE. A conspiracy ... 

HANSON. Which we are very foolish to ignore (46).

Appearing uninterested in pursuing the subject, Arnold suggests that Hanson bring Maureen Wilkinson over for a social evening, since he, Hanson, has no money with which to entertain her otherwise. Hanson agrees.

The second scene in Act II is key to an understanding of The Restoration of Arnold Middleton. This scene details the dissolution of Arnold's public personality. On the surface, the central action of the scene is the small party that Arnold and Joan give for Hanson and Maureen. After an early bout of drinking where Arnold consumes more than he should ("Don't give him whiskey," Joan warns. "One glass knocks him off his feet" (62)) and gives speeches in a mock-heroic manner, Hanson remembers to give Arnold a
telegram that he had earlier intercepted from the delivery boy. The wire is a message from Arnold's father, who expresses regret that he and Arnold's mother cannot make their planned visit, their first in the ten years of Arnold and Joan's marriage, because the mother has taken ill.

Although Joan is immensely relieved, the wire has a curious effect upon Arnold. He does not speak, but drinks more heavily, until it can be said that he is no longer in control of himself. Urged by a tipsy Hanson to show his armor to the gathering, the armor he had earlier told Joan was intended as "a present . . . for my parents" (41), Arnold resists. He tries to aim the group's interest instead at other objects in the room: an airplane, a stuffed eagle, a Lee-Enfield rifle, "a weapon of importance to the British nation" (70). Hanson persists, Arnold resists more fiercely. Their constant friendly jibing becomes an insulting exchange, with each accusing the other of lack of contact with reality. In a drunken contest of nerve, Arnold takes the rifle, removes the safety catch, presses it to Hanson's head and threatens to fire. Hanson laughs brashly and insists that the rifle is not loaded. Arnold fires, but the gun only clicks. Examining it, Hanson is stricken to discover that the rifle was loaded and he is angered at what he believes to have been a genuine threat to his life. Arnold takes the gun, and again pulls the trigger, to everyone's dismay. Then he shows what he knew to be true all along:
the firing pin had been removed. The gun is loaded but "it can never go off" (73). Hanson is enraged at the humiliation, and Arnold verbally humiliates him further. Somewhere during this confrontation with Hanson, whom he both likes and despises, Arnold has crossed a line where reality is blurred, where standards of behavior are unclear, where responsibilities have vanished. He stumbles away from the gathering to his bed, telling Joan, "Assume they aren't here. It's an easier alternative to assuming that they are" (74). In his bed, as Joan learns later, Arnold finds her mother, drunk and crying because Joan has earlier told her she must leave. With the suit of armor hidden beneath the bed, Arnold and his mother-in-law couple in a drunken offstage encounter, perhaps more indecent than unholy.

The first scene of the third and final act takes place the next morning, with Arnold and Edie both stricken by their behavior of the night before, while Joan is coldly angry, particularly with Arnold. He begs her to say something, anything. Joan replies, "You've behaved like a dwarf. Everything in your life is like that--dwarfish" (86). She leaves the room, and Arnold fuzzily decides that he might as well be talking to the wall, so he does. The scene ends with his recitation of mock-heroic doggerel about the need to live and die in heroic circumstances, as he "moves from one patch to another on the wall as if carefully selecting the right one for his task" (87).
The final scene of Act III takes place a few days later. Obvious changes have occurred: the room has been cleared of all Arnold's possessions, Joan has a job outside the home, Arnold has not returned to school after the party described in Act II. When Maureen and Hanson stop by to inquire about Arnold's health, they are met by Edie, who is running the household, and then by Arnold, who enters the room wearing a towel turban-like around his head and carrying a sword. In heroic and irrational fashion, he announces:

The King, though broken by his plight,
Shall rise again to set things right! (91)

After a tense exchange of polite formalities, during which Hanson accuses Arnold of taking to madness like other men take to drink, Arnold regales both Hanson and Maureen to a philosophical equation: "Look. A simple arithmetical problem set in all the schools. Take what we are from everything, and what remains? . . . Goodness and kings" (96). Joan's arrival from work allows Hanson and Maureen to escape politely from most of the remainder of Arnold's harangue. Joan encourages her mother, who Arnold has taken to assuming doesn't exist, to tell him her news: she has found a flat and will be leaving. Arnold is vastly relieved, and immediately decides to return to work on Monday. "Rest. Recuperation . . . Work!" (102), he says to Joan. Suddenly he begins to shriek and clutch his head. Something "hard
Then it becomes clear that it is he, Arnold, who is tentatively emerging from the antic disposition which has possessed him for some time.

ARNIE. Have I finished?
(He looks around.)

JOAN. Yes.
ARNIE. I've finished?
JOAN. I think so.
(They stand facing one another, still some distance apart.)

ARNIE. Oh. Joan. Thank God.
(Fade.) (104)

Major Themes

Complex and fascinating, The Restoration of Arnold Middleton is a highly literate and finely textured piece of drama. As with Storey's novels, particularly Radcliffe, the play contains several layers of meaning and requires careful reading to be thoroughly understood. (The critic Billington speaks of "points in the play that remain obscure" and admits, "Like most critics, I was puzzled by a good deal of the play."21) Such puzzlement is not necessary, however: Storey's fourth published work and first play strongly reflects his previous artistic concerns, and at the same time shows maturing judgment.

Although The Restoration of Arnold Middleton appears at first glance to be a traditional well-made comedy-drama, appearances are deceiving. Only the surface of this play is realistic. Beneath the surface boils the same tensions and
unresolved conflicts which plagued the characters of the novels, and unable to resolve them, Arnold Middleton unwillingly takes the only course he feels is open to him: madness. "The insights that irrationality brings," he muses (87).

Arnold arrives at this decision only after a long and bitter struggle with himself to hold on, to stay in the realistic, everyday world, but too many forces have irrevocably brought him to the precipice:

I don't understand. . . . I lie here, caught up in a million abominations, attributes, some of them fed in long before conception. And some of them [to Joan] fed in by you! (86)

Arnold Middleton must break down before he can be built up again.

The ancients likened the plot of drama to the tying and untying of a knot. In The Restoration of Arnold Middleton the knot is a complex one and the initial tying has taken place before the curtain rises. There remain only a few tugs to tighten it, and most of the play's attention is devoted to untying it without the audience--and some characters on the stage--given many clues to how it got in such a convoluted mess in the first place. A critic who saw the Royal Court production objected that the play does not have strong roots because "we do not learn at all how the situation developed."22 On the contrary, the play's roots are extremely deep, to those acquainted with Storey's work, and careful examination of exactly how Storey unravels the knot
The Restoration of Arnold Middleton consists of two simultaneous plots. Each plot reflects a major Storey theme, and the two are quite closely related. The first and most intense conflict in the play is Arnold's struggle to deal with his clamouring inner demands while living a reasonable external life. He has already begun to lose this battle and is slipping rapidly as the play opens. The second major conflict in the play is the disharmony between Arnold and his wife Joan, essentially the result of masculine and feminine, or active and passive, natures in conflict. This struggle is complicated by the fact that Joan, the feminine creature, has the active nature, while Arnold is essentially passive. How are human beings caught in such two-edged traps? It was all "fed in long before conception" and afterwards, by demanding parents with illusions of a world that no longer exists. Ultimately, the source of pain and confusion in this play lies with parents, present or long-absent, and even with ancestors, who betrayed the current generation by allowing the very kind of world they taught it to exalt to be destroyed.

But more immediately, the source of pain and confusion for Arnold is his increasing withdrawal from the external world into the comforting isolation of the inner world of fantasy. Arnold is an historian who prefers the glories of the golden past to the drab realities of the
present. In an effort to grasp the heroic past, he is driven to re-enact it, first in his classroom and on the stage, and finally in his madness as he stands in his living room, head bound in a towel-turban, swinging a sword. The first symptom of Arnold's illness is evident immediately after the play begins. The set is described by the playwright as:

A cosy, well-furnished, scrupulously clean living room. . . . Arranged around the room, on the walls and furniture, are various objects, mounted and in an excellent state of preservation: a stuffed eagle, a sword, a model aeroplane, a model engine, etc. which may suggest the rudiments of a museum but bereft of any specific human connotation (11). Standing in the middle of this clutter is the latest arrival, "a full-size suit of armour" holding a two-handed sword which "runs down from its hands" (11).

Both the clutter of objects and the armor are strong visual statements about the man to whom they belong. Arnold's life is overwhelmingly crowded with romanticized trivia just like his living room and his classroom. ("His classroom's extraordinary. More like the court of King Arthur than a schoolroom. Have you seen his museum?" Maureen asks of Joan in Act II (59).)

Joan is instinctively repelled by the armor and tries to shut it away, as if she senses its relationship to Arnie's growing deterioration. To Arnold, however, the armor is precious, and he treats it much of the time as if it were a brother, or a co-conspirator. The armor becomes
the catalyst for the events that follow, particularly the disagreement with Hanson and the dalliance with Edie. The armor fascinates Hanson, although he treats it with the distaste he might give a sideshow freak. It is Hanson who insists that Arnold bring out the armor so that presumably it may become an object of entertainment. Arnold refuses and subsequent requests to "show us your armour" (69) drive him into drunkenness and the peak of his madness. At the end of Act II, when Edie horrifies Joan by emerging from Arnold's bedroom wearing his pajamas and carrying a liquor bottle, the mother-in-law triumphantly announces that she has found the armor: "He's hidden it--would you believe it, the cunning devil--he's hidden it under the bed!" (79).

Although its purpose is not absolutely explicit, the suit of armor is quite clearly a tangible symbol of everything Arnold has been grasping for in his fantasies. It is a representative of the dashing, heroic age to which he would like to have belonged, it is his image of himself, but at the same time, it is only a metallic, hollow shell—not a living being at all. By this Storey points up that Arnold's dreams are beautiful and exciting, but empty. Indeed, on the morning after the drunken party where Arnold goes over the edge, Joan clears the house of all the clutter, including the armor. From the moment the armor is removed, Arnold begins his climb back toward rationality. It is a rocky road, not to be completed until the end of another act, but,
as Taylor says, "the process is thus begun." Significantly, the only object saved from the refuse man is the armor's two-handed sword, a palpable phallic symbol of Arnold's masculine sexuality.

The source of Arnold's anguished need to recover the glories and symbols of the past is revealed in the humorous series of couplets he delivers to the kitchen wall after Joan has called him a dwarf, the antithesis of what he has wanted to be. The doggerel begins: "When I was young, my mother said to me:" and is quoted in part below:

So remember, even if the means are insufficient, rather
Than dies in pieces, subside by preference as a whole,
For disintegration is inimical to the soul
Which seeks the opportunity or the chances
To die in circumstances
Of a prince, a saviour, or a messiah--
Or something, perhaps, even a little higher--
You and me and several of your aunties,
On my side, though working-class, have destinies
Scarcely commensurate with our upbringing;
I hope in you we are instilling
This sense of secret dignities and rights--
[emphasis mine]
Not like your father's side...
'Please, please my son,
Don't fail me like your father done.' (88)

Arnold here specifically cites his mother for planting in him a sense of destiny, of a great future, and a moral responsibility to meet that destiny ("Don't fail me like your father done"). At the same time, he lives in a mechanized world where there are no longer any "princes, saviours, or messiahs"—only interchangeable politicians and remote bureaucracies controlling masses of people. But he is guilt-ridden for not fulfilling the goals his mother set
for him. ("Oh. Oh. Oh."") he says, a few lines later, "When I was young, when I was young, there were so many things I should have done.") Thus in order to live with himself and his mother's exhortations, Arnold has tried to make himself a prince in his inner fantasy life, but he finds that impossible to maintain and still perform his work and live his life on a rational basis. Sadly, he finds that he cannot even "subside . . . as a whole." Disintegration is the path onto which he has slipped.

Notice that the major figure in Arnold's life has been his mother; his father seems a remote and scorned figure. Little wonder that Arnold, although a man, has developed a sensitive, passive, artistic nature which Storey earlier identifies with the feminine. Although there is ample evidence in the novels of conflict between parents and their children, this is the first work where Storey makes explicit the eventual harm that such discord can cause. Arnold is really the first Storey character who has emerged from the working-class into the middle-class, and this play begins Storey's exploration of the anguish he feels that journey causes. Arnold's very name—Middleton—is clearly symbolic. Arnold is a first-generation member of the middle-class and finds it an uncomfortable place to live. It is certainly a difficult place to maintain the working-class illusions his mother taught him. On another level, Arnold is the character in Storey's world who acts as a transition from the masculine/feminine physical separation in Radcliffe
to the whole, although yet still troubled, sons in *In Celebration*. He is the character intended for Storey's fourth novel where "the conflict moves inside, and is fought out inside one man's brain."

In *Flight into Camden* Howarth tells Margaret, "Families are just like vicious animals, radiant with solicitude and affection until you touch them. They seem to be the worst parasites of the lot" (64). Again in this work Storey displays animosity toward the domestic mother who lives her life through the lives of her children. Clearly Arnold Middleton's life has been shaped—and misshapen—by the pervading influence of his mother's own unrealized dreams. So, too, Arnold's wife Joan suffers from the expectations, demands of, and competition with her seemingly innocuous mother. The problem lies in the fact that both social expectations and her mother's upbringing of her have made a housewife of Joan, although it is against her own fundamental impulses. As the play opens on Arnold's incipient madness, Joan too is suffering from a growing, though ill-defined, distress. Edie says of her to Arnold:

She's so restless. She can't sit down two minutes these days without getting up again because there's something not satisfactory. I don't know . . . it's just everything (19).

The problem is not that Joan is a poor housewife. On the contrary, there is not enough to keep a woman of her ability and energy occupied. Thus she makes cleaning a perpetual process, to the point that it interferes with Arnold's
comfort. During an argument with Joan when he is trying to direct her attention away from him, he says scornfully:

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 reach (49).

Not only is there not enough domestic work to give Joan satisfaction, but she and her naturally domestic mother compete with each other for the role of Arnold's housekeeper and companion. Margaret Thorpe says of her mother in Camden that "she disliked having two women contending for the housework" (52), and this kind of unspoken competition is another source of Joan's bitterness. When Edie says to her daughter, "If only you had something . . . an interest," Joan angrily asserts her social and marital rights against her mother's obvious encroachment: "This is my house . . . and it takes some looking after. I run this as I want it" (15). "All I'm saying is I could run the house while you do something else," Edie wheedles, trying to make herself useful in the only role she knows how to fill. For her, that role supplies satisfaction; for her daughter Joan, it brings frustration. Only after Arnold breaks completely down, after Joan clears out his accumulated clutter so that the house is "clean and immaculate" (88), does she go outside their home to take a secretarial job. She has found, at last, an interest and, as Arnold tells Hanson, "You will find her . . . considerably changed. Her work--the contingencies of
high office, the flow, the rapid, reckless interchange of ideas" (94) leaves Joan tired but more tolerant. By the end of the play Joan has not only solved her difficulties with her mother, who decides to leave, but she also helps Arnold to overcome the stronger elements of his madness.

The external conflict between Joan and Arnold which manifests itself painfully throughout most of the play by their endless bickering has its roots in the conflicting identities they are forced to assume, imposed upon them by social and parental expectations. Arnold is essentially a passive, subjective man faced with the traditional demands of an active male role, while Joan is an active, energetic, objective personality forced by the demands of her feminine role to remain passive. When both characters eventually manage to break out of their imposed roles, when they successfully escape their respective mothers' dictums and do what they themselves choose, they begin to grow healthier and both, significantly, find satisfaction, if not salvation, through work—work they value. In the final scene Arnold sees work and recuperation as equivalent, and his wife agrees (102).

Clearly in this play more respect is awarded to the independent career woman than to the domestic woman, who is portrayed as hovering, limiting, and demanding. Again it is obvious—as it was in the novels—that women in Storey's view are stronger than men, particularly domestic women.
Their roles are defined, simpler, more elemental. Men, actually, become their children, to be bemusedly patronized. In a speech reminiscent of Radcliffe's courtroom testimony, Hanson shares his fears with Arnold:

> I mean, it can't have failed to have reached your attention that we—that is men and women alike—emerge at some point of our lives from the body of a woman. But has it also occurred to you that whereas we are always under this obligation to them, they are never under a reciprocal obligation to us? They, as it were, divulge us; whereas we—we are simply exposed. This is an extraordinary advantage bestowed on one sex at the expense of the other. Have you noticed that women live longer than men? They do not fight wars, only occasionally do they murder their fellows, and they seldom, unfortunately, commit rape. Relate this to our original observation that it is they who breed us, then things like politics and finance, even philosophy and art, become playthings bestowed on us by women merely to amuse and divert our unbreeding functions! (47)

The light tone of this speech and the fact that it is delivered by the dandified and philosophically lightweight Hanson indicate some confusion on Storey's part of his exact attitude toward women, particularly mothers. He seems to hold them in awe, while at the same time he vilifies them and chooses a career rather than motherhood for his two most admirable female figures, Joan Middleton and Margaret Thorpe. However, to compound the confusion, the major values that Arnold comes back from madness in order to affirm are all essentially domestic ones—work, home, and respectability.

As a transitional work in Storey's canon, *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* deals with the old problems of the three previous novels—the division of internal and
external sensibilities and the resulting isolation and mental anguish that division causes; but this first play begins to move, finally, in the direction of some possibly viable solutions for the average man. Leonard Radcliffe had to destroy the physical Tolson before he (Radcliffe) could feel a sense of integration, and when he tried to communicate that sense of wholeness and joy, he was considered a madman. Arnold Middleton's story begins essentially where Radcliffe's ends: Middleton is mad, but at least he is himself composed of both inner and outer reality. His task during the play, which he moves significantly toward accomplishing, is to unite those two realities into one complete whole, to move from one of those human beings who cannot make the world work for him, as Storey said earlier, to one who can.

Dramatic Technique

Stylistically, David Storey's first play can best be described as psychological realism presented in a very traditional form. The play has three acts, is to be staged on a single set, and it covers a period of not more than three days. The set is realistically decorated, dialogue between characters is realistic—excepting Arnold's mad blatherings, which in fact contain their own internal logic—and each of the six individuals in the play are for the most part fully drawn characters.
The roots of the play seem deep. Arnold's anguish, Joan's and Edie's unhappiness, Hanson's facile bewilderment are thoroughly convincing. The reasons for them, however, are difficult to ferret out. While Michael Billington, reviewing for Plays and Players, liked the play a good deal, he is compelled to ask "What is it that drives the hero mad?" and then to decide that "even if the cause of Arnold's disease is not all that easy to understand, what matters to the audience is that the symptoms are displayed with tremendous vitality."  

The confusion Billington and others express may perhaps be explained by the fact that the play seems more literary than theatrical, as Storey himself suggests:

I started Arnold Middleton from an anecdote, which . . . is literary, because I tend to start novels from anecdotes or from a first line, which just comes into my head, and follow it with a second line. And when I watch the play, I get the feeling it's written by someone who naturally wrote novels. 

In fact, The Restoration of Arnold Middleton was written by someone who naturally wrote novels at a time when his major concern was writing novels. Indeed, as the beginning of this chapter strongly implies, there is sufficient evidence from Storey's own statements to assume that this play deals with the same concerns which he had originally intended to explore in a fourth novel.

On the other hand, substantial motivation for the behavior of the major characters does not seem to be
deliberately withheld—only the exposition of it is tangled. Storey does not reject the author's right, as does a playwright like Pinter, to get inside his characters and pretend to know what makes them act and how they feel. Pinter, with whom Storey was identified later in his theatrical career, argues that the explicit information provided by so many playwrights is "cheating." Furthermore, he says:

The playwright assumes that we have a great deal of information about all his characters, who explain themselves to the audience. In fact, what they are doing most of the time is conforming to the author's own ideology. They don't create themselves as they go along, they are being fixed on the stage for one purpose, to speak for the author, who has a point of view to put over.27

With his first play (indeed, his first two), Storey does precisely what Pinter condemns. Arnold is quite eager to drop bits of information about himself in scene after scene. The fact that the information is sometimes difficult to decipher may be a reflection of Arnold's growing madness, or it may be an indication that the playwright does not have a firm grip on the development of his plot and the working out of his themes, or it may indicate both. The writing in this play certainly cannot be called tight and disciplined, as is the writing of a later play like The Contractor. It is rather full of energetic movements, explicit symbols, traditional character types, efforts at witty dialogue, and often fuzzy distinctions between motivation for a specific act and general angst for a life out of kilter. As with the heroes in his novels, Storey does not seem to hesitate to make
Arnold to some degree a persona for himself. Consequently, one must conclude that in his earliest play Storey is still using his writing—although perhaps to a lesser extent—to find a solution to his original problem. The problem by this time has expanded to include several others which are auxiliary to it—the conflict between the older working-class generation and its middleclass offspring, the pain that sexual and social role expectations may cause an individual, and the redeeming power of work.

In short, the fact that it is sometimes difficult to bring a character's motivation for a specific act into focus does not necessarily invoke the spirit of Pinter, a spirit which lurks, admittedly, around the perimeters of nearly every discussion of a British play produced within the last decade. There are, of course, some similarities between Storey's later style as a playwright and Pinter's best known work; these will be discussed when Storey's later plays are dealt with.

Besides the fact of Arnold's madness, it is perhaps the play's language which is its most startling aspect. Witty and sophisticated, the dialogue in Arnold Middleton is that of extremely articulate people. Occasionally, especially with Arnie, Joan, and Edie, characters reveal their origins by the use of words or idioms common to the working class. When Joan, conscious of her middle-class role, is trying to emphasize her mother's place to the older woman,
she calls her "Mother" (12). When Edie causes her daughter shock and dismay by emerging drunkenly from Arnold's bedroom, Joan "staggers to her feet . . . with a cry of denial like a child's" to shout "Mam! . . . Oh, no . . ." (79). At other points Storey conveys, as Billington sees it, "with hilarious accuracy the sort of idiotic badinage that schoolmasters indulge in when they think they're not being overheard."28 For instance, during the party in Act II, when Hanson explains to Arnold who delivered the telegram from his parents, the following exchange takes place:

HANSON. You remember Scott? A tall, lanky boy who wore glasses and dirty teeth. Won the long jump one year, I believe, by simply falling on his head.

ARNIE. Oh, Scot! . . . Wasn't he the boy . . .

HANSON. Could contain himself no longer during a mathematics lesson and furtively urinated out of an upper window when he presumed no one was looking.

ARNIE. Brought on a case of Thompson's disease. A hitherto unknown medical syndrome characterized by a sudden staring of the eyes, an energetic raising of the arms, and a loud, screaming sound emitted from between the teeth.

HANSON. It was first witnessed in an elderly caretaker of that name who happened to be passing beneath the window at the time . . .

ARNIE. A remarkable youth, I seem to recollect. Went through all the stages of puberty by the age of eleven. Caused endless consternation amongst the younger boys (69).

