A READING OF THE NOVELS

OF

JAMES COURAGE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines in detail the eight novels of James Courage (1903-1963) expatriate New Zealand novelist. The Introduction provides some biographical details of the author's family, his early life in Canterbury province, and his subsequent years in England. The case is made for seeing each of Courage's novels as part of a developing canon of work in which the themes of family relationships and the ongoing struggle for the child to break free of emotional ties with the parents constantly recur and are imaginatively reworked. The relationship between the mother and son is seen to be of particular concern to the author. While some other literary influences are considered, especially that of D.H. Lawrence, the ideas of Sigmund Freud are seen as a major influence on Courage's thinking about primal relationships between parent and child, and about the establishment of sexual orientation. Some possible reasons for Courage's decision to live in England rather than New Zealand are suggested. The attempt is made to justify seeing the author as a "New Zealand" novelist in spite of his expatriate status. In this process of justification the ideas of H.S. Canby and I.A. Gordon on the relationship between literature and national identity are also discussed. Courage is claimed to be a New Zealand rather than an English writer on the basis of his birth, his use of New Zealand settings in so many of his novels, the constant reworking of his early experiences in this country and his portrayal of the small but distinctive section of New Zealand society which he knew so well. In as much as Courage does seem to fictionalise his own experience his novels are seen as having a biographical basis, although the extent to which this is so cannot yet be determined until primary sources of biographical information become available.

Following the introductory chapter separate chapters are devoted to full discussion of each novel, working in chronological order from the first, One House (1933), to the last, The Visit to Penmorten (1961). Salient features of each novel are discussed and illustrated with references to each text: the points considered fall into the two categories of mechanical considerations such as plotting, characterisation, setting, dialogue, symbolism, and so on, and themes. Links between the novels, particularly in the treatment and development of recurrent themes, are highlighted. It is demonstrated that Courage's novels show his ever-increasing skill as a novelist and his growing self-confidence in treating of new or controversial themes, as well as the persistence of minor

stylistic faults, especially the tendency to use melodramatic or self-conscious dialogue in emotionally-charged scenes.

The chapter devoted to discussion of A Way of Love focuses on Courage's unique status in New Zealand literature as the author of the first full-length novel to deal with the theme of homosexuality sensitively and realistically. The discussion involves consideration of the critical and bureaucratic reception of this novel in New Zealand at the time of its publication. Discussion of this novel and its successor includes looking at the ways in which James Courage was an innovative novelist. These include his concern in the fiction with the actual process of producing the fiction --a concern which is strikingly post-modern--and his use of detached, ironic black humour.

The Conclusion points to areas of James Courage's life and writing in which further study remains to be done. The two Appendices contain useful material, much of it hitherto unpublished, regarding the publication of the novels and circumstances surrounding the "banning" of A Way of Love by the New Zealand authorities in the early nineteen-sixties.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

James Francis Courage was born in Christchurch, New Zealand, on February 9th, 1903. The son of Frank Hubert Courage and Zoë Frances Courage, née Peache, he was the eldest of their five children and was linked by family marriages to such established Canterbury families as the Harpers and the Tripps. As both of his parents had been born in Canterbury, James Courage was a third-generation Cantabrian.

Growing up on the family farm "Seadown", near Amberley in North Canterbury, Courage began formal schooling as a boarder at Mr Wiggin's preparatory school in Christchurch. Later he was a boarder at Christ's College from 1916 to 1921. In this, he followed a family tradition of private schooling: his two Peache uncles had earlier attended Christ's College, while his Peache grandfather had been educated at Haileybury and his Courage grandfather had been an old Harrovian. On a visit to England in 1922 Courage decided to study at Oxford University. He entered St John's College, Oxford, in October of 1923; after taking a second-class degree in English he came down in June, 1927. Of his education Courage later wrote, "From twelve to nineteen I was educated, badly, at Christ's College, Christchurch, New Zealand. I then came to Oxford--St John's College--where I read Eng. Lit. (a useless but delightful school.)"[1]

From 1927 on Courage lived in England, apart from brief periods on holiday abroad and one extended visit back to New Zealand some time between November of 1933 and May, 1935. His return to New Zealand followed a lengthy period of convalescence in a T.B. sanitorium [2] and the publication of his first novel, One House, in 1933. During the Second World War Courage worked in a book shop, remaining there until the early 1950s. He suffered bouts of mental depression, for which he received treatment at different times, and died of a heart attack at Hampstead on October 5th, 1963, in his 61st year.

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(1) Refer to Appendix A, the Author's Questionnaire completed by James Courage prior to the publication of The Young have Secrets.

(2) There is a discrepancy in available sources about this period. In his Preface to Such Separate Creatures, Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1973, Charles Brasch speaks of a sanitorium at Mundsley, Norfolk, but a letter from Ms Livia Gollancz of Victor Gollancz Ltd, states that James Courage wrote his first novel from a sanitorium in Sussex. (Letter from Livia Gollancz, 27 June, 1989.)

Courage first began writing while still at school [3] and continued this interest at Oxford by contributing to a number of student publications and writing musical criticism for The Isis. [4] A landmark in his writing history following One House seems to have been the production of his play, Private History, at the Gate Theatre, London, in October, 1938. Any hopes of seeing this play in the West End were quashed, however, by the action of the censor who, according to Charles Brasch, refused permission for further productions [5]. The writing of short stories may have been a spur for the production of longer works; Courage submitted short stories to various publications and many of these were gathered together in the collection Such Separate Creatures which was compiled and edited by Charles Brasch and published in 1973. Courage's second novel, The Fifth Child, did not appear until 1948. This was followed at approximately two-yearly intervals by Desire Without Content (1950), Fires in the Distance (1952), The Young have Secrets (1954), The Call Home (1956), A Way of Love (1959) and The Visit to Penmorten (1961).

Courage is undoubtedly a New Zealander by birth and by reason of his early life in this country, but his long years of residence in England make him an expatriate. Not all his novels have a New Zealand setting: the first, and the last two, of his eight novels are set entirely in England with no reference at all to New Zealand; of the others, they are all set in periods earlier than the period at which they were actually written, and none is set in the period after 1935, the date of the author's last visit to the country of his birth. This raises the question of criteria by which Courage can be seen as a New Zealand, rather than an English, writer. Such a consideration is complicated by the fact that Courage appeared to focus in his five New Zealand novels on one particular social group, the group that Frank Sargeson labelled "South Island sheep-farming pukka sahibs." [6] This

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(3) "James Courage: A Checklist of Literary Manuscripts held at the Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin" in Journal of New Zealand Literature 5, 1987, p.110 (author not known) mentions a short story, "Checkmated", co-authored by Courage during his time at Christ's College.

(4) A detailed list of Courage's undergraduate writing is given in Cathe Giffuni's "James Courage: A Bibliography" in Journal of New Zealand Literature 5, 1987, p. 95.

(5) Brasch, Preface to Such Separate Creatures, p. 10.

(6) Frank Sargeson "Review of The Fifth Child in Landfall III, 9 (March 1949), pp 72-73.

group was small, landed, wealthy, middle-class, well-educated and especially concerned with farming. Its families were interconnected through marriage, and were strongly "English" in their manners and outlook. Since these facts are so evident in James Courage's novels, the charge might be made against his New Zealand novels that they are narrow in geographic range, focus on a tiny section of society and look back in time, ignoring the conditions and problems that may have existed in this country at the time at which Courage was writing. The three English novels also appear to focus chiefly on the middle classes, while the homosexual themes of A Way of Love set this particular novel even further outside the mainstream of New Zealand life in the 1950s, as M.K. Joseph's description of homosexual relationships as being "outside any possible society" (7) shows, an attitude endorsed by the subsequent "banning" of this novel in New Zealand (8).

Consideration of a writer's "New Zealandness" is possibly less important today than it was in Courage's day, when there was considerable concern with the link between literature and national identity. Writing in 1943 Ian Gordon claimed that "A New Zealand author is one who identifies himself with his country." (9). In 1945 a visiting American academic, Dr H.S. Canby, wrote "...what makes a book part of a national culture, and especially a new national culture, is the extent to which it expresses the new way of life in the new country." (10). Canby saw the author's ability to use the characteristic rhythms of his country's language as a particularly important consideration. Both theorists seemed to believe that fiction should reflect and comment on the broad society from which it stems. Courage's writing certainly meets Gordon's criterion in its strictest interpretation: his New Zealand novels show a sensitivity to the rural landscape of Canterbury and to its seasonal changes. His novels do not reflect, however, the larger centres of urban, industrialised life. They describe the events which would have been important in the New Zealand that he remembered--the various activities on the farm, rural social pursuits,

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(7) M.K. Joseph Review Landfall XIII, 50 (June 1959), pp 176-179.

(8) See Appendix B.

(9) I.A. Gordon "Has New Zealand Any Literature?" in NZ Listener 9, 224 (October 8th 1943).

(10) H.S. Canby "Literature in a New Land." in NZ Listener 13, 321 (August 10th 1945), p. 17.

small town life, the gradual effects of a war which was being fought on the other side of the world, and so on--but pass over other events of national importance such as the economic depression of the 1930s, the Second World War and the post-War period of prosperity. When Courage's work is measured against Canby's statement it might be seen to fall short by an even greater measure. Because of his focus on a very restricted social group Courage's novels cannot be seen as reflecting any new national culture in its totality. Their predominant view might be seen as conservative in the extreme in that they seem to insist on the continuation of a particular way of life which was, in fact, changing by the minute. A closer study of The Young Have Secrets shows, however, the extent to which Courage was aware of the many changes that were taking place.

This discussion does not denigrate Courage's work, however, so much as point up the narrowness of dated views about the literature/nationalism link. Gordon and Canby, both new arrivals in New Zealand, may have been considering the question from preconceived and rather naive viewpoints, ignoring the complexity which always seems to have existed in our society, in spite of long-cherished notions of egalitarianism. Furthermore, although focusing mainly on one segment of New Zealand society, Courage did not entirely ignore other social groups. With a keen ear for characteristic turns of phrase, and a skill in describing settings and reflecting individual concerns and outlooks on life, Courage created minor characters such as the Warners' servant Kate, Lennox Iverson--the lonely widower struggling to make a go of his farm--and the vindictive laundrywoman, Mrs Nelson, who are as convincingly realised and as memorable as any of his middle-class characters.

It is important to realise that in his writing Courage was not attempting to reflect and justify any broad picture of New Zealand society as it might have been in his day; his particular concern was to answer the fundamental question of who he was and how he came to be that person. In this, it might be argued that he was taking Pope's dictum that the "proper study of mankind is man", and making a kind of object lesson of his own life. He subscribed to Freudian beliefs in the primacy of early childhood relationships and experiences--hence his return, time and again, to the settings and character types remembered from his own childhood. Courage's novels probe the primal relationship between son and mother and, to a lesser extent, that between son and father. He explores the ways in which these

relationships shape the child's nature, and continue to have a lifelong influence on the way that the child perceives himself and other people. In his constant return to the childhood theme Courage illustrates the claim that a great deal of New Zealand fiction is concerned with the child. (11). What Courage shows of family relationships within a particular social group and at a particular period may have relevance to the wider society and to the present, depending on the reader's own interpretations. His creative rearrangements and exploration of early childhood experiences can be seen as a precedent for such writers as Frank Sargeson, Janet Frame and Maurice Gee whose fiction frequently reworks the basic material which is presented in their autobiographical writing (12).

Such a view of Courage's work can encompass those of his novels with a New Zealand setting and those set in England, since both types are concerned, essentially, with the same themes of family shaping and relating. At times they seem to be explorations, through fantasy, of the possibilities inherent in human experience. In this way the author is able to present the very different viewpoints of, for example, a single woman, a child, a homosexual man, a middle-aged mother or a husband, so that each has validity. Similarly, he can reject some of these viewpoints as being inappropriate to his protagonist who so often seems to be a persona adopted by the author so that he might explore these fictional possibilities. Courage may have been a little like James Caspar, the author character he created, for whom writing was a substitute for human relationships (13).

James Courage's writing may also have served as a form of therapy during his years of psychiatric treatment, and provided him with a cathartic outlet. Without recourse to biographical material such as letters and personal papers it is not possible to be certain of this point (14), but it is possible to discern a growing self-confidence in the writing, along with

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(11) See, for example, M.H. Holcroft's Islands of Innocence, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1964. Holcroft looks at The Young have Secrets in the chapter "Rites of Initiation", pp 50-54.

(12) Compare, for example, Maurice Gee's Plumb trilogy with his recollections of childhood in "Beginnings", Islands 5 (1977) pp 284-292.

(13) James Courage. A Way of Love, London: Jonathan Cape, 1959 p. 112.

(14) Personal papers held by the Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin, will not be available for general reading until AD 2005.

a concern to explore human anguish and psychotherapeutic methods of resolving this. In the early novels characters fail to face up to the causes of their unhappiness: like Catherine Wanklin they travel abroad to escape themselves, or like Leo Donovan they turn their backs on family and head for an uncertain future in the city; other characters like Florence Warner and Celia Donovan settle back into their marriages with a grim acceptance of the lot they have chosen, or like Mrs Kendal they fabricate their own rosy versions of the past and seek solace in religion. It is only in the later novels that characters are able to discover and accept the causes of their pain, and to take steps which open up the possibility of a happier way of living. Norman Grant performs his own psychoanalysis in a primitive manner before resolving to return to England and qualify as a psychiatrist so that he can help other people; Bruce Quantock, the middle-aged homosexual who loves and then loses, epitomises the confidence and self-determination typical of the later novels; his younger lover, Philip, reflects the characters of the earlier novels, and possibly also reflects the author in his youth in his reluctance to accept the truth about himself and his inability to choose the most appropriate course of action. The final novel focuses specifically on the processes and benefits of psycho-therapy, and reaffirms the basic need for humans to be involved with other human beings.

Courage remains ambivalent in his attitude towards England. His first novel was set firmly in English county life, but he seems to have felt dissatisfaction with his achievements in this novel, confessing in a later interview that his roots in English life at that time were too shallow for him to be able to write as an English writer [15]. In spite of this, in subsequent novels he creates characters who constantly yearn for the English way of life which they see as a refined contrast to the rough, "colonial" ways of New Zealanders. For many of these characters, such as the elderly Garnetts, the difficulty is that their lives have become rooted in the colonial setting and it is no longer possible for them to return to the country they yearn for. In Courage's novels England stands for refinement, for education and advanced thinking: both Ronald Warner and Paul Warner travel to England to begin medical studies, while Norman Grant must return there if he wants to study psychiatry. Courage's own ambivalence towards

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(15) Interview with Phillip Wilson in NZ Listener XVII, 698 (21 November 1952) p. 12.

England must have been shaped, at least in part, by his family background and his early experiences. Grandparents on both sides of his family came out to New Zealand with the avowed intention of investing capital in the new colony for no longer than the time necessary to increase their fortunes before returning "Home" (16). The Courage grandparents achieved this ambition, but Grandfather Peache died at too early an age to realise his dream, leaving a large amount of money behind him. Again, both sides of the family were well-rooted in English society through mercantile interests such as brewing, shipbuilding and trading in exotic timbers, through family connections with the Established Church, and by descent from English aristocracy (17). Such family claims must have been important considerations in the young settlement of Canterbury, that most "English" of New Zealand settlements. Education at an institution modelled on the great public schools of England would no doubt have further influenced Courage's attitudes towards England and his country of birth.

There are further considerations in Courage's choice of expatriate status. The cultural climate in New Zealand during much of his lifetime may not have been conducive to a writer of his outlook. Heather Roberts argues that the same pioneering spirit that had tamed the physical environment was perpetuated in New Zealand fiction for many years (18). She claims that our literature was dominated by the white, pioneering male ethic and so reflected only the experience of the dominant Pakeha male, excluding the experiences of those groups--women, Maori, homosexual--who did not belong to the dominant group. She further claims that this attitude continued to have an effect for a long time after the initial pioneering period. Bobby Pickering's explanation of the critical reception of Courage's work has

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(16) Refer Sarah Amelia Courage Lights and Shadows of Colonial Life, Christchurch: Whitcoulls, 1976, and Constance Gray (compiler) Quiet With the Hills: the Life of Alfred Edward Peache of Mount Somers, Christchurch: Pegasus Press, 1970. Both books contain invaluable background to the Courage and Peache families.

(17) Zoë Peache's great-great-grandparents had been Sir Robert and Lady Diana Sheffield who were descendants of the 1st Marquis, later Duke, of Normandy; this ancestor built Buckingham House which the Hanovers later transformed into the present-day Buckingham Palace.

(18) Heather Roberts, Ph.D. thesis: Public and Private Realities--The Subjective Novel in New Zealand. Canterbury University, 1979.

affinities with Roberts' thesis [19]. Pickering claims that Courage's work was deliberately ignored because it was the work of a homosexual writer who did not belong to the literary mainstream of his day, a writer whose writing threatened any attempts to impose a uniform view on society. While both Roberts and Pickering have particular biases, it cannot be denied that James Courage must have felt very alien in his home country. The family ties to England may well have assisted his decision to live there permanently. In England's older, larger and more varied society it is possible that Courage felt himself freer to live and write as he wished than was possible at that time in New Zealand. Elizabeth Caffin certainly takes this view when she writes, "Courage had grown up in a society which, though well established in a new land, had continued to keep one eye on England. He now stayed on there, an understandable escape by a writer and a homosexual from a New Zealand milieu not tolerant of difference." [20]

Regardless of whether one accepts the reasons put forward by such writers as Heather Roberts and Bobby Pickering for the lack of attention accorded James Courage's novels in his home country, one has to recognise that his talents have been underrated. The neglect of his work may well be partly attributable to the limited numbers of his editions; apart from reruns of The Young have Secrets and A Way of Love, his novels appeared in relatively small editions and to date only The Young have Secrets has been reprinted posthumously [21]. One novel was adapted as a radio play [22] in 1982 but there have been no film or television adaptions of any of Courage's work, with the result that his novels are now hard to find and little known.

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(19) Bobby Pickering "The Conspiracy Against James Courage", Pink Triangle 18 (December 1980), p. 5.

(20) Elizabeth Caffin Introduction to The Young have Secrets, Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1985, pp ix-x.

(21) See Mr Michael Bott's letter of 9 October 1989 in Appendix A for print runs of Courage's last four novels, also Livia Gollancz's letter of 27 June 1989 in Appendix A for print runs of One House. Unfortunately an inquiry to Constable Ltd elicited no response, so no figures are available for Courage's other novels.

(22) The Fifth Child was adapted by Bill Baer and broadcast by the BCNZ National Programme on June 16 1982 at 8.45 p.m. NZ Listener CI, 2211 (June 12 1982) p. 24 carried an article about Courage's life and work as background to the broadcast.

There are, undoubtedly, stylistic faults in Courage's writing; the most noticeable of these is the tendency to employ a high-flown "romantic" style when describing exchanges between lovers, and a habit of resolving all plot threads rather too neatly and not always in a convincing manner. These criticisms aside, his skill as a writer is considerable. He is able to evoke period and setting in such a way that the reader has a strong impression of the background to each novel's actions. His plots move forward at a good pace to a satisfying point of conclusion, and characters are developed in a credible way by means of a number of devices among which dialogue is the most noteworthy. Although plots tend to become rather more complex as writing ability and confidence grow, there is usually economy in the telling, with little that is extraneous to the main narrative line. While much of Courage's style can be described as realistic, he is also an experimental and innovative novelist in several ways, most strikingly in A Way of Love. In this novel he breaks new ground for a New Zealand writer both in subject and in technique. In the case of the first he does this by choosing to write about the development and decline of a homosexual relationship. He faces his theme squarely, refusing to make his points by subtle suggestion which might be open to any ambiguous interpretation, and does not attempt to idealise the world he chooses to describe. He does this in the face of the negative attitudes that were held about the subject in his day so that this particular novel stands as a monument to the novelist's strength of character and ability. Only now, after the passage of some thirty years and the 1985 Homosexual Law Reform Bill are other New Zealand writers beginning to deal with this theme at equivalent length. He also diverges from the realistic mode by having his narrator/author explore the purposes and processes of writing at the same time as he is unfolding the narrative; in this way a form of metafiction is created, in which the reader is constantly reminded of the choices and decisions that must be made when a fiction is being created. In his final novel, A Visit to Penmorten, Courage again demonstrates the extent to which he differed from other writers of his day by chronicling in a sensitive way the process of psychoanalysis; at the same time he is able to operate on two levels, developing reader sympathy for the young protagonist whilst introducing a note of ironic black humour in his depiction of some of the other characters.

I have decided not to examine the short stories, collected in the volume Such Separate Creatures, in this thesis, though a comparison of those

better-known short pieces with the eight novels could be a worthwhile future area for study.

The following chapters look closely at the individual novels in Courage's canon, approaching them in chronological order. The attempt is made to examine themes, as well as mechanical considerations such as settings, characterisation and plot development in such a way as to demonstrate that Courage's central concern in his fiction is with self-discovery through the exploration of primal child-parent relationships or substitute equivalents of these. It is seen that Courage's writing was influenced by Freudian notions about human psychology from the very first novel; this is seen particularly in the Freudian symbols which are incorporated into the narrative, and eventually turns into a concern with the benefits and the actual process of psychotherapy. It is also seen that while Courage was influenced by other literary sources, in particular the possible influence of popular drama and the writing of D.H. Lawrence, he possessed writing strengths from the very start of his career, and gradually evolved a very confident and distinctive style of his own.

CHAPTER 2. ONE HOUSE (1933).

This novel bears many of the hallmarks of a first work. The young author's intentions are very obvious and are often fulfilled at the cost of stylistic considerations. His prime concern is with his themes and, as a consequence, these are often overstated. Narrative method, characterisation and symbolism are utilised, often awkwardly, as tools to develop the novel's underlying ideas. In addition, Courage's prose is frequently florid and his style melodramatic, while he occasionally loses himself in irrelevant detail particularly when introducing new characters. In spite of these shortcomings however, this novel does have its merits. These include effective evocations of place and mood, the capacity to engross the reader in the narrative and to move the action along through a series of incidents to a point of satisfying resolution, and the clear foreshadowing of events. Also of interest in this first work is the concern with the perplexities of the human psyche which is developed more fully in the later novels, and the first appearance of character "types" which recur in Courage's writing.

Courage's central themes are articulated early in this novel, through the awkward convention of allowing the reader access to characters' thoughts, particularly Catherine's which are remarkably full and coherent; we are presented with the idea of a "house divided against itself" being unable to "hope for complete obedience" (p. 13), a notion which the events in the novel will eventually disprove, and with the more personal concept of the "individual will perpetually hampered by unavoidable concessions...the realisation of so much compulsory pruning of human designs in deference to merely accidental forces" (p. 13).

Catherine sees herself and her sisters as each embodying a separate key aspect of their dead father. By staying together in the family home, they are to maintain a living memorial to their father. When Catherine considers her father's relationship to his children she concludes- "His whole self, indeed, was *in them* more explicit than it had even been in the living man because, by a strange metempsychosis, now separated the more sharply into its essential traits." (p. 61). Catherine sees herself as embodying her father's over-sensitive asceticism, his essential loneliness, fatalism, stubbornness, love of the past and his readiness to love. Helen embodies her parent's love of settled domestic existence; Mona seems to have her father's darker "Latin" blood, his taste for "sensual or salacious

pleasures" and his "rather Italian" features; Anne is seen as his inspiration and genius which offsets the other aspects of the embodied nature and holds them in some sort of harmonious whole.

After the family lawyer's revelation of an unknown half-brother, Catherine takes an entirely new view which has an element of religious insight: "I have regarded life as conquerable or standing still, but it is not, it is free and ever pressing, ever becoming. The unity I have longed for is a dead and static thing, not the lustrous beacon of my visions. God shows Himself in the living and becoming, not the dead." (p. 267). Here the ideas which Courage is focusing on are the same ideas that D.H. Lawrence had explored in his fiction; the ideas of "freedom", "becoming" and "lustrous qualities", in contrast to "static being" which is "dead", are strongly Lawrentian.

Having outlined his themes at this early stage, the author returns, again and again, to these same ideas so that his intent cannot be overlooked. When the secondary concern with the attraction between men and women and the impossibility of the one sex ever knowing the other fully is introduced, this idea is also repeatedly highlighted so that it cannot be ignored. Not only are these ideas examined in the context of the relationship between Anne Wanklin and Roger Hesse, but they are also at the heart of the passionate affair between Mona and Jack. The two lines of thematic concern might then be summarily described as, primarily, the difficulty of attaining self-realisation separate from family identity and pressures and, secondarily, the inevitability of sexual defeat.

The use of an omniscient narrator contributes a great deal to this overriding concern with theme, as this device allows the reader a constant and unconvincing insight into the minds of all the characters, leaving little to be inferred from action or dialogue. Two examples serve to illustrate this point: at the beginning of her relationship with Roger Hesse, Anne's thoughts are shown in this manner--"'Roger Hesse--or, for that matter, any man--was his inmost self so very different from or alien to that of one of her own sex? How did one find that out? Would one have to be in love with a man, before being really certain?'...Her virgin mind was ripe with guesses at it." (p. 46); shortly after this passage, the intrusive voice of the narrator describes Mona in these words--"In the company of her sisters, this secret of hers would often half-betray itself in sharp

defensive flashes, giving her speech at such moments an unwonted impatience that made them uneasy, recognising a change in her. For Mona had a lover." (p. 48).

The symbolism that serves to point up thematic concerns is also heavily underscored for the benefit of the reader. In the first chapter, for example, the Wanklin family home is a dominant symbol: the Georgian house towers over its neglected Italian garden, with the "Georgian" and "Italian" aspects symbolising the two opposed sides of the nature of Hubert Wanklin, now dead. By this means, his cold, formal, rational "English" self is contrasted with his impetuous, sensual "Romany" self. Through Catherine's eyes the reader is made to see the house as "A monument to what had been for her, five years before and ever since, the permanence of Hubert Wanklin, her father and the father of her three sisters." (p. 9). Again, there is the very obvious symbolism of the two cedar trees which grow on either side of the front porch and which are constantly referred to throughout the narrative. They are made to represent the spirit of continuity which Catherine wishes to preserve in the house; at the same time, as they grow closer together until their merging branches almost obscure the entrance, they are endowed with an almost mystical female significance. This is evoked particularly when the lopping of the cedars' branches is made to coincide with Anne's realisation that women are capable of making great sacrifices for love. A further striking example of this characteristically unsubtle use of symbolism occurs in Chapter 16, "Tiger and Dove". The unusual ring worn by Helmore, the Wanklin family's solicitor- "a ring of dull gold, exquisitely chased with the design of a tiger and a dove" (p. 242)--has already been mentioned in the previous chapter of the narrative; furthermore, the information has been expanded to include the fact that the exact design shows "the beast of the jungle rampant, his head turned back to watch the heaven-flying dove" (p. 244), that Hubert Wanklin had a book plate showing this same design, and that Wanklin gave Helmore the ring as a token of regard. Courage does not leave the matter there, however; after Helmore has revealed to Catherine that her father had an illegitimate son by an Italian woman, he goes on to sermonise on the significance of the ring's design: "'The problem is to find a point of balance, of probity, where the spiritual and animal elements of a man's self are in accord. There is always the tiger and the dove: a little symbol to which your father lent the significance of his own conflict.'" (p. 263).

When in this novel Courage attempts to convey the emotions felt by his characters his prose tends to become florid. This is particularly noticeable in descriptions of Catherine's feelings of frustration and apartness. Two passages serve to illustrate this point: on p. 59 Catherine's anguish over her father's death is recalled- "...for where, yesterday, their father had been with them, now he was utterly no more, his library empty, his place at table vacant. Only Catherine, the eldest, sobbing: 'He's dead, he's dead,' gave voice to the void, and made the inexplicable explicable." Later, the author attempts to convey Catherine's sense of frustration through using unconvincing personification: "Would she ever achieve that longed-for concord? 'Through death,' whispered the wind through the boughs above her: but the echo in Catherine's breast was rather: 'Not through death but love.'" (p. 115). In portraying human emotion in this way as intense, consuming and totally influencing the individual's view of the world to the extent that all creation seems to sympathise and take part in the emotional expression, Courage demonstrates all the features of the twentieth-century Georgian inheritance from nineteenth-century romanticism. An emotional style is again used in the attempts to convey feelings which develop between men and women. Because Anne does not love Roger, she maintains a detachment from emotions, but is still made to analyse her reactions to the relationship in ways which strike the reader as unnatural as the following passage illustrates:

> Separate from her will, Anne could feel a reaction taking place within her. She was aware of a curiosity about the situation, seen as a blend of the night, the garden and the two of them there together, for ever strangely. She prolonged the clairvoyance of the moment by review--How fresh the air on her bare arms! (p. 140).

When the author attempts to describe the strong passions which overtake Mona and her lover, the prose strongly resembles that of D.H. Lawrence: "She had glanced at him quickly and read in the unwavering of his bright, impudent eyes, what at once tightened and altered their friendship. He desired her. And immediately a deep-rising, somehow necessary answer to his desire caused her body to ache as though in a fever. Useless to reason with that answer. It was in her limbs and her breast, a fiery madness, a breathless piercing. No words seemed necessary on her part; he saw that she responded." (p. 50). Such interchanges, verbal or physical, between men and women, are depicted

in their most melodramatic terms in the final reconciliation between Helen and Roger: "He made a wry, tortured face and said suddenly: 'God, what a fool I've been!' He put his hand over his eyes. 'I think I've always mismanaged my private affairs.'" (p. 276). Here, it is the gesture, as much as what is said, that is clichéd. This is followed, on the next page, by--

> 'Our marriage is going to be so perfect, so happy...' Her eyes brightened to think of their rapture. 'Nothing is going to keep us apart any longer...nothing can hurt us anymore, now.'
>
> 'Dearest girl,' he said, moved by her words.
>
> 'Beloved Roger.' (p. 277).

In this passage, the prose comes close to the style of musical comedy or pulp romantic fiction.

So much of this novel is relentlessly directed towards thematic development, that when incidents of marginal relevance are incorporated, they are glaringly apparent. One such incident is Catherine's relation of a local legend of seduction, magic and revenge--the lover of a young girl is seduced by an older woman; the girl casts a spell which causes the rival to lose her powers of speech, and the girl's lover is restored to her (p. 176). The legend has no apparent bearing on the events of the novel, and if the author had intended it to have some relevance then his intention remains obscure and unrealised. In a similar manner, time is devoted to describing minor characters when, again, the features focused upon seem unimportant to the novel as a whole. Thus Courage gives the picture of Mrs Barrett's "wonderful, tragic eyes" which "shone out from a lined sensitive face" (p. 127), but fails to satisfy the reader's natural curiosity about the story which might lie behind the appearance, nor does he develop this character's rôle so that the qualities which have been commented upon can contribute to the action of the novel. Similarly, Helmore is described in this way: "His face, peering down from this height, was singularly fine--the face, indeed, of a man with the soul of an artist or a poet..." (p. 242); also, in Chapter 3 there is a very full description of old Mrs Hesse's unhappy marriage and her subsequent life of devotion to her son, which takes up nearly three pages but, once more, this appears to be superfluous to the development of the plot. Such occasional failures to achieve conjunction between incident

and plot detract little from the overall achievement however, and could be seen as evidence that the young author, in this first work, is still revelling in his mastery over words without having the experience or self-critical capacity to curb his excesses for the sake of overall form and coherence.

Courage demonstrates in this novel a particular ability to describe settings and moods. This point is well illustrated by a passage from Chapter 10:

> The windows of the library were so many rectangles of the evening light. Through one of them Catherine could see the elms at the end of the formal garden, golden-green-topped by the setting sun, and above them heads of delicate saffron cloud: through another the sweep of the drive, below a dark fringe of cedar. The room was quietly and faintly sad, attentive to the clear notes of a blackbird in the shrubbery.
>
> Catherine pressed her forehead to one of the cool window-panes, listening, her mind attuned to the mood of the room. The place comforted her; its associations all subtly fed her sense of her father's immortality. She heard Anne's voice call to Helen somewhere in the house and then the sound of a door being shut. (pp 172-3).

Mona's violent death, the turning point of the narrative, is skilfully described in Chapter 13; there is no straining for effect here and no excesses of style--every word contributes to the passage's total effectiveness:

> The stable door was shut. With her crop she flicked back the bolt and, swinging open the top half of the door, peered in. Her short-sighted eyes detected a movement and what she took for a man's back turned to her in a loose-box. Pushing open the lower door she walked across the dark stable. The place was warm and reeked of straw and manure. The same half-seen movement led her on.

> 'Is that you, Jack?' she called uncertainly, and pulled back the rail of the loose-box.
>
> The cob stood just within, his left shoulder partly turned to her. As Mona, quickly aware of the danger, brought up the hand holding her crop as a shield, the rapid feint startled him. He swung half round, half forward, his head ugly with fright, his ears laid close back, his teeth bared. At the sudden peril Mona gave a sharp cry and tried to lower her whip. She was a second too late. The menace of the bite, deflected from her arm, caught her full on the right breast. Screaming with pain and shock she fell back and down, while the horse, himself crazed with fear, trampled across her body and stampeded for the open door. Else found her an hour later, on his return from a farmers' meeting in Nornley. She could not speak, and died before he was able to carry her to the house. (pp 227-228).

Mona's death is foreshadowed in several ways. The cob is established early in the narrative as having a vicious nature when it bites Jack Else on the arm: Mona's short-sightedness, a critical factor in the fatal accident, is given as the cause of her frequent headaches, while Catherine dreads leaving on her trip to London because she believes something always goes wrong whenever she is away from home.

In One House Courage introduces many of the concerns and motifs which he goes on to explore further in later works. One of the most important of these recurrent concerns is that of the unequal influence of each parent on the child; in this novel, although Hubert Wanklin is dead, he continues to exert a strong influence over his daughters, while Mrs Wanklin is briefly recalled as a wife and mother completely without character or influence who died in giving birth to her fourth child. There are obvious parallels here to Hubert Warner in The Fifth Child who is absent from the action of that novel for much of the time, but is always present in the minds of his family, and to Mr Kendal in Desire Without Content whose death takes place soon after the birth of his son so that his influence on his child is minimal. Again, in The Young have Secrets, Walter Blakiston is separated from parental influence, but this separation is caused by illness and not death, and in The Visit to Penmorten Walter Lythgo has only dim recollections of his dead mother but is disturbed by the traumatic

experience of maternal deprivation and haunted by guilt connected with the death of his father. In A Way of Love both Philip and Bruce, in different ways, continue to be affected by the memory and loss of their own fathers, while in the short story Flowers on the Table the middle-aged Walter feels sudden sadness for his long-dead father and recalls his childish fear that his mother had died without his knowledge. Aspects of this parent-child relationship theme taken up in this first novel continue to interest Courage in most of his subsequent work.

Another of the recurrent concerns first looked at in One House is that of early marriage between mismatched partners which settles into a state of drawn-out hostility and frustration. Here, Anne almost commits herself to marrying the much older Roger Hesse whom she does not love, but ultimately she decides to break off her engagement and seems set to remain single and celibate. In later novels, however, the women are less wise: Florence Warner, in The Fifth Child, marries with her head full of romantic notions only to find herself bound to a dull sheepfarming husband who burdens her with children, a situation similar to that existing between the Donovans in Fires in the Distance where the wife's unfulfilled artistic leanings conflict with her husband's uncouthness. In Desire without Content Elfrida Shelbeck surprises herself by travelling all the way to New Zealand from England to accept a proposal, only to realise she does not want to marry Michael Dyson; still acting on impulse, she marries Lewis Kendal instead and has to suffer the tragic consequences of his madness. In The Young Have Secrets the Blakistons seem ill-matched and unhappy, the wife's sensitivity and cultured manners in conflict with the husband's pragmatic and insensitive outlook which seems to stem from his work on the land; in The Call Home this picture is updated by depicting a similar couple in middle-age, the wife now bitter and withdrawn into menopause and the husband aging pathetically and unable to relate to his wife on any level. In this later novel also there is the depiction of Louise Morton's ill-advised marriage which brings her to New Zealand and in which she suffers great mental cruelty, while another character, Peter Fitzgerald, looks to marriage as a desperate and probably fore-doomed solution to his personality difficulties.

A number of character types appear in this novel who will recur under other names in later writing. Mrs Hesse, for example, is an older, self-contained woman who shares the wisdom she has gained from bitter experience

of life; in these ways, she resembles Mrs Kendal in Desire without Content, and the grandmotherly figures of Mrs Murray in Fires in the Distance, Walter's grandmother in The Young Have Secrets and Mrs Lynd in The Call Home. All of these characters appear to have one eye on this world and one on the next, and to act as confidante and advisor to a younger generation. There may well have been a real-life model for such characters in Courage's maternal grandmother, Ida Peache, with whom the author is said to have had a very close bond.(1)

All of these women seem to hold deep religious convictions; this is most marked in Mrs Kendal who lives apart from society in order to look after her handicapped son and then, after his incarceration, becomes increasingly monastic in her life style, dressing and living simply and giving most of her wealth to others. In One House Catherine, although a young woman, has a very similar outlook to these later characters in that she is more concerned with spiritual matters than with worldly affairs, and lives according to a strong (albeit misguided) sense of spiritual purpose.

Catherine's sister Mona is strongly sensual, passionate and restless beneath the constraints of the time and class to which she belongs. Because of these attributes she is something of a prototype for such later characters as Elfrida Shelbeck and Rose Garnett who both admit and act according to their passionate natures despite social opinion. Mona's strength of character endows her with an almost masculine forcefulness; this force is apparent also in Catherine Donovan in Fires in the Distance, having transmuted into a quality which borders on sexual ambivalence.

Mona also has a passion for horses; because of this she becomes involved with Jack Else, and this leads to her death when she is savaged by Else's stallion. There are strong parallels here to Catherine Donovan again; Catherine adores her horse, but it is her horse's death which prompts her sudden decision to turn her back on her young admirer and marry the older Lennox Iverson. In portraying this strong bond between both women characters and their horses Courage uses the animals as Freudian symbols of sexuality: in Mona's case the stallion symbolises unrestrained passion

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(1) Charles Brasch. Preface to Such Separate Creatures, Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1973, p. 7.

which has destructive potential, while in the later novel the symbol is used more subtly to suggest that passion has the power to destroy itself as well as others.

In Chapter 13, a moonlight picnic takes place and it is during this picnic that Anne comes to see her relationship with Roger in a new way. It is while her sisters and Roger are away on this picnic that Mona is killed. Courage uses this same idea in the later Fires in the Distance when the Donovans set off with their young guest on a moonlight picnic during which Catherine also comes to a new realisation about her feelings towards Paul; on the way home from this jaunt, Catherine's horse is injured and has to be shot, so that the occasion is a turning point for the plot. In other novels too Courage uses occasions which the characters look forward to as plot pivots: in The Fifth Child Mrs Warner gives birth to her child on the same night that her teenage children are enjoying a long-anticipated dance while Effie Shelbeck, in Desire without Content, comes to her decision to break off her engagement following the community get-together at which she is introduced to her fiancé's parishioners. Again, in A Way of Love, it is while he and Bruce are on a day trip to Brighton that Philip Dill realises he is dissatisfied with life and wants something other than the relationship he shares with Bruce. In all of these instances, Courage seems to suggest that his characters need an occasion out of the ordinary to force a reassessment of their usual actions and attitudes in order to provoke drastic and necessary changes.

CHAPTER 3. THE FIFTH CHILD (1948).

A period of fifteen years separated the publication of Courage's first and second novels. Unless the author's private papers provide a definitive answer when they become available for public perusal in the year 2005, the reason for this long gap in the writer's work can only be guessed at. In the mid nineteen-thirties Courage suffered from tuberculosis and spent time in a sanitorium. He also made a visit home to New Zealand over the 1934-1935 period. These factors may have contributed to his failure to publish; the general feeling of unease prevalent in England in the years prior to the outbreak of war may have also affected his inclination to write, while the Second World War itself must surely have been a further adverse influence.

The available information suggests that Courage may have been working at a number of projects during this period. In his preface to Courage's collected short stories, Such Separate Creatures, Charles Brasch mentions that Courage worked on an autobiographical novel while he was back in New Zealand; this novel was rejected by Faber. Courage also had a play produced at the Gate Theatre in London in 1938 which was prevented from reaching the West End by the action of the censor. The checklist of Courage's literary manuscripts held by the Hocken Library at the University of Otago includes a significant number of unpublished novels, plays, short stories and poems; while only one or two of these unpublished works have been tentatively dated as belonging to the years between 1933 and 1948 (1), other extant unpublished works may also date from this period, while others may, conceivably, have been destroyed.

Phillip Wilson, recording a rare interview with James Courage in 1952, wrote that until he had actually completed One House Courage "had believed that if he was to write at all it would have to be as an English novelist, but the result showed him that his roots in English life were not deep enough for him to have gone on." (2) This suggests that the process of writing the first novel, possibly combined with the experience of returning home after more than ten years' absence, had a profound effect on the

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(1) These are the novel Ms "A Present for K", dated ca 1941, the play script "The Man in the Distance", dated ca 1940-41, and the short story script "On the Edge of the Sea" dated ca 1944.

(2) Phillip Wilson. 'Expatriate Novelist'. NZ Listener, XXVII, 698 (21 November 1952), p. 12.

author, creating uncertainty about his own abilities and about what his true subject matter should be. Charles Brasch quotes Courage as saying of this period that he'd "given up the ambition of ever being a writer at all." (3)

Whatever the reasons may have been for the long gap in Courage's published longer fiction, The Fifth Child was published at the start of Courage's main period of production. It has a Canterbury setting and is set in 1920. The novel has many strengths: characterisation, on the whole, is strong; constant shifts in viewpoint are handled skilfully; convincing dialogue is used as the main narrative medium; and occasional humour is used to good effect. Narrative foreshadowing is employed, and the short chapters are often carefully linked to integrate the narrative. Symbolism is used to a limited extent. The points on which one might be critical of the author in this novel are his less effective presentation of three characters--Mrs Warner, Ronald and Dr Hoy--and his unconvincing resolution of the main lines in the plot.

Courage develops the identities of each of his characters through indications of their physical appearance, speech, interests, personal idiosyncrasies and outlooks on life. In this novel he is most successful in conveying the characters of the servants and the younger children, the lesser characters. The elderly Welsh servant, Morgan, for example, is well depicted. She is short, plump and has hair which is "creamy-white"; she has been in the Warners' employ for some years, and has a strong bond with Mrs Warner. With advancing age she is becoming increasingly tired, and in the course of the novel she comes to a firm decision to return to Wales for the final years of her life. In different situations in the novel Morgan is shown to be capable, deferential, fiercely loyal, nervous, shrewd, kindly, censorious, easily embarrassed, and this varied picture makes her a very real and sympathetic character. Even the small details which the author gives of her daily life add to this impression of authenticity--the faded photograph of her parents' home, the trinket box covered with shells, her pride in getting through the morning's housework in good time, the cup of tea she enjoys in the chilly scullery after she has taken in Mrs Warner's early morning tea. Courage brings out Morgan's character most effectively when he shows her in contrast to the second servant, Kate, the tippling cook

(3) Brasch. Preface to Such Separate Creatures, p. 10.

with the dubious past. The following scene is a fine example of Courage's technique in this respect:

> Old Morgan drew a chair across the floor and settled herself by the stove. She rubbed her knees, saying nothing. 'Yes,' Kate went on irrepressibly, 'I remember that white hat... It got blown away by a nor'wester. I was in a place by the sea then.'
>
> Morgan nodded. She was determined not to give Kate a chance to launch into another of her wicked, sordid reminiscences. That white hat, for instance, might lead anywhere, into heaven knew what appalling scrape, if encouraged. 'I'm tired,' she yawned, by way of excuse.
>
> 'I'd only hung the hat on a post for a jiffy too, while I let me hair down. Of course, I was younger in those days.'
>
> Morgan was not to be drawn. She'd suspected lately--and not for the first time--that Kate drank. She had seen Kate bury something in the garden one morning, digging with the coal-shovel and afterwards patting down the earth like a cat. 'I daresay,' thought Morgan, 'if I went out with a spade I'd find the whole orchard stiff with empty bottles.' And, more than once, Kate's eyes... Well, poached was the only word to describe them. She glanced at them now.
>
> 'No need to look at me so suspicious like,' said Kate. 'Anyone can hang up a hat and have a nice bathe in the sea.'
>
> 'I wasn't thinking of hats,' said Morgan severely. (p. 130).

Kate, in her thick glasses, is shown as being embittered with life in general. She has been used by men, has lost her child, and feels herself put upon in her work. Finding her consolations in movie-going and drinking, she meets the world head-on with deliberate rudeness. A second extract again contrasts the characters of the two woman servants and provides a good sample of Kate's outlook:

(Kate has just told Morgan about the illegitimate child she bore and lost)

> 'But--' and Morgan couldn't help herself prying--'but the father, didn't he marry you?'
>
> 'I never asked him to.' Kate lifted her spectacles and rubbed the bridge of her nose. 'A cowman he was, at a place I worked at in the country. We used to take the buggy to church, Sunday evenings, together.'
>
> Morgan turned her head away. 'Sundays,' she murmured.
>
> 'Why not?' Kate flared. 'God doesn't turn yer instincts off because it's the end of the week.'

When Morgan asks if their employer knows about Kate's child, she replies,

> 'Mrs Warner?' Kate gave a neighing laugh. 'Oh, yes,' she said sarcastically, 'it was all down in my references. I don't think.' She stuffed her handkerchief away. 'What would it matter to her, anyway?' she went on. 'She's had hers in lawful wedlock and good luck to her. She's never had to worry herself.' (p. 52).

Again, in Chapter 21, Courage manages to sum up the total pitifulness of Kate's life in three pages. As she returns from the pictures with her mind still full of romantic images, the moonlit house looks to her like "a long white ship anchored to the frosty lawn." When she takes a short cut across the grass to reach the kitchen door, her mood changes from one of appreciating the beauty of the scene, to feeling resentment towards the inhabitants of the house whom she can see in cosy tableau when she looks through a gap in the drawing room curtains. Full bitterness erupts at the contrast between her life and the lives of the family within; unable to throw off her sudden depression, she enters the house and unearths a bottle of whisky. The whole chapter is unfolded from Kate's introspective viewpoint, and the contrast between the snug interior scene and the cold outside world which is hostile to human concerns is well conveyed.

The world which the younger children, Susan and Alec, inhabit is shown to be a quite different world from that which the older characters live in. While they frequently possess only a limited knowledge of what the adults are doing, the children attribute great importance to the multifarious small

matters which the adults overlook or have long ago forgotten. Susan imagines that the hens that once inhabited the hen house might have sat up on their perches to watch the games of tennis which were played on the grass, and she secretly retaliates against an older bossy sister by tying a knot in a piece of string each time the sister's boyfriend pays a call. She marvels at the young pigeons in their nest, and maintains her private solemn ritual of touching one special gate post on her way home as a means of averting disaster. Alec loses himself in the fantasy of being tall enough to touch the overhead tram wires and possibly receiving an electric shock, only to be hurt by his mother's ironic replies to his questions. While doing his French homework he demonstrates a typically child-like absorption in small detail as he tries to assimilate the foreign with the familiar: "... he returned to his homework with a sharper eye. A French farm that could show such a piffling mistake in dray-harness might provide further howlers. 'The farm is in the valley,' he translated slowly, and at once cried, 'It'd flood every winter!'" (p. 97).

Faced with the prospect of a new sibling, whose origins are all rather mysterious to him, Alec runs away; on his return his chief concern is that nobody in the family has punished him by damaging his stamp album. By reflecting the natural attitudes and interests of young children in these various ways, Courage succeeds in his presentation of his child characters.

With similar skill he manages to highlight many of the features of adolescent experience, especially the typical lack of self-confidence which results in harsh self-condemnation, the desire to escape adult criticism, and the uncertainty about future vocation. The two adolescents in this novel, however, are treated in different ways by the author. Ronald, on the threshhold of career decisions, is characterised as sensitive and intense to the point of moroseness; he seems to lack warmth, and these points are illustrated by this extract:

> His thoughts, his preoccupations, had all been definite enough, though not as he had planned they should be. For in the excitement of leaving college the future had opened brilliantly clear, a morning prospect: he would read this standard book on flora, or that other on fauna; he would study, make notes, engage in field botany, buy a good microscope. All was grandly "set". But, alas, no sooner had he found himself at home than nothing was

> simple, nothing "set" any longer. On the contrary, each day was a grimy tangle of anxiety and personal disgusts. Oh, there was no simple starting point; achievement was an end that offered no graspable beginning. (p. 73).

In contrast, the author seems to treat Barbara with indulgent humour and expect much less of her; she develops as flighty, impetuous, rather shallow, and fit for little more than the marriage which is planned for her when she is a little older. It is difficult to know if Courage is reflecting, through his characterisation of Barbara, the attitudes and expectations towards young women which prevailed in the time and place that he writes of, or whether Barbara embodies something of the author's own viewpoint. In the following extract Courage conveys a dual sense both of Barbara's embarrassment and her shallow concerns:

> Barbara, confused, glanced down at her borrowed silk stockings and blushed. Those stockings! What on earth must Sheridan be thinking of such a vulgar display? On a rapid summing-up of the silk-stockinged Barbara, in fact, she despised her utterly. She attempted to hide the creature's legs beneath a chair. (p. 90).

Courage is at his cruellest towards Barbara when he describes her attempts to write love poetry which fails to satisfy its creator because it is so sentimentalised and says nothing of what she imagines she feels.

This novel demonstrates Courage's ability to use dialogue which is appropriate to characters from different classes and age groups, and his ability to distinguish characters through their use of particular turns of phrase or colloquialisms. In Chapter 12, for example, when Hubert Wanklin visits to look over the house which his wife has rented in town, phrases are used within the narrative in quotation marks just as Hubert might have said or thought them--"casting a weather eye over things", a "shipshape notion", and so on--while other phrases, not placed in inverted commas, add to this impression--"a rickety collection", "not worth serious attention", "Little to complain of there", etc. (p. 43). The teenagers and younger children use a wealth of slang; they speak of "bullyragging" and "biffing" other people, of being "weepy", "ratty" or "squiffy", and of going on the "tart tray" of a motorbike for a "spin". The Scottish nurse who comes to care for the new baby tends to speak in the third person plural using diminutives and baby

talk, while Kate's lack of education and her status as a servant is suggested through her unconventional grammar and earthier turns of phrase.