In other passages Arnold quotes doggerel, sometimes at length, often in answer to realistic dialogue on the part of another character. During the early part of the play as he is rehearsing his own version of "The Adventures of Robin Hood," he often enters or leaves the room with verse
quotations as if he were aware of himself playing a role within a role. At the end of Act I, as Arnold takes his wife and mother-in-law to the cinema, he casts himself in the heroic role as they leave:

Gay Robin Hood to town did ride
With maidens fair on either side:
The evil sheriff and the bad King John
Ne'er recognized the gentleman (29).

At other moments in the play, particularly at points where Arnold feels especially cornered or anguished by the tide of events, he resorts to verse to try to communicate his frustration:

There are things in your life
Not even your wife
Would think could pass through your brain.
But give me a light
And I'll show you a sight
That would turn even Satan insane (31).

Of course, it is difficult to believe that Arnold is naturally as quick with a rhyme as his frequent outbursts of verse indicate, and that lends an even stronger literary quality to the play.

A final aspect of Storey's language to be considered here is its strong symbolic content. Often the words that Arnold chooses to use have multiple meanings, communicating on both realistic and metaphoric levels. As the party begins in Act II, Arnold asks Maureen in casual cocktail-party fashion: "Do you know what happened to the early Christian martyrs the moment they stopped throwing them to the lions and loved them instead?" Maureen gives him the answer she
has already heard from him on another occasion: "They went off into the desert to live in caves haunted by demons" (57). It seems clear here that the first "they" refers to the Romans—or to any group persecuting the early Christian martyrs—and when that persecution was stopped, the martyrs were made impotent; they no longer had a place in the world and so were forced then to "live in caves haunted by demons," or become madmen, the fate Arnold recognizes as his own as a result of his inability to be the "martyr, prince, or messiah" that his mother urged him to be. All things considered, it is probably Storey's skill with language which displays his technical brilliance best in this play. Storey is modest, however, about his ability in this area: "Writing dialogue's so easy you can go on for pages and pages just pouring the stuff out," he said in an interview.29 He feels that his greatest struggle as a playwright has been to maintain momentum and cohesion, both basically structural problems.

Structurally the play is traditional, with complications in the first act developing into open conflicts in the second, which in turn lead to the obligatory scene where Arnold takes utter leave of his senses at the end of the second act. The third and final act displays a gradual leveling-off process, a return to normalcy and a resolution --on the surface, at least--of the conflicts and complications that begot them. There is very little difference
between this plot and the traditional well-made one. In The Restoration of Arnold Middleton the crisis is imminent from the play's beginning, and the plot functions primarily to work out the details of the crisis and its resolution. With his first play Storey seems to be working generally in the tradition of Ibsen. The Restoration of Arnold Middleton can be considered melodrama with a good measure of comedy worked in. Since Storey has said repeatedly that he had only attended the theatre a few times in his life prior to writing his first play and that he had little interest in or knowledge about theatrical production, it is reasonable to speculate that his general impression of how a play is structured might very well have been quite traditional. In fact, Storey did not depart from this traditional dramatic method until after he had challenged it to some degree in In Celebration; apparently he later found that it could not really contain the departures he needed to make in order to be faithful to his conception of the following play, The Contractor, and so turned to another style which better fit his needs.

IN CELEBRATION

As a first piece of dramaturgy, The Restoration of Arnold Middleton is rather brilliantly brought off. But it is not surprising that critics wondered, as they did, whether this first success was merely beginner's luck.
In Celebration, Storey's second play to be produced, challenged that speculation, for it too proved to be a substantial and well-received drama. Again in this play Storey deals with the human mind at the end of its tether. The point Storey makes in this play, as in the last, is the extraordinary ability of the human animal to keep going, even when everything seems impossible. In Celebration is, in fact, a celebration of this very fundamental and precious truth. Furthermore, the play courageously comes to grips with the problem of how to accept oneself—all the disparate parts of oneself—and how, at the same time, to reach a reconciliation with one's past.

Seeing his first play successfully staged at the Royal Court, Storey was exhilarated after so many frustrations in his novel-writing efforts. He began to perceive that the stage "offered an alternative." As a result, "several more [plays] popped out." In Celebration was one of those "six or seven" plays, and it was written "either during or just after" the success of Arnold Middleton. The other plays which "popped out" during this period included The Contractor and two versions of Home, one of which was discarded.

In Celebration received its first performances at the Royal Court Theatre on April 22, 1969, under the direction of Lindsay Anderson. There the play ran two months, closing on June 21. No plans were made to transfer the
production to the West End and a proposed Broadway transfer was aborted. The initial American production of the play, directed by John Dillon, was presented by the Arena Stage, in Washington, D.C., in June of 1974. *In Celebration* was not seen in the United States in professional production until after *Home*, *The Contractor*, and *The Changing Room* had all enjoyed acclaimed performances.

Storey's second play, however, was received well, if not overwhelmingly, by critics in both Britain and America. Benedict Nightingale, writing for the *New Statesman*, found the play "a supremely fair piece of work" and an "unusually stimulating play."\(^{35}\) Holmstrom of *Plays and Players* found it "highly intelligent, highly theatrical and often wickedly funny" and added that in spite of certain faults in construction "much of it sparkles."\(^{36}\) The critic from *New Society*, who had certain ideological quibbles with Storey's conclusions, nonetheless felt that "its weight of detail, eloquence of language and complexity of structure make you feel its determined seriousness and importance."\(^{37}\) John Russell Taylor was impressed with the production itself, feeling that the Royal Court production was

one of Lindsay Anderson's more masterly productions . . . the whole production was . . . an extraordinary instance of a deep intuitive sympathy between director and writer which added immeasurably to the richness and vividness of the theatrical experience.\(^{38}\)

Upon seeing the recent American production, T. E. Kalem from *Time* magazine placed *In Celebration* in
the tradition of the finest family plays. Its relatives leap to mind: Long Day's Journey Into Night, Death of a Salesman, The Glass Menagerie, The Homecoming. Like them, it is incessantly poised between laughter, tears and the unfathomable mystery of existence.

Like them, In Celebration is "a loving, sorrowing armistice with the past." 39

Plot

The celebration of the play's title is the occasion of the fortieth wedding anniversary of the Shaws, a working-class couple who live in a decaying, red-brick coalmining district, and whose three grown sons return home briefly to celebrate their anniversary with them. The sons are a disparate lot, but they are the pride of both the Shaws, since their father has spent his entire life flat on his stomach digging coal in "the pit" so that they might be educated for better things, while their mother has strictly taught them the manners and values that their higher stations will require of them. Somehow their lives have not gone as their parents planned: the eldest son Andrew has given up his law practice to become a bad--and penniless--abstract artist; the middle son Colin, a financially successful labor relations negotiator, is lonely and afraid to look below the surface of human relationships; and the youngest son, Steven, has given up writing his study of modern society after seven years, and is subject to nightmares and fits of crying. The intense, emotional meeting is
the occasion for the remembrance of things past—for the opening of festering wounds, for the rousing of uneasy spirits. One spirit in particular hangs over the gathering: the eldest son Jamey, quiet and artistically gifted, who died at the age of seven while Andrew and Colin were toddlers and before Steven was yet born.

Although Jamey is rarely mentioned, his memory haunts the family—particularly Steven, who dreams nightly of the brother he never knew, and Andrew, who feels that Jamey was in effect sentenced to death by their bitter, demanding mother for his innocent role in forcing her hasty marriage to their father, a collier and a man socially beneath her. Mrs. Shaw is further responsible, Andrew believes, for the sorry psychological state of the surviving sons: his own frustrated disillusionment, Colin's soullessness, Steven's nameless suffering. At this gathering, the vengeful, acerbic Andrew wants to confront his mother with her misdeeds against her family, to force her to see that her own frustrated social aspirations and reverently-held middle-class values are false and ridiculous. Colin and Mr. Shaw are shocked and angered; Steven pleads calmly: to confront their mother with such accusations now would be pointless; she would be confused and wounded by it. Until the final moment of departure on the morning after the anniversary dinner, there remains the possibility that Andrew will strike out at his mother. The others all watch
him tensely, warning him off. Suddenly Andrew makes his decision; in the drab, badly-furnished living room, he invites his mother to dance, then kisses her and his father as he departs, leaving the fragile family structure—and illusions—still standing. Relieved, Colin and Steven also depart, leaving behind their father to adore and pet his higher-class wife as he always has done.

Although there are some similarities between In Celebration and Arnold Middleton, this second play is in most ways extremely different from the plays which followed it—The Contractor, Home, and The Changing Room. Those later plays are exact, well-observed events where Storey distances himself with almost fastidious detachment. In Celebration, however, is an extremely personal play. T. E. Kalem notes, "It seems to have been axed out of the playwright's heart. While writing this work, Storey must sometimes have seen blood red." There are certainly many similarities between the domestic setting of the play and what Storey has written about his own background. His father was a miner, his family from a dingy working-class neighborhood in the Midlands, and the character Steven has several striking similarities with the description Storey has given of himself as a young man: a teacher, father of four, intense, moody, preoccupied with place of man in modern society, and a frustrated writer. Steven is also, significantly, a character whose inner preoccupations clash
with his outer circumstances and pursuits, a frustrated artist trapped inside a respectable husband, father, and teacher. It is Steven, in fact, in whom Storey centers his continuing conflict of the spiritual-material duality that extends through his work from Arthur Machin-Margaret Thorpe through Radcliffe-Tolson to Arnold Middleton.

It should be noted here, however, that the relationship between the physical details of the play's setting and Storey's personal background are not particularly necessary to an understanding of the play. The play seems extremely personal because as the characters interact, their facades are stripped away layer by layer revealing them to be clumsy, cruel, loving human beings who alternately flail and soothe each other. For instance, Andrew suffers because he thinks his mother does not love him at the same time he castigates her for the pain her ambitions have generated in her children. While he can snap at Colin, "My father . . . has more dignity in his little finger than you and your automated factories could conjure up in a thousand years," Andrew can at the same time try to smash the illusions that support his father by insisting that his life has been built on "bloody nothing . . ." And he continues: "These aren't your sons, old man. . . . These are nothing . . . has-beens, wash-outs, semblances . . . a pathetic vision of a better life" (51). Colin, whom Andrew has called "a shoddy, fifth-rate, syncophantic whore" is enraged at Andrew's
comments to their father and vows, "I'll bloody kill you for this!" (51). Yet the next morning Andrew and Colin leave placidly together, with Colin driving Andrew home after the night they have spent together at home. And throughout the play there is the ironic sense that nearly everything Mrs. Shaw says to her sons, particularly to Andrew, causes them pain or dismay, but they avoid responding cruelly, often through considerable effort, because they realize she speaks to them out of what she takes to be solicitude. One feels that only a writer who knows these people well could draw them so finely, picking out the rhythms of their speech with such a true ear and so fairly sketching the intense, tenuously-balanced family relationships.

**Major Themes**

A critic who attended the Royal Court production of *In Celebration* was struck by the fact that instead of the usual curtain there was "an enormous industrial landscape, scrawled out in charcoal by the author himself." Behind it on stage, as this and other critics noted, was a "sober little room full of cheap, ugly furniture" with "white blinds . . . drawn behind the patterned curtains," a set so meticulously detailed that it was "a peep into a miner's living room." At first the play seems to be working on a documentary level, but as the play progresses, Hunt tells us:
It becomes clear that Storey isn't asking us to look at these physical details simply because he's trying to tell us how miners live. On the contrary, as David Mercer tells us in the programme, Storey is attempting to go "beyond specific circumstance of class and time and place." 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.\[44]\n
In short, the play is not just about a group of people getting together to work out the particular problems of their particular family, but about people who are trying to learn to cope with the pain inherent in the human situation, particularly in the structure of the family, a peculiarly human institution. Human beings are "effectively destroying [them]selves by violence masquerading as love,"\[45\] a quotation from R. D. Laing's The Politics of Experience which Storey cites approvingly in his review of the book. Storey goes on to explain in his own words:

For if we are not crucified by hatred we are crucified by misguided love; and if we are not crucified by either, we are crucified before we start. Shattered, broken relics of our once whole and noble selves, we crawl about this pitiless world waiting for that final, devastating light.\[46\]

The play In Celebration is an acute examination of the spiritual crucifixion from which human beings suffer at the hands of their families, and the way in which Storey suggests that suffering might be faced.

Simply stated, the major theme of In Celebration is the need to accept oneself and come to terms with one's own past. Working this problem out, however, is extremely
complex, and in effect only Steven manages it entirely. How does a person become alienated from himself ("this feeling of disfigurement," as Steven puts it) and from his roots? Storey quotes Laing from *The Politics of Experience*:

> 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.

In short, each generation preys morally on the next, forcing their values and habits on their offspring until the offspring are sufficiently maimed, and all this done supposedly with the best of intentions. In Andrew's opinion, this is exactly what has happened to himself and his brothers, and for his brother Jamey the experience was physically as well as spiritually fatal:

ANDREW: Do you remember Jamey?
COLIN: Not really . . . I was only two or three at the time . . .
ANDREW: I was nearly five. I remember him very well. Sitting there . . . drawing . . . Or upstairs. Crying. They never beat us, you know. But him . . . he was black and blue . . . (43)

Jamey was beaten, Andrew believes, to force him to perform scholastically, so that through education he might move into the middle class which his mother was forced to leave when she married Shaw because of Jamey's imminent arrival. Having been "raised up to higher things" (43), which her
forced marriage prevented, Andrew is sure that his mother conceived a powerful, bitter determination that her children would enter the world she believed that she had been denied. Thus her insistence on Jamey's--and all her sons'--education. Bitterly Andrew appraises that determination:

Projecting him into a world they didn't understand. Educating him for a society which existed wholly in their imaginations... philistine, parasitic, opportunistic... bred in ignorance, fed in ignorance... dead--in ignorance (43).

Thus the Shaws have performed on their sons a "crushing, bloody sense of injury" (52) inflicted, as Steven realizes, "by wholly innocent hands" (52). Thinking their purposes noble, both the Shaws sacrificed and planned for their children to have a better life. However, as Storey has said elsewhere of such parents: "They said they wanted you to have a better life, but what they really meant was they wanted you to be better off. Richer. More immune to life."49

Yet deep down, Mr. Shaw senses, if his wife cannot, that real pleasure from life is to be had by becoming involved with it, taking risks, getting dirty. "Work for your father," Mrs. Shaw tells Colin, "well, it's something he doesn't seem able to do without" (52). Steven understands his father even more deeply than Shaw does himself:

STEVEN: The funny thing is... (He laughs) The funny thing is that he (gestures up) 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'd educated us to do... is
nothing . . . at the best a pastime, at the worst a sort of soulless stirring of the pot. . . . (52)

In a reference to In Celebration Storey has clarified even further the fundamental ambiguity of the parents' impulses: "I felt the basic tragedy [in this play] was that education has alienated everyone in the family, all of them, rather than enhancing their lives."50

There is the key—the three Shaw brothers have become separated from their roots because they were forcibly cut off from them, by their parents' good intentions, through unwanted educations. Of the three, Steven accepted the process with less resistance; his father says to him:

SHAW: Nay. You were the last Steve, but by God, the best. There wasn't much I had to teach you. As for them: I had to shove it down their throats. Like trying to eat burnt porridge (36).

Now that they are adults, however, it is Colin who has most successfully met his parents' expectations, arriving in an expensive car, wearing good clothes, taking them to a nice restaurant, offering to buy them a retirement home. And yet Colin is lonely, superficial, a man of expediency. For example, Colin discloses that he is finally planning to marry, not because he particularly loves his girlfriend, but because in his job, "it's just less embarrassing to be married than not to be" (42).

Andrew is the most agonized of the three, the one who was physically51 as well as spiritually rejected by his parents and who believes that for Jamey and for himself
that "revenge . . . is his only answer" (43). During the night following the anniversary dinner when the weeping Steven awakens his father and two brothers, an angry confrontation between Andrew and Mr. Shaw occurs when Andrew insists that his father see and understand what he believes has been done to the family:

Forty years of my father's life for a lady like my mother, conscientious, devout of temperament, overtly religious . . . sincere . . . for getting her with child at the age of eighteen, nineteen, twenty . . . I've forgotten which . . . on the back of which imprudence we have been bourne all our lives, labouring to atone for her sexuality . . . labouring to atone for . . . What? Labouring to atone. . . . When I think of all the books I've had to read, to study. The exams I've had to . . . with that vision held perpetually before me: a home, a car, a wife . . . a child . . . a rug that didn't have holes in, a pocket that never leaked . . . I even married a Rector's daughter! For Christ's sake: how good could I become? The edifice of my life—of his life—built upon that . . . retribution. . . . But no . . . we—we—are the inheritors of nothing . . . (51)

Andrew and his brothers have been cut out of a tradition and a community which still has meaning and which still believes in itself, forced unwillingly into a sterile and artificial existence where they are lonely and emasculated. Andrew feels the deprivation most strongly, for he is the son who would have most preferred to follow in his father's path.52

Unable now to do so, in extreme bitterness, Andrew has thrown away his profitable law practice and taken Jamey's path, painting; but where Jamey painted "apples . . . you could almost pick them up," Andrew paints "abstract . . . triangles. Not a sign of human life. . . . The fact is, I'm
not very good" (58). He earlier sardonically observed of himself to Colin: "I've gone down. You can't get much lower than where I am, mate" (41).

On the morning of the sons' departure, Andrew advances upon his mother, accusations ready to pour out. But the silent and strong Steven, whom Andrew respects, dissuades him:

STEVEN: (to Andrew). Look ... I appreciated ... what you said. But judgments, in certain situations, come very easily to hand.
ANDREW: You've got to make a decision sometime, Steve ...
STEVEN: I've made my decision. You, of course, can ignore it. If you like . . . But actually, I've made it.
(Andrew gazes at him for a while.)
ANDREW: I too, then, have a choice?
STEVEN: Yes . . .
(Andrew weighs his hand, as if he holds the handle of a sword.)
ANDREW: Vengeance . . . is mine, then.
STEVEN: Yes . . .
ANDREW: Saith the Lord.
STEVEN: I don't want you doing any damage here.
ANDREW: Here?
STEVEN: I don't want you doing any harm.
ANDREW: Harm? (55)

Andrew considers carefully, while his mother stands puzzled, smiling. She has not understood this oblique exchange between her sons. Finally Andrew, too, makes a decision, following Steven's lead:

(Andrew gazes at Steven, then says:)
The harm that I was done, was done a very long time ago . . . . (To Mrs. Shaw) Shall we dance?
MRS. SHAW: Well, I . . . (Laughs as he puts out his arms) Honestly, I don't know what we're coming to . . .
ANDREW: Salvation. I can feel it in my bones. (55)
Thus begins the real celebration, the rites of renewal heralded by forgiveness. Steven teaches Andrew that the only way he can reunite the pieces of himself strewn through the decades of his life is through forgiveness and an act of will. It is necessary to affirm the good parts of the past, and embrace the good parts of the present "with the possibility, at least, of dignity and peace."

In view of Storey's concern throughout his artistic career with the role of the artist in modern society, it is significant that Steven, the genuine artist, is the character who understands and forgives his parents their transgressions against him, and then teaches Andrew, the false artist, to do the same. There is an even deeper level at which his act of forgiveness—or atonement—might be understood in In Celebration. The first artist in the Shaw family was Jamey, and parallels are several times drawn between Jamey and Steven during the play. From a conversation among the three brothers, we learn that after Jamey's death, while Mrs. Shaw was pregnant with Steven, she tried to kill herself, and by extension, Steven. When Steven was born, he proved to be temperamentally a great deal like Jamey. Andrew refers to Jamey as "like Steven there . . . silent as the tomb" (43).

For months before he returns home to celebrate with his family, Steven is plagued by dreams of the dead Jamey. Andrew suggests to Colin and Steven that Jamey's death was
indirectly the result of the guilt the Shaws suffered because Jamey's conception was not within lawful wedlock: "Guilt. Subsequent moral rectitude. They fashioned Jamey—as a consequence—in the image of Jesus Christ" (43). So in the present, Steven dreams of Jamey "crying out . . . trying to appease the immaculate conception. Trying to tell them it wasn't his fault. . . . Jamey in the wilderness, Jamey on a mountaintop, Jamey at the window . . . " (43).

The spirit of Jamey—Jamey the artist who at the age of seven "could draw like a little angel" (41)—is obviously uneasy prior to this family gathering. There is a possibility that Storey means for us to think that at this reunion (which occurs, incidentally, about thirty-three years after Jamey's death) the spirit of Jamey is working through Steven's own sympathetic artistic being to effect a reconciliation in this torn family. While alive, "he could never atone" (43), and he died, Andrew insists "from a galloping bout of perfection" (43) trying. Yet at this point in its existence this family needs badly to learn how to come to terms with that old indiscretion so they need not be "endlessly, perpetually measured by [their] bloody imperfections, by [their] more unfortunate bloody actions" (43). Each son, in his own way, has arrived at the point where he must shake loose from the clutches of his past life in this home or lose control of his destiny entirely.
All during the play, the spirit of Jamey hangs over the gathering, drifting through wistful conversations. The atonement that Jamey died trying to achieve, as Andrew insists, is ripe for birth, and it is Steven, the son most like Jamey, who helps bring it to pass. For indeed, the Shaws' atonement is achieved if their sons can accept the life that has been created for them as a result of the original transgression. This acceptance is more or less complete when Andrew in the last scene drops his vengeful stance and invites his mother to dance in order to celebrate his new-found tolerance as well as the preservation of the family.

Consequently, Jamey might be viewed at the same time as a representative of the artistic spirit and as a kind of grieving, Christ-like figure who, rejected by his people, expiating the original guilt of his forebearers, comes back again (not to punish them, as Andrew would), but to forgive them and help them learn to live with themselves and their past. Perhaps the artist performs just this function for the masses of average people who, without realizing it, often need the enlightenment that his art can provide, and who do not fully recognize their need nor the artist himself when he appears.

Dramatic Technique

In Celebration is a two-act domestic drama which observes the three classical unities of time, place, and
action. The play takes place over a twenty-four hour period in the living room of the Shaw family and concerns itself with the reunion of three grown brothers with their parents on the occasion of the parents' fortieth wedding anniversary. Speaking of his first four plays to an interviewer, Storey once said:

I suppose they're all in a way very traditional plays because they all have one set, one environment, and everything happens within it. Conservative, perhaps. I imagine a play, then try to write plays where there's a constant change of environment... but I find the unity of one place all I can manage.\textsuperscript{54}

It is true, Holmstrom says, that Storey is not necessarily avant-garde, "and who cares? He makes one sit on the edge of one's seat and listen, more than almost any dramatist of his generation."\textsuperscript{55}

The environment of Storey's second play presents careful and accurate social observation. The set, the characters and their relationships, and their speech all are decidedly naturalistic. Storey, however, "has the knack of charging naturalistic settings with terrible possibilities of revelation, lighting a long, invisible fuse to the powder keg whose length one can only guess,"\textsuperscript{56} Holmstrom says, and rightly so. Storey's naturalism is dense and emotionally-charged with long gaps between statements or words where characters seem unable to speak. The effect is a good deal like that of Chekov. The language is direct and realistic, beautifully balanced, and yet often left off in mid-air as if there is so much to be communicated that mere
words cannot carry the weight. John Russell Taylor calls this quality of Storey's dialogue "the teasing and elusive feeling that the plays have a sort of weight and density which one cannot logically justify--which makes David Storey's plays so distinctive in the contemporary British scene." Again, it must be stressed that in this play, Storey's "teasing and elusive" dialogue lacks the sense of menace and the sense of mysteries never to be told that one finds in plays by Pinter. By the end of *In Celebration*, each character has had opportunity to express himself fully; each is limited only by the extent to which he can put into words what he feels. The mood is Chekhovian.

Storey's dialogue also captures the content and rhythm of genuine northern working-class speech with the same meticulous detail he gives to the stage picture. At the same time, the language each character uses to express himself is strictly his own, so that a speech by sixtiesh Mr. Shaw is easily distinguishable from one by his son Andrew or by his life-long friend Reardon. And yet, when the different family members speak to each other, there are echoes that result from family expressions and sentiments that they have in common. And still, the lines of dialogue between or among characters often mesh together into flowing, finely-knit expression that reinforces the dense mood and gives a feeling of extraordinary unity. Good examples of the speech of individuals who remain individuals while they
are at the same time members of both a family and a general community occur everywhere. One typical passage is selected below:

COLIN: How's your book going, then, Steve?
STEVEN: Oh, all right . . . Well, not really. I've packed it in.
COLIN: Packed it in? Why, it's years . . .
STEVEN: Aye.
SHAW: Why have you give it up, then, lad?
STEVEN: Not my cup of tea. (Laughs.) Stick to what I've got, I suppose.
SHAW: Aye . . .
MRS. SHAW: He's better off looking after his wife and family, not writing books . . .
COLIN: What was it all about, then, Steve?
STEVEN: Oh . . .
ANDREW: Modern Society. To put it into words.
STEVEN: I don't know.
ANDREW: Indicating, without being too aggressive, how we'd all succumb to the passivity of modern life, industrial discipline, and moral terpitude.
MRS. SHAW: Don't mock him.
ANDREW: I'm not mocking him. He let me read a bit of it once. What? Four years ago. He's been writing it nearly seven, I don't know why he's packed it in. I agree with every word.
SHAW: Agree with what?
ANDREW: I don't know . . . his view of society. The modern world . . .
SHAW: Nay, I can't make head nor tail of it . . . (40)

The above passage suggests that Colin is clearly direct and uncomplicated, while Andrew has a colorful command of more complex ideas. Steven and his father are similar in that neither is particularly articulate, but Steven obviously possesses language skills that his father does not.

Mrs. Shaw's comments display her general bland, maternal nature. In short, the language of *In Celebration* is clearly differentiated according to character and nicely balanced in tone.
In Celebration is complete but relatively short, structured in two acts, each act having two scenes of nearly equal length.

Storey's method is similar to Ibsen's; step by step he strips away the surface layers of social behaviour and reveals the tensions beneath. He drops in pebbles of information, and they form widening ripples.59

The first scene of Act I marks the arrival home of the three sons. Full of customary arrival rituals, this scene merely establishes the place and the manner of the occupants. A sense of disillusionment to be revealed later is suggested by Steven's brief exchanges with his father. In the second scene, Andrew begins to bait the other family members; with tension among the brothers mounting, Andrew finally reveals his plan for this family gathering— to force his parents to acknowledge how ridiculously they have spent their lives. Thus the first act ends with conflicts between and within family members quite clearly established, with the promise of a major confrontation to come in the second act.

The first scene of the second act provides mild comic relief, as Mrs. Burnett and Reardon, two neighbors, stop by to be sure the Shaw home is warm and protected during their absence. Still there when the Shaws return, the two neighbors join in the tipsy afterglow of the Shaws' triumphant evening on the town with the three impressive sons. Toasts are said all around; emotions are masked in
After everyone has retired, a sleeping Steven awakens his father and brothers with cries. The situation provides Andrew with the occasion to try to convince his father that his wife, their mother ("the Godhead . . . slumbering overhead" (51)) is the source of not only Steven's agony, but of everyone else's. Shaw, Steven, and Colin draw away with distaste, refusing to take hold of what Andrew is offering. The scene ends at a high pitch, with Andrew's threatened attack on Mrs. Shaw looming in the final scene.

The second scene in Act II begins as a domestic breakfast scene, with Mrs. Shaw bustling about. A high-pitch tenseness hangs over the room as Andrew begins his needling attack; Mrs. Shaw blunts his force by being unable to understand his implications. He begins again, and Steven cuts him off, thus preventing the confrontation between Andrew and his mother which has been looming from early in the first act. The result is a not altogether satisfactory easing of tensions. The denouement hits with something of a thud.

An interviewer once commented to Storey: "With In Celebration I was expecting a confrontation between the mother and son and never quite adjusted to not getting it." Storey tentatively admitted that the aborted confrontation might be a weakness, but that he still thought it might also be a merit of the play. He continued:
When I actually wrote a confrontation I felt it was all wrong and in fact made the play much more conventional and less interesting. In a way the explosion has already taken place off or outside or away and this is really the aftermath of the battle. If you compare it with Ibsen in terms of approaching emotional realities, Ibsen is writing about before the explosion has happened, the bomb festering away inside. In Celebration is after the bomb's shown what it can do. It's not a question of stripping off hypocrisies and deceits and complacencies but of realizing that once you have, there's nothing much really there afterwards.  

The above comment indicates that Storey accomplishes somewhat less than he intended in communicating his vision: "All the illusions have gone. We no longer need the explosion, the ripping out of heart and head." Within the play Steven has achieved this insight, but he expresses it rather obliquely, almost mysteriously. It is the tousled, agonized Andrew who most effectively stirs audience emotion and identification, and it is for Andrew that one would like to see a resolution to his angst that matches its quality and depth. As the playwright, Storey clearly believes that "it is really a question of soldiering on or of compromise or forgiveness, as the play tentatively suggests at the end," but it can also be argued--and felt--that the compromise suggested at the end of the play is almost too tentative for the blast of the conflicts that have preceded it. One might very well agree with another critic that "Storey's method is like Ibsen's," but that "his conclusion is different. Ibsen insists on driving relentlessly through to a truth. Storey believes that there are some truths that people ought not
have to face." That is, Storey spares the Shaws from the shattering disillusionment that might come if they were to hear and understand Andrew's accusations. And yet, there is some evidence in the manner of Mr. Shaw, who does hear them, that he is incapable of understanding—or accepting—their meaning. For the people in the play, the bomb already has gone off, and the task remaining is to pick up the pieces and continue to live, which Storey considers the most important human responsibility. That task is made easier by the aborted confrontation, even if outsiders looking in would prefer to be entertained by a fireworks display.

Although his remarkable eye for detail and ear for the northern speech put flesh on the characters of *In Celebration* to a great extent, several critics have complained that the roles of the three sons are too obviously schematized into "the Revenger, the Crippled, and the Crucified" and Storey himself admits that the play was planned from the beginning almost as a literary argument. He calls *In Celebration* "the most deliberately written of the plays".

Beforehand I decided there would be three arguments in the play. One was the ascetic saintly silent temperament; there would be the latently revolutionary one; and the chap who, rather like Harold Wilson, says this is the best of all possible worlds and you've got to have a bash at it.

As with Arnold Middleton, Storey feels that *In Celebration* is also an extremely literary play. "It's basically just people sitting in a room talking about themselves and other people." Technically speaking, Storey remains a
traditional writer, with plays that are almost "anachronistically balanced, direct and realistic, beautifully shaped and . . . well-written," according to John Russell Taylor, the most sympathetic critic of the New Wave.\textsuperscript{67} Storey's major concerns, however, are clearly more for theme than style. He uses his fictional and dramatic pieces to express his own intense, private vision of the world.

As this study has repeatedly asserted, that vision underwent progressive change, its mutations traceable through Storey's work from the first novel through \textit{The Changing Room}. At this point in the progression, one can see that just as Arnold Middleton reaches the conclusion that he cannot take refuge from the pain of living in insanity, so does the tortured Andrew, guided by Steven, decide that the only reasonable path open to him is reconciliation with his parents, his own personal anguish, and himself. While dancing with his mother in the final scene, "coming to . . . salvation," Andrew feels "overrun . . . encapsulated. Caught well before my time" (55), but his anguish over it has begun to lessen. Standing aside a moment later, he watches the gathering and says to himself more than to anyone else, "Compassion. I can feel it in my bones" (55). As he leaves with Colin, Andrew turns to the neighbor Reardon and says of his parents, "Look after them, Mr. Reardon. They're very precious" (55). He turns, kisses his mother and shakes his father's hand; clearly Andrew's
wounds have begun to heal.

If *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* binds the wound resulting from a split psyche, *In Celebration* begins the actual healing process. In the play itself an unholy encounter—son against mother—is averted by the son's deliberate choice, and after Steven learns, tentatively, to combine both inner and outer realities to make the world work for him, he sets about to teach others how this might be done. The conclusion of *In Celebration* is a long distance from Arthur Machin's dark submission to miserable isolation. Optimism begins at this point to shine through Storey's early work.
FOOTNOTES


5 Because of the similarity some people saw between Radcliffe and Wuthering Heights, Storey was commissioned by Anderson to do a film treatment of the Bronte book which he, Anderson, was to direct with Richard Harris playing Heathcliff. The effort was aborted because of Harris's Hollywood commitments. See Sussex, p. 55.

6 In an article in the Manchester Guardian (February 7, 1963) entitled "Ned Kelly on Film," Storey discussed the similarity between Arthur Machin and the flamboyant, larger-than-life British outlaw Ned Kelly. At the time Storey was preparing a filmscript of Kelly's story for Karel Reisz, but there is no evidence to indicate that the film was ever produced.


8 Hayman, p. 52.


10 Hayman, p. 47.

12 "The Restoration of Arnold Middleton: Plans," London Times, June 30, 1967, p. 8e. The first page of the published script cited in the footnote above lists the Royal Court cast as the following:

Joan Middleton ........ Eileen Atkins
Mrs. Edie Ellis ........ Noel Dyson
Arnold Middleton ....... John Shepherd
Jeffrey Hanson ........ Tenniel Evans
Maureen Wilkinson ....... Andree Evans
Sheila O'Connor .......... Gillian Hills


19 Hayman, p. 47.


21 Billington, p. 32.

22 Browne, p. 73.


24 The other play to be considered in this chapter, In Celebration, deals with that problem in even greater detail.

25 Billington, p. 32.

26 Hayman, p. 48.

28 Billington, p. 32.

29 Hayman, p. 51.

30 For this insight I am indebted to John Russell Taylor's summary of Storey's drama in The Second Wave, already cited.

31 Hayman, p. 50.

32 Hayman, p. 51.

33 The remaining plays of those "six or seven" have by this time been produced and include The Changing Room, to be discussed in the following chapter, and Cromwell, The Farm, and Life Class, which will be dealt with briefly in the Conclusion.

34 This information, along with the original cast, is provided on the first page of the complete text of the play published in Plays and Players, the British professional theatre periodical, in June of 1969. The original cast was as follows:

Mr. Shaw .................. Bill Owen
Mrs. Shaw .................. Constance Chapman
Andrew Shaw ............... Alan Bates
Colin Shaw ................. James Bolam
Steven Shaw ............... Brian Cox
Mrs. Burnett ............... Gabrielle Daye
Reardon .................... Fulton Meckay


38 Taylor, The Second Wave, p. 149.


40 Kalem, p. 106.

41 David Storey, In Celebration, Plays and Players, June, 1969, pp. 35-55. Subsequent references to the above play will be included in the text.
Of his mother's situation, Andrew says: "English language, domestic science; didn't leave school until she was sixteen ... religious ... raised up by a petty farmer to higher things ... ends up being laid—in a farm field—by a bloody collier ..." (43).

After Jamey's death, Mrs. Shaw, six months' pregnant with Steven, tried to kill herself. During the period of her convalescence, she sent five-year-old Andrew to stay with Reardon, a neighbor. "He was away six weeks. He used to come to the door crying ..." (52), Mrs. Shaw explains to Colin. Later Andrew demands of her "Do you remember when I used to cry outside that door ... 'Let me in! Let me in! ... Why wasn't it ever opened? Why?'" (55). Related to this, then, is Andrew's statement to his father that "I've never been in ... this family" (51).

Although forced to attend school and become a lawyer, Andrew's fundamental impulses have always been in another direction, as he explains to his father: "I've always thought, you know, coalining was one of the few things I could really do. (Looks at his hands.) One of the few things, in reality, for which I'm ideally equipped. And yet, the one thing in life from which I'm actually excluded."

This concern is evident through Storey's creation of such creatures as Howarth in Flight into Camden, Denis Blakley and Leonard Radcliffe in Radcliffe. In Arnold Middleton Hanson complains conspiratorily to Arnold that art is one of the amusements of women bestowed on men "to divert our unbreeding functions." In In Celebration when Colin says of Andrew, "Christ, if we all thought like that maniac up yonder—we'd all be what?" Steven replies: "Artists, most likely."
The very same can be—and will be later—said for The Contractor, Home, and The Changing Room. As Storey’s experience with playwrighting grew, so did his skills.

CHAPTER IV

THREE LATER PLAYS

The last three plays to be considered in this study --The Contractor, Home, and The Changing Room--mark the height thus far of Storey's achievement as a playwright. At the same time, they show his fully developed view of the world as a place where a man is a most complete and satisfied being when he is fully engaged in productive effort with other human beings. The Contractor and The Changing Room have the most in common in structure and style and in their depiction of the pleasure provided by collective effort; Home is in many respects an anomaly in Storey's dramatic work, with its lack of definition or of physical activity, and with its sense of confinement and hopelessness. Yet Home shows us the other side of the coin from the competent crew and team of the two other plays, depicting human wrecks who never managed to become absorbed into any productive group. All three plays display Storey's admitted weakness "for the dignity of undignified people." In addition, the three plays show a definite progression in skill and a widening of viewpoint from The Contractor through Home to the culmination of The Changing Room. In fact, when
John Weightman, the critic for *Encounter* magazine first wrote about *The Contractor*, he decided with some insight that "it is almost as if the play were the first episode in a serial, to be amplified in later installments."²

**THE CONTRACTOR**

Just as *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* acts as a transition in thought and style from the novels to the plays, so *The Contractor* bridges a distance—admittedly shorter— from the wordy, static, frustrated first two plays to the latter indirect, more dynamic, more positive three. The shift is obvious in both style and thematic concern. From *In Celebration* to *The Contractor*, the playwright moves from the closed, stifling living room of the Shaws, to an outdoor, windswept hill, where no physical barriers exist except those created by the crew itself as they raise the tent. At the same time, there is a mood change: the stuffy world of *In Celebration*, which produces impotent anger or apathy in its main characters, gives way to the sense of strength and purpose of the foreman and his tent-raising crew. Inability to work gives way to the dignity and fruits of labor. In comparing both the technique and the themes of the two plays, one must find *The Contractor* a superior play.

Critics on both continents have given consistent approval to *The Contractor*. A reviewer who saw the original production found it "a brilliant piece of stagecraft,"³ and
another considered it "very satisfying." The London Times reviewer, who saw both the original and the West End production, decided that The Contractor was "an extraordinary play" which proved itself on the second viewing even better than he had remembered from his first, leaving "an eradicable image in one's mind." When the play was done in the United States, Harold Clurman thought it "most remarkable in that he [Storey] shows us workers at work," something the American "workers' theatre" in the 1930's never quite accomplished. Clurman's praise was otherwise lower-keyed than of other critics, although his respect for Storey's craft was obvious and he suggested that certainly "The Contractor merits a visit." Seeing the Chelsea Theatre production after Home and The Changing Room had visited American shores, T. E. Kalem thought perhaps "The Contractor may be the best of the three," while Edith Oliver of The New Yorker describes the play flatly as "a miracle by David Storey." Nearly every reviewer found the play quite unlike what he normally saw on the stage. Most suggested influence by Pinter or Beckett to help explain "the sense of mystery underneath," but found that although there were resemblances, Storey fit neither mold completely. Peter Ansorge, writing for Plays and Players, wisely decided that "it becomes helpful to interpret the play with the background of Storey's earlier novels and plays in mind."
Thematically, the place of *The Contractor* in the development of Storey's technique and world view will be discussed shortly. For the moment, it is at least interesting to recall that tents have risen and fallen in Storey's work before, specifically in *Radcliffe*. In that novel the tentcontractor (Ewbank) employs a crew whose makeup is very similar to the makeup of the tent crew in this play. The scenes in the novel which deal with the tent-raising provide the background against which Radcliffe and Tolson form their first adult relationship, providing some positive value. The general mood of the crew, however, is bitter and uncooperative, unlike the fundamentally involved and cooperative crew of *The Contractor*. That is to be expected, of course; in *Radcliffe* Storey despaired of men ever finding satisfaction in a threatening world; in *The Contractor* he has progressed to a vision of how they might.

The professional production history of *The Contractor* shows that in terms of both British and international exposure to Storey's work, his third play was a real breakthrough. Like Storey's two previous plays, *The Contractor* opened first at the Royal Court Theatre in London, running from October 20, 1969, through the end of December.¹¹ Three months after the production closed at the Royal Court, it was revived on April 6, 1970, at the Fortune Theatre in London's West End and ran successfully for nine
months. From there, the specially-made tent necessary for the play's production began to travel. It went from the Fortune to several of the world's major cities in the following three years, providing productions in Cologne, Aalborg (Denmark), Melbourne, Brussels, Helsinki, and Amsterdam. There have been four professional productions in the United States, one each in San Francisco and Seattle, and two on the East Coast in New Haven and New York. The New Haven production, presented by the Long Wharf Company in November of 1971, won golden notices from critics, as did the most recent production Off-Broadway in New York presented by the Chelsea Theatre in October, 1973. The Chelsea Theatre production was subsequently filmed and shown by the Public Broadcasting Service's educational television network in April of 1974.

Plot

There is very little narrative plot to summarize in *The Contractor*; the play is an event more than it is a story. As T. E. Kalem pointed out in a *Time* review, "The putting up and taking down of the tent is all that actually happens in *The Contractor*, but it is utterly fascinating." A short explanation of the background against which this central action takes place may be helpful, however. A contractor by the name of Ewbank who makes and erects large tents (or marquees) for all occasions decides to create the best and most impressive tent of his career for a reception
following the marriage of his only daughter Clair to a young doctor "so refined if it wasn't for his britches he'd be invisible." Consequently Ewbank assigns one of his crews, headed by a foreman named Kay, to erect the tent on the front lawn of his "lovely house" (12), one of the symbols of his class advancement. Ewbank worries that the clumsy workmen will trample his lawn and he warns them that "I don't want you up to your usual habits. Piddling all over the place, for one thing. And language. I'd appreciate it very much, Kay, if you saw to it that they watched their tongues" (12).

The tent is erected over the course of one day, with each bit of the work meticulously performed as the workers, who consist of two clever but loutish Irishmen, an insecure young man whose wife has just left him, and a half-wit, keep up a running, not always good-natured, banter. As the work progresses, members of Ewbank's family, including his son Paul, Claire and her fiance Maurice, Mrs. Ewbank, and both Ewbank's parents, wander down from the house from time to time to see how things are going. Paul offers to help but is repeatedly refused by his father, who has given him "the best education money can buy" (45) but apparently considers his quite worthless when it comes to real work. In fact, the family members are simply in the way of the workmen who have been told to "Get it up. Get it finished. And get away" (13). By the middle of the afternoon they have
accomplished their task, and Ewbank's family visits the perfect, gleaming tent appreciatively; Claire and Maurice glide around its polished floors to silent music, and Mr. and Mrs. Ewbank briefly do the same.

The following morning, the workmen return to disassemble the tent, and are dismayed by the "bloody mess" (117) they find. The muslin is ripped, part of the flooring uprooted, chairs and tables are overturned, bottles smashed. Shrugging, crew members begin to take down what they had so carefully put up the day before. As the men work, conflicts flare up between them, and threats are made, but the work must be done and there is no time even for fighting. Paul wanders through "off on his bloody travels" (106) to no particular place. The newlyweds are gone, and the old Ewbanks are leaving shortly. After the tent is taken down, piece by piece, and put on the truck, Ewbank brings out some wedding cake and champagne left from the previous night for the crew. They enjoy the rare moment of hospitality and go, leaving Ewbank and his wife standing alone where the tent had been, wondering "what's to become of us?" (122).

**Major Themes**

The Contractor is not a conventional play; structure and plot merge, and themes are indirectly expressed through snatches of dialogue and obvious but unstated tensions between characters. Storey acknowledges that he did not
want to "write something that was dramatic in the conventional sense" with *The Contractor*. He just:

wanted to do a play without any dramatic gestures 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 . . .

Storey clearly succeeded in this purpose, much to the admiration of most critics. "In this extraordinary play," Michael Billington wrote in the *London Times*, "David Storey achieves something that few writers before him have ever attempted: he dramatizes work." In short, Storey shows that men reveal themselves most clearly when they are involved in the actual business of work, rather than while they are relaxing. But there is a further point to be made: in this play Storey shows himself a celebrator of communal effort. "The stress, the satisfaction and the ultimate futility of a community of effort are all present" in *The Contractor*, Kalem notes. However, "community" is the key word here for Storey. In fact, he once mentioned in an interview that even watching the cooperation and sense of community involved among the actors preparing the play itself gave him satisfaction:

I found it fascinating to watch 12 people who had really nothing in common apart from the fact that they were actors, being united 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."
Thus for Storey it is the doing, the cooperation among human beings, that matters most, rather than the "ultimate futility" of the effort. The men who comprise the crew may be at a dead end, as Clurman points out, but the pervasive sentiment, as he further notes, is "unavowed courage."

Storey seems finally to have arrived at an answer for the dilemma which plagued his characters through both the plays and the early novels: willful submergence of individuality into the efforts and processes of a group effort. Where Arthur Machin, Margaret Thorpe, Leonard Radcliffe, Arnold Middleton and Andrew Shaw are all divided against themselves and painfully isolated from their fellow beings, members of the tent-raising crew achieve a sense of personal value and identity through their mutual effort. Howarth's, Middleton's and Michael Shaw's inability to work in their private hells is contrasted with the obvious productivity of each member of the group in the public creation of the tent.