A number of different devices are employed to link chapters. These include the repetition of a key word or idea and the paralleling of characters. Chapter 7, for example, focuses on Susan and her new friend Moyra, while Chapter 8 depicts Alec in relation to his new friend Macfarlane; Chapter 27 ends with Ronald accepting by phone an invitation to a dance, while Chapter 28 begins with his mother reading the formal invitation to the same event; Chapter 14 ends with the suggestion of Susan having to share a room with Barbara, and the following chapter has Alec and his friend having to share a changing cubicle at the swimming baths. Some of the events in the narrative are foreshadowed earlier in the novel: these include Alec's actual running away which is looked forward to on page 58; Ronald's decision to become a surgeon which Mrs Warner foreshadows when she claims that Ronald's hands are like those of her own grandfather who was a surgeon; and the idea which is first introduced on page 106 that the new baby might arrive, as it does do, on the night of the Sheridans' dance. The chapter linkages and the foreshadowing of events serve to integrate the narrative and to weave a number of minor incidents into the main plot line. All of these considerations suggest that Courage, at this stage in his writing life, had a sound awareness of the mechanics of plotting a novel.

The main symbols exploited in this novel are the Persian carpet, the young pigeons and the chestnut tree that grows by the gate. The carpet, with its beautiful colours and patterns, is used to symbolise Mrs Warner's attempts to begin some sort of new life in middle age; this symbolism is underlined early in the narrative when Florence Warner actually articulates this notion (p. 20), and she returns to the idea again on page 54. At the end of the novel the carpet, now a little grubby "like the plans that lost their brightness in compromise, ...life patterns that refused to get themselves redesigned by an effort of will" (p. 180), is rolled up ready for removal to the farmhouse where Mrs Warner has spent all but this last year of her married life. Again, early in the novel, Mrs Warner dreams that she holds out her hands to pigeons which turn into "babies with naked heads and pink hands" (p. 35); this image is sustained later when, disoriented after giving birth to her child, she talks of birds hatching out their young, and when Ronald and Susan monitor the development of the squabs out in the garden shed; however, it is left to Hubert Warner to actually speak of their

children as "beginning to leave the nest" (p. 205). While the image of the chestnut tree is also recurrent, its significance is less immediately apparent. It serves as a means of distinguishing the Warners' town house from its neighbours, and Ronald sees the compact perfection of the chestnut bud which he dissects as surpassing even the wonderful and mysterious shaping of the human embryo (p. 95). During her labour Mrs Warner imagines her pain as the chestnut tree forcing itself into her body:

> 'Ah!' she cried aloud, and was suddenly, as she lay here in bed, braced to meet pain. It came, she thought, in the form of a tree: the branches, the long piercing leaves, the heavy root grasping in anguish at the earth. 'But the tree!' she found herself exclaiming as the sweat broke on her skin, 'the tree is the chestnut that grows by the gate into the road. Why should it come into the house?' (pp 138-139).

The chestnut tree becomes, like the cedars in One House, a symbol of female experience, particularly of strength gained from endurance, and of the mystery of new life which has such a strong female element.

The reason that Mrs Warner, Ronald and Dr Hoy appear less convincing than the other characters is that they are represented in a much more two-dimensional manner. Mrs Warner, in spite of her inner doubts and conflicts, continues to be the angel of the hearth in her own home, speaking kindly and patiently to servants and children, and maintaining calm dignity even when discussing the possibility of a marital separation with her husband or the two older children. She seems so self-restrained and in command of every situation that it is difficult to believe in her professed dissatisfaction with married life. Courage introduces the character of Mrs Warner's long-time friend, Laura Stenhalls, who might have acted as confidante and outlet for Mrs Warner's feelings, but Courage does not make such use of this relationship which he has gone to some trouble to establish. His failure to convince the reader of Mrs Warner's difficulties is major, in view of the fact that she is the novel's central character and that her dilemma is at the heart of the narrative. By the end of the story, reader sympathy is likely to rest with Hubert Warner who seems well-meaning enough and quite at a loss to explain his wife's strange notions.

Dr Hoy is not developed as a character to any extent, serving merely as a calming influence on Florence Warner and a rather priggish mentor to Ronald who is trying to reach decisions about a career. He also acts as a refined "English" foil to Hubert Warner's rough and ready colonial ways; in subsequent novels Courage returns to this theme of the contrasts between the colonial experience with its inevitably coarsening effects on the individual, and English gentility and manners. Here, Dr Hoy presents as patronising and something of an anachronism.

Ronald is depicted mainly through dialogue with other characters, and although he is shown by this means to be a dutiful son, a kindly older brother and a respectful young man, he still lacks full credibility. The very few insights given into the inner character convey the impression of a moody and self-conscious individual who takes everything far too seriously to be taken seriously by the reader.

Courage's attempts to resolve the various threads of his plot are also open to criticism. Ronald's plan to study medicine, and his arrangements to leave for England are made in great haste; the decision is suddenly made to send Alec away to College and for Susan to board in town with Laura Stenhalls so that she can also attend school; Barbara's engagement to Norman Sheridan is confirmed after a strategic meeting between their mothers. Least convincing of all is Florence Warner's sudden resolution to give up her plans for a separate life and to settle back into her old rôle of dutiful wife and mother with even the vague possibility of resuming marital relations once the likelihood of bearing any more late-in-life children has passed. By arranging matters so that all but the youngest child will be away from home for much of the time, Courage creates a future for the two parents in which they are likely to be alone with each other for a great deal of the time; in such conditions it is likely that their already strained relationship will come under even greater pressure, and that Mrs Warner is committing herself to a life which will prove even less fulfilling than what she had experienced to this point. Such considerations make the novel's ending problematical: are we to see the "happy endings" for family members as contrived and unconvincing, or are we to assume that Courage was not so much arranging happy endings as illustrating a thesis that people, like the characters in this tale, make compromises continually between their wishes and the practical considerations of life and so are doomed to be always less than happy.

The Fifth Child focuses not only on relationships within marriage, but also on parent-child relationships. On the whole it is the wife's viewpoint which is most prominent. Although the husband is absent for much of the novel's action, he is a constant presence in his wife's mind as she awaits the birth of her fifth child and considers the future of their marriage. Florence Warner is 46; having married at 25 and having already borne four children, she resents the fact that this pregnancy has been forced on her so late in life by what she considers an inconsiderate husband's wants. While the reason for her taking a house in Christchurch city for a year is, ostensibly, to be nearer medical help during her pregnancy, Florence's real reason is to have the chance to reassess her marriage and to decide on its future.

The two marriage partners are shown in opposition to each other. Florence is both sensitive and unfulfilled in her marriage, and Courage uses the Persian carpet which Florence buys to beautify the ugly rented house to embody both these ideas. Laura Stenhalls sees the carpet as an expression of her old friend's excellent taste but on a more complex level, the blue, pink and camellia-white patterns symbolise fresh, new arrangements which Florence is considering making in her own life; as her period of reassessment continues, the carpet becomes grubby and its colours fade. She is shown to be, as befits a farmer's wife, experienced in the practical arts of running a family home. She is also shown as caring towards people--her children and servants. At the same time, however, she is capable of taking an over-emotional view and, in her pregnant condition, becomes easily tired and readily moved to tears. Immediately before she goes into labour, Florence recalls the occasion of her first meeting with Hubert Warner, and her mixed reactions of fascination, doubt, embarrassment and pleasure. She then recalls the twenty years of her married life, the "droughts, floods, accidents of body, changes of heart, the long discomforts of childbirth" (p. 138) which have made up the experiences of her marriage. Following the birth of her child, she continues to consider the possibility of separating from Hubert, but in fact her decision was made at the time of the birth when she thinks of her carpet as symbolic of "...an extravagance, a kind of late blossoming, that wasn't after all truly in me." (p. 140).

Hubert Warner is initially presented as down-to-earth, pragmatic and insensitive to others' feelings or to the finer things of life. His concerns are that buildings and fences are solidly constructed, and that the

England to study. Whereas Ronald feels himself unable to relate to his bluff father, and agonises over speaking about his plans to him, the younger Alec relates to his father much more easily. Alec admires his father and sees him as a rôle model, wanting to live with him and help him on the farm. When the arrival of the new baby threatens the security of his familiar world, he makes his way back to his father; it is significant that although Alec had been unable to give any explanations for his actions "his father had understood without an explanation." (p. 153).

Just as the contrast between the relationships which the two sons have with their father is brought out, so Barbara's relationship with her mother is contrasted with that between Susan and Mrs Warner. As a young woman of 17, Barbara is intolerant of her mother's perceived old-fashioned outlook and of her attempts to organise her daughter's life. Mother and daughter are constantly at odds over small incidents such as Barbara wearing her mother's silk stockings without asking permission, or Mrs Warner's attempts to enforce a bed time for her older children. There is a marked generation gap between the two: Barbara scoffs at her mother, is knowledgeable about such matters as sex, is unrestrained in her actions and speech, while Mrs Warner is unable to speak about her pregnancy to her younger children, and holds definite views about what behaviours are appropriate and "ladylike"--for example, her opinion that young women should not wear silk stockings until their hair is "up". Because she is still very young, Susan is treated much more firmly as a child who is expected to do as she is told by adults. Because the power relationship between parent and child is more clearly delineated, there is no friction generated between Susan and her mother. Presumably it is adolescence which affects the relationship; the daughter's outlook is affected by her wish to be modern and to avoid domination, while the mother's attitude is governed by expectations of what is correct behaviour in a young woman, and possibly by fears of social opprobrium.

CHAPTER 4. DESIRE WITHOUT CONTENT (1950).

In this novel Courage again uses the setting of Canterbury in the 1920s. This time however, he writes of a rural landscape. The plot is, on first consideration, bizarre; once this is accepted as a valid part of the novel, its particular strengths become more apparent. What Courage succeeds in writing is a sort of colonial-Gothic tale, a style which Ronald Hugh Morrieson was to develop in his novels a few years later [1]. Against a natural landscape which seems impervious to human needs, a human drama is enacted in which the Gothic elements are those forces within the human psyche which have the power to destroy happiness and those inclinations within man towards spiritual forces beyond themselves. The novel is well plotted, and has characters who are convincing in their portrayal and in the changes which they undergo. The story is absorbing and moves at a rapid pace towards a gripping climax. Its themes are subtly developed rather than overstated at the cost of narrative development and style.

The novel has a four-part structure. The very brief opening section covers the period from 1866, when the first Kendal family members settled in New Zealand, until 1926 when the main action of the tale begins. This first part serves to set the scene for later action by relating the past events of one family member's retarded development and suspected suicide, Mrs Kendal's widowing at an early age, and the confirmation of her son's abnormality. In this section the notion of impending and inevitable disaster is introduced, to be developed in the rest of the novel. The second section introduces Elfrida Shelbeck into the Kendals' closed family circle; it describes the change in her relationship with the Reverend Dyson, and ends as intimacy begins between Elfrida and Lewis Kendal. The third section carries the action further into the main time frame by describing Effie's and Lewis' marriage, the birth of their daughter and her subsequent murder. The final section, spanning the years 1928 to 1940, serves as a kind of epilogue to the rest of the novel; here, Mrs Kendal assesses the part her own attitudes and actions have played in the tragedy, and she leaves her old life behind in order to make some form of reparation for what has happened.

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(1) See Maurice Shadbolt's Preface to Morrieson's Predicament, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1974, for the suggestion of a link between Morrieson's work and that of American 'Southern Gothic" writers.

The plot might be seen as a series of attempts by the main characters to restore and maintain balance in their lives. Mrs Kendal, for instance, first dreads that her son has inherited a form of mental weakness; when this is confirmed she elects to live with him on the family farm in isolation from the influences and judgements of the wider world. Ultimately she is made to realise that she cannot act to protect her son from the human need for love, and must then act to protect him in marriage, transferring her anxieties about inherited defects to his child. When even marriage fails to normalise Lewis, and his mad violence precipitates disaster, she resigns herself to these events by gradually seeing religious significance in what has occurred and coming to see Lewis as a kind of saint.

As a further illustration, Michael Dyson accepts that his vocation lies in the colonies, but then suffers great loneliness in such alien surroundings. He brings Elfrida out to New Zealand as a potential helpmeet, only to be rejected by her. He moves to a distant living and after several years of separation and further loneliness he meets Elfrida again and they marry. Elfrida accepts Dyson's first proposal as a way of escaping the mundanity of her home life, only to find in strange new surroundings that such a marriage would be no solution. Her decision to marry Lewis and to bear his child stems from a mixture of motives - strong sexual attraction, confusion, vulnerability, a desire to help and to repay obligations, a desire to salvage something from the mess she feels she has made of her life, the reluctance to make other, less pleasant, plans. Lewis, too, acts in an attempt to gain control over his own life. He resents the feeling that he has never enjoyed the happiness in his life that other people take for granted, and marries in an attempt to find this happiness as well as to retaliate against people such as his mother and Dyson whom he suspects of controlling his life. When he kills his young daughter, he does so in the belief that he is avenging himself on his mother and in the deluded hope of baptising the child "properly" according to his own weird notions of propriety.

Courage again uses an omniscient narrator, a technique which is successful because it allows for changing viewpoints. As much of the action is seen from Lewis' point of view as is seen from Mrs Kendal's or Elfrida's. At times this allows an overlapping of viewpoint on the same incidents which heightens the sense of authenticity and allows the reader a choice of what is a "real" view and what might be judged to be an erroneous or a deluded view.

Courage is able to evoke skilfully both setting and mood. The reader is given a clear picture of the North Canterbury farm--the homestead with its pioneer cob section and its modern wing, the enclosed garden, the paddocks, the stony river, the sheepyards, the high mountains and bush in the background. This description of the ravine where Elfrida and Lewis boil their picnic billy is an apposite example:

> She thought she had seldom seen a more beautiful place. The trunks of the beech-trees were a soft sooty black, the foliage above--myriads of tiny hard leaves--a dark olive green. Moss and a reddish lichen covered the boulders and the slabs of limestone in the shade. Out in the sunlight the river fell and flashed, sending up spray into the dancing air. The sound of the water was continuous, relieved only by the notes of a bird calling from among the trees of the steep bluff on the further bank. Each call was like a drop of the purest blandest silver. (p. 123).

In his description of the village hall at night, the author conveys an equally strong sense of place and mood, as much by allusion and suggestion as by actual description:

> The social had begun. Below the hanging kerosene lamps, and in an atmosphere redolent of varnish and damp shoes, some thirty people were already talking together in small groups. Healthy foreheads shone in the lamplight, above good plain faces and bodies in thick clothes. A few children, their hair brushed flat, raced about on the shiny pine-boards of the floor. Chairs were ranged along the walls and on the raised platform at the Hall's further end. Fretted pink paper decorations, left over from a winter dance, hung in festoons below the stark rafters of the roof. (p. 54).

Later Courage adds to this picture by describing the hall kitchen where a cauldron of water heats over a roaring wood fire, children rush about carrying plates of food to the supper tables, and the tea is brewed in a huge brown teapot. The general mood of conviviality is contrasted with Elfrida's nervousness in an unfamiliar setting:

> Effie left her coat in the chilly little cloakroom, then went from group to group round the floor, her name announced to each by the

> voice of the parson at her side. Large red hands grasped her small pale one in welcome. Had she really come all the way from the Old Country, she was asked, and had the voyage been a rough one, and was she enjoying New Zealand? Effie took the questions in good part and answered them honestly. Behind her, more people were constantly arriving at the door, out of the wet darkness, so that she was kept in circulation until she longed to escape and sit beside Mrs Kendal on the platform. Her social strength, resolutely kept up, at length began to fail: she could think of nothing to say that she had not said already. (p. 54).

This impressionistic description of the gathering from Effie's uneasy point of view effectively conveys her increasing sense of alienation and builds up to the minor disaster of the broken teacups which causes Effie to feel so inadequate, and to the more significant decision she makes to break off her engagement.

The asylum where Lewis ends his days is also described in economical but effective terms. From impressions of the bleak exterior, the clean yellow-painted interior and the manager's small office decorated with models made by the inmates, the reader is able to build a strong picture of this carefully-tended but essentially separate world.

Near the end of the novel care is taken to establish an image of the seaside bungalow where Mrs Kendal chooses to spend the last part of her life. Because her mind has become focused on the goal of achieving spiritual harmony, the bungalow is represented as austere but in harmony with its surroundings and pervaded by a feeling of complete peacefulness. The exterior is described in this manner:

> The tiny bungalow was little different, save in size, from a hundred, a thousand others: white-painted, timbered walls, a corrugated iron roof, many windows. A narrow verandah, reached by a straight flight of wooden steps, ran along the front and (though the house had but one storey) was set high enough to look like a balcony. A restricted garden, between macrocarpa hedges, had gained a few yards of soil from the dunes. Flowers, however, did not take easily to such pinched nourishment: only nasturtiums, marigolds and sturdy scarlet and orange zinnias flourished. In

> the summer days the salty bright air shone upon the windows like a mirror-reflection from the beach; the house glittered and basked, the flowers blazed. In the winter bitter winds blew in from the sea, besieging the place's single inhabitant in her hermit-like seclusion. (p. 203).

Later, the interior of the bungalow is shown through Dyson's eyes:

> He sat down in a basket-chair near to the open fireplace of rough mortared stones. In the warm spring morning the small room, almost bare of furniture, gave an impression of floating in the light reflected from the sandhills and the blue sky. Shelves of books filled one wall, the rest were painted white. Plain rush mats covered the floor. Pot-plants and hyacinths were on the long window sill on the seaward side. (p. 211).

Each of the main characters is convincingly depicted and acts consistently. An important consideration is the way in which each person changes significantly in the course of the narrative. Mrs Kendal is seen as a sensitive, cultured woman who is forced to depend on her own strength of character and her religious faith when her son's handicap forces her decision to live apart from mainstream society. Appropriately, because she is an introspective person, the reader learns about her chiefly through her recorded thought; the face she presents to the world is polite and solicitous, but reserved. At times, her thoughts strike the reader as rather esoteric, but this is a reflection of her deep spirituality and high aspirations:

> Mrs Kendal contemplated the familiar scene in silence. The question she asked herself was no new one and amounted to this: why, in a landscape so beautiful as that before her, was the tangle of human relationships no simpler to unravel or to control than in the dismal crowding of cities? Space and isolation should dissolve rancour and soften anger, not exacerbate both...
>
> 'If only we might share a simple and complete confidence, Lewis and I,' she thought as she closed the glass doors. 'If only he might love me as I love him, how satisfying and noble our lives might be then!' (p. 17).

Such ideas, couched in such language, may seem merely pretentious but are part of Mrs Kendal's soulful outlook on life, an attitude which is rooted in Christian belief and is at one with her almost monastic lifestyle and charitable attitudes towards other people.

Lewis, although an abnormal character, is consistent in his aberrant behaviour. He is described from the beginning as fine-looking--"Tall, broad and very strong, he had the fine-boned head and hands of his mother's family an was undoubtedly handsome." (p. 11). This impression both heightens and helps to explain to the reader the effect he has on Effie--for example, as he swims with her in the river--but the impression is undercut in several places by references to the awkward appearance of his clothes, his clumsy movements, and his childish outbursts. His essential childishness is underlined by several incidents such as his fascination with the echo which he imagines to be a real person (p. 108), and his lingering doubts about the reality of Father Christmas (p. 123). His moods swing between childlike impetuosity, suspicion and brutal strength, as on the occasion when he strikes his mother across the face (p. 77), or when he mutilates the carcase of a dead sheep in a macabre game with his dog. He does not understand the motives behind his actions and his thinking is easily confused. It is only when he has gone beyond all acceptable bounds of behaviour and has been confined to custodial care that he finds some sort of peace.

The vastly different characters of Mrs Kendal and her son might almost be seen as extreme representations of elements in the New Zealand "national" character, as it has been traditionally perceived. Mrs Kendal, as widow and mother, is almost a caricature of the notion of woman as "the angel of the hearth" which was strong in the nineteenth century; she suffers and endures, with her mind firmly fixed on Heaven; her gentle female influence will civilise the debased male world. Lewis might be seen as representing the brute force of the pioneering male; by very nature a coarser being and doomed to a perpetual childishness, the male is dependent on mother, and later wife, for sustenance, support and ultimate salvation. While these ideas are most strongly represented in this particular novel, Courage does return to exploring modified forms of these predominant attitudes in his other New Zealand novels.

The details of Effie's arrival at Winterhaven, and the disclosures she makes about her home life in England establish her as a timid and unremarkable person:

> Effie's luggage was stowed beside and behind her in the vehicle: a steamer trunk, new and cardboardy and bound with slats of pale wood, a battered hamper, an old-fashioned carpet-bag and numerous brown paper parcels. She herself was small, even diminutive in appearance, with neat sharpish features and eyes that seemed almost too large for the size of her face. Her clothes were brown--a tweed coat and skirt, a plain leather handbag, a brown bracken-coloured hat. Nothing about her was remarkable save her general neatness and smallness and perhaps the appealing effect of her eyes, which were of a warm brown tint like her clothes. (p. 32).

She is depicted as anxious to please, attempting to follow her fiancé's advice to make a good impression on his parishioners by asking about their children and their illnesses, but unable to quell her doubts about her planned future. These misgivings are dramatised in the incident at the village gathering when Dyson's clumsy attempt to help her lift the heavy teapot results in smashed cups:

> 'You see!' cried Effie. 'You see what you've done!'
>
> Her voice rang out with such intensity of accusation that it produced a laugh among the bystanders. The accident was an everyday one and, had she realised it, only endeared her to them. But in her own mind she had done something appalling and she lost her head. (p. 57).

It is up to Mrs Kendal, with her maturity and social poise, to smooth things over. Effie's eventual attraction to Lewis stems, as has been said, from a mixture of motives; among these, the power of sexual attraction and the desire to avoid having to make alternative plans probably predominate. Like her mother-in-law, Effie also has to turn, increasingly, inwards in order to cope with her life with Lewis. She is forced to act towards him in the same protective and nurturing capacity that Mrs Kendal had originally filled; this experience, combined with the tragedy of her child's death, finally

gives her the strength to make her own independent decisions and to live as she chooses to.

The Reverend Dyson resembles Mrs Kendal in his essential self-containment and aspirations towards spiritual fulfilment. His actions reveal his compassion for others, but this is somewhat academic until he has experienced suffering at a personal level and learnt that he is exactly the same as other human beings. When first introduced into the narrative he is "a dark, bony-faced man" whose piety has led him to a remote rural living where he can lead a life of seclusion surrounded by his books. By the end of the novel he remains "a man honest in his own faith" (p. 212), but he has learnt compassion and has come to accept that the human mind is essentially unknowable.

The novel's themes are embodied in the characterisation. Mrs Kendal, with her growing mysticism, epitomises the Christian notion of self-sacrifice for the sake of others, and this idea is strengthened by Elfrida's decision to marry Lewis and take over responsibility for his life. These themes of aspiration towards good are balanced against the theme of animal baseness as represented by the character of Lewis, who must remain a child needing immediate gratification of all desires. While Mrs Kendal attempts too much to assume responsibility for the well-being of others, Lewis is incapable of having concerns for matters beyond himself. Effie is an intermediary between these two outlooks; she wants to give to both Lewis and her mother-in-law, but the carnal side of her nature clouds her judgement and causes her to overlook her primary responsibility for her own physical and spiritual well-being. Mrs Kendal's ultimate realisation is that no one can play God in the lives of others, and she finds satisfaction finally in strengthening her own religious convictions:

> In this little house I have tried to be alone with myself, humbly, and with what intimations of grace God would give me of his mercy. I have looked for a resting place in belief, so that a pattern in existence might become plain to me...One must, at the last, come to a happier view of meaning and purpose, surely? (p. 214).

This theme of spiritual growth is enhanced by the recurrent monastic imagery. Lewis dreads that clergymen are in league with the police to commit him to a monastery; he has only a vague conception of a monastery as

"a place where monks are shut up" (p. 30), yet the institution where he is detained for the remaining years of his life resembles a monastery in its rules and routines, its separateness from the outside world and its abbot-like manager. Mrs Kendal also comes to see the asylum in this light:

> Bereft of responsibility for ever, were not the men she had seen (and Lewis amongst them) putting into practice something more ideal than they were aware of--a principle of the truly Christian life? Because they had lost everything...had they not gained in the process an advantage--an immense advantage--over those who lived like herself in an outer world of possessions and anxieties? A compensating force, a power, was at work...And she came at last to the question: was not Lewis' present existence, segregated and unattached though it might be, more truly Christian in essence than her unimprisoned, her too comfortable and worldly own? (p. 195).

By the novel's end, Mrs Kendal has come to resemble a religious anchoress: she has given away most of her possessions and lives in solitude. In Dyson's eyes she even seems to be dressed in a sort of habit (p. 211), and she spends her days in quiet contemplation, even though Dyson considers that the conclusions she has reached over time are misguided and symptomatic of the error on which the human mind is wont to become fixed.

In addition to the recurrent monastic image in this novel, the image of flowers is also used repeatedly. Mrs Kendal and Effie wear flowers on their dresses; Effie chooses a white hyacinth to wear to the village social; Lewis angrily uproots and burns the hyacinths that grow in his mother's garden; later, Mrs Kendal grows hyacinths in pots on the window sill of her seaside cottage; Effie and Mrs Kendal speak together of Effie's wish to marry Lewis while the two women walk beneath flowering fruit trees in the orchard; Mrs Kendal sits with her infant grandchild under a vine which is responding to the warmth of the Spring by sending out new shoots, and so on. This strong association of flowers with women seems to connote natural beauty, purity and the capacity to regenerate, while the vine has connotations of endurance through various seasons and is a symbol of the cycle of constant renewal.