And finally, group acceptance is clearly the key to self-acceptance. The character in The Contractor with the greatest sense of wholeness and peace is the half-wit Glendenning, who is generally the most liked and trusted member of the group. The group's mockery of him is good-natured, and their affection for him obviously genuine. In fact, different crew members tolerate each other quite well as long as each pulls his own weight and respects the
feelings of other members. The conflict between Bennett and the two Irishmen, which emerges in Act II, for instance, only comes after Bennett gives away Kay's secret: that he has spent time in jail. Bennett's anger is countered by a scornful Fitzpatrick who says

it was Bennett who pointed out the fact with which, until then, we were unacquainted. Namely that you, Kay, yourself, had been in the clink. . . . What I can't abide is a man who can point his finger at other people but can't bear the same one to be pointed at himself (101).

Solidarity is the order of the day. The real core of the play is not in the tent itself, which is certainly fascinating, but in the cooperation and efforts of the men who raise it.

Since the work crew is the major focus in the play, they should be examined more carefully. The four workmen on the crew are Bennett, a man left in shambles by his wife's infidelity; Glenny, a gullible idiot teased unmercifully but ultimately loved by the others; and Marshall and Fitzpatrick, two Irish drifters whose fantastical, self-amusing and self-parodizing dialogues are "more naturally entertaining," Henry Hewes feels, "than the interchanges of Beckett's allusively allegorical pair of tramps in Waiting for Godot. Fitzpatrick, in particular," Hewes continues,

is a master of the art of turning accusations and insults back on those who make them. His remarks are often caustic and destructive, but he has a fine sense of humor and a keen perception of who and where he is. 20
The longsuffering foreman of this crew is a "monument of humiliation," a responsible father of a large family once convicted of embezzlement, probably in a desperate effort to provide them with a comfortable existence.

These men are not, needless to say, exemplary.

"The debris of society . . . that's us," (109) Fitzpatrick acknowledges in Act III. In short, Ewbank takes on those that nobody else'd employ. . . . I employ anybody here, you know. Anybody who'd work. Miners who've coughed their lungs up, fitters who've lost their fingers, madmen who've run away from home(38).

Ewbank's crews are come from the lowest social level, and they know it. But their compensation is the freedom they retain to mock their employer and his values openly. They have no positions nor illusions to maintain, no status to lose, by losing their jobs. In fact, Ewbank takes peculiar pride in the fact that "There's been nobody sacked from this firm since the day it first began" (103). And ultimately, the characters are delineated clearly so that they all live as separate individuals; it matters less what they are as individuals than what they can--and do--become as a cohesive group.

Having finally found satisfaction in his depiction of the role men can best play in the world, Storey still does not entirely abandon his concern with the problem of alienation. Two major sources of alienation are explored in The Contractor; they include the classic Marxist concern
of the separation of the worker from his product, and a problem Storey has explored before: the alienation between social classes, in fact between generations, brought about by education. Ewbank himself is a good example of the first kind of alienation. Ewbank is unlike his father, a rope maker who made all rope by hand and who proudly recounts that "You'll find bits of rope I made, you know, floating under the North Pole. Good God. A piece of rope in those days . . . ." (107). Instead, Ewbank's life's work has been as a contractor, an overseer of other men who do the actual labor. The nature of his position has isolated him from a genuine participation in a communal effort, and he has no comfortable place with any of his numerous crews. He has reached middle age and is lost. "Do you know," he tells Kay, "I've lived all this time--and I know nowt about anything" (111). Later he tells his sympathetic wife, "I don't know. You'd think you'd have something to show for it, wouldn't you? After all this time" (121).

Part of the reason Ewbank hires men who are at the end of the line is an attempt to redeem himself and to justify the manner in which he has spent life. Fitzpatrick recognizes this in a bitter speech just after he has been fired (temporarily) by Kay:

It's amazing, you know . . . the way he surrounds himself with cripples. . . . It qualifies, I suppose, the nature . . . of his warm and understanding heart--ah, well. You can tell him one thing for
nothing. The road up yonder is a harder climb than that. (Thumps upward) (102).

During the special two days covered by the play, Ewbank is perhaps most sharply made aware of the sad fact that his wealth has not freed him of painful isolation from both his men and his family.

Ewbank's son Paul is another case of alienation worth consideration. Paul has been extensively educated but finds that it has left him entirely separated from everyone else in the play. "Oxford. Cambridge. University College. All the rest. Ask him anything and he'll come up with an answer," his grandfather says. But he "hasn't got his father's skill. . . . Couldn't thread a needle" (45). Paul's education has separated him from his parents' class, to their despair, and cut him off from his own cultural roots. Thus he has become a wanderer, unsure of where he is going or why. He only knows that a person has "got to find [his] natural level" (45), and his wanderings are an effort to do that. All Paul is really sure of is that he can neither follow in his father's trade nor accept his father's values. As he is leaving at the end of the play, Ewbank uncomfortably asks him "Do you ever fancy this job?" and Paul shakes his head (79). Rejected again, his father lets him go his way. The smouldering conflict between Paul and his father is never fully explored nor resolved. Storey chose this course deliberately, he has said in an interview, because he is more interested in depicting people and
relationships as they are at a particular point in time rather than dealing in dramatic conflicts. As with the mother-son relationship in *In Celebration*, the *Contractor* involves:

A similar case of withdrawal from drama in that sense. Again all confrontations that could take place there are, if you like, skillfully avoided, because the actual conception of the play is directed towards that end rather than explosion and revelation.21

The uncomfortable father-son relationship adds texture to the play but is not developed enough to be pursued. The focus of the play is the activity of the tent crew.

It is interesting that although women are present in this play, they are not involved in any significant activities. It is ostensibly for the women—for Claire's wedding and the older women's approval—that Ewbank has his crew raise the tent. But the women have no part in the effort itself. Old Mrs. Ewbank, who "would like to help" (??) is allowed to do nothing more than arrange flowers. Ultimately, Storey is a celebrator not just of communal effort, but of communal male effort. The women, Clurman points out, "accept the world which has been created for them with dutiful resignation."22 More and more in the progression of his work, Storey tends to separate the activities, the motivations, and the worlds of his men and women, as if he were not quite sure they were of the same species.
Dramatic Technique

The Contractor is written in a style which Storey himself calls "poetic naturalism." By this he means that on the surface this play appears to be extremely realistic; indeed little else appears to be happening on the stage except the erection of the tent. But as in genuine naturalism, it is not the versimilitude of the surface action which interests the artist, but rather the interplay of carefully selected examples from a specific milieu to demonstrate a universal truth. Storey has no specific scientific principle to promote, as did the early literary naturalists; he is really searching for a means to express a poetic, emotional sense impression of the way life can best be lived. Edith Oliver pays him a fine tribute when she says of The Contractor that

There are some plays so rich, so dense with incident, life, and atmosphere . . . that you just want to live in them. . . . Mr. Storey, without appearing to maneuver characters into the slightest semblance of a plot—rather, by appearing to set them free to talk and behave as they will—has allowed us to know them in a way few dramatists have, and only at the end do we realize that a great deal of ground, emotional and otherwise, has been covered, and that his strong hand has been at the controls from the start. In ways there is a sense of mystery underneath: Why that long, significant look? Why does this line draw blood and that one not?  

Although Oliver does not mention the name Pinter when she writes of Storey, other critics have done so, and the above comments do sound like a description of a Pinter play, such as The Homecoming. It is certainly true that there are many
correspondences between the styles of certain Pinter and certain Storey plays, especially in the style of the dialogue, but in the particular case of *The Contractor* the significant difference seems to be that the characters all act in a rational and predictable manner. At the same time, exposition of the foundation for the events in the play—why the characters are present, why they behave and speak as they do—comes naturally as they work. Questions raised in Acts I or II about the characters' backgrounds—why Kay was imprisoned, for instance, or what's eating the heart out of Bennett—are answered quite clearly by the end of the third and final act. There are no threatening external forces pressing upon mysterious characters in a shaky refuge, no weasels under the cocktail cabinet. There is rather an optimistic sense of strength through cooperation among human beings, in spite of their individual failings and petty concerns, and the reassurance that comes from performing—and observing—specific action. Rather than Pinter-esque, there is more a Chekhovian sense of the ebb and flow of life in the relationships that are played out among the people in *The Contractor*; Taylor mentions

the delicate web of relationships among them, the subtle pattern of strengths and weaknesses, understanding and illusions, which gradually emerges from the seemingly desultory banter and back-chat of the workmen as they work, in an effort to evoke rather than describe a sense of the play. There is also in this play a strong sense of form
which is also reminiscent of Chekhov, but Storey once mentioned in an interview that with *The Contractor* he wasn't trying to do something consciously Chekhovian. (I don't think I'd ever seen a Chekhovian play when I wrote it.) I just thought the visual texture of the play should be complementary to the emotional texture."

Critics and audiences alike have been caught by what they have felt to be the utter authenticity of every aspect of *The Contractor*. Kalem emphasizes that Storey puts "life" on the stage: "everything that constitutes the experience of a lifetime has been distilled into two hours of stage time." Beyond that, others are impressed with the realistic surface Storey (and his directors) have managed to create and maintain. "Storey depicts the Yorkshire landscape in a laconic style that is most expressive of it," Clurman writes, adding that the play's "sound is entirely authentic." Every writer who has commented about productions of the play stresses this fascination with the task of erecting and dismantling the tent. In a review of the Chelsea Theatre production, Kalem asserts, as he did with the earlier Long Wharf production:

The task of putting up and taking down the tent in *The Contractor* 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. That is why Storey's casts always look like veteran ensemble companies. They have to be to get the job done. Oliver agrees, pointing out that "the actors are always at work on the tasks that constitute the job, which demand
considerable physical dexterity and concentration, and at the same time they are at work in a play in which character and conviction are everything." 31

The script itself calls for extremely detailed realism in staging; there is no other style of production in which this play could be successfully done. Briefly, the tent is erected in Act I, the floor is laid and the interior is decorated in Act II, and the "violated" tent is entirely dismantled and taken away in Act III. Within the script Storey provides detailed explanation of what each crew member is to be doing at each moment in the play, in addition to many suggested line interpretations. For instance, on the first page of the script the stage is described as:

set with three tent poles for a marquee, twenty or thirty feet high, down the center of the stage at right angles to the audience.
The poles should be solid and permanently fixed, the ropes supporting them, from the top, running off into the wings.
Each pole is equipped with the necessary pulley blocks and ropes, the latter fastened off near the base as the play begins. Two ridge poles, to be used for the muslin, are set between the poles (9).

Each character is introduced performing a specific task. Kay enters, "tests one of the ropes, checks another, as he looks around with a professional eye." Ewbank comes in and "busies himself with pressing down a divot." Bennett enters "carrying the ridge pole . . . a sandwich in his mouth . . . and . . . in his arms he carries the muslin ropes . . . He puts the ridgepole down between the first two vertical poles" (11). And so on throughout the entire play. The
members of the work crew are never at rest longer than a moment, and then they are obviously slacking off the job. In fact, Storey seems to observe the letter as well as the spirit of the unities. During the time the tent is being assembled and disassembled Waterhouse points out that "There is no cheating, no visual or verbal shortcutting and very little padding. The unpretentious story . . . is told down to the last tent peg and pot of flowers." Of course actuality of time in the theatre is impossible and unnecessary, except when a specific real action is being performed on stage; then real time is required, and most of The Contractor consists of real actions performed in real time.

Storey has also been repeatedly recognized for putting authentic northern English (and Irish) dialect into the mouths of his characters. John Weightman says of Storey:

[He] is good . . . at catching the exact ring and movement of uneducated, non-intellectual dialogue. Points that could not be made consecutively arise naturally from the rhythms of work, or from the constant attempt to avoid work. Again, people who might be expected to be boring are made extremely interesting.

Storey does more than simply make an authentic transcription of working-class dialect, however. Dealing with what appears to be merely workmen's banter, desultory and meandering, Storey gives their language a kind of compressed, graceful poetic quality. It can be described in the same terms John Russell Taylor used when he discusses
Pinter's dialogue:

Studying the unsupported dialogue bit by bit we might well conclude that it is an exact reproduction of everyday speech, and so, bit by bit, it is. But it is "orchestrated" with overtones and reminiscences, with unexpected resonances from what has gone before, so that the result is a tightly knit and intricate texture of which the "naturalistic" words being spoken at any given moment are only the top line, supported by elusive and intricate harmonies, or appearing sometimes in counterpoint with another theme from an earlier play.34

Although Storey is unlike Pinter in his use of dramatic space, as earlier stated, in this play, and particularly in Home and The Changing Room, Storey is similar to Pinter in his underplayed orchestration of emotions and ideas through shifting bits of authentic dialogue. Thus it is left to the audience to construct for themselves many of the inner details of character and the extent to which unspoken conflicts affect the lives of the characters on stage.

Storey attributes to Lindsay Anderson and the work they did together on the screenplay for This Sporting Life, his realization that there must be an inner texture to spoken dialogue and that it's not simply a case of providing a realistic chat.35 More precisely, Storey has said in an interview that his original attempts to write stage dialogue were faulty because he used a novelistic technique of simply having people "fidgeting around on stage, waiting to come out with the next bit" when it was needed to support the play's momentum.36 That situation is unfortunately the one in
which the actor who plays Michael Shaw finds himself, for instance. But finally, through practice and help from Anderson, in *The Contractor* Storey feels that he "cottoned" onto the fact that

> when you're actually watching dialogue ... it has to have a completely different inner dynamic ... they've all got to be engaged and even if they're quiet they've got to be engaged in a way that is just as important, and informative as the people who are talking."\(^3\)

Storey's subtle weaving of work with seemingly aimless, but usually meaningful, chatter in *The Contractor* proves that he learned the lesson well. He also used the technique in his following two, perhaps best known plays, *Home* and *The Changing Room*. It was, as Storey himself feels, "a turning point."\(^3\)

No discussion of *The Contractor* is complete without an examination of its central image, the tent. Certainly the tent as a theatrical device lends itself to a variety of interpretations. Some critics have called the tent the most prominent character in the play in the sense that it invades the stage and commands rapt attention from the audience.\(^3\)

Several others have seen the tent as a symbol of the rise and fall of Britain's greatness and in a larger sense an emblem of the vanity of human wishes.\(^4\) Another finds in the tent a metaphor for the several stages of marriage: "early hopes and efforts, mature achievement, and the old-age descent into naked reality."\(^4\) Weightman expands in
that general vein by believing it "a symbol of the tragic pointlessness of human endeavour."\textsuperscript{42}

By taking the tent itself as the most important thing in the play, by allowing it "a poetic mystery-- ... a silent token of nonrecoverable truth,"\textsuperscript{43} these critics are ignoring the real focus of the play: the crew of men who, working together, can both create and disassemble the tent. Thus the tent really becomes a general symbol of collective achievement, of what men are collectively capable of doing. Beyond that, one must agree with Oliver that there is "not ... anything as pretentious as a microcosm or an allegory ... intended."\textsuperscript{44} Because the play is scrupulously fair and sincere about its subject, it implies more than it actually states. Therein lies the ground for endless speculation about the central image of the tent and the relationships among the characters. The play's strength lies in the fact that there is no one ultimate provable meaning; the play has, as Taylor calls it, a "true poetic polyvalence."\textsuperscript{45} For this reason, Storey himself thinks \textit{The Contractor} is one of his best pieces of writing:

It seems to me that if, on reading something through, I know completely what it is about, then it is dead. It is when I feel that I don't really know what it is about that it lives--it lives for me almost in the measure that it escapes and refuses definition. ... It is for this reason that I find \textit{The Contractor} one of the most satisfying things I've written. Each time I see it in a different light and I get letters from people who ask me does it mean this, and does it mean that, and I often see some justice in their suggestions. And still the play is
not confined to any one of these definitions; it con-
tains the possibility of them, but it still continues
to make sense—and complete sense—as the story of
these men who put up this tent, and that's that. I
think it's very important for me to leave all the
options open.

In summary, it can be said that with The Contractor
Storey achieves what few playwrights before him have been
able to deal with successfully: he creates a mesmerizing
theatrical experience by dramatizing work itself and by
capturing the flavor of life as it is lived moment to moment
by average, unremarkable people, providing at the same time
a rewarding insight into what it is to be an average human
being on a daily basis.

HOME

For The Contractor Storey received respect and
general praise; with Home he became an almost instant
celebrity, both in Britain and abroad. Critics immediately
began to squabble about whether the excellence of what they
saw on the stage resulted from superior playwriting, acting,
or directing, but one thing was certain: no one ignored
David Storey's fourth play. It was the hit of the 1970
season in both England and the United States, winning major
awards on both sides of the Atlantic. Home was awarded the
Evening Standard Award in 1970 as London's Best Play and
after its transfer to Broadway won the 1971-72 New York
Drama Critics' Circle Award as the best play of the season
in New York.
A large part of the attention awarded Lindsay Anderson's production of the play resulted from the fact that the small cast was headed by Sir Ralph Richardson and Sir John Gielgud, two of England's most accomplished veteran actors. However, most critics agreed with Richard Watts' estimate that "Home is by no means merely an actor's vehicle," but also "a remarkable play and . . . a notable one."  

Actually, it was the script itself which most stunned critics as well as the general public. Accustomed to substantial drama with deep social and psychological concerns, even given the fascinating structural differences of The Contractor, no one was prepared for the nebulous, static, lyrical quality of Home. The general pattern of critical reaction was first shock, followed by enthusiastic approval, and then the inevitable comparisons with Beckett and Pinter. Usually these comparisons were positive. With the few--but equally vocal--critics who did not like Home, they were not.

A sampling of critical opinion shows for the most part a general agreement of the play's excellence; in fact, practically the same language is used by different critics in their effort to capture the essence of this "strange and extraordinary play."  

Barnes of the New York Times found Home a "compassionate and moving play" which "speaks with an inner voice."  

For Hughes it was "a work of immense compassion and substance," and Kalem called Storey "an extremely evocative new British playwright."  

Brendan Gill
of the New Yorker also thought the play an exceptionally good one "acted to perfection."\textsuperscript{52} On this point both British and American critics united; Lindsay Anderson's original production of the play—and the skill of the cast—was extraordinary. It may not quite have been, as the critic for the Wall Street Journal called it, "the most extraordinary piece of theatre in years,"\textsuperscript{53} but it was no doubt close to being, as Weales said, "easily the best theatre to reach New York [that] season.\textsuperscript{54}

A few critics found that they did not like the play but still admired the production of it. The New Republic's Kaufman decided that "Storey's play is fairly vacuous," but that Anderson had done a magnificent directing job, given what he had to work with.\textsuperscript{55} Having seen the play on several occasions, Henry Hewes came to the conclusion that Home "may be frequently boring as a play, but because it emanates a genuine sadness, it succeeds as a work of art."\textsuperscript{56} Walter Kerr, struggling to be fair, called the play "a carefully tooled example of its kind," but he does not like the kind. Kerr's preference for plays which rely heavily on narrative, conflict, strong characters and colorful language --"the dramatic gesture"--is well-known.\textsuperscript{57} Consequently he found Home a play of carefully "calculated stasis," which dulled the senses. "The play is like Beckett without the anguished poetry, like Pinter without the tension," he protested.\textsuperscript{58} Yet Edwin Newman, feeling the same stasis, told
his NBC audience on the night of Home's New York opening that indeed "it is a small, subtle, monochromatic play. There is no overt dramatic excitement, but Home manages to be quietly funny . . . and sad."59 Nor for Watts did the lack of dramatic conflict matter: "Nevertheless, [Home] is steadily striking and strangely moving and dramatic. And it is never tiresome."60 Weales of Commonweal decided—and he was ultimately joined by the majority of critics and journalists, who showered Storey with intense attention after Home—that "Storey, the novelist, has become a playwright, the most impressive one to turn up in the English theatre since those early angry days when John Osborne, John Arden, and Harold Pinter emerged."61 Following the same train of thought, Newsweek's critic found Storey's fourth play "extremely intelligent in its use of tradition from Coward to Pinter."62 Finally, an ardent Clive Barnes urged that analysis and cavil be put aside, and that the play be considered simply "a play to lose yourself in, to trust implicitly and go with all its ebbing and flowing currents of pain and humor."63

The production history of Home conforms more or less to that of Storey's previous plays. Opened first at the Royal Court Theatre on June 17, 1970, the play ran a full month.64 It transferred immediately, cast intact, to the Apollo Theatre in London's West End where it reopened on July 29, 1970, to continued acclaim. On October 31, 1970,
Home closed in London and was taken immediately to Broadway, there the play premiered on November 17, 1970, at the Morosco Theatre for an eight-week limited engagement and closed on January 9, 1971.

Fears of some critics that Storey had begun to write plays "which most imperatively require perfect casts and immaculate production for their full realization," thus providing that they could "never be performed by amateurs or repertory companies," were belied by successful international productions of Home during the following theatrical seasons. Even without the impressive talent of Richardson and Gielgud, a production of the play at Israel's National Theatre won an award as best play of the 1972-73 season, as did a production which ran for six months at Mexico City's Xola Theatre. There were fifteen productions of the play in Germany in 1972 and Home was performed throughout the world last year in Portugal, France, Holland, Sweden, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Australia and New Zealand. There is, in short, in this "compassionate and moving play" something which touches a deep chord in human beings the world over. Martin Gottfried perhaps defined that nebulous something when he decided that the play is moving, but more than that, it is transporting. It takes you beyond this world to somewhere beyond time and place, so that the humanity of its people... and their sadnesses... can find step in universal rhythms.
Plot

*Home* has an even more meagre narrative plot than does *The Contractor*. During this play not even a specific action is performed; the best to be said is that what seems to be a specific amount of time—most of one day—passes. As a play *Home* consists of several interlocking conversations primarily among four people, two old men and two old women. The conversations begin as desultory, aimless chatter, and there is at first no reliable indication of the play's setting or the characters' circumstances. The men (Harry and Jack) appear to be retired Edwardian gentlemen sitting at a white garden table in a slightly decaying civic park or at a blank and seedy seaside resort exchanging mild comments about the weather, the human condition, and vaguely-remembered activities of their young manhood. As they depart for a mid-morning walk, two garrulous women (Kathleen and Marjorie) appear and take their chairs. In a more comic fashion, the women exchange complaints, their personal histories, and observations of the peculiarities of other residents of the "home." As these women continue to talk, it becomes appallingly clear that the playwright has brought us in to spend the day in an asylum for the insane.

When Jack and Harry reappear they become acquainted with Marjorie and Kathleen, and the four carry on with exemplary form an amusing but horrifying caricature of social conversation. Behind genteel masks Harry and Jack continue
their earlier politeness, introducing themselves properly, eschewing direct language for euphemism, and showing distress at the slightest sign of vulgarity. The women, on the other hand, are clearly of another social class and have different interests and values. In the style of awkward adolescents, they giggle at every opportunity to interpret a comment in an off-color manner; Marjorie argues about the origin of treacle; Kathleen complains about her aching feet and the institution's inadequate facilities. At each sign of indiscretion on the part of the women, the men change the subject, usually to the weather. The women just as adroitly turn the change around, asking unrelenting questions, demanding to know why the men are at the home. Jack is finally driven to tears but hastily apologizes, and invites the women to lunch in restitution. As they pair off to leave the stage, the first act ends. Very little direct information about these people has been given us. However, we sense who and what they are, and particularly how they feel, as we observe them behave and empathize with their discreet despair.

At the beginning of the second act Kathleen and Harry engage in a generally warm, slightly flirtatious dialogue, skipping from subject to subject. Kathleen inquires whether the rumors about Jack's taste for following little girls are true, and then shares with Harry the details of Marjorie's inability to stop crying. Expressing
her distaste for life on the outside, Kathleen asks Harry what he will do when—and if—he is released. Unable to give her an answer, he weeps. She holds his hand in an attempt to comfort him.

When Jack and Marjorie enter the scene the two women begin to argue jealously, each casting aspersions on the character and habits of the other. Embarrassed, the two men discuss the weather and the cultivation of flowers; Harry and Kathleen then depart for a stroll. Left alone with the querulous Marjorie and Alfred, a lobotomized young man who thinks he is a wrestler, Jack shows extreme discomfort. Marjorie tells Jack of Kathleen's sexual history and of her own frequent confinement in isolation; he displays little interest. She bullies Alfred and explains why he was lobotomized, distressing him; Jack fidgets. Irritated, Marjorie begins to bait Jack about the inconsistencies in his numerous stories of family members; with extreme agitation Jack begins to look for the other couple. Mercifully, they arrive.

At this point, a shift back to the original pairing takes place. Kathleen and Marjorie aim barbs at each other and at Alfred, but when Harry and Jack show signs of discomfort, it is they who become the victims. The general unpleasantness apparently drives Harry to cry. Jack tries to comfort him, then turns stiffly away himself. The women offer crude comfort, but are ignored. Offended, they leave,
and the men again are left alone together. They politely shrug off the vulgarity they have had to endure from the women and pick up their previous reminiscences of early adventures and old friends. Now, Jack does most of the talking, his enthusiasm about the armed forces and England's past greatness punctuated by Harry's nods and monosyllabic agreements. The day quickly draws to a close as Jack once more tries his card trick for Harry and fails. Harry has already begun to cry soundlessly. As Alfred carries away the last of the set pieces and the lights slowly fade, Jack, too, begins to weep. Brendan Gill points out aptly that Storey "has composed a comedy upon a tragic theme, and the grace and warmth of its composition insure . . . compassion." 69

The previous description of what happens during *Home* is necessarily interpretive, since characters are most clearly revealed through the dialogue, and the dialogue is a series of fragments and broken thoughts; rarely is there internal logic within a single statement, and comments are very often non-sequential. In addition, the script—and more particularly the Anderson production—contains "great gaping silences, and words which are hardly better, or hardly different," according to John Russell Taylor. 70

**Major Themes**

Presented with this play where external conflict is limited and where the playwright's expected "message" is not
immediately clear, critics and audience members were baffled --some intrigued, some annoyed, but all bewildered. What was this strange new Storey play about? What did it mean? And why did Storey so drastically alter his previous playwriting style? Familiarity with plays by Beckett, the absurdists and Pinter, which shared, they felt, many characteristics of Home, gave critics the temerity to assign interpretations to this gentle, abstract piece of dramatic poetry. The interpretations generally fall into two categories, and a number of critics suggested the possibility of both. The first group is perhaps best represented by Hewes. Home, he felt, is about "these two old men who have led wasted lives and are now doomed to a lonely and empty old age," and the play ultimately "emerges as an imaginatively conceived, descriptive social drama." Other critics such as Newman tended to universalize that interpretation somewhat, deciding that we "may take the asylum for home, which is to say the world, and therefore take the play as a picture of human loneliness." Geilgud himself agreed in an interview, expressing the opinion that the characters' "physical location [is] incidental to their human predicament." In short, the play, these critics decided, was to be considered a metaphor for the helpless and hopeless human condition shared by all of us.

For another group of critics, the play seemed to present a more compelling metaphor. "Storey subtly draws
an ironic parallel between the plight of the two men and the fate of England . . . England shorn of Empire, reduced . . . a gleamless cinder on the tides of history," Kalem declared. Hewes also found elements in the set that "obviously represent a contemporary England that is run down and has lost its illusions of glory and pride in supremacy." Another critic agreed, deciding that the "home" of the play is indeed a home for "the defeated--the old, the mentally ill--but it is also home in another sense, it is Britain," as Auden called it, "this island where no one is well; and Storey's characters are meant to epitomize the eroded vitality of Britain." Although these are the primary ones, other interpretations are possible, of course. For a play he described as "the most baffling bundle from Britain since Harold Pinter's The Homecoming," a reporter who interviewed Storey in New York suggested the play might also be

A parable of morally bankrupt Britain, or possibly the world, an indictment of a society that closets its old and ailing, a shriek of outrage at an unlistening God, or a sob of despair over man's inability to communicate with man.77

Taking cue from the critic who decided that The Contractor might be best understood in the context of Storey's previous work, the next section will approach Home from two standpoints: a fresh look at major themes that emerge from direct reference to the script, and a consideration of how the appearance of Home elucidated Storey's continually
expanding world view.

The first and most obvious fact about *Home* is that it deals with isolation, both physical and spiritual. Although we meet only five of the residents of this home, they speak freely of the many others, and it is clear that they are all shut away from the outside world, trapped within the rigid walls of an institution. They are apparently there permanently. "Tell you something," Marjorie says to a weeping Jack, "Not leave here again," to which Jack replies, "Oh, no." One reviewer has called the characters of *Home* "doomed prisoners."79

As these wispy, incomplete people speak to and about each other, it gradually becomes clear why they have reached their current impasses. Jack first greets the two women by explaining "My friend here, Harry, is a specialist in housewarming, I myself am a retailer in preserves" (31). That, at least, is the illusion both men prefer to hold. The women, however, have heard differently, and are not averse to saying so. "Heard all about your little lapses, haven't we?" Marjorie sneers at Harry. "Burn down the whole bleedin' building, he will. Given up smoking because they won't let him have the matches" (38). Later Kathleen weiddles from Harry the reason for Jack's confinement: "Your friend come in for following little girls? ... Go on. You can tell me. Cross me heart and hope to die" (45), to which Harry reluctantly replies "I believe there were ...
er . . . certain proclivities, shall we say?" (45).

Kathleen and Marjorie are open about their own reasons for being at the home. Kathleen explains that one day in a rage she "smashed everything in sight . . . Winders. Cooker. . . . Nearly broke me back. . . . Thought I'd save the telly. . . . Thought: 'Everything or nothing, girl. . . ." (30). Marjorie, on the other hand "started crying everywhere I went. . . . Started off on Christmas Eve. . . . Didn't stop till Boxing Day" (30-31). In addition, as Kathleen explains later, Marjorie suffers from an incontinent bladder and "can't go down the street without her trousers wetting" (51). Kathleen herself "can't get to old age fast enough . . ." (49), and complains because the officials of the institution have taken her laced shoes, the ones that fit, because they "Thought I'd hang myself, didn't they?" (28). Alfred, the young lobotomy patient, was brought to the home for his operation, according to Marjorie, after he "Painted rude letters in the road. . . . Right in the town centre. Took them three weeks to scrub it off" (56). As the empty lives of these characters slowly come into view, it becomes clear that the world of reality has slipped their grasp. Clurman points out that "nothing within sustains them and all without is barren. Their lives are shadowy dreams, shattered memories."80

In order to deal with the horror of their situation, these people that society has put away try to create their
own society. Home consists of one day, like countless others, on which these wretched people "play out a pitiful replica of life outside," going through social rituals that become meaningless as they vegetate between one meal and the next. It is a kind of limbo where the living speak as if their lives are over. "I once . . ."; "I used to . . ."; "A cousin of mine was . . ." In the present, they hardly exist at all, for themselves or for anyone else. The four primary characters are, as Barnes says, "four people searching for contact, looking for a past to call their home." Living out "this horror story with quiet desperation," the men and the women discuss the difficulties of communication, the necessity for human beings to tolerate each other, and the justifications for human existence, if there are any. Pointing out a poignant sense of personal isolation, Marjorie says to Jack, "Most people don't talk to you in here. You noticed?" (53), and when Harry explains to Kathleen that Jack had certain "proclivities," she replies: "I don't know what you're saying half the time, you realize that?" Harry agrees uncomfortably that "Communication is a difficult factor" (45). As the play ends, Jack observes to Harry with some pain that "One of the strange things, of course, about this place" is that one can "never meet the same people two days running" (64). Communication is impossible because these people have no engagement with any
activities or ideas and no relationship to anyone who would care to listen. Communication is also impossible because, like Pirandellian characters, the people who inhabit this institution are all devoted to appearances, and thus put on masks "... in order to stop time, to achieve stasis, to locate the still point ... hoping to hide their shameful faces by playing a role," as Brustein describes the characters of Pirandello's drama. Behind masks which screen them from each other, and which may change from day to day, each character is utterly isolated.

The two male characters, with their genteel masks "plastered over the void of their lives" are eager to allow each other their failings, whereas the women probe to uncover those failings. Whenever a nerve ending is grazed, the men quietly weep. It is Harry particularly who seeks forgiveness by his eager willingness to set the example:

HARRY. We all have our little foibles, our little failings.
JACK. Oh, indeed.
HARRY. Hardly be human without.
JACK. Oh, no.
HARRY. The essence of true friendship, in my view, is to make allowances for one another's little lapses ... (37)

The women, however, find what Jack calls "all our little falls from grace" (38) the only interesting facet of their lives. They seem more willing to confront reality as it is and has been than the men, who retreat into platitude and fantasy. By withdrawing from the women's queries and attempting to cover up their "little failings," the men are
refusing yet again to participate in any real communication effort. They parry the women's efforts, which are admittedly crude, to reach out to them, and they remain with each other, although sympathetic, both polite and distant.

Aware that they are essentially pieces of human refuse, these people are inclined to question the motives of the Being who created them. Jack tells Harry when they first meet that he had intended to become a priest in his youth but

> could never . . . resolve certain difficulties. . . .
> The how's and the wherefore's I could understand.
> How we came to be, and His presence, lurking every­
> where, you know. But as to the "why" . . . I could never understand (15).

When one has led an incomplete and miserable life and exists now on the very edge of existence, he may be inclined to demand of God why he was ever born at all. Even Kathleen, expressing dissatisfaction with having been forced to spend most of her life in the drudgery of a customary marriage demands, "Who's He think He is?" (47). Ultimately, Jack decides sadly, "Shouldn't wonder He's disappointed" with this creature man. "Same mistake . . . won't make it twice" (66), Jack says, with Harry's agreement.

Jack's assumption here--and one that many critics make with him--is that he and Harry are normal human beings and representatives of us all. Thus we are all hopelessly flawed creatures, he seems to believe: "One endeavours . . . but it is in the nature of things, I believe, that, on
the whole, one fails" (32). Jack and Harry, Kathleen and Marjorie, Alfred and the others, have failed at the business of being complete human beings, and confinement is the result. But as Clurman points out, this is not our world. It "convinces and hurts" certainly, but this is a shadow world which presents only shadow truth. This "home" is a madhouse, established to contain those who are beyond sanity. There is no real evidence to assume that Storey intends it as a metaphor for the world the rest of us inhabit. "The purely literal level has got to work first," Storey told Peter Ansorge of one of his later plays, "and perhaps work only at that level."

On the other hand, Home works on several levels, as poetic drama must, even if one has to "leave the audience to fathom the symbolic level." Which objects are accepted as symbols, which motifs are noticed, will vary with the interpretation an individual makes, and "if we wish to relate them to our own experience that is our privilege—or perhaps misfortune." Storey himself insists that there are no symbols in Home. Anderson admitted in an interview that as the director he was concerned with "the imperial motif—this country, this little island." The content of the opening and closing scenes between Harry and Jack support this choice. "This little island" which spawned, as Jack claims, an "empire the like of which no one has ever seen" (64) achieved what it did because it was an island:
"At times one's simply glad to live on an island" (12). However, as Jack repeats to himself "This little island" (64), Harry replies, "Shan't see its like... The sun has set" (64), thus giving some credence to those critics who saw in Home a parable of the decline of Britain's vitality as a world power. The flagless flagpole tends to support this sense as well, although Lindsay Anderson claimed it was added to the set to give "the right institutional feeling" and because "everything else is horizontal, so the vertical aspect is particularly valuable." At any rate, it is noteworthy that islands—especially small islands—cannot endure if they exist in isolation; Jack and Harry are just such small islands, and their own personal declines parallel that of the nation.

The characters of Home are presented to us as specific, not universalized, cases of people who have retreated into madness in order to escape from having to face and work out problems on a realistic level. Referring specifically to Home, Storey has said:

Insanity gives you the same kind of reassurance as work. It unifies your particular condition in an asylum... It provides a reassurance to life which it wouldn't otherwise have. The longer you stay bonkers the safer you are. It's that kind of fantasy in Home.92

In other words, the people in Home failed during their lives to find for themselves a comfortable place in some organized structure; now they are using the false comfort of irrationality as a substitute for the satisfaction that work as part
of a productive group might have brought. Again there is a Pirandellian element here: Enrico IV, in Pirandello's play by the same name, chooses to withdraw from the demands and the pain of daily living into a fantasy structure of his own devising, the maintenance of which has consumed the majority of his life. Like Enrico IV, Jack, Harry, Kathleen, and Marjorie have become trapped in their own structures and can no longer venture out among those considered sane.

Retreating first from their places in society and then from themselves, the characters in Home wear their masks well enough that we could almost believe they do not realize their situation. But then a tear falls, or a bit of aberrant personal history emerges, and it is clear that the roles they have chosen have become traps, and they know it, but there is nowhere left to turn. Home is static because it is about stasis.

Stasis is in itself a horrifying prospect, but there is a further point to be made: these characters were never whole, never fulfilled, and now they are past ever becoming so. There is about them a terrifying sense of "unfinished ripeness," of the "absurdity of unlived lives." As Storey obviously decided in In Celebration and The Contractor, life for human beings does not have to be this way. There is some possibility for human happiness through work and cooperation with others. With The Contractor, Storey experimented fully with the possibilities open to people who
consciously work together. With Home, he is equally as conscientious about examining people who could not or would not—and now cannot and won't—attempt a mutual effort of any kind. Home is, as Wardle states, "a society tragedy, showing past and future defeat."^  

Storey's recurring theme of the division "between those who can make society work for them and those who can't is explored to some degree in Home. Storey has said:

I think [that theme] comes through vaguely in Home to the extent that I see Jack as the residue of the extrovert who tried to live a decent life and get on with people and get out in the world and have a place in society; and Harry as the residue of the poor old artist, totally immobilized by his capacity to make any sense of it all and is quietly fading away in delusion and murmuring and grief and a sense of his own loss but no way of expressing it.95

Thus the earlier portrayal of a physical/spiritual dichotomy occurs vaguely here again. But here the two sensibilities are separated into two different people as they were in Radcliffe and there is no hope for a successful life for either. Each is an incomplete human being, and both have failed "to make society work" for themselves.

**Dramatic Technique**

Home came to be written because Storey could not forget the image of the single white table left on stage at the end of The Contractor. "This play starts from there, from the image of that white table . . ." he has said.96

It was written, surprisingly enough, in only two days.
Actually, Storey wrote two early versions of *Home*, or rather two different plays which shared the same idea and title. While writing the first he thought it was splendid, but later found it to be lifeless on the typed page. The second version, which seemed to him worthless while he was writing it out in longhand (as he does all his manuscripts) somehow clicked for him as he typed it. "The rejected *Home* I understood completely, so it had the deadness of a demonstration," Storey told John Russell Taylor. "The other one ... rather mystified me, but it had taken on an independent life of its own." It was the second version, the one which mystified the playwright, which was sent to the Royal Court for production. *Home* is a two-act play, more theatrical than literary. As one might expect of a Storey play, it observes the unities of time and place quite closely. Neither a naturalistic nor even a realistic play ("I think people in mental homes in real life are slightly different from that," Storey has said), *Home* has been generally considered "avant-garde," and thus unlike any of Storey's previous plays.

Although *Home*’s general attitude toward roles and reality is quite reminiscent of Pirandello, when the play appeared it was immediately tagged a conscious departure from Storey's usual style into the Beckett-Pinter absurdist tradition. That tradition, of course, derives to a large degree from Pirandello's work. As he praised Storey's rare
"sense of visual-reality" and his still rarer skill of applying language to it, Gottfried said of Home:

It sounds like Samuel Beckett and, in the austerity of words, movement, action, and looks, it seems like Beckett. The simplicity of the dialogue and its exaggeration of commonplace conversation is equally reminiscent of Pinter, particularly because there is a definite sense of pressure, of something going on that has nothing to do with words.99

Other critics were not as generous as Gottfried. They too saw stylistic elements that reminded them of Beckett, and more particularly of Pinter, but they were displeased by what they considered an inept borrowing from either or both of the better-known playwrights. For Kaufmann, "Storey shrivels next to Pinter. Much of Home sounds like a revue sketch of Pinter. But like the revue sketch, what it omits is the submerged text of ambiguity."100 Walter Kerr, previously cited, complained in his initial review of Home that the play "is like Beckett without the anguished poetry, like Pinter without the tension." The play is ultimately, Kerr decided, really Beckett-like, but it is "domesticated Beckett, Beckett tamed to a tabby cat."101

It is certainly easy to see why Home was received in those terms. Stylistically the play on paper very much resembles the structure of a Beckett play, as Martin Esslin describes Godot: "A pattern of uncertainties and questions, and action demonstrating the absence of action--here we have the essence of Beckett's play."102 We also have the essence
of *Home*, which is a small, subtle mood piece of repetitions and evasions, lacking conventional theatrics and orthodox dramatic structures. Esslin says further of *Godot*, with equal application to *Home*:

These plays are not like the conventional well-made drama re-enacted stories, they are complex and extended poetic images brought to life before the eyes of the audience. If the drama of plot and character is akin to the narrative art, this type of play is essentially lyrical. If the conventional, well-made play unrolls before our eyes like a Comic Strip in which the action proceeds from point A to point B, in this type of drama, as in a poem, we are witnessing the unfolding of a static pattern as that of a flower which gradually opens and reveals a structure that, however, has been present from the beginning.103

Like a poem, *Home* exists as a complex of images surrounded by an aura of specific emotion, in this case sadness. The play is about defeat, which distinguishes it from Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* in a significant way. *Godot* is about uncertainty, and within the field of uncertainty there is some slight possibility for optimism: perhaps Godot will come someday. But the door has closed behind the shattered wrecks who people *Home*. They have stopped waiting for anything but the certainty of eventual death. And in Storey’s world, as opposed to Beckett’s, it is not necessarily the cosmos which renders men impotent; the ones who fail were too weak to meet the challenges of creating for themselves a structure through which they could live a useful life. Hence for *Home* Storey uses a dramatic structure that reflects Beckett’s work, but his philosophy differs. *Home* is
a clear case of the subject of a play determining the form in which it can be best expressed.

If the structure of Home is reminiscent of Beckett, the dialogue can be compared to Pinter, as was the dialogue of The Contractor. Coming from similar traditions, both Pinter and Storey write about the same kind of people and they share an excellent ear for recording not only the surface realities of everyday speech, but also the quirks and inconsistencies that are even more insistently convincing.

In addition, in Home more than in any other of Storey's plays before or since, there seemed to be a "whiff of unspecified menace" about the production. However, that is not necessarily evidence that Pinter has been an influence on Storey. After the notoriety of Home began to spread, Storey insisted repeatedly to interviewers, "I've never seen a play by Pinter." In fact, Storey claimed not even to have read a Pinter play.105

Considering the question of Pinter influence, nobody has yet recognized an obvious point: if Storey had never seen a Pinter play and yet many people saw Pinter influence in Home, then clearly those people made the leap themselves. They had seen Pinter plays, they had seen Beckett plays, and it was easy—almost obligatory for some—to place this strange new play within a recognizable tradition. Most of them were undoubtedly more familiar with the 'absurd' than with the remainder of Storey's oeuvre. In addition, it is
important to point out that the production staff of the original production of *Home* from director Lindsay Anderson and his distinguished actors to the designers, were surely extremely familiar with Pinter, one of the contemporary playwrights of most consequence in the British theatre in 1970. A description of Jocelyn Herbert's set: "a starkly simple outdoor setting—a small white metal table, two white chairs, a tall white flagpole with no flag, all framed in shades of gray," combined with Brendan Gill's comment that "you might not think a decaying balustrade and a flagpole could be frightening, but they are" indicates a possible effort to suggest menace, a celebrated quality of Pinter's drama. In addition, Richardson and Gielgud brought to their interpretations of Jack and Harry a certain manner already associated with the acting of Pinter plays. There were long, gaping silences, not always specified by the script, and platitudes delivered portentously. The tears called for by the script occur as a specific result of Harry or Jack being forced to face up to an extremely unpleasant truth; on stage, Richardson and Gielgud wept at their own discretion. They acted brilliantly, as every reviewer who saw the production admiringly acknowledged, but it is possible that they, aided by Anderson and Herbert, created the sense that *Home* was a play influenced by Pinter. In sum, it is more likely that the Anderson production of *Home* was a production influenced by Pinter than that the
playwright himself was influenced. *Home*, like any important play, will admit any number of interpretations. As a play with little activity and sparse dialogue, it perhaps demands interpretation in production more than many other plays might. Concerning this question of Pinter influence on Storey, John Russell Taylor thought it "grotesquely irrelevant. . . . One never feels [with Storey] that there was any real choice of technique: the idea determined its form of expression, and that was that." In *Home* this remains so, even if the ideas have changed and the form of expression has changed with them."108

Since it is probably most correct to say that it was Lindsay Anderson's *production* which brought Storey's play attention and praise, a brief attempt to reconstruct the style and manner of that production seems appropriate. Nearly everyone who has written about *Home* is in agreement on one point: the production was superb, and that was due in large part to the acting of Richardson, Gielgud, Washbourne, and Nichols. "Lindsay Anderson's production of David Storey's new play *Home* . . . comes as near perfection as I can imagine,"109 was Taylor's evaluation. Clive Barnes agreed, saying

> the production is impeccable . . . and you will rarely encounter acting of such quality. The two of them [Richardson and Gielgud] are natural enough to be heart-rending and they play together with the musical aplomb of a Bach toccato. This is great acting.110

It should be noted that the two women were extraordinary as
well but often underrated because of the play's well-known and superb stars. For Clurman,

Jocelyn Herbert's setting is exactly right in its bleak and shabby nakedness. Against it the five actors bring the warmth of their beings and their excellent craftsmanship. Lindsay Anderson has directed them to perfection. The effect is that of chamber music. The pauses amid the strokes of dialogue, the tones and rhythms are modulated to convey a meaning of which the words are but signs. The whole transcends what is actually said.111

Other critics referred to Anderson's sensitive orchestra-
tion of the production as well, using musical terms to try to express the acting skill which had moved them:

An unforgettable double sonata of deep and com-
plex feeling.112

Richardson and Gielgud ... play together like two master instrumentalists, Richardson's oboe answering Gielgud's viola in a duet that extracts endless variety from broken sentences ...113

A string quartet, in which each grace note falls perfectly into place as part of an extra-
ordinary and moving whole.114

Indeed, the Anderson production of Home had become legendary almost by the time the play reached London's West End.