The exploration of marriage relationships which Courage began in The Fifth Child is continued in Desire without Content. Again, the partnership

between Elfrida and Lewis is characterised by inequality; here the two partners are of greatly different intellectual capacity. Lewis, with the mind of a seven year old in a man's body, can only ever see the world through a child's eyes. Elfrida's decision to marry Lewis stems from a number of complex motives, and she comes to take the place, as Lewis' wife, that his mother had previously filled as guardian and caregiver. Because of the essential gulf between the two partners, their marriage is a replica of the earlier mother-child relationship and involves constant giving on Effie's part in response to Lewis' constant need to take. Lewis' initial attraction to his wife is born out of physical desire and intense jealousy; the dominance of these factors in his attitude towards Effie means that he cannot consider her separate needs in any way, nor share her with anyone. Because of this, both his mother and Janet, the daughter Effie bears him, become threats to his marriage and he is moved to act against this imagined danger.

Lewis is incapable of reasoned argument, so that when his wishes are thwarted or he feels himself to be threatened, he resorts to brute force. Under the influence of alcohol, his behaviour becomes even more brutish, as is demonstrated most vividly when, during their brief holiday in the city, he becomes drunk and attempts to kill Effie. She, in reply, has only her superior intelligence and her capacity to endure what takes place.

Some years after Lewis' death, Elfrida and Michael Dyson meet up again and eventually they marry. A marked comparison can be made between Effie's two experiences of marriage. When she is first engaged to Dyson, she is overwhelmed by his expectations of her; because of these pressures, Effie is in awe of her fiancé and feels herself to be inadequate as his future wife. Lewis' expectations of his wife are much more basic and more easily fulfilled since they can be met on a physical level; indeed, Lewis' extreme childishness actually affirms Effie's own view of herself as adequately capable. When Dyson and Effie meet again after twelve years both have been altered by time and experience. Dyson describes himself as "less formidable than before, a little more human" (p. 212), while Effie has suffered tragic loss and years of loneliness. While immaturity, impetuosity and sensual desire led Effie and Lewis into their unequal marriage, Dyson's description of his marriage to Effie suggests that it is a more equal partnership, more rational and founded on a mature realisation of the need for mutual love.

Whereas in his first novel Courage focused on a daughter's relationship to her father, and in his second work he looked at parent-child relationships in terms of both parents, in Desire without Content he concentrates on the mother-son relationship. Mrs Kendal bears a double burden for her son because she is a widow and so has no spouse with whom she can share her responsibility, and also because Lewis' retardation is caused by an inherited familial defect. She wants Lewis to live happily, but at the same time she wants to keep him from confinement in an institution; in order to achieve these ends she chooses to live apart from the world. Her self-imposed task is a lonely one, since even speaking about Lewis' condition would be, as Mrs Kendal sees it, a breach of loyalty to her son. Her decision to raise Lewis in this way has a disastrous long-term effect. He becomes resentful of the way his life is organised and restricted, and feels that he is being conspired against and kept from what is rightfully his.

Mrs Kendal's attitude towards her son is also shaped by her strong religious views--caring for him becomes a vocation for her. Quite early in the novel an insight is provided into her attitude by the following: "She knew now that she would have to give the unfortunate boy her closest care: his happiness and protection were a duty laid upon her--in a sense, her destiny. She accepted it." (p. 25). At the same time, religious faith sustains her in this task: "...she had turned to religion as at least some compensation for the major distress of her life." (p. 25).

In spite of his mother's readiness to overlook unpleasant incidents and to humour him, Lewis resents the control she has over his life and attempts to assert his independence. At first he does this by occasionally running away to the city, but after Effie's arrival in the house he insists on his right to marry her. His insistence that he has never been happy and that he should be allowed to find happiness in marriage forces his mother to realise that "Not all her care and devotion over the years, then, had protected him from a common human fate." (p. 101). Lewis accuses his mother of keeping him on the farm, and his confused claim during his trial--"She wouldn't let me be responsible" (p. 185)--has the sad ring of truth to it.

Mrs Kendal would like to be able to relate to her son on terms that allow a mutual exchange of love, but Lewis is incapable of verbally expressing his feelings or of showing affection; his emotions have different

outlets, he can "speak easiest in anger" (p. 15). Increasingly, Lewis reacts with violence which is at first directed towards his mother, and later at his wife; his increasing resort to violent action culminates in the drowning of his baby daughter.

Although she is aware from an early stage that Lewis is of extremely limited intelligence, Mrs Kendal continues to hope for some kind of improvement. She also continues to allow Lewis to hope for more than he is capable of achieving with the result that he is constantly frustrated at not being able to do such things as learn to drive the family car or take over the management of the estate; he sees these tasks undertaken by hired help and resents such apparent usurpation. This frustration increases once he is married; he sees himself as a married man with a new set of rights and obligations which he is still kept from fulfilling. His mother's refusal to give him more responsibility strengthens his manic belief that she is conspiring against him with others--clergy, the police, and the farm manager. For him, she comes to represent all the forces which he imagines work to frustrate his wishes and to "imprison" him--as he sees things, "the powers of authority were manifold and arrayed against him." (p. 156). Lewis' daughter, Janet, becomes the focus of contention between Lewis and his mother; he imagines that his mother wants to "steal" the child, and his action in placing Janet in the river is, in part, an attempt to save her for himself. Ironically, it is Mrs Kendal's concern that Janet should turn out to be unaffected by inherited mental weakness which makes her so anxious about the child, without realising that her protectiveness fires and increases Lewis' suspicions.

That Lewis' condition is deteriorating is not comprehended by Mrs Kendal until he attempts to strangle his wife; this act forces her to recognise the "inevitable progression of mania." (p. 170). Nevertheless, she takes no decisive action to prevent the disaster which inevitably occurs; her inaction seems to stem from her religious belief, amounting to a form of fatalism, that all things are preordained and worked out to some overall plan. Just as she accepted that she had to nurture her handicapped child, she continues to believe that whatever happens is beyond her control. This idea is most powerfully articulated at the moment when she and Effie are frantically trying to discover where Lewis has taken the baby, and Mrs Kendal suddenly realises "with a curious lifting of the heart and of all her senses that there was nothing further--nothing in her own human power--that

she could do...Her sole function lay in awaiting the disclosure of what God had already so serenely purposed, and in accepting it when it came." (p. 175).

Following Lewis' confinement in a mental hospital Mrs Kendal becomes increasingly convinced that Lewis' life has been of religious significance. She sees the inmates of the institution as living apart from the material world, and wonders whether they may, unconsciously, be putting the principles of the truly Christian life into practice. This consideration prompts her own decision to free herself from property and material concerns. Other developments assist this decision and reinforce her fatalistic outlook: "It was as though a sanction beyond her own wishes were beginning to rearrange the pattern of circumstance, providing encouragement, gently showing her that she was not mistaken in the path she intended to follow." (p. 198).

In time, Mrs Kendal's life becomes increasingly ascetic. She lives very simply and uses what money she has to carry out charitable work. The notion that she once had of becoming a better person through her care of her son develops into the idea of achieving this end through loving all other people. By the end of the novel, Courage even describes her appearance in terms which suggest a religious recluse: "...her head was thrust a little forward as though peering at something a yard beyond her sight's ken. A coat or robe of reddish wool fell loosely, like a habit, to her ankles, above a pair of squashed house-shoes. Her hands...were as rough as untanned leather." (p. 211).

The real Lewis becomes less and less recognisable to Mrs Kendal each time she visits him, and after his death she comes to imagine him as a saint who deliberately acted to free himself from all worldly concerns so as to devote his life to God: "For a saint, after all, there may be obscure ways to deliverance, and Lewis chose his own. The child was sacrificed so that he might be the more single--ah, the freer--in his salvation." (p. 216). The question remains at the end of the novel as to the extent to which Mrs Kendal's view of Lewis is self-delusion, or a form of religious mania. In a sense she does what she believes Lewis did--she sacrifices her son in order to achieve saintliness herself.

CHAPTER 5. FIRES IN THE DISTANCE (1952).

This novel follows its predecessor as another of Courage's North Canterbury Gothic works, although it is less bizarre than Desire without Content. The narrative is carefully plotted over a confined period of nine days, setting and mood are strongly depicted, and the plot gathers interest as it moves towards its climax. Dialogue is handled well, and strong links are established between setting and character. Characters are easily distinguished by their appearance, interests and manner of speaking, but not all characters are developed to the same depth. Themes which Courage had already opened up in his earlier novels, in particular concerns with family relationships, are taken up again in this book, and a new theme of homosexual orientation, which Courage took as a central theme for the later A Way of Love, is introduced here. Certain literary references and influences are apparent in this novel, and worthy of discussion. There are minor lapses in controlling the time span and some instances of incomplete narration; in one scene also the style becomes particularly melodramatic, reminiscent of the worst passages in Courage's first novel, but these faults are minor in comparison with his overall achievement.

The novel has a three-part structure. It begins by backgrounding the Donovan family, then moves to the visit of Mrs Murray and her grandson Paul and Paul's acceptance of the invitation to stay at Cavan; the middle part covers Paul's three-day visit to the Donovans, and ends with the moonlight picnic; the final part sees the dispersal of the family members and the establishment of an uneasy truce between Mr and Mrs Donovan. Having established the characters and their situations, Courage shows how Paul affects Mrs Donovan, her son and daughter; then, after the high point of the picnic and the death of Kathie Donovan's horse, he shows each character choosing a fresh course of action which will lead to a new future. The tight time frame is appropriate to the intensity of the emotions which develop in the narrative. The relationships between Paul and the other three key characters develop swiftly, forcing sudden resolution. The time frame is also dictated by the relation of action to the moon's phases, the moon being a dominant image in the action. As the moon reaches its full phase so the action reaches its climax. A minor but annoying slip on the author's part is the loss of a day in the narrative so that characters on several occasions speak of events as occurring "yesterday" when they had occurred two days earlier.

The setting is again rural Canterbury in the early 1920s. To establish the physical setting there are specific references to Christchurch and the Southern Alps, as well as the more local, fictional details such as the small township with its store and wooden church, the stands of pines and rows of poplars, the low rounded hills and wide rocky river beds. References to the recently-ended war establish the time setting as shortly after the First World War. Cavan, the Donovans' home farm, is clearly described. The house and its surrounding garden reflect, in their neglect, the malaise which afflicts the Donovans' marriage: "Through the gap in the curtains she could see the verandah outside--the verandah roof shaded the drawing room--a stretch of gravel drive, a weedy green lawn, and the trees of the plantation sheltering the garden of the homestead." (p. 5). Courage uses this house in symbolic ways in much the same way that he used the Wanklin house, Ebbfield, in his first novel. Later, through Katherine's eyes, he shows the declining house and garden in contrast to the splendid surrounding scenery:

> The evening was already beginning to fall across the plains. To the west, in a clear blue light, stood the mountains, the Southern Alps, their gullies showing like ribs in the dusk. Katherine entered the homestead plantation by the white iron gate to the drive and strolled towards the house. Here, inside the shelter-belt of pines, the wind had dropped, the air was still. Apple and pear trees in the orchard to one side of the drive were in bloom; their white and pink blossoms gave out a sweet honeyish scent. Daffodils and many small pearly narcissi by the paths were almost choked by the growth of tall cocksfoot grass. The whole garden was wild and overgrown, neglected for many years--so long indeed that the original paths, leading away on either side of the drive, were now shut in by a jungle-like tangle of lilacs, laurels and laburnums and clinging trailers of clematis...So the garden wilderness remained and flourished with the house set in a precarious space at its centre. (p. 17).

The description also symbolises the struggle between the "refinements" transplanted from England and the old world, and the "uncultured" elements which thrive in their native setting. Courage also depicts this same struggle between the characters, as he did in The Fifth Child, and to a lesser extent in Desire without Content. Here, Mrs Murray of Mount Sterling

represents the English-born settler who has remained "English" in her manner and outlook while adapting to the new country and realising how it may develop in the future:

> English money, English ideals, had come stretching out from England, round the world; a long navel-string of colonists; and fixed themselves upon this far island. But now the navel-string was shrivelling, the baby beginning to insist on its own vigorous life, with the practical temper of its own adopted landscape. The link with England was still strong, resilient (the war had shown that), but the fresh generation had an independence not English, a budding nationality, a family difference with the parent...The large estates like her own, Mrs Murray reflected, estates which were the legacy and expansion of English money, English endeavour--how much longer would they last? (p. 218).

Mrs Donovan is also English-born, but has never come to terms with life in New Zealand. By marrying suddenly and at a young age, she has married into a situation she neither expected nor can comprehend. Her disappointments centre on her family's home in England--a picture of a stone mansion with a pillared portico, set in parkland, a picture which strikes Paul as "...very calm, very far away, very dead." (p. 74). Patrick Donovan is New Zealand-born of Irish emigrant stock, and appears as bluff, insensitive, coarse and concerned only with farming matters and with drinking.

Courage is able to endow specific places with a strong sense of the identity of their chief occupants. Mrs Donovan's large upstairs bedroom, for example, combines such appearances of faded glory as looped lace curtains and pink striped wallpaper with indications of slatternliness in the clothes and books which are heaped on chairs and floor. This description contrasts with the image of her husband's narrow downstairs room with its small dusty window. Again, Iverson's small cottage is "a box-built, pinched little place, sheltered by half-grown pines, with staring windows under the peak of an iron roof." (p. 65). It has a "meagre" garden with hens roaming a dry yard near a tin rainwater tank. Its interior is makeshift and proclaims the occupier's status as widower. The kitchen where Leo spends so much of his life cooking and washing is hot and cluttered, and contrasts with his bedroom under the gable which is decorated in an eccentric way expressive of his interests and aspirations.

In this novel the night has a particularly strong effect on the characters' emotions, and again the author takes great care to set the scene so as to enhance the mood he wishes to convey. In the scene where Leo feels most attracted to Paul but is eventually rejected by him the initial description of the surroundings as they stroll in the paddocks sets the conflicting moods of sensuality and apartness:

> They left the tufted grasses of the lawn, skirted the verandah and dived under the dark trees into the tunnel of the drive. The air was warm, gently shifting, scented with laurel and lilac. The whole garden, wild, overgrown, and the plantation beyond it, stirred in the night breeze, throwing off the closeness of the day. The stars were pinpoints among the high branches. In the far distance a single owl-voice called and again called, a stranger in the silence of the moon. (p. 135).

As part of the night setting, the moon is also a dominant image and acts as a further influence on the moods of the characters. The moon has traditional connotations of both romance and lunacy, and these are integral to the narrative. Courage devotes the whole of one chapter to the moon (pp 130-132), establishing it as a powerful active influence on human behaviour which is beyond the restraints of time or place. The moon is personified as a female force, as the following extract shows:

> The moon rose. Through her, on this spring night, her transmitted power of the sun's pulse, the cell and beauty of life, of love itself, fell upon the homestead. The power was not a discriminatory power: male and female both--and, no less, the wanderer between--felt its thrust, its workings. The moon, the sun-influence by night, the messenger and the fate, fell upon the persons we know--upon Mrs Donovan, upon Leo, Katherine and Paul. (p. 132).

Following this chapter Leo, then his mother, and finally Katherine come under the luminous spell of their visitor, Paul; they act in ways that are novel or out of character, emerging from their period of enchantment with fresh understandings of themselves and new courses of action to follow. More specifically, Leo confesses to having danced naked on the moonlit grass, and his struggle with Paul takes place in a moonlit paddock. The

moonlight picnic takes place two nights after this incident, and in Chapter 17 where the picnic is described there are recurrent references to the moon and to moonlight. The cumulative effect of these references is to convey the impression of a supernatural landscape, an unearthly world in which ordinary objects have been transformed by the moon into objects full of mystery, and in which people act quite differently from the way they act in full daylight.

Dialogue is handled well in much of the novel. Each character speaks with a distinctive voice, from Mrs Murray's cultured tones to Patrick Donovan's down-to-earth speech with its hints of his Irish ancestry discernible in idiom and sentence construction. The least successful passages of dialogue are those between Katherine and Paul when they have recognised their mutual attraction: here the prose and dialogue become melodramatic, as the following passage serves to illustrate:

> In return, her hands caressed his cheek, his forehead, the curve of his neck below his hair: they were the emblems of his indwelling soul, the physical envelope of a being her imagination had drawn from books, loneliness and a craving beyond the banal round of her daily life. To possess this treasure, bodily--to possess it for this moment, this one time, without thought for the future--was now her intensest wish. The gate was broken, the walls breached. She was conquered.
>
> 'Paul, darling Paul--don't let me go.'
>
> 'I won't let you go. I love you. Tell me you love me.'
>
> 'I love you.'
>
> 'For always?'
>
> 'Hold me, hold me.'
>
> 'This is our life, Kathie. It must be our life.'
>
> 'Don't let me think. We mustn't think, either of us.'

> His voice exulted against her ear. 'You're mine, Kathie. I didn't know it could happen. I didn't think anybody could love me'.
>
> 'Don't let me think. Hold me, kiss me. You're my poetry, now, Paul. Poetry and beauty, to me.'
>
> His hands travelled over her neck, her breasts. 'I love you--Oh, I love you. Let me touch you, your body.'
>
> 'Yes--now--touch me.' (pp 179-180).

Fortunately such stylistic lapses are rare. It is difficult to decide whether this almost bathetic way of describing romantic interchanges, which is no improvement on the purple prose of Courage's first novel written nineteen years earlier, derives from the author's attempt to write to some sort of formula for romantic fiction, or whether it stems from an ignorance of the realities of such an exchange.

This banal passage can be contrasted with other scenes such as that at the end of the novel where the Donovans realise that with their children now gone they must make the best of their marriage. Here Courage adeptly balances bitterness and anger against feelings of regret and optimism, capturing the very human swings of mood and the essence of a marital dispute:

> Whisky had made him talk belligerently, with an ugly edge on his voice: now the effects of the spirit began to ebb from his veins: he felt stranded, even as he glanced at the squat bottle of liquor on the table by the piano. Stranded and lost, like a boy wanting to cry. His face crumpled.
>
> 'What is it then? What do you want of me?' he asked, and stood stupidly, fingering his chin. 'What do you want?'
>
> 'Do you want me to go? To leave you?'
>
> 'Ah, look here, look...' But he did not know what he wanted to say. 'It's like this,' he began, and stopped. 'I've said hard

> things to you, Celia.' He uttered a conscious laugh, almost a chuckle. 'I've said what was on my mind.'
>
> 'Yes, yes.' A little control came back into her voice. 'You've said terrible things. Unforgiveable.'
>
> 'Ah, well,' he sighed, 'there it is.'
>
> Again there was a pause. Into the silent room drifted the distant hunting-calls of the owls from the plantation around the homestead. Under the picture of an English park the clock above the mantelpiece struck twelve thin notes, like the vibration of harp strings. 'There it is,' he repeated, including the day and the years. (pp 237-238).

Characters are established as effectively as are the settings and mood of the novel, although because some of the characters are not typical of the "types" found in novels of this period they may be more difficult for the reader to accept. Mrs Murray, in her experience and wise acceptance of the world, Patrick Donovan as a hard-drinking, disappointed farmer, Paul as a handsome but somewhat callow youth are almost character stereotypes, yet they are still developed by the writer as substantial entities. This is achieved through careful observations of their physical features and speech, their mannerisms and their behaviour in a range of situations where they are shown as reacting in a variety of ways rather than with fixed responses. Katherine is also seen in a range of situations; in particular, the dual aspects of her nature--the feminine and masculine features--are contrasted, and she is convincing as a woman of principle, determination and inner strength. Lennox Iverson is shown as an uncomplicated man of the earth, winning reader sympathy because of his loneliness and his patience in continuing to woo Katherine in spite of her indecisiveness and her mother's disapproval of the match. Imogen, the youngest of the three Donovan children, has links with others among Courage's child characters such as Susan and Alec Warner, Walter Blakiston, Jimmy Nelson and Stella Mesurier. She is a product of her unorthodox upbringing, combining rudeness, a solitary nature, naïvety and precocity. She plays a minor part for most of the plot but has an important rôle in serving to point up the interaction between the adult characters, while seldom comprehending the complexities of the action she is peripherally involved in; for instance, she is sworn to

secrecy over Kathie's marriage to Lennox, but breaks the news to her mother before Kathie has a chance to prepare the way for making the disclosure because she reasons in a childish manner that it is no longer necessary to keep the secret once the deed is done. In doing this, she also precipitates Mrs Donovan's attempted suicide which further brings about her own despatch to boarding school. Imogen has been given her name by her mother in the hope that she lives up to ideals such as those represented by her Shakespearian namesake who was tender, truthful and artless: ironically, these qualities do characterise the child but in an unexpected way. Her tenderness takes the form of childish innocence which is lost in the transition to adulthood, while her truthfulness becomes a statement about the adult world as she perceives it, with all its paradoxes and apparent untruths; in speaking artlessly she inadvertently wounds. Where the heroine of Cymbeline assumed men's clothes for the sake of love, this Imogen is a tomboy who relishes the opportunity to run barefooted and to dress in practical clothing.

Of Courage's characters in this novel Mrs Donovan and Leo may initially appear to be the least credible. Mrs Donovan is given to excessive acts and extravagant modes of expression, but these must be seen, along with her psychosomatic illnesses, as manifestations of her disordered personality. Similarly, Leo daydreams and behaves strangely: he dances naked in the moonlight as he imagines, from his eclectic reading, that the ancient Greeks did, and revels in a self-induced state of morbidity by contemplating a Maori skull he has found in a curio shop. Again, these actions must be seen as the outcome of his ignorance, his lack of understanding of his own homosexual nature and the desire to act in some extreme way against the constraints of the life he is forced to lead.

This novel contains a number of direct references to other literary sources. Katherine and Paul read Rupert Brooke's poetry, and Paul's good looks are compared to Brooke's idealised beauty. The life of the Brontës in an atmosphere as self-created and self-sustaining as that in the Donovans' household is recalled in Katherine's quotation of Emily Brontë's poem, "No Coward Soul is Mine"; this opening phrase becomes a personal motto for Katherine. A less direct, but intriguing source, might be detected in the tussle between Paul and Leo which recalls the naked fireside tussle between Birkin and Gerald in D.H. Lawrence's Women in Love. The following extract suggests some parallels between the two works:

> But Leo, for all his light build, was muscular. He refused to disentwine himself; he clung like a wrestler, with a yielding, yet hard resilience, grasping Paul's waist. And now Paul began to struggle back, with a sort of bewildered playful annoyance. He didn't want to hurt Leo, but Leo would not budge; he tried to hold Paul's eyes with his, to turn aside violence, a fixed imploring smile on his mouth. He would not relax. And presently the light struggle, the almost accidental proximity, turned to combat: it became tinged with competition, a trial of strength. The feet of both young men struggled for a hold on the dry grass, among the tussocks. Paul began to use his fists, to batter Leo's ribs. No word was now spoken: the conflict developed in a sharp silence, with thrusting limbs. Both fighters overbalanced, fell to the ground. And again the half-grim extraordinary battle was taken up, with Leo using his clasp acquiesently [sic] to muffle Paul's strength. The grass was hard, with humps and tufts of tussock, on the plain. Paul could see his opponent's grimacing lips, his tangled hair, the whites of his eyes as he twisted on the ground. Even when pinioned in Paul's grip Leo said nothing: by desperate wriggling and clinging he again and again provoked the conflict, remaining passive under Paul's blows yet protecting himself from real hurt. Five minutes passed. In sweat and exhaustion the struggle tightened. It did not cease until Leo gasped and lay still, as if fainting, as if dead, his face twisted back on his bare neck, his mouth shuddering open to the moonlight. His resistance collapsed. He lay silent, his eyes closed. (p. 138).

In the two passages, both Leo and Birkin are stronger than their appearance suggests, both struggles become more intense as they progress, both are silent with no verbal interchange between the protagonists, and both end similarly with Leo and Birkin becoming so exhausted that they almost lose consciousness [1].

While the passage describing the tussle between the two youths may be suggestive of Lawrence's writing, it is an ultimately disappointing episode for the reader because its intent is not fully clear. The reader is left in

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(1) Refer to Women in Love, by D.H. Lawrence. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985, pp 304-306.

some doubt as to what exactly occurred; at the end of the encounter Leo seems to have gained sudden insight into himself, but no apparent grounds are provided for this recognition. Since Leo's homosexual nature is a key factor in the plot, it is regrettable that his realisation of his true orientation is not handled by the author in a more convincing manner. This tendency to initiate action which is not wholly credible or explicable can be seen in other parts of the novel; for example, there is the strange incident in Mrs Donovan's bedroom when Paul's "healing" hands bring "comfort" to his hostess. In this passage too there seems to be the suggestion of sexual stimulation and possible gratification, but vague or possibly euphemistic language obscures the meaning. In this, is the author being rather coy about actually describing sexual experience after he has boldly chosen to deal with such topics as latent homosexuality, marital discord and menopausal experience, or is he misjudging his abilities to suggest rather than state explicitly? Again, the exact details of Katherine's ride home after the moonlight picnic are not provided: after the earlier melodramatic build-up which suggests that some sort of romantic consummation will take place, the narrative leaps to the report of the shooting of Kathie's horse and of Paul's sudden departure from Cavan. The narrative does not make it clear whether Kathie has had a change of heart and has rejected Paul's further advances, or whether some sort of unsatisfactory consummation has occurred which has resulted in a guilt over-reaction. Questions arise as to whether the horse's accidental death followed, and so marred, what had already taken place between the two lovers, or whether the horse's death represents, in Freudian terms, Katherine's destruction of her own passion. In this novel Courage amply demonstrates his ability to structure a plot so that dramatic or unusual incidents stand out vividly; he even skilfully foreshadows such incidents as the picnic, which is looked forward to on several earlier occasions, and the shooting of the stallion which is prepared for when Katherine retrieves her rifle from Lennox (p. 165). What these specific instances highlight is Courage's inability, at times, to make clear the full details of key incidents.