Ultimately, one can conclude that Home is an inter-
esting play both stylistically and thematically in the con-
text of Storey's other drama. In terms of content it is
slighter than either The Contractor or In Celebration—or Arnold Middleton, for that matter. But Home proved that Storey is an extremely capable and flexible playwright technically, and it furthered his progress away from earlier literary plays into a more theatrical form. Home confirms
what _The Contractor_ suggested, that Storey has enough con-

fidence and mastery over his art that he can comfortably let

an idea choose its own form of expression. Writing just

after _Home_ had opened, Taylor said of Storey:

His strength as a dramatist up to now has been

his isolation from fashion, his ability to follow

his own vision unswervingly in the theatre and find

to his hand precisely the right means of doing

so.115

The Changing Room, the last of Storey's early work to be
discussed in this study, is the apex of Storey's dramatic
work precisely because he followed his own vision to its
fullest completion and because he expressed that vision in
an extremely effective form.

THE CHANGING ROOM

_Home_ established David Storey as a theatrical

celebrity; _The Changing Room_ established his place as a very
capable playwright. At the same time _The Changing Room's_
particular style—what Storey chooses to call "poetic
naturalism"116—was finally recognized by critics as a dra-
matic form peculiar to Storey on the contemporary theatrical
scene. It is a style which seems to most easily allow the
playwright's preference for presenting realistic people per-
forming real tasks in an authentic milieu, yet imbuing what
they do with a larger meaning, and at the same time always
returning to the same themes: how to reconcile internal and
external realities? how to escape stifling isolation without
surrendering personal freedom? With The Changing Room Storey seems finally to have found an external form which synchronized with his internal concerns while he at the same time resolved the problems which plagued him throughout all of his earlier works. Thus one can say that as Storey's plays reflect the gradual resolution of thematic conflict, they also display a metamorphosis of form until the point is reached with The Changing Room that theme and form are one.

A superficial look at The Changing Room might incline one to agree with Clive Barnes that it is "an unusual piece of documentary theatre." The play deals with a roughshod group of Northern working-class men brought together to play a rugby match on a miserably cold winter day. In what seems an almost minute-by-minute account, they enter the locker room, change into uniform, play the match, change back into everyday clothing, and leave. Yet, as Barnes further explains, the play is remarkable,

because while it only purports to document what goes on in a locker room before, during, and after a football game, the playwright's skill is such that we seem to get to know these football players and the society that produced them.

Jack Kroll of Newsweek concurs, but extends the praise even further:

So skillfully does he do this, so sure and sensitive are the innumerable details of character and action that he assembles, that his play becomes a field of force charged in every square inch with interest and meaning.

America's Catharine Hughes joins the chorus of approval and
goes even further, attributing to *The Changing Room* a genuine universality:

It could not be simpler, yet it has a richness, an integrity, a completeness, that give it a compelling power and enormous effectiveness. It broadens the boundaries of the theatre by narrowing them.\textsuperscript{121}

By this Hughes means that Storey's intense concentration on a specific environment ultimately produces a resonant statement about the world that all of us inhabit.

With critics almost unanimous in their praise of *The Changing Room* from the moment it opened, the play's successful future was virtually assured. Opening first at the Royal Court under the direction of Lindsay Anderson on November 9, 1971, *The Changing Room* ran there until December 18, when it transferred to the Globe Theatre in London's commercial West End.\textsuperscript{122} At that point Charles Lewson, the *Time* 's daily critic, noted that "It is a pleasure to add one's voice to the chorus which welcomed David Storey's latest play."\textsuperscript{123} Earlier voices which had praised *The Changing Room* had included Billington of the *Guardian* who called Storey a writer "who genuinely extends the territory of the drama"\textsuperscript{124} and the *Observer* 's Wardle who stated gravely that the play left "a picture which will stick in the memory."\textsuperscript{125} Also writing for the *Observer* in a long and perceptive review, Helen Dawson wrote of the performance she saw:

The play is much more than a slice of life. The achievement of author, director, and cast is an
evening which, amid the mud, blood, and bruises, is often funny, frequently beautiful, and always warmly humane.\textsuperscript{126}

While the play was still running in London, arrangements were made to mount an American production by David Rudman, an expatriate American who was at the time Artistic Director of Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre. Working with the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut, which had earlier mounted an impressive production of \textit{The Contractor}, Rudman premiered \textit{The Changing Room} on November 17, 1972. Critical response was immediate and positive. \textit{Newsweek} called the play "a warm, full-bodied work,"\textsuperscript{127} and \textit{Time}'s T. E. Kalem considered \textit{The Changing Room} "Storey's most powerful and moving drama. . . . The finest new play seen on the North American continent this season."\textsuperscript{128} With the big critical guns booming, the Long Wharf production was moved virtually intact to the Morosco Theatre on Broadway. There is opened on March 8, 1973, and ran until August 18 of that year. In New York the play created a remarkable stir, as much for its unusual style as for its casual male nudity in several key scenes. Both Barnes and Kerr of the \textit{New York Times} praised the play, but for opposite reasons; Barnes found it "an unusual and gripping piece of documentary theatre"\textsuperscript{129} while for Kerr, whose bias toward traditional dramatic form has been noted earlier, the play "must . . . be taken as choreography," as simply a "vibrating visual image."\textsuperscript{130} New Yorkers wrote the editor of the
New York Times both to praise the play as a representation of "the height from which America has fallen [from grace]" and to deplore it as "only a 'production' with a gratuitous skin show dimension and not a play at all." Victor Cahn, in another New York Times review, extolled the play as "enthralling . . . superb in every respect." Wire services described the play for the readers of daily newspapers across the United States, and Storey was interviewed repeatedly by prestigious news services. Storey and The Changing Room were together even featured as the focal points of interest in the March 5, 1973, issue of Sports Illustrated, a magazine which normally concentrates more on touchdowns than on theatrical productions. Predictably, the American production of The Changing Room was nominated for several Tony awards, including those for best director, best scene design and best supporting actor. Faced with competition from Jason Miller's That Championship Season, another sports-oriented hit of the 1973 season, The Changing Room produced only one Tony winner: John Lipkow, who played the dull-witted forward, Kendal, was named Best Supporting Actor. However, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play of the 1973 season was awarded to a Storey play for the third time in four years. International productions of The Changing Room were mounted at the Goteborgs Stadsteater in Göteborg, Sweden, in May of 1972, at the Württembergische Staatstheater in Stuttgart, West Germany in
December of the same year, and by the Elmwood Players in Christchurch, New Zealand in March, 1973, during the period the play opened on Broadway. With the almost universal acceptance of his fifth play, Storey had little choice but to accept his place as a successful and widely-respected playwright. "Today, at 39," a critic wrote in 1973, "David Storey is one of England's best novelists, and only Harold Pinter rivals him as a playwright."^34

Plot

The play which stirred such attention is certainly worthy of close examination. On the level of narrative plot, one can almost say with Clive Barnes that "There is no story—nothing happens,"^35 because there is very little which is identifiable as traditional, formal plot. However, a great deal happens on the stage in terms of life; the play has depth, texture, momentum, and even suspense.

The first act opens on a set—the changing room itself—which is to remain constant throughout the play. An old janitor moves creakily around the room sweeping the floor and arranging towels and uniforms for the expected players. The players arrive singly and by twos through several entrances, and begin desultory exchanges about the weather and their everyday activities. As they slowly change into uniform, massaging bruised muscles and strapping weakened joints with help from the rugby club's trainer, the janitor Harry warns them of impending doom planned by the
The players laugh at Harry's fantasies and at each other's shortcomings, ribbing the slow-witted Kendal, who proudly shows his new electric toolkit with which he intends to make "any amount of things. . . . Pantry door. Fitments . . ." (17). Morley chides him: "T'only bloody fitment thy needs, Kenny. . . . Nay, lad, thy weern't find wrapped up inside that box" (17). It happens gradually, but by the end of the first act, one recognizes the players individually. "You can pick out anyone," a reporter mused for the Gannett News Service, "observe no one else all through the evening, and see a complete life unveiled." The fifteen players, the two trainers, the masseur, the chairman and the club secretary, even the referee, are all presented with careful detail in the stage directions, and all assume independent life on the stage. By the end of Act One, the players have dressed, engaged in a brief practice session in the changing room, awkwardly endured a visit by Sir Frederick Thornton, the club chairman, and run out onto the playing field to begin the first half of the rugby match.
The second act opens on Sir Frederick and his secretary, Mackendrick, warming themselves by the scanty coal fire in the changing room minutes before the first half of the game ends. Harry warns of the Russian threat, his constant theme, and comes to loggerheads with Mackendrick about the merits of the past. Not one of the current players, Harry insists, "could hold a candle to the past" (47). The club secretary calls that view "Bloody bunkum . . . God Christ. If this place was like it was twenty years ago--you wouldn't find me here for a bloody start. . . . As for fifty years ago. Primeval" (48). Sir Frederick warms himself with liquor and muses over a recent dream:

I came up here to watch a match . . . looked over at the tunnel . . . know what I saw run out? (Laughs) Bloody robots. (Laughs again) And up in the bloody box were a couple of fellers . . . flicking bloody switches . . . (Laughs) I laugh now. I wok up in a bloody sweat, I tell you" (49).

Suddenly the team pours into the changing room, miserable from cold and pain. They remain long enough to compare injuries, to receive false compliments from Sir Frederick for plays he heard on the loudspeaker rather than having bothered to watch, and to be told to "Start putting the pressure on in the second half" (50). The score is tied, 7-7. The room empties again at the end of the rest period, leaving Luke, the "perky, brisk, grey-haired" (16) trainer alone with Harry, who admits that he has never watched a match. A moment later an injured player, Kendal, is brought in, blood pouring from his face, unable to walk, unaware of
what has happened. In a scene reminiscent of Machin's mouth injury in *This Sporting Life*, Kenny is bathed, dressed, bandaged, and taken to a hospital to repair his broken nose, while he clutches to his chest the parcel of tools he earlier showed so proudly.138 Alone again in the room, Harry switches on the loudspeaker and listens to the game outside as the lights fade.

Act Three opens with the victorious team shouting and singing in the changing room and the accompanying bath, after the rugby match. They have won by a narrow margin, but it is sufficient. The men bathe, tend to their injuries and dress at an individual pace. More alive at this point than at any time earlier in the play, they behave briefly like joyous children. Barnes records:

They sing dirty songs, make silly jokes and play games under the showers, running around mother-naked with that particular playfulness of men together after a tough and bloody game. There is both innocence and thankfulness in their mood, a grim air of achievement and simple physical exhaustion.139

The players leave as they arrived, singly and in clusters, to go back into a world of hard, everyday realities. Harry is left to clean up the locker room and prepare it for the next contest. The play is over.

Although there is no overt conflict in *The Changing Room*, a great deal happens. A rough, pulsing representation of life as it is lived by real human beings is put on a stage often known for its artificiality. The play seems to document special, yet real, events minute by minute while it
at the same time weaves an intricate web of fantasy as well as universal rhythms into the reality. "The detail is immaculate almost to the point of documentary," one critic notes, "yet the play is more than that. . . . They [Storey and Anderson] create a world that is its own entity but possesses enormous resonance." Exactly how Storey enriches and deepens this special world and the characters who people it is best understood through an analysis of the play's crosswoven themes.

Major Themes

Clearly *The Changing Room* is not merely a realistic play about rugby; it is rather a play which commemorates a time, a place, and a people, and which offers a vision of how the rigors of painful, everyday living can be transcended, if only for a brief time. In short, *The Changing Room* dramatizes the fact that, as Victor Cahn states, "the joy of being part of a team can be the greatest fulfillment of a man's life." Storey has indicated in a recent interview that he sees *The Changing Room* as an area of communication for men from totally different walks of life. They are brought together by the game, to win by becoming a single, brutal force, and when it is over they depart, each to his own life:

And the cleaning man is left on stage to pick up the towels, bandages, the jock straps, the liniment, to sweep up the debris of the battle. Man needs work,
and he needs a cause, and he finds his greatest compatibility with life when the life he lives externally synchronizes easily with his internal life. In that brief statement Storey succinctly states the resolution of his—and his characters'—earlier dilemma. How does one find salvation in an alien world? His answer: Through work, through dedication to a cause in cooperation with other human beings. And an individual finally discovers the compatibility he so fundamentally needs "when the life he lives externally synchronizes easily with his internal life." Earlier works such as Radcliffe and In Celebration agonize with the problem that a man's internal thrust is toward communion with others, yet externally he is more often than not kept apart from the people around him by mistrust, insecurity, or alienation. The Changing Room demonstrates—does not specifically verbalize but rather repeatedly demonstrates—that submersion into a difficult physical activity with other human beings is the key to unlocking the paralyzing fear and depression which haunt individuals like Arthur Machin or Arnold Middleton or Michael Shaw who have no secure place in a social structure and no one with whom genuine feelings may be exchanged. When he is thoroughly involved in a team effort, internal and external thrusts merge into one, and a human being may temporarily transcend the confines of his narrow daily existence.
Since nearly none of the above analysis is articulated in the lines of The Changing Room (in contrast to The Restoration of Arnold Middleton or In Celebration, for example), it is necessary to look at what happens in the play to secure evidence. As the players enter the dressing room at the beginning of the play, they all perform the same general series of actions. Patsy, the first to appear, "... evidently familiar with his routine, goes to his locker. Gets out his boots, unfolds his jersey and shorts already lying on the bench" (10). Morley, a later arrival, "goes straight to the business of getting changed: coat off, sweater, then shoes and socks" (15). By the end of the first act, "all of them are almost ready: moving over to the mirror, combing hair, straightening collars, tightening boots, chewing, greasing ears, emptying coat pockets of wallets, etc." (35-36). What happens during the first act is more than a simple change of clothing. As the men who enter the changing room change out of their civilian clothes into the shoulder pads, shorts and jerseys which mark them as players, the uniforms also lend them other identities, unified yet still individuals. "Almost ritualistically, they become a team," Hughes notes, and "merge their personalities in quest of their common goal." At that point they each gain a place in a communal structure and discover a cause, whether or not they possess either in the world beyond the changing room and the rugby field.
In the outside world, in fact, it is most likely that every man is alone. But on the field, facing triumph and defeat together, the players are never alone. For the brief period of time during which the game is played, they with their new identities live by a different code of rules, a code they both understand and can trust to be consistent. These few hours provide what Victor Cahn calls "ordered innocence," which the players may share freely with each other, in contrast to the suspicious stances they must assume in the outside world in order to protect themselves. Cahn further explains:

An ennobling purity is part of every real team competition. The game may only be to move a ball forward on a dirt field, but the task can be accomplished with an unshackled joy, and its memory will be a permanent delight. The experience of being lifted out of self and selfish concerns is very important to Storey, who explained in a recent interview:

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

In The Changing Room sport becomes for Storey a form of work which goes beyond the drabness of mere personal reality to become, like art, a transcendent experience. For this
reason the style of the play, a kind of theatrical pragmatism, most naturally communicates Storey's discovery. The players do not sit and discuss, trying to discover the solution to life's insoluble problems. They barely discuss any subject, except to give it a moment's attention in passing. Instead they are constantly involved in activity aimed at a specific goal. Storey has said elsewhere:

I think that . . . activity unifies people in a way that perhaps they don't get unified anywhere else. 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. 146

In the contemporary world traditional structures have broken down and traditional expectations are impossible to fill, a state of affairs that sends Arnold Middleton into insanity, because he and all men still need a sense of dignity and purpose. One can find it, Storey believes, by a commitment to work that goes beyond the merely personal. "Blessed is he who has found his work," the English philosopher Thomas Carlyle once wrote, and David Storey echoes him both in conversation and in art.

The Changing Room is a play about the pleasure of being part of a team; it is not, as Walter Kerr would have it, a play simply about "the room in which men change, whether the change be meaningful or not." 147 Furthermore, Kerr describes The Changing Room as a play which
must . . . be taken as choreography. It pretends to nothing else. . . . There is no narrative, no interest to be taken in who wins, who loses. . . . There is, in the end, only the design to attend to, and the design is no doubt what the play has been written for. 148

Kerr misses the point of the play entirely, perhaps to some degree justifying the perennial claim that American critics simply can't appreciate British plays.

Perhaps Kerr finds a language barrier in the play; indeed, many American critics and theatregoers have noted, and some have complained about, the numbing repetition of the word 'bloody' and the authentic Northern dialect. Storey found the American cast's mastery of the dialect "astonishing." 149 Kerr called it "even less than naturalistic in that actual conversation in an actual locker room would be both wittier and coarser than this." 150 One wonders at Kerr's presumption of what would "very probably" be going on in a real locker room when he misunderstands what was happening in the one on the stage. At a key point in his discussion of The Changing Room, Kerr misquotes 151 a line to prove his main contention, that what the players are doing may be entirely meaningless:

Whether the change that is described has meaning or not is left open. The trainer of the team would like to think that it has. Chatting wearily with his assistant once the game is done and the room all but cleared, he repeats to himself, "It counts, it counts." His tone is dubious. 152

There is no such line as "It counts, it counts" anywhere in The Changing Room, in either reading or acting editions.
The only line remotely similar to the one Kerr cites is a comment made by Crosby, the assistant trainer, to Owens, the team captain, at the end of the play when the room is nearly empty. Crosby tells Owens with some pleasure that the team "Did well today." Owens laughs and replies, "Aye," to which Crosby admiringly (not dubiously) answers, "Bloody leadership, that see, that counts" (90). A proper understanding of the text (and indeed, the production), challenges Kerr's claim that the play exists as pure form apart from a specific thematic intention. In fact, the very scene Kerr chooses to cast with doubtful men trying to reassure themselves that what they have just done has some meaning is in reality a scene where the men congratulate themselves with hearty satisfaction, still enjoying the sense of unity and dignity that playing and winning the game has brought them.

The changing room is a metaphor for a reality much more powerful than Kerr is willing to admit. It is not just a room where men change; neither is it the main character of the play, as another critic suggested. The focus of interest in The Changing Room is the team; the room plays a secondary role, but at the same time, it cannot be ignored.

There are two major points to be made about the room: it does, by the end of the play, assume an identity of its own, and it acts as a magical space through which men pass as they go from one reality to another. At the beginning of the play, the curtain opens on an empty room,
gray and inanimate. But as the room fills with first the complaints and later the happy whoops of the strong, lumbering men who compose the team, it gradually absorbs part of their energy. "You can imagine it breathing quietly," Helen Dawson says, "when it is empty of all that masculine energy." She continues:

> It is the sort of place which recurs in dreams, a silent witness—like an empty theatre or examination hall or hospital corridor—with a personality apart from those who people it.\(^{153}\)

The room is indeed a separate entity and it presses itself on a viewing audience with force, but it lives in the shadow of and only in small proportion to the degree that the men on the team live and strive.

In another respect, however, the room ceases to be important for its overwhelming naturalism and becomes instead a place where ordinary men assume heroic roles for an afternoon of gladitorial conflict before a roaring crowd.\(^{154}\) Throughout the play, a note of fantasy is sounded against the deceptive realism of the locker room, a note that creates the sense that the room is a special place which exists between the extreme realities of the ordinary world of responsibilities and insecurities, and the gallant world where nothing significant exists except the team effort. The key to understanding this idea lies with Harry, the keeper of the room. Dismissed by most critics as "a dilapidated old type who cleans up"\(^{155}\) Harry is immersed in a fantasy which he refuses to let go of. Repeating over and
over his threats of a Russian takeover of the free world, telling a scoffing Sir Frederick in frustration, "You'll wake up one day . . . I've telled you . . . You'll wake up one . . . " (49), Harry is more than just a janitor. He is the guardian of the room and as such establishes its fundamental spirit, and that spirit is fantasy. Since Harry's fantasies have to do with holding off a threat, it is reasonable to draw a parallel of the room as a bastion against the forces of drab everyday reality which loom around it, threatening to take away even the temporary spiritual solace the team members gain from their weekly partnership. But there is little possibility that Harry's fears will come true, particularly in the strange form into which he has cast them, and there is no particular reason to suspect that the men will suffer any psychic harm from their membership on the team, even when it loses. The important thing about team activity, after all, is the sense of oneness with one's fellow competitors long after the game is over, a sense of unity "that brings a dignity and romance to life which may never be extinguished." 156

The Changing Room has a working-class setting and elements that might permit the world it portrays to be seen as "a metaphor for a mechanized industrial society in which prodigious energy is expended for the profit of a few," as Billington does. 157 And there is clearly, as Billington says elsewhere, "an image of a class-ridden, deeply hierarchical
society," but not in the traditional Marxist sense. In the first place, the most pathetic, emptiest character in the play is Sir Frederick, the club chairman. Like the contractor, Ewbank, Sir Frederick is utterly excluded from the sense of companionship and purpose that the players share, and his uncertain gestures toward them are received with a reaction bordering on contempt. In the second place, the hierarchy which the men themselves take most seriously is the one that exists among themselves; the deference they pay to Owens, their captain, or Trevor, the only educated one among them, or Walsh, the flashy, good-natured old timer, is far more genuine than any respect they have for Sir Frederick, in spite of his social or financial position. Storey tentatively admits that his play could be made into a political statement, but he says he thinks little of such statements:

You could make The Changing Room a strong political statement by turning the Chairman and the Secretary into bad guys—simple caricatures. You'd get that effect very easily by changing the way those roles are played. You could also turn the players into exploited buffoons. That doesn't seem very interesting or relevant. The Chairman is just as desperate, driven into a corner, as the players who are allegedly being exploited.159

The point is, as Storey goes on to say, he simply does not believe that political gestures in art can be effective in the contemporary world:

Life has got too complex for making political gestures anymore. They don't work. . . . To look for vague unifying political gestures is romanticism.
Politics today is on a global scale— it's all compromise, conciliation, infiltration and subversion. 160

In fact, those writers who do produce literary works merely to illustrate an idea run the serious risk of producing dead works, Storey believes. "Plays which are mere illustrations of an idea never become real," he said recently to a critic from Plays and Players, besides which "the things which those writers are illustrating are based on outmoded, outworn social and political conventions." 161 Consequently, in The Changing Room, as in his earlier plays, Storey makes no specific political gestures. He prefers to remain a playwright who documents reality in meticulous detail in order to make a broader and more lasting statement.

Dramatic Technique

Given Storey's spare, uncluttered presentation of reality and Anderson's virtual choreographing of movement into a gripping visual tension, it is difficult to tell while watching the play where the talent of one begins and the other stops. "The real triumph," a critic says, "lies in the seamless blend of acting, writing and direction." 162 Production excellence aside, however, it is clear that with The Changing Room, Storey does very clean, polished writing, and this play is the purest example so far of the theatrical method that has come to be associated with his best work. That method means economy, the avoidance of artifice, and an abstinence from commentary by the author that is generally
refreshing. Irving Wardle described Storey's method in the following manner:

His assumption is that ordinary life is interesting enough in itself without being distorted to meet the requirements of plot, character, or editorial comment; and his chosen task is to isolate and shape social activities so that they become fascinating in themselves and occupy a zone where the barrier between everyday and dramatic life has dissolved.

Although the play seems simply to follow an average Rugby League team through an average game, it hardly limits itself to that. Ultimately what Storey achieves is neither naturalism nor realism, but a kind of supra-realism which mesmerizes. What occurs on the stage seems utterly real, but it is carefully constructed, tightly-controlled, and fascinating to watch. Undoubtedly a genuine Rugby League team would be much more ragged and less interesting than the crew on stage. Somehow, with his consummate skill at creating characters who are both concrete and abstract at the same time, Storey has transcended the traditional boundaries of dramatic shape and realistic surface. With The Contractor, as Dawson notes, Storey took a tentative step into this territory; The Changing Room is a "bold stride forward"—indeed, bolder than at any other time in his playwrighting career to date. With this style Storey manages to be both popular and avant-garde at the same time, a relatively rare achievement.

Given this special style, the frequently-mentioned nudity in The Changing Room is altogether natural and not at
all distracting; in fact, to have coyly tried to avoid nudity within the context of this play would have seriously violated its integrity. At one time or another, fifteen of the play's twenty-two characters strip casually and entirely to the buff, behaving as football players normally do in a dressing room. The undressing does not make them vulnerable, as nakedness usually does, but rather stronger. They need hide nor fear nothing in this special, protected world where only the initiated are admitted. In fact, there is a sense of theatrical—if not class—division between those who strip and those who don't, as Wardle explains:

In charge though they are, there is something excluded and almost pathetic about the two trainers exercising their rather shaky authority, and . . . the club's titled manager, bestowing fatherly congratulations and talking on man-to-man terms with the cleaner while hogging the only chair. In terms of vision and action, which is the play's language, they are lesser creatures than the others who hang up their suits and jeans, and pack into a communal bath after two hours in the mud.165

On a symbolic level, it is perhaps necessary for the players to entirely shed their everyday identities via their clothing in order to merge with the group in a kind of mystical rite, and then reassume those everyday identities through the same process. At any rate, no protests concerning nudity were heard from either the critical or the civic establishments, and only a very few theatregoers registered complaint through the news media. In summary, nudity in The Changing Room is a necessary, positive component of the artistic entity, and not a calculated bid for commercial
Concerning the source of his inspiration, Storey admits that he is no longer driven as he was earlier to explore psychological or social wounds, a tendency he now calls "theoretical and pretentious." The truest approach to a work of art, Storey implies, is to concentrate on what is rather than to grope after what should be. "I think that any play will mean to people whatever it is," Storey said recently. "It has to express whatever it is expressing and if it doesn't then it's bad luck. I don't accept the notion that by sticking portentous statements on to your material one is making it more meaningful." 166 In The Changing Room more than in any of his other dramas, Storey avoids such portentousness, and has been rewarded by fascinated audiences and critics wondering exactly what the play is. It is unfortunate that Storey did not learn the lesson earlier (even The Contractor is marred occasionally by epithets and succinct bits of class wisdom) and that he did not entirely retain the lesson, as critics of his plays following The Changing Room have complained.

What first seems to be a spontaneous joking and freewheeling conversational exchange in The Changing Room is actually "a carefully controlled visual kaleidoscope. In all his [recent] work Storey strikes a balance between solid structure and improvisation," one critic notes. 167 The rugby match itself—before, during, and after the game—
provides a natural three-act structure for the play. In addition, the play is structured into a kind of circular rhythm. It opens and closes with the sweeping of the locker room, and it presents a completed action from before its initiation until after its consummation. In addition, there is a movement within the play from cold to warmth, from complaint to satisfaction, from misery to joy. A realistic sense of time and place is created. In all, the structure of the play is fixed, like the frame of a picture, while life swarms ceaselessly inside the frame.

The sound of the play's language seems entirely authentic. To some degree Storey attempted phonetic spellings to indicate dialect, but a great deal is still left to actors' skill in the production of the peculiar Northern working-class dialect. A few critics have complained about the frequent use of the word "bloody" in the dialogue; this may indeed be to some degree a poetic device that Storey uses to establish verbal rhythm while he at the same time symbolizes the war-like nature of the game itself. Storey intentionally makes his plays "particular and precise," as he explained to one critic, but he does not think of them as simply realistic: "To do just a documentary play about Rugby would be very boring." Consequently, the language of The Changing Room, like the action, is undoubtedly selected and arranged to create a stronger effect than simple reality might.
Because of the obvious pitfalls involved in creating a cast of twenty-two separate characters from the same general background involved in the same activity, Storey tries very hard in the stage directions of The Changing Room to capture the uniqueness of each character. Characters, in both the published script and in the production program, are identified both by age and by team position, and players are listed by number. Each character is described carefully in the stage directions when he first enters. Patsy is described as "a smart, lightly built man, very well groomed, hair greased, collar of an expensive overcoat turned up. Brisk, businesslike, narcissistic, no evident sense of humour" (9-10), while Walsh is "a large, somewhat commanding figure" who "wears a dark suit with a large carnation in the button hole. . . . His age, thirty-five to forty. Stout, fairly weather-beaten" (19). Thus each character is given individual physical and personality characteristics. Of his characters, Storey says,

Each has a different conception of life. It grows to the extraordinary extent that twenty-two characters come in within about twenty minutes. They are not anonymous. They each have a particular view of life and a particular thing to say. 

Proper casting, however, is the real key to audience identification of each character during a performance. For the original production, Storey and Anderson together spent a difficult three-month period casting; the problem, Storey told an interviewer, was "matching physique and
temperament" as he had originally conceived and written them for each character. With *The Changing Room*, incidentally, Storey took longer than he normally does to write a play: five days, largely because he had trouble keeping close track of each member of the large cast.

In terms of the dialogue given them, characters are also identifiable, particularly when they belong to different social classes, like Thornton or Mackendrick, or when they pursue different kinds of activities, like Luke, the trainer, or Trevor, the schoolteacher. However, among the players, many of their lines sound alike. This is reasonable, of course, because of the tendency of the players to merge into one unit, the team, at least for the brief time they are together. This kind of camaraderie through language even results in somewhat awkward efforts by Sir Frederick Thornton to sound like 'one of the boys' in order to be part of the spirit around him. For example, when Harry deferentially calls him "Sir Frederick" at one point, Thornton replies, "Nay, no bloody titles here, old lad" (47). *The Changing Room* portrays a moment when men from different backgrounds and interests come together to engage in a mutual effort for a mutual purpose; by and large, solidarity and similarity in all respects are the order of the day.

Lindsay Anderson, with whom Storey says he shares an "unspoken intuition," directed the original production of *The Changing Room*, making it his fourth Storey play (of
five). Since *The Contractor*, and certainly since *Home*, theatre critics have been saying that when Storey and Anderson team up to produce a play, it is difficult to know where the talent of one stops and that of the other begins. One critic, echoing in essence the comments of many others, repeated that tribute again with *The Changing Room*:

Needless to say, Mr. Anderson's production is perfectly choreographed, keeping an exact balance between individual characters and group endeavors. Most importantly, it gives one the feeling one is watching yet another Saturday in the life of a constantly changing group rather than a gang of actors togging up for a theatrical occasion. . . . But the real triumph lies in the seamless blend of acting, writing, and direction.171

The question then becomes, is Lindsay Anderson necessary to a well-produced Storey play, particularly one of the latter three? Clearly the answer is no, since successful productions of *In Celebration*, *The Contractor*, *Home*, and *The Changing Room* have been mounted the world over without assistance from either Anderson or Storey. Visiting New York for the American premiere of *The Changing Room*, Storey praised Michael Rudman's production in an interview with Robert Wahls, and lightly called David Jenkins' set "the star of the show."172 All five of David Storey's early plays are difficult tasks from the standpoint of acting and direction, requiring both skill and intense effort, but experience has shown that they are not out of the reach of all but the most professional artists, as critics such as John Russell Taylor originally feared.
The similarity of the central action and some of the major characters to Arthur Machin and his general milieu in *This Sporting Life* was noted earlier in this chapter. The resemblance is more than a casual instance of a writer mining his own earlier work for material to use in a new medium. As this study recounted earlier, *This Sporting Life* grew out of Storey's despair at the sense of estrangement from himself and isolation from the people around him. Thus his first piece of published work deals with an insensitive creature of limited intelligence whose vision of himself and the world is dark and tunnel-like. Although early in the book Machin is treated with rough affection by his rugby teammates, his treatment of them leads first to competition and then to mutual savagery. He propels the woman he loves, Valerie Hammond, away from him, toward death, by his brutishness. Finally, in the rugby match described in the last pages of *This Sporting Life*, Machin comes to the terrifying realization that his physical prowess has begun to fail him and that he will shortly be a has-been, with genuine ties to no human being. The book ends with a kind of teeth-clenching despair.

Storey has telescoped many of the same elements into his fifth play, but the perspective and the spirit are entirely different. In the first place, Machin's world is filtered through the distortions of his limited understanding, while all the people involved in *The Changing Room* are
presented objectively, with almost no commentary. The character in the play most like Machin is Kendal, the worn-out forward. Kendal is clearly at the end of his career ("Too bloody old, you know," Mackendrick mutters (63).) when he suffers a facial injury similar to Machin's loss of teeth early in his career, under similar circumstances. Kendal is also, like Machin, big and stupid, and he has lost his wife to promiscuity as surely as Machin lost Mrs. Hammond to death. Kendal's "bloody wife," according to a sympathetic Luke, "has been round half the teams i' the bloody league, one time or another" (64). And in the last game described in This Sporting Life, because of Machin's personal failure, it is unclear which team wins the match; the general mood, in spite of the locker room horse-play afterwards, remains dark and uncertain. Storey's first novel is about failure.

His fifth play, however, is about success and is the first of his published work to clearly be so. The Changing Room is about team, rather than individual, effort, and the team definitely wins. The spirit of the team members is a kind of gritty positiveness at the opening and sheer elation by the play's end. In short, Storey demonstrates in The Changing Room that he has come full cycle from his first to his eighth work, and is finally released from dead-end isolation and from his sense of life as an alienating experience. With The Changing Room, Storey's early work is complete.
FOOTNOTES


5 Michael Billington, "Dramatizing Work," London Times, April 7, 1970, p. 2


11 The Cast of the original production as provided in the printed script is as follows:

Kay . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Philip Stone
Marshall . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Jim Norton
Ewbank . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Bill Owen
Fitzpatrick . . . . . . . . . . . . T. P. McKenna
Bennett . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Norman Jones
Paul . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Martin Shaw
Claire . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Judy Liebert
Glendenning . . . . . . . . . . . . John Antrobus
Old Ewbank . . . . . . . . . . . . Billy Russell
Maurice . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Christopher Call
Old Mrs. Ewbank . . . . . . . . Adele Strong
Mrs. Ewbank . . . . . . . . . . Constance Chapman
The distinction between realism and naturalism is often blurred; in fact, the term naturalism is often used to describe any form of extreme realism, although this usage is a loose one. Thrall and Hibbard's *A Handbook to Literature* (New York: Odyssey Press, 1960) makes the distinction in the following manner: Naturalism, it states, tends to differ from realism, not in its attempt to be accurate in the portrayal of its materials but in the selection and organization of those materials, selecting, not the commonplace but the representative and so arranging the materials that the structure of the work reveals the pattern of ideas ... which forms the author's view of the nature of experience. (p. 302).

In short, for Storey the actual work done on stage in *The Contractor* is not important for itself but rather for what it reveals about a larger reality; that is, the relationship between human beings engaged in a joint project.


28 Kalem, "On to the Triple Crown," p. 84.


30 Kalem, "On to the Triple Crown," p. 84.

31 Oliver, "David Storey's Tent Show," p. 108.


33 Weightman, "Life and Death of the Common Man," p. 53.


37 Hayman, p. 51.

38 Hayman, p. 51.


42 Weightman, "Life and Death of the Common Man," p. 52.

43 Weightman, "Life and Death of the Common Man," p. 52.

44 Oliver, "David Storey's Tent Show," p. 108.


57 Kerr, one of America's best-known drama critics, some years ago outlined in his book How Not To Write a Play his objections to "plays of the Chekhovian tradition" which "open in a timeless twilight, announcing that nothing will change. Characters move in longing, recoil in inhibition, freeze into paralysis . . . resign themselves to frustration." Yet drama, Kerr believes, should exist "for the precise purpose of mirroring, exploring, illuminating, and in general tipping our hats to the fact of change." (Walter Kerr, How Not to Write a Play (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955), pp. 101-102, 134.)


60 Watts, "Two Memorable Performances, p. 18.
The cast of the original production as cited in the script is as follows:

**Harry**.................John Gielgud
**Jack**....................Ralph Richardson
**Marjorie**................Dandy Nichols
**Kathleen**.................Mona Washbourne
**Alfred**..................Graham Weston

In the American production the part of Marjorie was played by Jessica Tandy.

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68 Tickner, Theatre Print Programme: 'The Farm.'
70 Taylor, "Home," p. 32.
71 Hewes, "Knights at a Round Table," p. 164.
75 Hewes, "Knights at a Round Table," p. 164.
76 "Lost Avalon," p. 68.
78 David Storey, *Home* (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1971), p. 54. All further references to this edition will be included in the text.
82 Barnes, "Theatre: 'Home' Arrives," p. 4l.
85 Barnes, "Theatre: 'Home' Arrives," p. 4l.
87 Ansorge, "The Theatre of Life," p. 35.
88 Ansorge, "The Theatre of Life," p. 35.
89 Barnes, "Theatre: 'Home' Arrives," p. 4l.
90 Flatly, p. 5.
91 Flatly, p. 5.
92 Ansorge, "The Theatre of Life," p. 35.
93 "Lost Avalon," p. 68.
94 Wardle, "Flawless Tone," p. 8d.
95 Hayman, p. 53.
98 Hayman, p. 52.
101 Kerr, Like Pinter, Except . . . ." p. II-1.
Because Storey is so precise and authentic with his use of detail in *The Changing Room*, even a casual reader or viewer needs to know the meaning of certain terms and designations before he can fully appreciate what is happening in the play. Indeed, programs distributed at performances of *The Changing Room* contained nearly a full page of explanations to aid the uninitiated. In her article for *Sports Illustrated*, Martha Duffy provides a very helpful explanation of rugby in relatively simple terms:

> It is about the roughest sport left, with more tackling than in American football, done by players who wear no headgear and virtually no protective padding. There are 13 men on a side: six forwards
who try to get the ball at each scrum (a savage close-quarters battle that starts any given action) and then pass it backward to the seven backs, who can run with it or kick it. There is no forward passing and no blocking to protect the ballcarrier from being tackled. The clock runs constantly except where there are disabling injuries, and only two substitutes per game are allowed. The field is called a pitch, a score is a try and worth three points. The kick, which is often attempted from a tortuously sharp angle, is worth two points.


121 Catherine Hughes, "Four Hit Plays: A London Review," America, April 8, 1972, p. 379.

122 The cast of the Royal Court production as it is given in the script is listed below. Names of cast members of the Long Wharf production are listed in parentheses.

Harry . . . . John Barrett (Louis Beachner)
Patsy . . . Jim Norton (Doug Stender)
Fielding . . David Daker (Rex Robbins)
Mic Morley . . Edward Peel (Jack Schultz)
Kendal . . . . Warren Clark (John Lithgow)
Luke . . . Don McKillop (Jake Dengel)
Fenchurch . . Peter Childs (William Rhys)
Colin Jagger . Mark McManus (John Tillinger)
Trevor . . Michael Elphrick (George Hearn)
Walsh . . . Edward Judd (Tom Atkins)
Sandford . . Brian Glover (John Braden)
Barry Copley . Geoffrey Hinsliffe (James Sutorious)
Jack Stringer . David Hill (Richard D. Masur)
Bryan Atkinson . Peter Schofield (James Hummert)
Billy Spencer . Alun Armstrong (Mark Winkworth)
John Clegg . . Matthew Guinness (Ron Siebert)
Frank Moore . . John Price (Alan Castner)
Danny Crosby . Barry Keegan (George Ede)
Cliff Owens . . Frank Mills (Robert Murch)
Tallon . . . Brian Lawson (Peter DeMaio)
Thornton . . Paul Dawkins (William Swetland)
Mackendrick . . John Rae (Ian Martin)


Martha Duffy, p. 68.

Barnes, "'Changing Room' Opens at Morosco," p. 37.

David Storey, *The Changing Room* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972), p. 11. All further references to this edition will be included in the text.


Machin carries with him to the dentist the Christmas toys he has bought for Mrs. Hammond's children.

Barnes, "'Changing Room' Opens at Morosco," p. 37.

141 Cahn, p. 11.


144 Cahn, p. 11.

145 Duffy, p. 69.

146 Ansorge, "Theatre of Life," p. 35.

147 Kerr, "The Changing Room": Something Like Magic . . . .," p. 5.


149 Drew, p. 15.

150 Kerr, "The Changing Room": Something Like Magic . . . .," p. 5.

151 It is only fair to note that actors do not always deliver lines exactly as they are written in the script. The line Kerr refers to may have occurred as an ad lib.

152 Kerr, "The Changing Room": Something Like Magic . . . .," p. 5.

153 Dawson, p. 30.

154 The offstage crowd, unseen but often heard roaring its responses to the entrances and plays the men execute, is also a character albeit one with a limited function. The crowd becomes a symbol of collective humanity for whom the team engages in combat, both for the crowd's entertainment and as their representatives.


156 Cahn, p. 11.

279


159 Ansorge, "Theatre of Life," p. 35.

160 Ansorge, "Theatre of Life," p. 35.

161 Ansorge, "Theatre of Life," p. 32.

162 Billington, November 10, 1971, p. 10.

163 Wardle, "Individuals in a Team," p. 12.

164 Dawson, p. 30.

165 Wardle, "Individuals in a Team," p. 12.

166 Ansorge, "Theatre of Life," p. 33.

167 Duffy, p. 69.


CONCLUSION

The life of a writer is always implied in his work, but more for David Storey than for many other artists, his background has influenced his choice of craft, his literary themes, the styles and genre within which he has chosen to work. Bearing his background like a birthmark, Storey has repeatedly represented himself in the press as a child of the working-class who was dispossessed of the heritage and sense of belonging that his class membership should have provided him by parents desperately ambitious for him to become educated and scale the social ladder. In order to facilitate that advance, Storey's father went daily deep into coalmines, risking his life and health, a sacrifice which he would not let his son forget. Learning from his culture that only physical work is admirable and that artistic interests are a ridiculous waste of time, and learning from his parents (who shared the culture's views) that it was his responsibility to his family to move into the professional class (where work is far more intellectual than physical), the young Storey, inclined toward fantasy in order to escape his poor living conditions and possessed of an inherent talent for drawing, entered young manhood extremely confused. In a recent interview Storey restated
this dilemma:

My father . . . a short man in a dark countryside of slag heaps and polluted rivers . . . was the son of a miner but he'd taught himself things like algebra. And he was very keen that we boys, there were four of us but one died of privation, should get out and have good middleclass lives.

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 the middle class. And yet, everytime 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

Consequently, the young Storey suffered not only from confusion but from guilt—guilt for his father's sacrifice, guilt for not being genuinely interested in his father's ambitions for him, guilt for his artistic impulses which were misunderstood by his family and scorned by his culture.

At seventeen Storey signed a rugby contract because of "the guilt again. I had to make money. I couldn't bear the thought of father bent over in the pit and me sitting around painting pictures."2 Shortly after signing the rugby contract, Storey won a scholarship to an art school in London and for two increasingly desperate years tried to live both lives simultaneously—the working-class footballer in the north, the sensitive art student in London.

Virtually at a point of collapse at the end of the two years, Storey resigned rugby and devoted himself to art. But the intense guilt for being unable to please both his parents and his class and his consequent confusion of
identity led him into the literary medium. Preoccupied with a feeling that he was two separate people, neither of whom could function effectively in isolation, Storey hoped to become a writer, a profession he saw as one which provided "an identity between the inner and outer man."^{3}

Not only did Storey's early dilemma drive him to write, it provided his subject matter. As this study has recounted, in his first three novels Storey meticulously explores the private worlds of his two natures—or of any human being's two natures, since there is a spiritual/physical dichotomy "which runs through the whole fabric of Western society," according to Leonard Radcliffe. Storey tried to isolate first the physical aspect of human nature in Arthur Machin and then the spiritual (or internal) aspect in Margaret Thorpe in order to study how each nature operates with other human beings in everyday life. Again, Storey's own background provided a milieu through which his characters moved: the insulated, defensive, puritanical, non-intellectual working-class society of northern England. When in his third novel Storey moved away from the meticulous, concrete, realistic style and out of the milieu of the first two books, he lost control of his art. In Radcliffe the theme of the physical/spiritual, masculine/feminine, internal/external split natures grotesquely dominates plot, character, dialogue and imagery, until the book is virtually a parody of Storey's early concerns.
Realizing that he had reached a stalemate in terms of this early approach, Storey turned eventually to the stage in order to approach the problem, still unsolved, from a different standpoint. By this time, it is safe to say, Storey's original impetus to write was transformed from a groping after personal solutions to an interest in the literary medium itself and an interest in developing a vision that could encompass the dilemma of all human beings—how can one live a full, satisfied life in spite of the necessity of enduring a dull, everyday existence, fraught with frustration, loneliness, and in many cases, personal privation? Gradually in the plays, from The Restoration of Arnold Middleton to The Changing Room, Storey explores this question, approaching it from several angles, yet moving inexorably toward the same conclusion in each case, a conclusion which is vividly dramatized in the fifth play. The only viable solution to the dilemma of everyday existence, its loneliness and frustration, is to find a secure place in a social structure that exists not to feed upon itself but to accomplish some necessary and specified goal. This is both the situation and the message of The Changing Room. Curiously enough, or perhaps not surprisingly after all, Storey arrives at the end of his early work with a vision that accomplishes several things: it offers a solution to his own early personal dilemma, it suggests a means by which all human beings might best live their lives, and it is
remarkably similar to the general outlines of the close-knit, conformist, supportive working-class society from which Storey felt so painfully alienated as a young man. Perhaps one can say that in a sense, Storey's early work is a kind of philosophical road map that points forward to a social structure and a manner of living that he—and a good many other people—had thought was left behind. Ultimately Storey emerges as an artist with traditional concerns and conservative attitudes. Several years ago the playwright described himself as "the sort of man who lives Left while thinking Right." 