As in the earlier novels, a number of images recur which have symbolic importance; the moon as a key image has already been discussed. The fledgeling image first encountered in One House, and used with even greater point in The Fifth Child, is used here on three occasions, and each time the young birds are seen from Imogen's viewpoint. Where fledgelings earlier

symbolised the growing independence of children in the family, in this novel they represent Imogen's increasing understanding of the adult world. When she first sees them they are defenceless, dependent and gullible; when next seen they are becoming more like adults in appearance but are still not fully capable of fending for themselves; finally, they have deserted the nest altogether. Music is another motif in the novel: with the poetry Katherine reads and the drawings Imogen composes on scraps of cardboard, music represents the finer, artistic aspects of human nature. It is this side of herself which Mrs Donovan has had to deny in her married life and which Katherine seems finally to renounce when she honours her engagement to Lennox Iverson. Katherine's magnificent black stallion is a particularly Freudian symbol in the novel, serving a similar purpose to the cob which causes Mona's death in One House. Katherine's mount has cost her a great deal of money and she tends it lovingly; the animal meets its end at Katherine's own hands when, after breaking its leg in a rabbit hole on the ride home from the moonlight picnic, it has to be put down. The killing suggests the conscious decision Kathie has to take to kill off her feeling for Paul in order to free him from any obligation to her and leave him free to pursue his career; seen in this light the shooting of the horse also represents an extreme form of self-denial. Courage makes particular use of the Freudian interpretation of horse as sexual symbol: where the stallion is usually seen as symbolic of male sexual energy, here it represents, in part, the masculine side of Katherine's own nature. Some hints are given of the ambivalence of her nature--for example she dresses in men's working clothes, performs farm tasks capably, and ignores local conventions and opinions; the stallion has a key rôle in this as it is the means by which she performs so much of her work, and her ability to handle such a magnificent animal earns her the respect of men such as her father and Lennox Iverson. Katherine's killing of the horse can be seen in this light as a renunciation of the masculine side of herself: she not only destroys the symbol of her male self, but also does away with the object which enables her to act in a male rôle and to win respect in a male world. Following the horse's death, she will finally marry and take on the traditional female task of caring for a home and husband.

In highlighting the serious differences between Patrick Donovan and his wife, Courage once more depicts a marriage which comes about through impetuosity and settles into great unhappiness and frustration. Mrs Donovan gave up life as a student musician in order to marry, and instead of leading

an exciting cosmopolitan life as a concert performer, she has become a bitter, neurotic farmer's wife living in isolation from people. Since her married life has offered no outlets for her artistic sensibilities she has retired to her bed. Paul Warner's visit to the farm gives her new energy because, as the son of an old friend, he connects her to memories of a happier youth and her own youthful aspirations. Her attraction to Paul's youth and good looks are an outcome of her menopausal neuroticism and the physical alienation that exists between herself and Patrick.

Patrick must bear the blame for his wife's unhappiness. Celia Donovan blames her husband's Irish ancestry for the fact that he is so "stubborn", "trying" and hard to live with. She fancies he has never loved her and is indifferent to her needs. She also fancies that they live in a state of constant conflict and that Patrick works against her by encouraging their children to behave in ways which mock her aspirations for them. Thus she blames Patrick for the fact that Katherine works on the farm like a male farmhand, while Katherine's engagement to Lennox Iverson is seen as a ploy by Patrick to consolidate his own land holdings. While his wife has become increasingly inactive and slovenly, Patrick continues to work his farm but his efforts have little result. To compensate for his disappointments he drinks, further increasing his wife's antagonism towards him. He is not depicted as hopeless however: he has a vitality and an air of virility which is strongly conveyed in the novel, especially through his children's impressions of their father.

The final confrontation between husband and wife comes after the children have all left home, and the two realise that they are now alone. Bitter recriminations are followed by the recognition of mutual needs and some kind of reconciliation is effected with the recognition that "Hope could lie only in an attempt, too long postponed, to connect two solitudes, his own and hers." (p. 238).

The examination of the Donovans' marriage is paralleled by exploration of the relationship between Katherine and Lennox. Their marriage is also to be one in which the partners have very different interests and outlooks. Lennox is considerably older than Kathie and has been married before; he is also fully taken up with the struggle to win a living from the land, and has no time for genteel pursuits. Katherine marries in full knowledge of the sort of life she will lead, unlike her mother who had no idea of the life

she was marrying into; for this reason, although history might appear to be repeating itself in the daughter's marriage, the prognosis for the Iversons' marriage is brighter. Using Katherine's marriage as exemplum, Courage seems to claim that marriage can never be more than a compromise on the part of both partners, but he concedes that marriage might still be happy if both partners are aware of each other's shortcomings and of what they are becoming involved in.

In this novel the author paints his cruellest picture of family relationships. The Donovans' marriage has been a bitter experience for both husband and wife, and it is their children, and in particular the sensitive son, who must suffer the consequences. The novel suggests a family situation in which a neurotic mother interferes in the relationship between her children and their father, makes demands of them and effectively spoils their lives. This sad portrayal is mitigated by the sympathy which Courage is able to engender for the mother, so that, although her actions are seen as damaging, the reader feels sympathy for her situation and understands her motivation: she uses her children as props and excuses for her own deficiencies and works to distort them into creatures of her own likeness. In this self-interested and domineering attitude towards her children Celia Donovan has much in common with two others of Courage's mother characters--Mrs Nelson in The Young have Secrets and the senile Mrs Jaques in The Visit to Penmorten.

Patrick Donovan seems less distant from his children than are other father figures in Courage's novels: this is especially so of his relationship with his somewhat effeminate son, Leo, of whom he does not have particular expectations. Patrick accepts that Leo is, effectively, the housekeeper in place of Mrs Donovan: such a degree of tolerance is surprising in view of the male stereotype dominant in New Zealand society both at the time in which the novel is set and at the time when the novel was written. There is a suggestion that Leo finds his father's maleness disturbing, but this aspect of their relationship is not explored in great depth except for the one episode when Leo waits while Patrick dresses:

> Mr Donovan struggled out of his pyjama jacket, fumbling with the buttons, baring the black hairs of his chest and the rift of flesh above a slackened belly. Leo, turning, saw his parent's nakedness: that of an animal weak in purpose but not negligible

> and not without charm: he turned back to the bed, aware that he was judging his father through his mother's eyes. (p. 225).

In this passage Courage also suggests the difficult situation in which the three Donovan children find themselves in relation to their parents. They are aware of the extent to which Mrs Donovan's attitude towards their father is likely to colour their own, and of the need to hold their own separate views of him.

Rather unjustly, in a moment of self-pity, Patrick accuses his son of being against him (p. 226--"You've always had your knife into me..."), and attributes this to Leo's attachment to his mother. Leo responds by pointing out that Patrick has always had the love of his daughter, Katherine, as compensation. Here, it seems obvious that Courage is accepting and utilising standard Freudian notions of identification of the child with one or other of its parents, so that the feminine son relates to the mother and the somewhat masculine daughter relates to the father. As the eldest child, Katherine is more aware than Leo of the pressures which exist in their parents' marriage, and until Paul's arrival places her in competition with her mother for the newcomer's love, she manages to act as a sort of go-between for her parents and so bridges their separate worlds. In the evenings Katherine returns from working on the farm for her father, and exchanges her male garb for the feminine clothes which her mother approves of. She is a keen horsewoman and capable at farm tasks--attributes which her father admires--but at night her artistic needs are met by reading poetry which is an interest she shares with her mother. These antithetical aspects of her nature make her seem ambivalent in sexual orientation, but this suggestions is not developed; her willingness to help on the farm can be explained in terms of her love for her father, just as her alliance with Lennox might be explained as a desire to please her father and to help to repair family fortunes. When Katherine does decide to go ahead with her marriage to Iverson, it is to her father that she turns for help in carrying out her plans.

Celia Donovan is disappointed in her daughter. She is disapproving of Katherine's engagement and her apparent lack of femininity, when she can see in her daughter's features and nature strong resemblances to herself--"Katherine was twenty-five, with the same well-bred features as her own, the same feminine body" (p. 3), and again, "...she's much too fine a character

...Katherine is my daughter, with a sensibility she mustn't sacrifice." (p. 23). Celia places the blame for Katherine's behaviour on her husband: because he drinks they have no money and so Kathie must not only work to help out on the farm, but must also marry unsuitably.

Because her expectations of her daughter are frustrated, Celia turns to her son Leo for comfort. She admires his well-shaped hands which she imagines are inherited from her own family and values his "sensitivity". She fails to recognise her own responsibility for Leo's failure to develop career interests, in particular the fact that her psychosomatic illness has disrupted Leo's education and forced him to assume the rôle of a skivvy in her kitchen. Celia has a neurotic dependence on her son; in particular his skilled brushing of her hair relieves her tension and she relies on his advice about what she should wear. While encouraging Leo's interests in clothes, perfume, hairdressing, and so on she delights in the fact that Leo is not like his father; her attempts to ensure this are an active encouragement of his homosexual nature and might be seen as a form of emasculation. She can also be cruel to her son, however: after mother, daughter and son have all confessed their love for Paul Mrs Donovan crushes Leo by saying, "I didn't ask to have an unnatural son." (p. 177). It is this wounding comment which goads Leo into deciding to abandon his family to their own devices and to seek work in the city.

Imogen, the Donovans' third child, is much younger than Katherine and Leo. She runs wild, with little to restrain her until she is sent off to school; the inference here is that Mrs Donovan, by the time Imogen appears, has lost interest in imposing her will on her children or possibly is content with trying to influence her older children's lives. Whereas Katherine and Leo attempt to placate both parents, Imogen actively resents and rejects her mother, refusing absolutely to accommodate her mother's wishes in any way. As she becomes wilder and ruder, her mother once again manages to attribute everything to Patrick's influence and to his Irish ancestry.

Through the character of Leo the author makes a very tentative step towards exploring the theme of homosexual orientation which was to be central in his later work, A Way of Love. Leo is depicted in shallow and quite stereotypical terms. He is good looking but vain about his appearance, keeps a mirror handy to admire himself in, does physical

exercises to enhance his appearance and occasionally wears perfume; he is interested in traditionally feminine matters such as clothes and hairdressing, and is capable at such as tasks as cooking and housekeeping; from his limited education he has acquired an eclectic knowledge of aspects of culture such as the lives of the great poets and the classical Greeks, especially as they pertain to his own interests and desires; he is attached to his mother and manipulated by her; when he finds himself attracted to Paul he attempts to win attention by very unsubtle means, assuming at the same time a passive and self-denigrating attitude which foresees rejection and disappointment as inevitable; because his desire to be a dancer is frustrated he plans to find work in stereotypically "gay" areas of employment as a waiter or hotel porter.

Leo represents only one type or aspect of homosexual behaviour, and his understanding of himself is limited. The above outline suggests that Courage was influenced at this stage of his writing by Freudian notions of homosexual orientation being an outcome of arrested psychosexual development in which unresolved over-identification with the opposite sex parent is the crucial factor [2].

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(2) See, for example, Chapter 5 of Sigmund Freud's New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis. New York: Carlton House, 1933, pp 153-185. These lectures were first delivered in the period 1915-1917 and so, in spite of the delay in their publication in book form, can be assumed to have had currency and influence over a long period.

CHAPTER 6. THE YOUNG HAVE SECRETS (1954).

This might be considered the most successful of James Courage's novels both in terms of literary achievement and of sales figures [1] It is the novel which is the least obviously didactic of his works, and the most cohesive in terms of setting, plot and character realisation. Courage has said that he wished to "record a very particular morsel of life at a very particular time and geographical point." [2] In this aim he has succeeded admirably. He has also succeeded in portraying the adult world through the eyes of a child, conveying the tensions and misunderstandings that exist between these and other overlapping worlds. In creating this "morsel of life" the author imposes a kind of universality on it by setting it against the greater drama of the First World War which is just beginning on the other side of the world and which would have such far-reaching consequences that the world encapsulated in this novel would never be the same again.

The setting is Canterbury in 1914; much of the action takes place in the Christchurch seaside suburb of Sumner, with a lesser focus on rural life. At the particular time in which this novel is set, Christchurch is typified by its own peculiar social hierarchy, its very "English" appearance and outlook, its Edwardian family structures in which the rôles of men and women are strongly differentiated, and its twin forces of rural and urban activity. Both the author and the reader know that the Great War contributed much to the alteration of this picture--for example, the participation by New Zealanders in this world event leading to a greater sense of nationhood as a separate entity from Britain, the loss of so many young men in overseas battle, the altered ideas about women after many had taken on traditionally male tasks during crises, and so on--but the novel suggests that many of these changes were already in train before the traumatic experience of war forced the pace and scale of change. Changing attitudes to class difference are represented by Mrs Nelson; the Garnett daughters speak more openly of such matters as pregnancy than their English

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(1) From information supplied by Mr Michael Bott of the University of Reading it seems that a total of 26,000 copies of this novel were printed, compared with runs of 5,000, 4,600 and 4,000 for the last three novels.

(2) Refer to Appendices--the Biographical Questionnaire which Courage supplied to Jonathan Cape Ltd.

mother would think seemly; Walter's grandfather and Mark Garnett both recognise the need for a particular form of education appropriate to the needs of a new country; Rose Garnett earns a competent living as a nurse; it is becoming increasingly difficult to define "ladies" and "gentlemen".

The novel has a four-part structure--a first, long section, a brief second part, another long section and a final brief 'coda'. The sections are entitled "On The Bridge", "Holidays", "In The Water" and "Home", with each being made up of several small chapters. The action is sequential over some nine months from early Winter to the following Summer. An incident occurring in the opening chapter provides a key metaphor for the rest of the novel, and gives rise to the titles of the first and third sections: Walter watches from the tram as the tram conductor and driver throw a dog, which has been run over by their tram, into the estuary to drown. This event, apparently ignored by other passengers, remains in Walter's mind as a disturbing image of the force and inexplicability of fate. As time goes on Walter is drawn into the complicated lives of the adults around him: temporarily cut off from his own family he tries to make sense of what is happening and tries to maintain his own equilibrium, but events overtake him and he is left with a sense of guilt for what transpires. The first and third sections are set in the world of the Garnett family with whom Walter boards during term: the titles of these sections recall the dog's death and strengthen the links Walter imagines between this incident and the situation he finds himself in. The second section is a brief interlude between the two school terms spent away from home, and the final section provides a coda to the main part of the novel when Walter returns to his own family and, from a distance, makes connections between his experiences with the Garnetts. In the third section the parallel between the dog's death and the boy's own situation is underlined when Walter is once more on the tram and sees, on the very spot where the dog was injured, a young boy in imminent danger of suffering the same fate. This time, however, the boy realises the danger just in time to move out of the tram's path:

> Walter saw his face twist upwards in a grin of embarrassment at the driver as the tram passed on its way unhindered. For a second their eyes met, Walter's and this stranger's of his own age, and a signal of escape flashed from one to the other like a greeting or a blessing: nobody but they, the two of them, could understand or

> share this impish shiver of triumph, nobody but themselves. The recognition was immediate and it vanished. (p. 247).

The incident is another way of highlighting what has happened to Walter in the novel, and the sense of triumph comes from Walter's knowledge that he has managed to survive a painful and bewildering time.

Courage's narrative is in the third person, a method he had used in earlier novels, but here he attempts to convey all events through Walter's eyes; the one exception is at the beginning of the seventh chapter of Part One which is remarkable for Walter's absence. His absence at this point seems inconsistent with the narrative stance adopted and forces recognition of the artificiality of this device. For the most part the author is, however, faithful to the narrative viewpoint he has chosen and incidents are filtered through Walter's perception. This fidelity sometimes leads to a straining of reader credulity, when Walter is forced to become an unconscious or unwitting eavesdropper, observer or confidant to the adult world in order for the narrative to unfold. In this way he overhears Rose and Muriel Garnett arguing over past circumstances which led to Geoffrey McCaulay's marrying their sister Hilda (p. 96). Later he is a witness to the reunion of Rose and Geoffrey (p.109), and he becomes an unlikely confidant at different times to Miss Muriel (p. 140), Mrs Nelson (p. 206) and Miss Rose (pp 223-228). Walter also hears more of the Garnett sisters' complicated emotional tangle when he accompanies Mrs Hilda and her brother Mark on a night walk (pp 180 ff), and when he plays on the verandah outside the room in which Muriel and Geoffrey discuss what has happened and try to make decisions about the future (pp 210 ff). Walter's presence as silent witness to so much of what occurs might seem a contrived narrative device, providing the reader with a means of obtaining all the necessary information while having little apparent effect on Walter himself. Beyond this, one might argue that Courage is accurately reflecting something of the way in which children grow up in a world that they do not fully comprehend and to which they often seem to be impassive while, in fact, events are impinging upon their minds and the significance of accumulated experience is gradually perceived as maturity and further experience allow. Such an argument is supported by the way in which Walter only slowly recognises that by answering Mrs Nelson's probing questions he has provided the evidence to prove her suspicions and so has had an indirect part in causing Mrs Hilda's death.

One major problem emerging from Courage's use of Walter as the medium of observation is that he creates the unlikely situation of Edwardian adults baring their souls to a ten year-old boy and speaking in terms of "passion" and "rape", as Mrs Nelson and Miss Rose do in their confidential outbursts. When Mrs Nelson's husband turns up unexpectedly from her past she tells Walter:

> 'Well, he's comfortable, I suppose. I like a real man about, sometimes. And he's not so bad when he isn't drunk.'
>
> She straightened a mat on the floor, bending with difficulty in her tight satin dress. 'The wonder is he hasn't crept in here one night and slit my throat, these past years; he wants the kid, you see.'
>
> 'But you like him, don't you?'
>
> 'Me? He raped me, for a start. Oh, I enjoyed it all right, but it was rape, Walter, call it what you like.' She drew herself up. 'After that it was marriage. I was crazy about him till he left me flat before Jimmy was born.' She breathed heavily, swelling herself out in disdain of the past. 'And now he's volunteered himself for a soldier, like the rolling stone he is. I'd written to him for money and he blows in here, calm as you please, and throws me the money on the table as if he'd never been away.' (p. 206).

Rape, sexual pleasure and wife desertion seem unlikely matters to be discussed between adults and children in this period, and despite Mrs Nelson's social position she is conscious of differences in class outlook and would be well aware of the social constraints which would normally prohibit such revelations.

While Courage's choice of Walter as a means by which the reader can gain insight into this fictional world does have difficulties, it at least avoids the danger of the author attempting to explore the private thoughts of all the characters as he did so unsuccessfully in his first novel. In this later work other characters are shown impressionistically as they appear to Walter. Through their idiosyncrasies of speech and manner, and

through the varied and often conflicting impressions given of them, each character is fully realised and distinctive, with the possible exception of Mark Garnett who remains something of an enigma. In this way, we are given a very clear impression of the very "English" Mrs Garnett--elderly, confused and crotchety--despising the colonial situation she finds herself in and pouncing on Walter at every opportunity to criticise him for what she sees as his uncouth "colonial" ways:

> The old woman sat pinched into a basket-chair before a smoky fire. To Walter she seemed as ancient as a bone on the beach, and as bleak: the knuckles and tendons of her thin hands gleamed like knots of fencing-wire. The meagre greying hair of her skull was scraped back into a bunch above her nape, exposing a high forehead, an arched nose, and eyes as hard as the steel spectacles in front of them. She was, Walter suspected, older than Mr Garnett: in fact, when he had first come to the house as a boarder, six months before, he had taken this formidable woman to be not the wife but the mother of his schoolmaster. Now she twisted her head to face him as he tiptoed into the room behind her.
>
> 'Oh,' she said, 'it's you. Have you shut the door?'
>
> ' Yes.'
>
> 'You're improvin' then.' Her hands moved over the tangle of knitting on her lap. 'You're very late, aren't you? What have you been doin'?'...
>
> She crouched to the fire. 'Have you washed your hands since you came in from the tram?'
>
> 'Well... I haven't yet.'
>
> 'Do you know what I used to say to my son Mark when he was your age?'
>
> 'I dunno. What?'

> '"Wash your hands before you handle clean knives and forks." Are you listenin', young man? That's what I said.'
>
> 'Yes, Mrs Garnett.' Walter stared. 'And what did he say?'
>
> 'It wasn't for him to speak. He did as he was told.'(pp 21-22).

A second extract shows how the impression of Mrs Nelson's essential bossiness and slovenliness is economically conveyed:

> Jimmy twisted around from the window. He opened his right hand and thrust a new shilling under Walter's nose. 'I'm saving up for a bike lamp. Then I can ride at night, see?'
>
> 'You don't leave this house after dark,' his mother warned, 'unless I'm with you.'
>
> 'You can come too, on the bar.'
>
> 'A fine sight I'd look, twelve stone of me, on the bar of a kid's bike in the dark.' She took up a rolling pin from the table and pushed it fiercely across the dough lumped on a sheet of newspaper before her. 'I'd look better on the seat of that old tricycle Mr Garnett rides to his choir practices,' she laughed. And she pointed with the rolling pin at two cups of milk on a corner of the dresser.
>
> 'Drink up your milk, both of you.'
>
> 'I don't want no milk, ma.'
>
> 'All right, Walter can have it. He's skinny enough for a farm-bred kid!' Her brown forearms were smudged with flour. When loose ash from her cigarette fell on the pastry before her she brushed it off impatiently. 'I can see myself going back to a pipe,' she remarked." (p. 74).

One of Courage's most credible and sympathetically portrayed characters in this novel is Mr Garnett, the old schoolmaster. Tired of travelling to and from school each day, he is considering retirement; teaching small boys in the colonies is becoming more than his English soul can manage. He is shown to be a dedicated teacher, but one who is well aware of the true interests of his pupils. He demands discipline, but relies on wisdom, courtesy and the occasional mild reproof to maintain control in class. Much of his classroom style is epitomised in the episode in which one of the more forward boys attempts to subvert discussion of France's rôle in the settlement of New Zealand, but has his fun spoilt by the master who has seen and heard it all before:

> 'If they'd got here first, sir, would we all be Frenchies now?' Collins had prepared his innocent joke. 'Would we have used French letters?'
>
> 'I doubt it, Monsieur Collins, I doubt it very much. And the French are an elegant race who don't encourage lubricity in young boys.' The class, puzzled, shifted their feet, suspecting a jest beyond them." (p. 62).

While Mr Garnett is a man of habit and convention, he is aware of the figure of fun he cuts with his pupils and is prepared to laugh at himself in a gentle manner. One episode especially demonstrates this point, as well as showing his fondness for his pupils and his basic desire to seize the moment for instruction: Walter and Jimmy have taken Mr Garnett's disused penny-farthing bicycle from its shed without his permission, and while they are attempting to master the art of riding it are discovered by Mr Garnett on his way home from choir practice. Although he seems to take a serious view of their misdemeanour, he is gradually drawn into the action to the extent that he attempts to demonstrate the proper technique:

> The old man turned down the collar of his overcoat. His beard quivered a little: to Walter he appeared to be listening to the far murmur of the sea from the beach.
>
> 'It was never easy. Simple skill is the result of art not force. Hold the bicycle up, both of you.'

The boys obeyed, eagerly. Perhaps--and more than faintly dawned the hope--they were not to be punished. They held the penny-farthing as though by the bridle, a captive horse.

'Yes' said Mr Garnett with solemn approval. 'Now, you see--and pay attention, both of you--the important thing was always to get away to a flying or a moving start. A push and then a jump. But you boys are both too small,' he remarked and peered up and down the road in thought. 'Dangerous,' he murmured, 'very dangerous. Wheel it along under the trees. Gently now, gently...' He followed them beneath the fir trees. 'Young thieves and hooligans,' he muttered in their wake.

In the shadow of the firs his thick figure cast a shade along the fence. And now it was Jimmy Nelson who spoke.

'If you'd show us, Mr Garnett,' he said with a respect Walter had never heard in his voice, 'if you'd show us, then we'd know another time. See?'

Again the old man glanced slyly up and down the road. 'Once only,' he said and passing his gloves to Walter seized the handle-bars. 'Once and no more. In all that matters I am, and regretfully I admit it, no longer of an age for such nonsense.'

All the same, and with an agility that amazed the two boys, he gave a thrust to the bicycle and a kind of bear-like lunge upward to the saddle. A moment more and he was astride, high and solid, the wheels creaking forward below him over the gravel footpath. Walter and Jimmy ran behind.

'It's like the circus!' Jimmy's voice was jubilant, ecstatic. 'It's like the clowns.' And, beside himself with delight, he threw up his arms. 'Wa-wa-wa,' his war-whoop challenged the night.

The war cry might have been a sign: a crackling and snapping of spokes, a sound like that of a decrepit harp in collapse, came

from the penny-farthing. Mr Garnett careened sideways in a confusion of darkness and old iron. The ride finished abruptly.

'I was afraid so.' The old man picked himself up with difficulty. 'I was very much afraid so.' He looked down at the ruined bicycle, adjusted his hat, his trousers. 'Not to mention the loss of my self-respect before a concourse of whooping gutter-snipes.'

Walter touched the bicycle with his boot. 'Shall I pick it up now, sir?'

'You will not only pick it up, Blakiston, but you will carry it back to the shed whence you stole it.' He turned to Jimmy Nelson. 'Furthermore, if I have any inkling from your mother--'

'I won't tell her. Ma won't know.'

'I'm glad to hear ma won't know, as you put it. Ma knows too much, without the delectable news that I have been riding on the footpath without a light, after dark.' He beckoned to Walter. 'And now fetch my tricycle. It's time I arrived home from the relative innocence of choir practice.'" (pp 133-135).

The greatest strength of The Young have Secrets is the detailed picture it gives of the child's world. A large part of this description is composed of minutiae--playing with meccano, collecting stamps and trade cards, scraping together left-over pocket money to buy sweets, avidly reading comic papers and adventure stories, the small boy's fascination with mechanical contraptions, the daily routine of school, pranks such as the cigar-smoking incident, schoolboy slang, and so on. Courage conveys the young child's ability to become totally absorbed in any activity which provides imaginative escape. He also describes the simple understandings and misunderstandings that children often have about the world around them: for example, while Mr Garnett is attempting to have a serious discussion with his young charge aboard the tram Walter's attention wanders and he puzzles over two signs which he can make no sense of: "The tram rattled past a factory-like building in the suburbs. 'Carrageen Irish Moss', a daily puzzle to Walter, was written along the front in black letters. (Another

puzzle, 'Cats Neutered Here', graced a green gate further down the line.) Now he withdrew his eyes from the Irish Moss. He waited." (p. 245).

These daily bewilderments are as much a mystery to the boy as his constant struggles with Latin grammar. Sometimes the child is shown attempting to make sense by trying to relate new information to known facts which does not always solve the puzzle, as this example shows in which Walter suddenly recalls Mrs Nelson's outburst and turns to his school friend for an explanation: "'Who's this Maori bloke?' Marriner asked. 'Just somebody.' Walter blinked. 'What's rape? Isn't it that yellow stuff with flowers that sheep eat?' Marriner had no idea. 'Farming's barmy,' he said. (p. 217).

Marriner's response typifies the child's capacity to dismiss what does not make immediate sense. Occasionally the author shows how a child's naïve response might amuse the more sophisticated adult mind, as in this exchange between Walter and Miss Rose:

> ...She nodded towards what seemed a large box of pale wood between the fireplace and the window. 'Do you know what that is?'
>
> 'Mr Garnett's organ.'
>
> 'Well,' and she threw back her head, laughing, 'It's his harmonium anyway.' (p. 138).

Again, Walter's grandfather has a little fun at Walter's innocent replies to his teasing questions:

> 'Do you *want* to be married, Walter?'
>
> Walter bent to stroke a white cat that had appeared, purring, from beneath Mr Grace's chair. 'Doesn't it cost a lot?' he asked, embarrassed.
>
> 'Cost? Give him sixpence,' Mr Grace waved at his wife. 'Give him sixpence, Rachel. That'll change his mind for him. Cost too much, indeed--I never heard such sophistry.' But his eyes crinkled at Walter. 'Between ourselves,' he said, 'you're only

> too damned right, my boy. Did you learn that in class? Is that what they teach now in the preparatory schools of these benighted islands?' (p. 152).

Possibly it is Walter's innocence which attracts from adults unlikely confidential outbursts. This possibility best explains the way that Mark Garnett seems to see in Walter a quality of essential purity which is in danger of being lost, something which he himself no longer has, but the young man fails to express this feeling clearly and his apprehension remains vague. In their last encounter, in response to the boy's request for some shells or seagulls' eggs to be sent back to him from the island on which Mark serves as lighthouse keeper, Mark replies:

> 'The corruptible to the incorruptible.' The older man gazed into the water below, reflectively. 'No, I shall send you nothing. I shall simply remember you and leave you with a word of advice: don't be afraid, timid, ever. Speak up for yourself--let humanity have it between the teeth and be damned to them, man and woman alike. Your soul's your own: respect it.' (p. 222).

While the contrast between the child's and adults' world is central to this work, there are other worlds which are shown as overlapping and in conflict. The elder Garnetts constantly compare colonial life with English life, usually to the disadvantage of the New Zealand lifestyle: their discussion also involves comparisons between the intellectual life as epitomised by Mr Garnett and the pragmatic life as epitomised by Walter's sheep-farmer father. The Garnett children typify the differences existing in Edwardian times between the single and married states; a married woman is shown to be freer and to have greater authority than a single woman who has missed the opportunity to marry. Considerations of marital status also entail consideration of the contrast between 'male' and 'female' experience, the balance of power existing between the sexes and the rôles assigned to each. In Mark Garnett's case there is a suggestion of the solitary world of the self-exile in contrast to the gregarious life lived by the majority. Life at different social levels is contrasted through the descriptions of life in the Nelson, Garnett, Grace and Blakiston households, so that a picture builds up of Edwardian Canterbury society as comprised of a number of social classes which are distinguishable in myriad ways. These include the way in which income is earned, the possession of material goods--Mr

Garnett, for example, owns a harmonium and a tricycle, whereas his young architect son-in-law has a new-fangled gramophone and a motor-car--, habits and social rituals such as standing to say grace, having respect for one's parents, avoiding indelicate subjects of conversation, and so on. One small incident illustrates perfectly the extent to which awareness of class difference is important in this novel: when Walter tells his grandmother that Jimmy Nelson is his friend her first question is whether Jimmy is a "gentleman". Taken by surprise, Walter answers by saying, "'He's got a bicycle...and his mother's a washerwoman.'" (p. 151). In attempting to define his friend in terms of possessions and parental status Walter has answered his grandmother's inquiry in full. His grandmother's response is to straighten a knife on the tea table and then to "lose herself" in contemplation of the surroundings!

There is an interesting contrast in styles between the main passages of text and the occasional "extracts" from the stories which Walter reads so avidly. Courage emulates the "Boys' Own" style with great skill, as this passage illustrates:

> A hundred torches--nay, more--flickered between the palm trees on the beach ahead. The breeze, laden with a perfume of wood-smoke and of the blossoms of the tropical forest, sighed in the rigging below the schooner's furled sails. On the deck, just abaft the main cabin-housing, Tom crouched beside Chinese Jack: the latter with his bare feet planted on the warm timbers, a fearsome knife a-dangle from his belt. (p. 141).

The interposed passages serve to heighten the difference between the everyday, adult-dominated world and the unconfined, romantic world of the child's imagination. This particular passage serves to emphasise Walter's situation: cut off from his parents by circumstances which have not been explained to him, and thinking of the approaching holidays which he is to spend with his grandparents, he replies to Miss Muriel's question as to who Tom is in the storybook by saying: "'He's been stolen by a press-gang...He hasn't got a mother or a father, only a grandmother.'" (p. 142).

The storybook passages also provide some of the motifs which are used more widely in the novel. The notion of desert island exile links both to Mark Garnett's self-imposed exile on the island where he serves as a

lighthouse keeper and to Walter's forced separation from his parents. The idea of pirating links to the way that the Garnett sisters vie for Geoffrey McCaulay's love, with Hilda marrying him when Rose was his first love, and then Rose encouraging him in an illicit affair after his marriage. Apart from the attractiveness of the kind of life lived by storybook children, adventure-seekers and savages, whose lives are not fettered by conventions and institutions such as family and school as Walter's life is, there are also the elements of new and alien experience, of danger and the unknown. Much that Walter meets with during his time with the Garnetts is alien and threatening, especially the revelations of human passion and the viciousness which Mrs Nelson displays; Walter becomes as entrapped and endangered in these strange experiences as his heroes do in their adventures.

In this novel a variety of marriages is depicted. Mr and Mrs Garnett, the elderly couple who provide Walter with a home during term time, are fully at ease in their relationship which has developed over many years of marriage. Theirs is a very Victorian partnership, somewhat anachronistic in this Edwardian context, and has parallels with the relationship between Walter's grandparents. Both wives respect their husbands' positions as head of the family and as members of the male sex. Each partner behaves towards the other in a conventional way in accordance with social attitudes and long-established habit. In both marriages, one partner has a protective rôle towards the other: Mr Garnett is still active and is solicitous of his frail wife, while this dependency situation is reversed in the Grace household, where Mrs Grace humours her husband who endures poor health. Class difference is discernible when the marriages of these two elderly couples are compared. The Garnetts might be described as middle-class and academic: Mr Garnett still finds it necessary to continue in his profession and to take in a pupil-boarder in order to maintain an income, while his wife seems resentful of the way their life has turned out--for example, that it has been necessary to remain in the colonies rather than being able to return to England. The Graces, on the other hand, represent a class of landed gentry who have created a comfortable life through their achievements on the land they have subdued.

The McCaulays live in a much more modern world, where traditional views about marriage are less influential. Although Geoff McCaulay has a profession, he also has a private income and is able to provide his young wife with a comfortable, modern home. Because of their secure financial

situation, Hilda is able to play a giddy rôle as an attractive and stylish young wife, with no other practical concerns apart from her weak heart. The relationship between husband and wife is a lot more free than it is in the older marriages--Hilda is outspoken and banters with her husband in a way that her mother would consider unseemly. An important factor in their marriage is the fact that they have married after a very brief acquaintance, after Geoffrey's misunderstanding over his prior commitment to Hilda's sister Rose, so that Hilda is unsure of her husband's love for her. The McCaulays' relationship has much in common with that between Walter's parents. The Blakistons have also married after very brief acquaintance, and while their financial situation is comfortable they are less secure in their emotional attachments, to the extent that Mrs Blakiston invests much of her emotional energies in her son and her husband expresses his jealousy of the mother/son closeness by separating them for a year. With the Blakistons Courage returns to the idea of vast differences between the partners, and once more, as in The Fifth Child, Desire without Content and Fires in the Distance the setting for this marriage is a Canterbury farm, where isolation from other society exacerbates the differences. Mrs Blakiston is shown to be sensitive and protective of her son. She is delicate and elegant, and has come through a period of crisis in her marriage and in her mental health--she speaks to Walter of "physical symptoms, headaches and pains" (p. 241). While such a portrayal invites reader sympathy, she is also shown to be overly possessive of her son, forcing him to kiss her and to nestle against her in the car, and expecting a mutual exchange of "secrets". Her husband is a younger version of Hubert Warner, a bluff sheep farmer who is confident enough in his own sphere but surly and confused under his wife's attacks. He also has strong ideas about fostering manliness in his son. While the novel suggests that Walter's ideas about love between adults are clarified once he arrives home and can set his earlier experiences against the examples his parents provide, there is no suggestion that the Blakistons' own difficulties are resolved by the end of the novel. Caroline speaks of a "very true love--a physical love" which existed with her husband in the early days of their marriage, but the inference is that this has since died and has not been replaced by any other positive feelings.

With Mrs Nelson's marriage, the author is attempting to deal with several ideas. He portrays this marriage as a working-class relationship in contrast to the various middle-class marriages already discussed. Because

of this, the relationship is depicted as coarser but also full of vitality. In part, however, Courage is also exploring, through the marriage of a European woman to a Maori husband, the truth of old Mr Grace's claim that "intermarriage between diverse stocks is a mistake, for which the wife usually pays." (p. 160). He is also looking at the notion of single parenthood, the struggle to provide for dependents and the social attitudes likely to be shown to this situation. Mrs Nelson has married the man who seduced her, and after being abandoned by him, has altered her surname to conceal the fact that her husband is Maori. When the husband, Rahi, suddenly reappears, their old relationship is renewed quite readily. As in the relationship between Elfrida and Lewis in Desire without Content there is the idea that male sexual attractiveness can be too much for the woman to resist, and that sexual fulfilment can compensate for ill-treatment or neglect. At the same time Mrs Nelson is shown to have sufficient strength of character to provide for herself and her son, while Rahi is seen as a weaker character, amoral and dissipated.

As he is presented Rahi conforms very markedly to the stock features that Bill Pearson outlines in his discussion of the portrayal of Maori characters by European writers [3]. He is represented as idle, amoral, physically attractive, good-natured and hedonistic. Finally, he is imprisoned and likely to be hanged for impulsively striking and killing an N.C.O. in the training camp. Seen in this light, Rahi enlivens the scene, adds a measure of spice to the narrative and increases the "New Zealand" feel of the novel. There may, however, be more to Courage's use of this character than this very narrow interpretation: Rahi seems to personify the more basic instincts which the European characters are so intent on repressing or are suffering guilt over. He may be seen as symbolic of the "savage" in all human beings, and iconic in Freudian terms of primal urges, especially sexual drive, and the uncivilised state of childhood. In his essay Pearson does not consider this novel, nor the use by other writers of Maori characters in this way, yet this view of Rahi's place in this novel can be justified. Although he is a minor character, his attitude to life does reflect on the very different outlooks of the middle-class characters

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(3) Refer Bill Pearson's "The Maori and Literature 1938-65" in Essays on New Zealand Literature, edited Wystan Curnow. Heinemann Educational Books: Auckland, 1973, (pp 99-138).

while his attractiveness is summed up in his wife's admission of love for her "damned savage". (p. 238).

Sibling rivalry is a strong theme in The Young have Secrets. It is remarkable that all male characters in the novel seem to be without brothers so that they are very much on their own, but the three Garnett sisters compete fiercely for the love of one man. Some of the exchanges between the sisters are extremely bitter, and their rivalry does in fact become a fight to the death. Again, the three sisters can be seen as representing a divided self, a notion first considered in One House. Muriel can be seen as the dutiful daughter who stays at home to care for her parents; Rose can be seen as the career woman who breaks ties with family and flaunts convention by becoming a nurse and, later, by having an affair with her brother-in-law; Hilda is the conventional "woman", embodying characteristics of beauty, charm, wit, frailty and vulnerability. Hilda's death reminds the reader of Mona Wanklin's death in that both women are pregnant and caught up in sexual intrigue at the time of their sudden deaths, and their deaths have drastic effects on the lives of their sisters. Hilda's death serves as a punishment for Muriel and Rose; Rose gives up Geoffrey as her lover and the chance to be his second wife, while Muriel extends her life of servitude by caring for Hilda's son.

It is difficult to place Mark Garnett against this scenario of sibling rivalry. He remains something of an enigma and Courage gives few hints as to what he intended the reader to make of this character. He obviously represents disappointed parental expectations of an only son; his early promise has not been realised and he has elected to live in isolation from other people as a lighthouse keeper. He is gloomy and introspective, but the causes of his unhappiness are only hinted at where, in the passage in which Walter comments on the silver ring he sees on Mark's hand--"he had never before seen a ring on a man's hand" (p. 176)--Mark replies, "...My wedding ring--I'm betrothed, Walter--betrothed to iconoclasm, curiosity and the damnation of my too-human nature." (p. 176). Later he asks Walter, "Ever hear of a little three-letter word--sex?...It's another way of spelling hell." (p. 182). The suggestion is that he cannot come to terms with his own sexuality, which might involve acceptance of homosexual inclinations. By appearing to represent the failure of his parents' hopes Mark Garnett serves to emphasise the fact that Walter's parents have considerable expectations of him, and to suggest that Walter may have similar difficulties in adjusting to life as an adult.

CHAPTER 7. THE CALL HOME (1956).

The Call Home, James Courage's sixth novel, again has a North Canterbury setting and focuses on a farming family. It is set in the mid-nineteen thirties, approximating to the time of the author's single visit back to his home country. In many respects the novel is an update of the family situation depicted in the earlier The Fifth Child. In the earlier work a young New Zealander set off from Canterbury to undertake medical studies in England; in this later work, an expatriate in his early thirties returns from England to his family following the death of his wife. The Grant family resembles the earlier Warner family in several respects; both have farming backgrounds, and the ages and characters of Norman, Francie, Meg and Will Grant are similar to those of Ronald, Barbara, Susan and Alec Warner; the senior Grants are not as old as the Warners would be, and Mrs Grant is a quite different character from her counterpart, Florence Warner, but the same regrets and long-standing antagonism characterise both marriage relationships. In this work Courage's particular focus is on the experience of Norman Grant and his resolution, as an adult, of childhood feelings of resentment towards his mother. At the conclusion of the novel, the protagonist returns to England to begin a new phase of his life, and it is significant that Courage's last two novels that follow this are set in England.

In contrast to the earlier novels the plot line here is relatively simple and describes the linear progression the protagonist makes from a state of despair to one of hope. The structure of the work also reinforces this idea: the three sections are of similar length and are separately entitled "An End", "Developments" and "A Beginning", in reversal of usual expectations. The section titles suggest that one phase of the protagonist's life ends when his wife dies, and that his experiences during his return visit to New Zealand lead him to the point of beginning a new stage of his life which will not be hindered by the memories of past unhappiness and in which he will experience fulfillment.

The simple plot line requires the return of Dr Norman Grant to his family in Canterbury, after an absence of twelve years during which he has qualified as a doctor, has married and has lost his wife in a car accident. He has also suffered some kind of nervous breakdown. Norman Grant spends time in his parents' home and at the homes of his grandmother and his

married sister; he also renews some acquaintances which used to be significant to him and makes new ones which influence his thoughts about his own future. In returning to old haunts and early relationships Norman discovers the extent to which these can no longer satisfy his emotional needs as an adult, and his growing relationship with the recently-widowed Louise Morton gives him a new sense of future direction. By this means, the plot returns to its starting point with the protagonist about to leave once more the family home to which he was returning when the narrative began.

Such a particular focus on the main character results in the under-development of many of the other characters who, although clearly differentiated by speech and other personal mannerisms, remain as foils to the character of Norman. The most extreme examples of this are Norman's younger sister and brother, Meg and Will, his friend Elizabeth Jessop and her friend Philip. Elizabeth is obviously "artistic" and a "good sort" who stage-manages the lives of her friends but appears to have no life of her own. There is even a suggestion of self-sacrifice as her motivating force in the hints that are given of her own love for Louise, her care of her father, and her decision to marry Philip so that she can nurse him during his terminal illness, but the author does not present this character in any convincing depth. Similarly Philip, who even lacks a surname, seems ridiculously affected as a character and included in the narrative for no other reason than as someone for whom Elizabeth can sacrifice herself. Will works hard on the family farm and looks for excitement in drinking, fast cars and fumbling attempts to seduce the local girls; however, he lacks the necessary polish to be a success with women and is too insensitive or unintelligent to see the cause of his discontent. In this, Will seems almost a caricature of the "Kiwi bloke". Meg is similarly dissatisfied with her life on the farm and the social life she has, but does not examine the reasons for her dissatisfaction or seek alternatives. Even Norman's father does little more than hover on the periphery of the action, in a world of his own, and is not perceived by Norman as relevant to his own difficulties.

Courage's characters in this novel can be seen as falling into two groups. Norman is chief among the group of characters which includes Louise Morton, Philip, Elizabeth, Marie Gresson and Norman's mother, who are all either physically ill or unhappy. This group contrasts with the second group made up of Mr Grant, Mrs Lynd, Ben Gresson, David and Francie Mesurier who are vigorous and contented; this group's health and happiness stem from

purposeful activity and an acceptance of their lot in life. Mrs Lynd and Ben Gresson, who are intelligent and inclined towards philosophy, have attained their states of satisfaction through active reasoning while the other, less sensitive, characters simply take their lives as they come. The contrast between the two groups suggest that ill health, both physical and mental, has its roots in the individual attitude to life and the extent to which each one has accepted personal shortcomings and circumstances. More particular contrasts are made between pairs of characters. Norman contrasts with his brother Will who represents the man Norman might have become had he stayed at home; Norman and Ben Gresson invite comparisons because they are both doctors, but in quite different situations and with quite different wives; Norman contrasts with Peter Fitzgerald to whom the homosexual relationship which he and Norman sustained at boarding school remains very important long after it has been forgotten by Norman. Each contrast serves to further define Norman's character and to point out either courses of action which are outmoded or no longer appropriate for him or ways in which his life might develop. Courage was to use this same technique of exposition through contrasts and negative examples again in his last two novels.

A second consequence of the close focus on the protagonist is that frequent changes of setting occur as Norman moves from place to place trying to resolve his unhappiness. The novel opens with Norman's return to the family home; thereafter the action radiates from the farm to many points--the village, the Gressons' home, Christchurch city, Elizabeth Jessop's house, the Mesuriers' farm near Kaikoura, Norman's grandmother's homestead, the beach, Peter Fitzgerald's bach--but always the action returns to its starting point until Norman finally departs for England. The many changes of setting convey the sense of Norman's restlessness, but tend to disrupt the flow of the narrative and result, at times, in shallow treatment of both setting and plot. Because the family homestead is so central to the action it is described in some detail; various glimpses given over several chapters contribute to a total picture of space, comfort and a lived-in shabbiness. An overall impression of Elizabeth Jessop's house is developed in a similarly piecemeal fashion. This impression conveys the sense of contrasts between the candle-lit areas of rooms and their shadowy corners, the exotic connotations of Chinese screens and lamps shaped like Greek vases, and the house's setting among the Cashmere Hills which sets it apart from the distant city whose lights can be glimpsed at night. As the house is a

backdrop to the early meetings between Norman and Louise these impressions of setting reinforce the image of Louise as someone who is attractive but set apart from others by personal unhappiness.

Outdoor settings are described in detail only when they affect, or are in sympathy with, the protagonist's mood, as this excerpt from Norman's train journey to Mt Hallam shows:

> In the train he sat with a book on his knees but did not read: his attention came alive only when the hollower click of the wheels told him that this southward-bound express was carrying him over one of the many wooden bridges spanning the riverbeds of the plains. The names of the larger rivers came back to him one by one--the Rakaia, the Ashburton, the Rangitata. This morning their waters were whipped to a spray by a wind from the north-west, and a fine mist sprinkled the dust on the carriage windows. The rivers crossed the plains from the mountains to the coast, their streams snaking seawards in wide beds of grey and white shingle, their waters as blue and chill as the glaciers behind the western ranges whence they came. Norman watched the rivers from the window, as though the flickering race of water carried within it some profound significance for the trouble of his own spirit. (p. 63).

Later the Mt Hallam setting becomes an extended symbol for Norman's and Louise's states of mind as the countryside is enveloped in snow which threatens the well-being of animals and humans alike, and then is released into vigorous new life as the Spring thaw proceeds:

> The rain, suddenly collapsing from the frozen sky, fell throughout the night. Ice crashed and tinkled from the eaves on to the roof of the veranda. Unseen cascades raced down the ridges above the homestead, past the outhouses and orchards, slicing into the snow like chisels. With the early light Norman woke and lifting his head from the pillow saw a different gleam on the ceiling--no longer the reflection from the frost of the terrace but a greenish-golden glow from the foothills across the valley. The rain did not cease. He roused himself and stood watching it from

> the big oblong windows of his room at the head of the stairs. The rain was washing away the water. (p. 205).

By comparison with the description of the Jessop and Grant households few details are given of the Mesuriers' home or of Peter Fitzgerald's bach except that its front room is "extraordinarily untidy"; possibly this is because these places have little effect on Norman, and so are unimportant to the narrative, but the reader is left wanting to know more in order to decide for himself. Perhaps this treatment of setting reflects Courage's way of looking at his own surroundings: certainly Charles Brasch saw fit to comment on the almost characterless style of décor which Courage favoured: "Each of his flats was furnished rather meagrely and quite impersonally, except for a painting or two (one by Christopher Wood), surprisingly few books, and the baby-grand Bösendorfer which had adorned his rooms at St John's and accompanied him on every move." (1)

England as an imaginative landscape is ever-present in this novel, despite the New Zealand setting. Whereas in the earlier novels contrasts were made between the two countries, with emphasis on the refinements of the old world and the crudities of the new society, and the predominant feeling was of exile and difficulty in coming to terms with new surroundings, here the outlook is rather different. New Zealand is the country associated with childhood experience and, as such, has limited relevance to the present of the novel's action. England and Europe are less idealised--political discontent and social poverty are dominant forces in the old world that Norman sees--nevertheless, it is in these places that great events such as the rise of Fascism, and great developments such as the growth of psychiatric medicine are taking place. It is this potential energy that attracts Norman back to England: in this climate of change and growth he hopes to make his own way.

Courage's use of an omniscient narrative viewpoint is appropriate to this novel, and is well sustained. The emotional states which Norman and Louise work through are too private to be observed and continuously commented on by a third character, while to have cast either of these key characters in the rôle of narrator would have been to run the risk of

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(1) Brasch's Preface to Such Separate Creatures, p. 9.

characters becoming bogged down in exploring their own complex feelings, an outcome which would have become boring very quickly.