Storey's literary style underwent a change not only between the novels *Flight into Camden* and *Radcliffe* but also after he began writing plays. His early novels and his first two plays, *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* and *In Celebration*, are explicit in what they attempt to say, full of editorial comment, deeply personal, and linguistically adroit. Storey describes this as being "terribly anxious about the material." The violence in *Radcliffe*, for instance, he continues, "was very theoretical and pretentious." The same might be said also for Arnold Middleton's plunge into witty, blathering insanity because he has failed to live up to his mother's expectations and for Andrew Shaw's virtriotic denunciations of his mother in *In Celebration* for behaving, after all, in a manner dictated by her love and concern for her family. However, beginning with
The Contractor and following through Home to The Changing Room Storey steps back from his material, becoming more impersonal and allowing his characters to speak and act for themselves. "Now," Storey says of his work,

I tend to let audiences make their own decisions about the ways in which they interpret the plays. You might say that this shows a greater maturity, that I'm more distant from the material. . . . These plays are certainly less turgid, less anxious in their use of material. 6

Certainly the last three plays under consideration here are not fundamentally literary in conception, as Storey considered his first two plays. The Contractor, Home, and The Changing Room are rather highly theatrical, conceived as a series of images, less totally dependent on words than on movement and the accomplishment of a specific task. All three of them seem like skeletons on the printed page and depend to a great extent for their effect on what happens on the stage during performance. This is not to say that Storey has joined the theatrical fringe where sounds and improvised movement often substitute for coherent meaning—not at all. Rather than artfully construct a plot and carefully lace nearly every line with some portentous implication or other (as Storey does in The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, for instance), in these latter three plays Storey seems to slice off a piece of life, shape and polish it until it fits comfortably on a stage (and is fascinating to watch), but without shattering its sense of reality. Even in Home, which seems peculiar among his plays, Storey uses the same
approach—it is just that the reality he depicts is an unfamiliar one; its rhythms beat on a slightly different level than the one on which most of us exist. With The Contractor and The Changing Room, Storey presents a slice of external reality; Home provides a view into an internal, insulated world that has its own logic and seems distorted only when it is compared to external realities. Perhaps so many people found the play so enormously disturbing precisely because it stirred their internal realities in a new and unexpected way.

On the contemporary British literary scene, Storey's early style as a playwright is relatively distinctive. Ronald Bryden speaks of his "modern still-lives" such as Home and The Changing Room which "reverberate within a real experience of Britain." In fact, the three plays for which Storey is best known and which consequently are identified as typical of his style, are carefully-polished, minutely-constructed pictures of contemporary working-class England. Like the young Radcliffe, Storey might be said to draw "minute figures and landscapes" which perhaps "temper his sense of unease" (47). Working within the mainstream of twentieth-century tradition, Storey's first two plays, crowded with distinctive--almost oppressive--detail, are best described as domestic dramas in the Ibsen mold. The latter three plays of Storey's early work derive from the Chekhovian tradition. Understated, precise, and
tightly-structured, these plays suggest a society which is fragmented and humiliated in its decline, yet with the potential for endurance—and even joy.

Consequently Storey is unlike so many of his contemporaries who seem extravagant in their use of language and situation. A great deal has been made of the growing violence reflected in British drama. In his closing remarks in *The Second Wave*, Taylor observes that the most consistent theme to be found among recent playwrights is "the idea of physical and emotional violence" and suggests that their work "may be . . . a drama of despair." In contrast, Storey is a playwright who avoids dealing directly with violence. His plays are muted, inward-turning. If violence occurs in them, it is internalized violence, inflicted by a character on himself. By and large Storey prefers, as he said concerning *In Celebration*, to examine what is left "after the bomb goes off." After all, "the beautiful and the terrible thing is that the birds still sing." For the artist who has "washed his hands of the world, in an act of self-_absolution," it must then be his task "to come back and reclaim it. For the crucified the resurrection is the thing of the deepest meaning." Thus while the work of many of his contemporaries—particularly those on "the fringe," as well as those of the second wave such as Bond and Rudkin—reflects grotesqueness and decay at the root, Storey continues to deal with average, everyday experience and how it
might be pleasurably endured. For the most fundamental human problem, as Storey seems to see it, is not pushing social boundaries as far as they go, but establishing social boundaries that provide security and satisfaction in a changing and unstable world.

Unlike major contemporaries like Wesker or Pinter, Storey is not and never was a man of the theatre. He was first a painter who turned his painter's eye to the description of fictional worlds. Believing himself a novelist who writes conventional novels in the tradition of the "English social novelists," Storey earlier wrote and continues to write novels which are long, dense, and detailed. Although he occasionally speaks of himself as a novelist ("The sentimental attachment is always to a novel"), Storey's experience as a playwright has proved easier, more successful, and more satisfying than his attempts to write novels. "To me, a play is like a holiday," he told one interviewer. In short, playwrighting remains for Storey something of a new experience, and it is still uncertain in which literary direction he will go. In the few years since 1971, he has published three plays and two novels. Drama therefore continues to hold an edge on his artistic production. Perhaps Storey will always be torn between the two genres.

One may reasonably ask where Storey is now, almost three years after The Changing Room appeared, heralding the completion, in this writer's estimation, of a total vision
and the end of his early work. Unlike many recent young playwrights in Britain like Delaney or Rudkin who have emerged with highly praised early work and then faded away into inactivity for a decade, Storey has continued to produce literary work at a remarkable rate. Still driven by a touch of guilt and by early work habits, Storey puts in an eight-hour day as if he were punching a clock at a mine entrance, regardless of whether he produces anything he considers valuable. Work is Storey's personal ethic as well as one of his major themes. Consequently during the years from 1971 through 1974, Storey finished three plays—*Cromwell*, *The Farm*, and *Life Class*—as well as two novels—*Pasmore* and *A Temporary Life*. The plays were each produced by the Royal Court and moved regularly to the West End. In fact, Storey's dramatic opus has made him one of the Court's most valuable properties, and his name has come to be very closely associated with that theatre. However, since *The Changing Room*, Storey's plays have been damned by faint praise, and none has enjoyed a particularly long run. Critical opinion, which peaked with *The Changing Room*, has taken a slow and almost embarrassed slide downward, to the point that *Life Class*, the latest play, was dealt with rather severely. Of the three latest plays, *The Farm* has just recently been produced in the United States by the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.
Perhaps a brief summary of these later works is in order. Two years after *The Changing Room* first opened, Storey brought out *Cromwell* at the Royal Court in August of 1973. For the first time in several years Lindsay Anderson did not direct for Storey (*Cromwell* was directed by Anthony Page) but Jocelyn Herbert designed the show as usual. *Cromwell* is quite a radical departure in subject matter and form for Storey, although many of his same themes and motifs recur. Set in Ireland during the time of the English Civil War, *Cromwell* concerns the changing fortunes of a group of Catholic sympathizers during Ireland's occupation by Cromwell's Protestant forces. Chief among this group is a philosophically-inclined farmer named Proctor and his wife Joan. What Procter discovers during the course of the play is that giving one's allegiance to political causes is a futile gesture: both sides of any struggle are equally vicious. "One thing I've found of causes . . . ," Proctor tells a soldier, "No cause is greater than its means." Retreating from political involvement in disillusionment, Proctor and Joan work to carve out a private life of their own on an abandoned farm. The work is satisfying because it absorbs their fears and provides them with sustenance and safety. But the safety is illusory. The war invades their world again, destroying all they've built up, forcing them to either take sides or flee. Proctor vacillates in despair while Joan urges him to join with her and rebuild again:
"Let leaders lead: direct us as they will--support the good, and fight against the ill... what can't be taken is our joy in work..." (73). Proctor cannot bear to remain perpetually a victim, however. "Well [my heart] is turned to some vaster place..." (73). After illumination comes to him, Proctor decides to transcend the narrow existence in which he and Joan have suffered, and the two of them are ferried across a river by a mysterious Boatman to a safe shore on the other side. This journey is one, according to Joan, in which "for the first time in our lives we have no turning back," but Proctor does not fear because as the boat approaches the opposite shore he thinks he sees "others moving in those fields that we knew before" (79).

_Cromwell_ is written in blank verse and modeled structurally on Shakespeare. ("The main idea was of a constantly moving set with scenes being made up of perhaps only a few lines. I wanted to get away from the idea of a static play," Storey told Peter Ansorge in _Plays and Players_.14) However, in spite of his effort to write a historical romance full of action, Storey seems instead to have created a play with wooden characters who live more in an intellectual dimension than a real one. The play is a poetic allegory which strains a bit too hard toward a universal gesture: the specific detail that is so telling and which so delighted audiences in _The Contractor_ and _The Changing Room_ is completely lost within the widely-drawn outlines of
character and plot in *Cromwell*. Although earlier motifs reappear—the idiot figure from *The Contractor* and *Home*, the strong domestic woman around whom the family is built, the satisfaction of work—Storey does seem to question in this play the proposition he made in his last: *Can* a man carve out a place for himself through work and will despite life's vicissitudes? Proctor rebuilds three times in *Cromwell*, but refuses to begin again the fourth time despite Joan's pleas that he do so. "I'll have no more of living as it comes... I must have goals, and ways and means... if men are victims what value are the things they struggle to?" (73). In short, Procter discovers that men are sometimes subject to external forces so powerful that the only way the forces can be overcome is to embrace a larger reality—to choose death, and thus retain a measure of dignity.

In his next play, *The Farm*, produced at the Royal Court in September of 1973, only a month after *Cromwell*'s premiere, Storey returned to the domestic format of *In Celebration*, and to his liaison with director Lindsay Anderson. *The Farm* deals with a northern working-class family, the Slatterys, caught in a dreary, loveless home leading deadening lives. The embittered father is slowly drinking himself to death while his wife, a cold and private woman, pretends an affection for him which is painfully unreal in order to preserve the family structure. The couple has four grown children, three of whom— all unmarried daughters— live at
home, while the only son, a would-be poet, visits during the course of the play to announce his impending marriage to a forty-year old divorcee. The family—particularly the father, whose relationship with his son has never been good—reacts with shock and disapproval. However, they prepare to meet his fiancee with graciousness, when the son Arthur arrives to announce that she has decided not to come and has suddenly returned to her home. The family is stunned and angered that Arthur would play what they consider a thoughtless game with them, and the old man sees in the incident further evidence of his artistic son's worthlessness:

The invisible bloody event: the story of his life. . . . Great bloody things that he's been and gone and done . . . only when you bloody well get theer: nothing but a puff o' smoke.15

Slattery, of course, a typical representative of his class, believes that "Work's the only bloody thing that's real" (III-I-11). Consequently, he totally rejects this puzzling son who travels about working at odd jobs, writing, and consort- ing with other artists.

The Farm is probably the only work by Storey which deals in such detail with multiple female characters. The three daughters are each carefully individualized and each is caught at a specific moment in her development. Again, Slattery is puzzled and frustrated by his daughters because all of them reject the domestic role. Because he believes that for a woman "to have babies when she's young . . . comes naturally as breathing" (I-11), the youngest daughter
Brenda accuses him of seeing his daughters "like some sort of primeval cattle. Cows." Slattery replies:

Nay, coos know what they're bloody after. . . . I don't think any one of you know one end of a man from 'bloody t'other. . . . Look at Wendy. Married sixteen months. . . . Then leaves. . . . A bloody doctor. God Christ: I'd almost marry the man myself. . . . And for bloody Jenny. By God: I've heard of flitting from flower to flower . . . she never even stops to rest (I-14).

Brenda too muses that she will probably never marry because she prefers to be free.

Wendy, the oldest daughter, summarizes the plight of these latter-day three sisters from a different perspective:

Brenda battles with her social ideals . . . entirely unrealistic. . . . I battle with me sense of inferiority in being a woman. . . . Jenny battles with . . . lasciviousness . . . sexuality . . . acquisitiveness . . . (III-I-18).

Brenda's major ambition is to escape the dreary North and her bitter family, but Wendy explains to Brenda her own earlier experience with the same impulse:

I couldn't wait, you know, to get away. . . . But once I'd got away I missed it all. . . . Manure . . . the stench of the animals and hay . . . the house itself. . . . I don't know what we're doing here . . . but I don't know where I'd go if I had to leave (I-30).

Thematically The Farm reinforces earlier Storey judgments: a unit of individuals supporting each other, even against the odds of internal conflicts and outside attractions, is stronger and more secure than the individual who tries to create his life in isolation, as the figure of Arthur proves. Storey seems to have some sympathy with Arthur's plight, but he also joins in Slattery's denunciation of a non-productive
However, for the first time Storey deals positively with women and comes out decidedly in favor of the independent woman, recognizing at the same time the social pressures and potential emptiness that she may have to face. The domestic woman, Mrs. Slattery, is treated with some sympathy as well. The women of The Farm are far more attractive figures than either man—father or son.

Traditionally structured and written to be realistically staged, The Farm bears certain resemblances to In Celebration. The situation is generally the same—a sort of family reunion, although it is unplanned. The major conflict suggested early in the play (the meeting of the Slatterys with Arthur's middle-aged fiancée) is also averted, as is Andrew's confrontation with his mother, and a lesser conflict is substituted as a climax to the early events in the play. This substitution is, of course, Slattery's denunciation of Arthur and his subsequent drunken tirade. The lesser confrontation is not quite as interesting as the meeting with the fiancée might have been and it mutes the emotional effect of the play. Arthur's reluctant agreement to remain at home for the night after he has been brutally denounced by his father serves to further soften the dramatic punch.

The Farm is a much less autobiographical play than In Celebration—only the setting and the cultural values are
familiar. Characters vary significantly, not only in terms of sex but in emotional attitudes they display toward one another. *In Celebration* is a play about reconciliation, about learning to cope with one's own problems without inflicting pain on others, even if they may have helped create the problems; *The Farm* sketches a portrait of a family whose tongues are often sharp and bitter but who are locked together in an unspoken pact which ultimately provides them with a kind of security.

Storey's latest play, *Life Class*, opened at the Royal Court in April, 1974. It too was directed by Lindsay Anderson and designed by Jocelyn Herbert. For the first time in Storey's career as a playwright, this combination of talent did not assure positive critical responses. *Life Class* seems a return to the general external style of Storey's earlier successes, what Irving Wardle calls his "work-play style," but critics were generally negative.

"The end product does not carry the same conviction as Storey's other plays," complained one critic.16 Another said flatly, "My reaction to David Storey's latest play, *Life Class*, is that I did not believe a word of it."17 Others complained that the play is more in the nature of a rather dull dialectic on art and life rather than the selection of a situation with some intrinsic interest which is allowed to develop on its own terms to some natural conclusion. One critic describes the play this way:
Storey takes a naked figure and sets about it a group of student artists, a posse of teachers and a commentator. This latter character, a teacher himself, doesn't do anything save for spinning bon mots, bestowing mordant observations and perpetrating doggerel on the walls. But he initiates one event, the violation of the figure of being, which turns out to be a mock, not a real, violation. And, in consequence, he and the art school part company. However, Irving Wardle of the Times defends Life Class on the grounds that Storey has extended his work-play genre "to include plot and it is a plot which grows organically out of the play's theme." He continues:

The theme is expressed in the title pun. Here is an event which is known as life class; but what has art got to do with life? Not that Storey ever states it in those banal terms. He extends it with a variety and intricacy of design, not excluding the recognition that he himself is producing an art work. There is the question of perception: whether the model is seen as a naked woman or as an object displacing a given amount of space. In his most recent play, Storey seems to be pursuing, Pirandellian-like, a question which surfaced in Radcliffe: what is the relationship between art and life, and what specifically is the relationship between the artist and his work?

Allot, the art teacher who is the central character of this play, "has moved on from producing traditional art objects, and sees himself as a practitioner of avant-garde events." The event Allot precipitates during the course of the play, the mock-rape of the model, turns out to be a non-event, an invisible event, perhaps, similar to Arthur Slattery's non-introduction of his fiancee, whose existence,
in fact, is never determined. At any rate, the figure of Allot in *Life Class* is similar to that of Arthur Slattery as an artist who has no comfortable place in the modern world because he has no real function. "To Allot himself, art is useless, as he proves during the play," Wardle notes.

The figure of Allot also bears striking resemblance to Colin Freestone, the central character of Storey's most recent novel, *A Temporary Life*. That book deals with an alienated and mildly antagonistic art teacher who spends a dreary year at a small provincial art school, goading his students and several locals into acts of retaliation against himself and each other while he waits with some impatience for his mad, institutionalized wife to be declared sane enough to be released. The book ends with an enormous bonfire, a symbol of both destruction and cleansing. Storey's future beyond this point is not at all clear, since *A Temporary Life* is his latest published work.

Storey's other recent novel, *Pasmore*, bears startling similarities to his second, *Flight into Camden*. *Pasmore* deals again with virtually the same frustrated love triangle and the same characters, only this time they have different names and the story is told from the man's point of view rather than from the perspective of the "other woman." After much agonizing over his sense of alienation and purposelessness and after the infliction of extreme pain on his uncomprehending family, Pasmore returns to them
because they are the only tangible evidence of a productive life. The house and family are his, he has worked to create them, and ultimately they are all he possesses. In addition, his responsibility is to care for them. "You owe things to people. You do. You can't go shrugging them off," Pasmore's mother tells him. Again, the value of the family unit and of upholding responsibilities and traditions are reaffirmed.

Storey's situation at the present moment is unclear. With his original impetus to write calmed, with his favorite themes explored perhaps to the point of exhaustion, Storey may be in danger of going around in diminishing circles. Others have questioned this possibility as well. The Plays and Players "Playguide" for June, 1974, notes ominously in it brief sketch of Life Class, then running in London: "Don't be surprised if Life Class turns out to be Storey's last play for some while."

A quick glance at the development of British drama and theatre over the past two decades indicates that the first New Wave which swept through the arts, particularly the theatre, in 1956 behind Osborne, Amis, Wain, Sillitoe, Wesker, and others has been followed by a series of smaller and less easily distinguished ones. John Russell Taylor acknowledged that a second major wave of new talent had swept over the stage by 1970 in his study entitled The Second Wave. He counted Storey among its members, in
addition to playwrights such as Peter Nichols, David Mercer, Charles Wood, Edward Bond, Tom Stoppard and Joe Orton. In the latter part of that study Taylor dealt with a number of young playwrights, at that moment newcomers to the second wave, who had not yet written enough to fully establish their credentials. The work of these Taylor grouped into general categories and discussed briefly. Among these newcomers were such names as Howard Benton, David Pinner, David Milner, David Halliwell and Heathcote Williams.

Now, three or four years later, some members have moved away from the fringe of the second wave and become a tentative third wave, now occupying the pages of Plays and Players, the slick journal of the contemporary British theatre, and dominating its published scripts. On the outskirts of this third group is a disorganized group of companies and writers referred to casually as "the fringe" by the professional theatre practitioners, both young and old, whose observations appear on the pages of Plays and Players. Among those who currently occupy that nebulous zone called the fringe are such playwrights as Howard Benton and David Hare (who have recently been successful enough with Magnificence that they stand in danger of being absorbed by the large group), new institutions like Inter-Action and Welfare State modeled on the examples of the Open Theatre and the La Mama Troupe, along with startling individual pieces like AC/DC by Heathcote Williams. The status of that
fringe, like all experimental movements, is uncertain at the moment.

Clearly Storey was not part of the theatrical New Wave which first emerged in the mid-fifties. In fact, his first novel was not published until four years after Look Back in Anger first appeared. By the time Storey did enter the theatre in 1967, the Angry Young Men had created a theatrical establishment of their own, and that establishment was—and still is—represented primarily by John Osborne, Arnold Wesker (in spite of his long silence), John Arden, and particularly Harold Pinter, with playwrights such as Keith Waterhouse, Willis Hall, Bernard Kops, Shelagh Delaney and others considered respectable members as well. Early members of this group were tagged the "kitchen sink" school, with their insistence on the exact depiction of the squalid details of domestic working-class life. Since those early days, however, nearly all of those artists have departed from such social realism to experiment variously with epic style, exotic locations, and poetic languages. Of these members of the New Wave, Osborne and Pinter have best weathered time and distance, although others have continued to produce, often in the television medium, and still others have recently made comeback attempts, including Arden (Island of the Mighty) and Wesker (The Old Ones).

Storey, although he never belonged to this group, has been called by some critics its heir, perhaps because of his
continued preoccupation with the working-class milieu, the insoluble problems posed by family conflicts, and his generally traditional approach to theatrical form. Peter Ansorge agrees: "The Storey opus has proved to be the one vital link with the early naturalistic days of Osborne, Wesker and Arden." Of the group to which Storey did belong—or rather the group with which he emerged—which included playwrights like Edward Bond, Joe Orton, David Rudkin, David Mercer and Tom Stoppard, he has been one of the most productive and consistently successful. In fact, Storey has become something of an establishment figure at the Royal Court:

... I do see myself belonging to a tradition of writing at the Court. It's a vaguely humanist tradition and very hard to define beyond that. It tends to work by empirical rather than theoretical methods. ... Compared with what the conventional theatre does it contains a vaguely radical, slightly didactic style of theatre.  

Furthermore, Storey sees himself as part of "a sort of second phase" introduced to the British theatre by the late William Gaskill which included "writers like Edward Bond, Christopher Hampton and myself ... after the initial impetus had begun to wane rather dangerously." Storey is a fixture of the avant-garde establishment, however, not to any extent of the commercial establishment.

At the present moment it does seem as if Storey is treading water and looking about to find his way to a new shore. Perhaps the peculiar Cromwell presaged a start in a
new direction for him; one cannot say. Speculating on the
future of a playwright who is perhaps in the throes of
changes is not a profitable task. However, David Storey is
unquestionably a man of talent, as he has proved repeatedly,
particularly with *The Contractor*, *Home*, and *The Changing
Room*, the three plays which most epitomize Storey's particu­
lar talent for merging art and life. The skill is there,
the artist has matured— one hopes that he can maintain the
excitement he has always seemed to have of a sense of truth
to be communicated, a new vision to be shared.
FOOTNOTES


2 Wahls, p. 1.

3 Wahls, p. 1.


13 David Storey, Cromwell (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), p. 66. All subsequent references to this edition will be included in the text.

14 Ansorge, "The Theatre of Life," p. 32.

15 David Storey, The Farm (London: International Famous Artists, 1973), Act III, Scene I, p. 17. All subsequent references to this play will be included in the text. Since this unpublished script is numbered from Page One at the beginning of each act, text references will provide the
act, scene and page numbers. Thus "III-I-17" indicates Act Three, Scene One, page 17.


21 After she learns that the fiancee will not arrive, Jenny says to Arthur, "I even wondered . . . whether this woman of yours, Arthur . . . actually exists . . ." Wendy adds, "We'll have to take your word for it," to which Arthur hesitantly replies, "That's right . . . You will" (III-I-21).


26 Ansorge, "The Theatre of Life," p. 36.

27 Ansorge, "The Theatre of Life," p. 36.
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In Celebration


Life Class


Radcliffe


The Restoration of Arnold Middleton


This Sporting Life