Dialogue, especially family banter, is handled well for the most part. This skill is demonstrated in the scene when members of the Grant family share a meal (pp 20-23) and in the conversation during Norman's visit to the Gressons' (pp 146-151). In Norman's meeting with the local vicar dialogue creates a vivid impression of a rather pompous man attempting, on one level, to offer Christian belief as a panacea for Norman's ills while being more interested, at a mundane level, in locating a pack of cards so that he can demonstrate the rudiments of Bridge (pp 173-175). At times, however, the dialogue becomes awkward and contrived; this is particularly noticeable when characters attempt to articulate emotions or to initiate meaningful exchanges with one another. Such situations occur most often between Norman and his mother, for whom he feels an old and inexplicable antagonism, and between Norman and Louise as their relationship deepens. In the following exchange between Norman and Mrs Grant the dialogue is unnatural and self-conscious, conveying too much to be credible:

> 'Why did you dislike my marrying Beatrice?' he asked suddenly. 'Why did you hate her?'
>
> 'I didn't know her, my dear, and your letters had told me nothing beforehand, or very little.'
>
> 'I sent you a cable from Sussex before the wedding.'
>
> She acknowledged this. 'It wasn't enough, Norman. It made me think you'd been trapped in some way. That wasn't true, I know, but I imagined your wife as an enemy. Even when she wrote to me later I saw her as scheming--a nurse with hard little ways of humiliation towards me as your mother.'
>
> 'You were very wrong.'
>
> 'Even when she died and you came home I saw your unhappiness as her fault, a kind of infection from her. You were different and I blamed her--and you, for having married her.'

She had closed her eyes, and Norman watched the curious twitching of her features. 'I came home,' he said with deliberation, 'to cry on your breast. You were my mother. Do you understand?'

She opened her eyes but did not answer.

'I can tell you this now,' he went on, 'because I fully realise it myself. I was forced back to you for survival. I was a grown man--or I thought I was--and yet I wanted comfort as badly as though I were still a child.'

Again she did not answer.

'I didn't get what I wanted,' he said. 'I didn't get it. I wanted my childhood restored to me through one simple act--an act of succour from you. I didn't get it.' He paused, his lips dry. 'It might not have worked--I can hardly tell--and in any case there were other aspects not so simple. But I was desperate enough to seek comfort from you first. I didn't get it.'

He saw pain and a kind of terror on her face.

'What shall I do?' she asked in a voice so low that he caught the words with difficulty. 'What shall I do for you?'

'I've begun to find my own way to recovery.'

'It's not too late for us, Norman. You're still my child, and dear to me. I know I haven't been kind.'

Her hand moved to grasp his own. He waited for a few moments then laid his head, as he had wanted to, on her breast. The action was precious to him and a release.

'Forgive me,' she said through tears. 'Try to forgive me.' (pp 158-159).

Often the words exchanged by Norman and Louise express a "noble", suffering attitude, and when feelings of love are articulated the melodramatic tone of similar passages in the earlier novels is again recognisable:

> 'Bear with me, Louise,' he said, his face buried against her lap. 'Bear with me.'
>
> 'Has it mattered so much?'
>
> 'Everything, until now.'
>
> She held him closely, in silence.
>
> 'I'm forgiven if you forgive me,' he said at last.
>
> 'I forgive you.' Her mouth came down to his, gently. 'I've never really kissed you before.'
>
> 'You comfort me.'
>
> 'I love you. Don't you realise that?'
>
> But desire was lost in some void of disuse where Beatrice had left him and from which he was still climbing.
>
> 'Louise,' he said, and bowed his head.
>
> 'When you want me,' she told him, understanding.
>
> Presently he drew her to her feet. Behind him he could hear the crackle and fall of the creek-water, but the ghost had vanished in the brightness of her face. They kissed for a long time.
>
> 'Shall I come to you tonight?'
>
> She shook her head. 'I'm the one who must plead now. Let me come to you.'

'You want to?'

'Yes, my darling, I want to.'

In the sharp winter air they descended to the mountain-side towards the homestead they had left two hours--and almost two lives--earlier. (pp 218-219).

The most melodramatic and consequently the least credible passage in this novel occurs near its end when Norman imagines himself in conversation with the dead Beatrice, receiving a blessing for the future he has chosen:

Gently he replaced the picture on the table, then with his forefinger touched the cardboard image on the mouth as though he would speak to the living woman and accept her answer. The words came: 'I'm my own man again, Bea. More surely myself than perhaps I ever had the time to be, with you.'

'You were never entirely your own man--' if the voice were silent now, the phrases were as real as they had once been in another tense and place '--you were a sort of ungrown boy who relied on me to assure him of his completeness and maturity. you were renewed through the body of my love as a child might be. I propped you up with love and held you upright in your way as a whole creature.'

'I was as I was,' he said.

'A doctor who hated to contemplate death--who was averse from looking into his own mind and without true insight into the minds of his patients. I knew you very well, my sweet husband. And what happened?'

He faced her death fully, as a fact. 'I lost you.'

'I died. You were not guilty but your life collapsed because I was not there. And now you say you are whole again.'

> Norman stared at the picture. The illusion of her voice was very strong. 'Am I mistaken, Bea? With Louise...'
>
> 'Not mistaken. She's necessary to you, just as I was. But go on from there, as you meant to--a man who's had the luck of a fresh start. Let that be my final blessing on you.'
>
> He looked away from the photograph. When he faced it again her voice had never spoken, save from an echo in recollection. One sentence only remained with him as he lay in the darkness ready for sleep: 'A man who's had the luck of a fresh start.' Much, he resolved, must come from that: some spur of aspiration to the whole man he had become. (pp 234-235).

The Call Home, like the novel which immediately predates it in Courage's canon, is structured around central symbols which are explicable in terms of human psychology. There is the symbol of the seemingly endless period of freeze followed by the Spring thaw which occurs while Norman and Louise are staying at Mt Hallam: both characters have become frozen in their emotional responses, and the external freeze which threatens the lives of the animals of the countryside represents the spiritual death threatening these two characters, while the thaw suggests release and renewal of life and hope. Old Mrs Lynd's "thaw-pearls" which she chooses to wear as an omen of hope during this period highlight the underlying notion of man as part of the total natural picture, influenced on many levels by the seasonal changes of nature and experiencing a cycle of emotional changes during which hope is constantly renewed. Mrs Lynd's description of herself as a "pagan" (p. 203) reinforces the notion of human beings from any time period or place experiencing and responding to life in basically similar ways. A second major symbol is the shiny red-bricked porch at the front of the family homestead which is a very obvious Freudian symbol for the maternal womb to which Norman is, metaphorically, attempting to return. In the opening pages of the novel the porch yawns "like a cave, shadowed with a darker vibration from the hall beyond" (p. 13); its coolness offers a welcome refuge from the glare and heat of the world outside, and when Norman faints, he crawls back into the porch to recover. The idea behind this particular symbol is extended when Norman later speaks of his wish to find healing by laying his head on his mother's breast, a symbolic action which affords him some kind of release. Further symbolism is evident in Beatrice's name, connoting

Dante's ideal woman who continues after her death to be still present in the lover's mind as a spiritual guide. There are specific links between Beatrice and the black swan accidentally shot by Will who feels no blame for the bird's death because, by flying across his line of fire, "she more or less killed herself" (p. 193). The hunter killing the beloved who has assumed bird-form is an image from old mythology: here the lesson for Norman to understand is that he is no more guilty of causing his wife's death than Will is of ending the bird's life.

Illness in various forms provides a recurrent motif in the novel. Elizabeth Jessop's sciatica and Louise's attack of laryngitis are sudden but short-term, whereas Philip's tuberculosis is terminal; in the case of the two women their illness seems to be an externalisation of emotional upheaval, and the period of enforced inactivity and seclusion during their illness allows time to accept changes and make new decisions. Louise has responded to her husband's cruelty during their marriage by withdrawing into herself, a reaction which is reinforced by the guilt she then feels for his death: the laryngitis she suffers underlines the attitude she has assumed in that it robs her of the power to speak about her feelings even if she were inclined to. Her period of convalescence permits her to consider the possibilities of becoming involved with Norman before she commits herself to a relationship. Mrs Grant experiences menopause as illness, a series of minor physical manifestations combined with major mental adjustments; like Mrs Donovan in Fires in the Distance she takes to her bed and finds comfort in reading novels until her elder son's difficulties force her to confront her own problems. Norman has also refused to face up to the reality of his wife's death, and had resorted to heavy drinking which, in turn, precipitated a nervous breakdown. The village storekeeper is certain that his wife is unfaithful to him and imagines also that he has heart disease; when this belief is proven wrong he hangs himself. This graphic example of untreated psychological problems underlying physical ills helps Norman to make his decision to return to England to study psychiatry. The key ideas in this illness motif seem to be that mental difficulties very often underlie physical illness, that illness of all types is often self-willed or self-inflicted, a dis-ease with the self, and that illness and its accompanying suffering can have positive outcomes.

The major theme of The Call Home is the adult's attempt to return to childhood settings and relationships in order to come to terms with

unresolved childhood trauma. Norman Grant returns to his family home, but among his family members it is his mother who represents the primal source of comfort, and Norman is compelled to resolve his ambivalent feelings for his mother before he can overcome his problems. It is significant that the novel opens with a description of Mrs Grant before the focus shifts to Norman whom Courage, by describing as "the man on the seat beside her" ... "a youngish man and her elder son" (p. 13) immediately defines in relation to the mother figure. Shortly after, the suggestion is made of an old enmity between mother and son--"He was remembering his mother's trick of the practical voice, the tone meant to cover and refuse the emergencies of childhood. Now he was thirty and the tone gave him not comfort but an odd hollowness of the heart as though before some score in need of settlement." (p. 14).

Norman's memory of family life has been obscured by long absence, and he is surprised by the realities of family relationships when he does return: "After so long away, it was strange to him, this family atmosphere --the small bickerings, the stresses and cross-loyalties, the banalities. From a distance of twelve thousand miles his mind had stretched forward, hungry and expectant to sanctuary, security, love: their actual embodiments were not as he had foreseen." (p. 23). Much later he thinks again of the family as "that extraordinary, ordinary, calming, infuriating institution from which love and marriage offers a flight and a release." (p. 234). Norman finds it contradictory that while the family and the family home are outwardly unchanged, individual members are different from how he remembered them. Apart from his older sister being now married, and the two younger siblings having reached adulthood, Norman sees how much his father has aged and senses his mother's discontent. While he has looked to his mother for some intuitive understanding of his need for comfort and healing, she is totally absorbed in her own unhappiness. There is little communication between the Grant parents, and Mrs Grant sustains an ambivalent relationship with her children in which maternal love conflicts with disappointed expectations. Neither Mrs Grant nor the rest of the family is willing to talk to Norman about his dead wife whom they had known only through photographs and letters. Later Norman realises the extent to which jealousy has shaped his mother's attitude towards her dead daughter-in-law when his sister Meg tells him, "'You don't understand how the maternal mind works'" Mother's no exception and don't you forget it--she's good and kind but she can bear grudges for years...'" (p. 116).

It is from conversation with his father, however, that Norman gains insight into the reasons for his mother's disturbing attitude towards himself as eldest child. Mr Grant mentions that his wife refused to speak to him for a year after Norman's birth: Mr Grant appears to have taken this event in his stride, accepting it as a typically peculiar piece of "female" behaviour, but Norman is disturbed by the revelation. When he confronts his mother over this matter he learns of her deep resentment towards her husband for robbing her of her youth by forcing child-bearing on her, resentment which transferred to Norman himself. When his mother admits, "'It always seemed to me that my youth--everything--came to an end with your arrival'" (p. 129), Norman feels a "sharp antipathy" towards her, recognising that his reappearance has brought her ancient feelings of resentment against him to the fore. Following the realisation that his mother cannot do anything else to heal his state of mind Norman turns to Louise Morton for love of a different kind.

Mr Grant is very much a minor character in his children's lives, especially in Norman's to whom the mother-son relationship is so crucial. From small glimpses of him Mr Grant seems well-intentioned but distant, taken up with the everyday concerns of his farm. He scarcely impinges on his children's lives, retelling stale jokes at the dinner table, mistaking his son for an unwanted visitor, and making token gestures towards the enforcement of rules of conduct which his adult children no longer bother about. He has assisted Norman in buying his first medical practice and takes pride in his son's achievements, dissuading him from working on the farm during his sojourn so that his hands will not be harmed. He seems to have acted generously towards Meg and Will too; they still live at home and seem well provided for--they have smart clothes and Will can afford flying lessons and a sports car. The abiding impression of Mr Grant is of an unimaginative but kindly man whose slight influence in the family is marginalised by the dominant influence of his wife.

The novel underlines the mother-son relationship by providing other parallel relationships to that between Norman and his mother. One such relationship exists between Norman and the older Elizabeth Jessop. She had encouraged him in his younger days by listening to his efforts at poetry before convincing him that his talents lay in medicine. When their friendship is resumed after twelve years Elizabeth discerns Norman's need

for love, introduces Norman to Louise and quietly encourages this relationship. There may even be an element of self-sacrifice in Elizabeth's action here: in reply to Norman's suggestion to Louise that Elizabeth loves her, Louise admits the possibility while denying its importance to her (p. 136). Whether there is any sort of self-denial on Elizabeth's part, she does seem to see the two lovers as her children and to want the best for them. This contrasts with Mrs Grant's introspection and self-centredness which makes her blind to her son's real needs. Again, when Elizabeth takes the decision to marry Philip who is dying of T.B. her action can be seen as a form of self-sacrifice willingly made, in contrast to Mrs Grant's forced acceptance of the responsibilities of motherhood. Mrs Lynd, Norman's grandmother, is an idealised mother-figure. When Norman makes his first visit back to Mount Hallam he is attempting to recapture the happiness he found there while on holidays as a child. It is not until he returns there with Louise that this intention is realised. His grandmother remains wise and understanding; she does not question or force confidences, but readily accepts Norman's disquiet just as she later accepts his relationship with Louise. Norman's married sister Francie is shown in contrast to the idealised figures of Elizabeth and Mrs Lynd. Francie is shown in relation to her only child; easy-going and outspoken, she loves her young daughter, but has little awareness of Stella's complex emotional needs of the richness of her imaginative world. She freely criticises and makes fun of the child's actions and interests, provoking resentment which promises to mar their continued relationship in the same way it has marred Norman's relationship with his mother.

The second major concern of this novel is with the individual's ongoing development and growth. Norman Grant can be seen as a man whose development has been hampered by the unsatisfactory nature of his relationship with his mother during his formative years. Returning to his family and to the places where he grew up, he has to reassess both himself and his relationships with his family and friends; he also sees solutions which other people have used in order to live their lives without unhappiness, and eventually reaches a decision about the kind of life he will find most satisfying in the future. Important factors which impinge on the process of individual growth are considered--adult responsibility, vocation, sexuality, marriage and child-raising, aging, spirituality--not only by a focus on Norman, but also through the depiction of other main characters.

Peter Fitzgerald is a significant character in the process of development which Norman undergoes. Peter is a reminder of the adolescent self; their brief homosexual relationship while at boarding school has continued to be important for Peter, while for Norman it is no more than an almost forgotten phase in the maturing process. Their adult encounter in Peter's isolated farm cottage, when Peter broaches the possibility of their former intimacy being re-established, serves to reinforce Norman's feeling that this relationship belongs to the past and that homosexual activity is not a means by which he can cope with life as an adult. However, there may be a suspension of authorial judgement here: Courage may be keeping an open mind about the question of innate homosexual orientation. Norman can view the possibility of resuming the old relationship in an objective way while recognising finally that it would not be right for him:

> In the distance between his own flesh and that offered to him was the space of almost half his own lifetime, and he hesitated before touching the other on the cheek. But the contact--absolved from the banality of an adolescent episode that had had no express meaning for him and, not deeply pondered, had left no scar--was now only and entirely compassionate. In whatever shape, this one of a retarded schoolboy's not excepted, an attempt at a bridge between two solitudes was not despicable and he did not despise it. Nevertheless, the experience would have no other name than expediency--desperate and loveless, at that. (p. 102).

For Peter, however, the reality may be rather different. He has obviously attributed great significance to what took place years before; now he has decided to conform to society's expectations and marry, even though he realises that heterosexual union is against his nature and may be doomed to failure:

> 'I'm going to marry this girl in town. If it's all a fiasco, then it's a fiasco; but she's a pretty girl and we're going to live in this place down south, Morton's place. That's why I bought it--for a love-nest.' His laugh was like a hard pebble flung disparagingly at Norman. 'It'll all work out somehow,' he finished. 'I'll make it.' (p. 103).

There is double irony in the fact that the "love-nest" is the same house in which Louise was made so miserable by her perverted husband, so there is a suggestion of tragic events about to be repeated in the same setting.

If Peter Fitzgerald represents one aspect of Norman as an adolescent, Will Grant can be seen as Norman's antithetical self, the man he might have become had he remained at home. Will has followed their father in becoming a farmer; like their father he is pragmatic, hearty, gauche and lacking in sensitivity. He is constantly described by vigorous verbs--he "lopes", "clatters", "clumps", "gapes", "snorts" and "heaves". His one attempt at creative expression is playing the saxophone, but the din he produces annoys the rest of the family and his playing never improves. He seems content to live a life structured around mundane routines.

The marriages of the Mesuriers and the Gressons can be seen as marriage models for Norman to consider and finally reject. Francie and David Mesurier's marriage appears happy, possibly because neither expects a great deal more from the relationship than what they already have. David is the archetypal "farmer", closer to the land and to animals than to other people; Norman's view of his brother-in-law, naked, intent on spearing crayfish on a reef, is iconic. Francie is depicted as lazy and easily contented. She doesn't have the same desires and ambitions that her mother had at the same age, and is happy in her rôle of farmer's wife and mother. There is no disparity between partners; each is happy with what the marriage provides. Norman, however, is looking for a great deal in marriage, and requires a partner who has suffered and has the capacity both to understand and meet his needs.

The Gressons love each other, but Marie Gresson has given up hopes of artistic fulfilment to accompany her husband to New Zealand, and still yearns for a more exciting life than that of the wife of a country doctor. Further, there is the suggestion that Ben Gresson deliberately chooses to live as he does, in order to maintain a balance in his marriage, sensing that stimulation would unsettle his wife and make her unhappy. The Gressons' marriage then is one in which both partners make sacrifices for each other, though each is still restricted by the relationship. By contrast, Norman's marriage to Louise will, presumably, be one in which each will support the other and so foster the growth and fulfilment of the partner.

Mrs Grant demonstrates, in her menopausal unhappiness, that living is a process of constant readjustment to the changing self. Menopause represents not only the end of the reproductive phase of one's life but also traditionally heralds old age. Mrs Grant has to accept the end of the youthful phase of her life and the physical discomforts concomitant with menopause, and must also come to terms with notions of loss and unfulfilment. Mrs Lynd, Norman's grandmother, represents a further stage in human experience. She has the wisdom and peace of old age, and can serve as a touchstone for Norman and Louise. She lives out her days on her isolated farm, apart from social contact, and is keenly attuned to seasonal changes which signal the passing of time. She is sustained by her spiritual beliefs and seems to be at peace with the idea of life eventually coming to an end. A close bond exists between grandmother and grandson, compensating for the savage intensity which mars the mother-son relationship.

When the strengths and weaknesses of this novel are balanced out it can be seen that close focus on the central character does result in some unevenness of development in the other characters, while Courage still creates occasional passages of dialogue which fail because of their mawkish and unconvincing tone. In spite of these, the novel succeeds because of the skill with which its main ideas are realised, and because of the craft with which various settings are described, the third-person narrative viewpoint maintained and symbols developed to underline key notions.

CHAPTER 8. A WAY OF LOVE (1959).

In any consideration of James Courage's novels A Way of Love merits special attention. Coming after five novels set in the New Zealand that Courage remembered from his younger days, this novel returns to an English setting. By moving beyond unsatisfactory family relationships which were the focus of the earlier novels and focusing on the homosexual relationship between two men Courage seems to write with a new confidence and conviction. At the same time the author deviates from his established approach based on a strictly linear plot line, and adopts an innovative approach which resembles the method of post-modern novelists. In its theme and its critical reception the novel was controversial [1] and was distinguished by being banned in New Zealand some time after its publication. Finally A Way of Love deserves recognition as marking a milestone in New Zealand gay fiction. In view of the predictable reception of the novel in Courage's country of birth, it is remarkable that he should have written such an honest novel on a gay theme at that time. Changes in social attitudes and laws restricting private behaviour have not yet resulted in a proliferation of writing by other New Zealand novelists on gay themes [2] so that Courage's achievement is not yet eclipsed. It might be argued that this achievement, in New Zealand terms, is lessened by the fact that the author was an expatriate and that the novel has no direct link through character or incident to New Zealand, but the novel can also be seen as a natural progression in the author's development, with the issues which have been touched upon in the earlier New Zealand novels being now treated much more directly.

This novel exhibits the same care with which Courage planned his earlier novels. Here he once again employs a three-part structure, and symbolism is still an important aspect of the crafting, but the basic framework is quite different from that of its predecessors in that the main plot is embedded within the framework of the writer describing the process of recording the plot. The first-person narration dictates the style of

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(1) See the review by M.K. Joseph in Landfall, Vol. 13, No. 2, June 1959, pp 178-9. For a conflicting argument see "The Conspiracy Against James Courage" by Bobby Pickering in Pink Triangle, No. 18 (December 1980), p. 5.

(2) Successors to Courage might include L.D. Thorn's Master Knot, Auckland: Brookfield Press, 1981, and Glynn Parker's Passion, Auckland: Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop, 1990.

writing since the character of the narrator is such a predominant influence; it also means that other characters in the novel are depicted as the narrator sees them and indeed the characterisation in some instances only succeeds if this consideration is borne in mind.

The three separate sections of the novel are untitled, but can be seen as firstly backgrounding the central relationship and then focusing on the development of this relationship before finally chronicling its breakdown. The novel spans a five-year period: it begins with the narrator, Bruce Quantock, meeting a young man at a December concert and ends five years later with Bruce receiving an invitation to spend Christmas with his sister and her family. December is also the month when the relationship between Bruce and Philip reaches a crisis point, three years after it began. The first section, as well as signalling the start of the relationship between the two men, also sets the background to Bruce's life as it has become established over many years. In this way other characters such as Bruce's family, his circle of friends and Helen Vincent, who provides a female counterpoint to Bruce, are established before very much is known of Philip. The second part shows the two men absorbed in their life together to the exclusion of other people except the elderly housekeeper, Rose, who looks after them. The central image developed during this section is of an island on which the two lovers exist apart from the rest of the world. To Philip this state represents security but for Bruce the situation is increasingly restrictive. The third part shows Philip's unsuccessful attempts to find a place in Bruce's wider world of homosexual involvement and the eventual breakdown of their marriage.

The novel is written in the first person with Bruce Quantock, a middle-aged homosexual architect, as narrator. He is persuaded by acquaintances, in particular by a homosexual novelist called James Caspar, to set down his experiences of a serious relationship with the much younger Philip Dill. In this way the novel builds the conceit of a "real" writer, who happens to share the same initials as Courage himself and who confesses that his own writing is a substitute for real-life relationships, encouraging a non-writer to set down his experiences. Caspar declines to use the material himself because it is not part of his own experience and would lack authenticity if he made use of it. Other characters discuss the validity of describing the metamorphosis of a homosexual relationship; they discuss the fact that other writers have attempted the task but failed in their intent

and also discuss the likelihood of a ready-made readership for a successful gay novel.

A Way of Love is, in part, an exploration of the process of writing a novel. The narrator begins with two sentences stating bald biographical detail--name, occupation, age, marital status and place of residence. He then goes on to state his purpose in writing, and includes a mitigation for any shortcomings which might be detected in the finished work:

> I want to write of a particular personal relationship in which I was involved--how it began and how it ended. I shall write as though for myself alone, with no excuses and certainly without regrets. Writing is neither my art nor my profession, and if I sometimes use words bluntly or stiffly I must plead that I am doing my best. (p. 9).

Once the narrative has been launched there are frequent reminders that past events are being recalled--for example, "It has taken me a couple of pages to describe an episode which occupied, I suppose, not more than forty seconds...A snapshot impression remained with me, that evening four years ago, of a youthful face..." (p. 12). Again, Chapter Three of the first section begins with the narrator at his desk, pen in hand, picking up the threads of his account and having to think himself back into the task:

> Nine o'clock in the evening. The professional business of my day is behind me and I can turn to other matters. The house is silent. The only sounds to reach me come from the traffic at the end of the Crescent, towards Primrose Hill. On the desk before me is the white oblong of this paper and, just touching the paper's surface, the gold nib of the pen in my hand--a nib which is as sharp as a surgical probe and which looks tonight as though it had been tipped with blood. Why am I writing in red ink? Possibly because the colour has warmth and fire and provides a sort of company for the red buckram shade of the lamp at my elbow. (p. 22).

In the second section the narrator bridges a gap in the narrative with these words:

> It wasn't, however, as a direct result of these youthful words that Philip came to live with me in the house later that summer. In fact I have been thinking how I can go back here and explain how so apparently simple a development of our association came about. Perhaps I had better begin with something that may for the moment seem beside the point.... (p. 106).

Frequently the narrator halts his account so that he can sum up or look ahead, and the reader is never allowed to forget that the narrative is a lengthy one-sided account, an attempt by the main character/narrator to record an important phase of his life and to use the setting-down process as a form of cathartic outlet. In comparison to the "realist" practice predominant in much New Zealand and English fiction of the 1950's Courage's approach here strikes the reader as innovative and experimental. In detailing the fabricating of the fiction in this way Courage is moving into the realm of metafiction and working on two distinct levels.

The style of the novel reflects the character of the narrator. His characteristic self-awareness and slight pedantry show through in his desire to relate events as precisely as possible. His tone is serious, his choice of words occasionally formal in keeping with his class, background and age. He reasons matters out and attempts to see situations from more than one point of view, a further explanation for the interruptions to the narrative. At the same time he is tolerant of other people and capable of being amused by human foolishness as it is evinced in himself and in others; Bruce is able, for example, to poke fun at Victor Hallowes' predilection for lovers from foreign parts, but can also laugh at the situation he finds himself in when a prospective sex partner stands him up: "I did not linger but found my way down the three flights of stairs to the street. A man who had played the game of the jungle and lost had best accept the fact with as little fuss as possible. Or so I told myself as I returned alone to my bed." (p. 58).

In a novel like this where characters are contrasted to such an extent, and especially where the majority of characters are homosexual, a reader might question whether these figures are in fact well realised; some characters such as Gavin Jackson and Victor Hallowes for example could be seen as caricatures of stereotypical limp-wristed gay men. Gavin is effeminate, promiscuous, delights in giving raffish parties at which he can dress up and amuse his guests; Victor is an aesthete in the fin-de-siècle

manner, and so on. It seems that this is the view that M.K. Joseph chose to take in his review of the novel [3]. It is important to realise, however, that these characters are described by a narrator who is sympathetic because of his sexual orientation and that he describes them as he sees them in relaxed social situations where they are enjoying being somewhat larger than life. To take one example, had the novel's plot called for Victor Hallowes to be shown in his daily world of commerce then an entirely different impression is likely to have been projected. An important theme of the novel is the extent to which homosexual men are forced, for so much of the time, to present themselves as what they are not. In the past reviewers of this novel tended to assume that Courage's intention in writing the novel was to elevate a particular instance of homosexual involvement to a level on which it could be understood and admired by non-homosexual readers. Such an interpretation is evident in the title of David Hall's review, "An Alien Society", in which he claims that an "ordinary" reader cannot identify with Courage's characters [4]. Again, Margaret Scott in her reassessment of the novel complained that it was "about homosexuals rather than human beings" and that Courage was too restrictive in showing his characters only in their homosexual setting [5]. Courage allows the reader to see behind the "camping-up"; in the first pages he shows the pathetic figure of Maurice, the young man devastated by the ending of his first involvement, and much later in the narrative Courage describes Gavin Jackson's visit to Bruce's home in company with a drunken sailor who is abusive, showing the desperate sadness that lies behind's Gavin's attempt at banter: "'Now, now, no boxing tricks!' Gavin recovered himself with a grim smile, though the blow must have hurt. 'We may behave like that at home, John, but not in a friend's house.' He turned to me. 'I'm sorry, he's being a bad boy, not at all sincere.'" (p. 201).

Because of Bruce's central rôle of narrator all impressions of the other characters are filtered through his perceptions. Other characters are developed to a greater or lesser degree according to the extent to which they impinge on Bruce's own awareness. Philip's friend Fiona, for example, whom Bruce sees only once on the occasion when he first encounters Philip,

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(3) Supra cit.

(4) "An Alien Society" by David Hall in NZ Listener, March 26, 1959.

(5) Margaret Scott's review of A Way of Love in New Zealand Monthly Review, Vol. 3, No. 26 (August 1962), pp 20-21.

is not described at all; she remains no more than a figure in the background while Bruce's attention is centred wholly on Philip. Later he can recall only with great difficulty that she was wearing a blue dress and imitation pearls.

Much later in the narrative, Charles Reynolds appears as a house-guest of Helen Vincent; he is attracted to Philip, which makes him a would-be rival to Bruce. Again, the characterisation is not developed to any extent but with one or two deft touches Courage establishes this character as someone whose suavity masks real menace--he rises "elegantly" from his chair, and is described as "a sophisticate in his early thirties whose demeanour and smile could not have been more equivocal, or more engaging..." (p. 161).

Rose, the elderly housekeeper, is one of the most sympathetically-drawn characters, another of the servant characters like Morgan and Kate in The Fifth Child or Margaret in Desire Without Content who come to life in Courage's novels. She is shown to be embittered by her experiences of life, but hardworking and loyal to her employer. At first she entertains hopes of seeing her employer married, and misreads the relationship between Bruce and Helen Vincent, but she becomes very fond of Philip when he joins the household and appears to make no judgements about the two men's private life together. Her character is also established through a number of small incidents. Most telling among these is her distress at the loss of a stray kitten she has become attached to, and the way she expresses pique at Bruce's absence over the Christmas period by writing his telephone messages in cryptic form on a paper bag.

Upon first consideration it might seem that the notion of exploring parent-child relationships is not relevant to A Way of Love in its chronicling of a homosexual relationship over two years. On reflection, however, it becomes apparent that this approach is entirely appropriate to the novel. The relationship between the two lovers replicates the primal relationship existing between father and son; the mothers of both men are hardly in evidence in the narrative, but there are important references to each man's father and to the ways in which their own relationship resembles that of father and son.

Bruce Quantock is 45 years old when he first meets Philip Dill who is twenty years younger. Following their initial antagonistic encounter there is a period of some months during which they make no further contact. In this interim period Courage demonstrates the essential loneliness of the older man's life. Although Quantock accepts his sexual orientation and moves comfortably in a gay world, he feels the lack of continuing loving relationships in his life. Previous long-term relationships are remembered, especially the attachment to Bart Clonso who helped Bruce to accept himself as a homosexual person. None of these involvements seems to have provided him with any lasting satisfaction. Before, and then again after the bond with Philip has been formed, Bruce's life is shown in contrast to the lives of other people in his world. These include Bruce's sister, a female acquaintance and various gay friends.

Louise, Bruce's sister, is married with two children. When he contemplates her family situation Bruce recognises that his life lacks much that seems to make Louise's life enjoyable:

> ...in retrospect I found that Louise had much that I lacked--a simple normality of living, the companionship of her children, an existence in which she was always and profoundly her own character without misgiving. I might find her life stuffy, unadventurous, but it also gave me a twinge of envy. In my soul I was alone and sought not to be alone. (p. 36).

In this, Bruce seems to express the regret that a number of childless people, both gay and straight, experience when they consider this aspect of their lives.

Bruce moves on to explore anew his reaction to the idea of heterosexual marriage by inviting Helen Vincent, an attractive client, to dinner. He can recognise those features which make Helen so attractive but is taken aback by her immediate insight into his nature when she says, after examining the contents of his bookcase, "'You'll understand that I have nothing against a man who so prominently displays a whole set of Gide'." (p. 43). As later events suggest, Helen's ready sympathy stems from fellow feeling. Bruce has already seen that his relations with women do not extend to the idea of marriage, stating

> I had never willingly mocked what might be called a deviation towards women in those whose pleasure had shown itself to lie demonstrably and passionately elsewhere--in the physical attributes of other men...
>
> But if from time to time I had myself been drawn to women--to Woman rather for her maternal unselfishness, her grace of movement, her decorative aspects of clothes, furs, jewels--then the attraction had been no more than a passing tribute. It had resulted in no compulsion to unite my flesh with theirs. It had not made me long for their permanent companionship. It had not made me wish to marry. (p. 48).

His attitude remains unchanged even after becoming better acquainted with Helen.

That Bruce is right in this attitude seems to be demonstrated by the situation in which Horace Givenchy, another of Bruce's friends, finds himself. Horace is married with two children; having acknowledged his homosexual preference after marriage he regrets that he has compromised his true nature and given away the opportunity to be fulfilled and happy. Givenchy's sad situation is an ominous precedent for Philip's desire to marry and have children.

The gay acquaintances whom Bruce, as narrator, consciously chooses to write about, all serve to throw light on his way of life. Victor Hallowes is shown to be intelligent, educated, witty and self-aware, but fated to always seek satisfaction in impossible relationships with foreign or married lovers who disappear back to wife or home country; his attempts to fulfill some long-held exotic dream seem doomed to failure. Gavin Jackson is less perceptive and more frivolous, seeking constant diversion through madcap parties and fleeting liaisons with all sorts of men; again, he seems doomed to betrayal and disappointment each time he embarks on a fresh involvement. The relationship between Wallace Blake, who is similar in age to Bruce, and his much younger lover Martin, represents a gay partnership with what Bruce perceives as a "genuine mutual affection--more, a genuine love" (p. 38) existing beneath the constant badinage that goes on between them. This particular partnership represents an ideal which Bruce looks towards.

With Bruce's loneliness established, and some alternative courses of action considered, the ground is laid for his second, and more significant, meeting with Philip which culminates in their becoming lovers and sharing a home. At this stage of the novel Philip's relationship with his father is considered. In answer to Bruce's question, "'What would you like most in all the world, Philip?'" he replies, "'I'd like to be with my father again.'" (p. 77). From his account we learn that Henry Dill died at Dunkirk during the Second World War and that Philip has vivid memories of his father which are readily triggered by small stimuli such as sounds and smells. Early in Philip's association with Bruce he deliberately recreates an idyllic moment from his childhood when, during a visit to his hometown of Falmouth, he rows Bruce about the harbour in a dinghy. By way of contrast Philip's mother is shown as lacking in warmth towards her son and subject to bouts of religiosity; in addition she has married again, giving Philip a stepfather whom he resents as a usurper of the father's place.

Bruce's own unsatisfactory relationship with his father is also recalled, most poignantly during a visit the lovers make, at Philip's request, to the farm where Bruce grew up. During this visit Bruce realises, "I was in fact aware of much conflict of feeling. For if my childhood had been happy here, my adolescence and the years when I had returned home from school had been passionately otherwise, a time of stress that did not soften in retrospect. My father had then become my bitterest enemy, so it seemed, understanding neither the frustration of my spirit nor the ferment of my flesh." (p. 147). It is perfectly understandable, of course, that the adolescent period during which the protagonist is becoming aware of his own sexuality and the degree to which this sets him apart in a society oriented towards heterosexual behaviour should be the period when the homosexual son is most estranged from his father. Bruce's mother, unlike Mrs Dill, seems to have related well to her son and to have encouraged his plans. She had been a refined Frenchwoman, somewhat at odds with her English farmer husband, and Bruce appears to take the very Anglo-Saxon view that his mother's exotic genes have shaped his own character. As Bruce describes her his mother emerges as an idealised and not wholly credible mother, an over-positively realised figure whose memory contrasts with the very negative image of Mrs Dill.

Important differences in the relationship each man had with his father must be considered. Bruce had been separated from his father by marked

dissimilarities in nature, education and outlook; as the son had grown older the relationship had broken down, resulting in alienation and mutual bitterness. Philip's relationship with his father has been incomplete, cut off by the father's early death. The affair between Bruce and Philip can be seen in the light of these earlier ties, in fact the text is explicit that this is the author's intention. Philip uses the relationship with Bruce as an opportunity to act out childhood needs: he is guided by the older man's advice, accepts shelter in his house, is taken for holidays, asks to be told stories during his illness, reacts against Bruce's other friends because they are perceived as a threat from an adult world which he has yet to come to terms with, and finally he rejects the "paternal" figure and strikes out on his own in a display of independence. For Bruce, the involvement has quite different significance: not only does the relationship mirror the first serious homosexual relationship he experienced in which, with Bart Clonso's encouragement, Bruce learnt to accept himself completely, but it also provides the opportunity for Bruce to act in a paternal manner towards Philip, making Philip a substitute for the son he will never have.

Whereas in other fictionalised gay relationships the focus is often on the process by which the younger partner is moulded and made more sophisticated under the older man's influence, in this novel Courage shows Bruce as anxious not to force his ideas on Philip, while Philip himself is shown to be resistant to outside influence and concerned to preserve his own integrity. Instead of attempting to alter Philip's tastes in literature, art, dress, and so on, Bruce respects his friend's individuality. Philip shuns any participation in Bruce's gay social world, speaking in a derogative tone of "them" and "those", expressing jealousy of those who have old acquaintance with Bruce, and fearing that such people may damage his own relationship. He loathes the idea of being labelled a homosexual through mixing in gay circles and does not want to be seen by Bruce's friends as simply the latest in a series of affairs. The two men share Bruce's house rather like father and son would; they have separate rooms and spend whole evenings in each other's company quietly reading or working, while the female domestic fulfils the maternal function by attending to their domestic comforts. The period of Philip's illness particularly demonstrates their father-and-son type of existence; unable to sleep, Philip asks the older man to tell him tales. Bruce describes these requests as "a little ritual, half a joke" (p. 133), and goes on to comment, "To what boyhood experience this pointed back I did not ask. I could guess." (p. 134).

As well as providing a stable and pleasant environment for Philip as a good father might do, Bruce also encourages him in his career ambitions. When Philip first voices his wish to become a landscape gardener Bruce does not belittle these hopes, but helps him to decide priorities and establish a course of action. Later he continues to encourage Philip as he studies for examinations. He has acted in some ways as a rôle model for the younger man; Philip realises the amount of effort behind the degree of comfort and professional success Bruce now enjoys. Bruce also attempts to help Philip to come to terms with his homosexuality by easing him gradually into contact with his gay friends, but these attempts are, on the whole, unsuccessful for the reasons already outlined. The father-son theme is especially underlined when, after Philip's return from a visit to his mother in Cornwall, he and Bruce spend a day at Brighton. As they sit in the restaurant they observe a man of about Bruce's age "talking together with obvious affection and interest" (p. 209) with his teenage son. This pair has a disturbing effect on Philip who insists on leaving the restaurant. Later he speaks of himself and Bruce as being "a sort of caricature of them--a travesty..." (p. 210). Gradually Philip becomes increasingly unhappy in his involvement with Bruce. Like a son growing into independent adulthood he asserts his need to move away from paternal influence. Philip's final decision is prompted by a letter received from a former girlfriend who has now married. He begins to speak of turning his back on homosexual inclinations and finding a wife. He also admits to Bruce that he has attempted to explore his gayness further by engaging in an affair with a young man of his own age. Rather like a rejected parent, Bruce is tempted to react in a punitive way: "And such is the force of the sadistic instinct in human nature that I had a sudden desire to do violence to this lad who in some sort had done violence to me. I would take him in revenge, rancour, in physical assertion that he was mine." (p. 239). Bruce quells this initial reaction to what he sees as his lover's betrayal, and the narrative progresses to the point of their eventual separation.

The theme of renunciation, of release from established emotional bonds, which was considered in earlier novels such as One House and Fires in the Distance, recurs in this novel. In contrast to characters in these earlier works, however, Bruce refuses to accede to Philip's request that he be released from mutual obligations. Again, this notion is expressed in terms appropriate to the central concept of a father-son bond:

> I had not only been a lover to him, Philip implied, but a kind of foster-parent as well. His relationship with his true father had been the deepest emotional experience of his youth, a feeling and a dependence he had later transferred to me--and now I must release him from that bond, that obsessive dependence. I must not withhold a kind of paternal blessing that would enable him to break with a prolonged adolescence, to make easier a change of heart and satisfy a natural hunger for maturity. (p. 242).

When, after a period of separation and limited contact, Philip tentatively suggests the possibility of resuming their former intimacy, Bruce does nothing to encourage the idea. It is as though the two generations of a family both realise the impossibility of returning to the former state of authority-dependence after the child has made initial moves away from such a condition.

Details of Bruce's relationship with his young nephew, Jules, are woven into the central plot, and the uncle-nephew relationship provides a counter-point to Bruce's involvement with Philip. When Bruce spends Christmas with Louise and her family Jules is twelve, a child who finds it difficult to relate to this uncle whom he hardly knows but wants to emulate. Little of Bruce's feelings towards his nephew is conveyed, but two sentences do suggest a deep emotional response to the boy--"His brown eyes looked at me with candour and a love utterly devoid of desire. I met the look for a minute then turned my face away." (p. 32). While these words might be construed as indicating some sort of paedophilic interest, they seem to be indicative more of Bruce's new awareness of what he has missed by not having children of his own. He has become used to seeing other people only in terms of sexual desirability, and has forgotten that love can be separate from physical desire. There may also be an awareness of innocence and naivety here. When Bruce next sees Jules, he sees him in a quite different light: "I realised he was no longer a child but a youngster in early adolescence who nevertheless retained a kind of childish enthusiasm." (p. 167). Here Bruce's perception of Jules as a naive child on the threshhold of adulthood seems to elucidate the rather vague attitude that Mark Garnett had towards Walter in the earlier The Young have Secrets. Bruce also recognises at this time that Jules is about to experience a period of rapid changes in which Bruce himself will play no part--"The bud must open in its own fashion, shaped by other accidents than I, other encounters." (p. 170).

The novel ends with a letter from Louise asking for Bruce's help in furthering Jules' plans for the future. Jules, now seventeen, wishes to come to London to study and Louise asks her brother to "take him under your wing." (p. 254). Bruce's thoughts turn first to Philip before he resolves "...as far as I am able I shall give Jules the guidance of a dispassionate philanthropy none the less valid because neutral in desire. None the less valid, either, because its exercise may come to fill the place in my life hitherto occupied by something frankly different in kind..." (p. 255). In this way it is suggested that family ties, "surrogate fatherhood", are to become an alternative for further homosexual attachments.

Courage uses several symbols in this novel which he had not previously used. The image of the island has already been discussed: it serves the double function of symbolising the insular relationship that Bruce and Philip share, as well as underlining the key notion that homosexuals inhabit of necessity two realms of experience, the straight and the gay. It is significant that Bruce and Philip are most in harmony at the moment when Philip rows Bruce about in Falmouth Harbour, a state of physical suspension between "island" and "mainland" which they never manage to attain in terms of their relationship.

Two other important symbols are those of the jungle and the zoo, which are linked in complex ways that go beyond the clichéd use of these images to make statements about human instinct and social patterning. At one level Courage is concerned with examining physical desires, the impulses which human beings share with other animals. Such a view of sexual desire involves a focus on the senses, especially sight and smell, and an awareness of the selfish urge which underlies the drive. The narrator particularises this imagery to the gay world he socialises in: the pursuit of homosexual partners seems to Bruce to have a desperate quality akin to the hunting instincts of jungle animals, but he accepts at the same time that he too is motivated by such needs:

> So...I was here again, just as though I had never met Philip and was still driven by a craving for the hunt, for some sensual diversion! All these young men, their arms enlaced in an odour of male sweat, their minds drifting in some dream or illusion of love--I had seen it all before, I reflected, I had seen it many times. Was I, all the same, quite as detached, as immune, as I

> fancied? Not quite. A certain crude animal excitement came to me out of the air, out of the room itself, out of my own flesh. (p. 225).

The notion of Bruce's nephew and of Rose's stray kitten are also linked to the jungle/zoo imagery. Jules wishes to visit the zoo during his visit to London, and the visit seems to increase his understanding of what it means to be human. The sight of a caged leopard with its belly and genitals exposed prompts the disgusted comment, "'I'm glad I'm not an animal'", but then he shows a sudden awareness of the similarities between himself and lower life forms by saying, "'Men are animals too, of course--vertebrate ones, who've learnt to talk.'" (pp 168-169). (6) Bruce has a particular affection for his nephew, stemming from a father-like concern for the boy's happiness rather than from any physical attraction, and seems anxious for the boy to come to terms successfully with such aspects of his own human nature as sexuality and the need to give and receive love. The contrast is with Philip, an older version of Jules, for whom Bruce's paternal feelings are overlaid by physical desire. At their first encounter Philip's eyes look "tigerish" to Bruce and the image remains with him of Philip's face being like that of "some tiger-cub surprised behind the bars of a cage." (p. 12). Because Philip is unable to fully accept the carnal side of his nature, or at least the homosexual element in it, he cages his true nature and Bruce cannot prevent him from being unhappy. Rose's kitten might be seen as a symbol for Philip: both are "strays" who need to be rescued and cared for, and both go away of their own volition leaving the ones who have given them love in a bereft state.

In describing the relationship between the two men, Courage is concerned with two main issues which the narrative still does not resolve fully. One issue is whether sexual orientation is an integral, genetically-programmed part of personality, or an outcome of early childhood experience. The second issue is whether sexual orientation can be denied or altered in later life. A further question of the morality of homosexuality underlies both of these central considerations. Even though Bruce goes through a reappraisal phase, looking again at the viability of commitment to a

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(6) Here Jules' use of the word "vertebrate" instead of a more accurate term such as "upright" suggests his childish inability to articulate important insights fully.

heterosexual marriage, Courage seems to use Bruce's reconfirmed self-assurance in his own sexual identity to suggest that sexual orientation is unalterable. Furthermore, he uses the sad example of Horace Givenchy's case to demonstrate that attempts to deny one's true nature result in unhappy compromises. The implication at the end of the novel is that Philip is likely to suffer unhappiness until he accepts that he is truly homosexual. At the same time, Courage is realistic in his recognition that the world at large is not sympathetic to difference of any kind, and uses the cases of Bart Clonso and Helen Vincent to illustrate this point. Neither of these characters have been able to live with their sexual natures: Clonso resorted to drugs and eventually took his own life, while Helen never speaks out about her love for Cordelia and leads a sad, empty life. Bruce's ultimate decision not to encourage Philip's suggestion that their former relationship might be resumed is also psychologically convincing; both partners have been deeply affected by what they have shared, but have moved beyond the point at which the old relationship still has validity for either of them.

The final section shows Bruce taking stock of his life up to this critical point in middle age. Just as the novel began with the narrator on his own, the final focus is again on the individual. Bruce is able to appreciate, in retrospect, the pleasures of his involvement with Philip:

> I owe Philip a debt. All in all our affair was the most satisfactory of my life, an association I do not undervalue because it has its deepest roots in a common gratification of the senses. I do not belittle that gratification now or turn the repentant eye on the hungers of a nature I happen to delight in sharing with other animals. I shall not in fact insult myself by any hypocritical reformation. Far from it. No less profoundly than before, I cherish physical desire for its own sake, for the power to alleviate the solitude of my kind and as it may expand into love. (p. 254).

Bruce can also accept that the affair ends because he and Philip have moved in different directions. He demonstrates this when he deliberately ignores Philip's tentative suggestion that intimacy might be re-established:

> If I turned him down, as I did, if I refused him as gently as I could, I acted out of no smug sense of revenge, still less with a feeling of self-sacrifice. Simply I thought it better that, having won a difficult independence for himself, he should continue to order his own life, weaned from mine. Whatever his future, whether he married or not, he must stand by himself. If he were to return to me, a second parting might well be more painful and less auspicious than the first. (There was another explanation also, a complex matter I did not attempt to explain and one which I had not foreseen: namely that in writing this history of our affair, his and mine, I had already to some extent worked him out of my system. A Philip revived would not be the same person.) (p. 252).

The final version of human relationships as it is presented in this novel is fairly bleak. The thesis seems to be that ideal relationships are seldom possible, that where they do develop either death intervenes or the relationship is destroyed by the inability of one partner to recognise the full value of the involvement. In the last analysis Courage seems to claim that for a gay man, at least at the time of which he was writing, there is only the self to depend on. This may be a disappointing conclusion, but in view of the renewed confidence that Courage's narrator seems to draw from this belief, and the way in which this conclusion so soundly defeats the vague attempts at happy endings witnessed in his earlier novels, it is a worthwhile one.

CHAPTER 9. THE VISIT TO PENMORTEN (1961).

The Visit to Penmorten fits oddly at the end of James Courage's list of novels. In the previous novel the author had displayed both technical competence and considerable confidence in dealing with a difficult theme. In this final work his technical ability is still impressive but he appears to revert to earlier themes, reworking the notions of primal child-parent relationships as enduring influences on the adult child and exploring again the intricacies of heterosexual relationships. On first consideration this apparent retreat from gay themes might seem to be a dishonest evasion on the author's part. On reflection, however, one must consider whether Courage may already have said as much as he had to say on the theme of homosexual relationships in A Way of Love, and needed to return to heterosexual contexts in order to write out his continuing concern with the significance of childhood experience [1]. There is no need to claim that homosexual writers ought to write only about gay themes, but the fact that homocentric and heterocentric viewpoints are so very different means that a gay writer who chooses to write about á non-homosexual world must exercise particular caution; characterisation must be convincing, and the dangers of sentimentalising or resorting to sensationalism to disguise a lack of depth must be avoided. Individual aspects of the novel such as narrative structuring, consistency of viewpoint, character development and evocation of setting provide evidence of the level of craftsmanship that the experienced author now commands; his ironic treatment of some characters and his informed description of the process of psychoanalysis are further evidence of the fact that he is an innovative writer. In the final analysis The Visit to Penmorten may be a lesser work than its predecessor but it adds, nevertheless, to the Courage canon.

The plot of the novel can be summarised in this way: the young protagonist, Walter Lythgo, travels to a Cornish village where he holidays and works on a book about Celtic saints. He is suffering from some sort of nervous breakdown following his father's suicide; while in the village he makes the acquaintance of a number of people, including a psychoanalyst who

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(1) Elizabeth Caffin, in her Introduction to the 1985 edition of The Young Have Secrets speaks of Courage's great disappointment over the treatment A Way of Love received in New Zealand: it is possible that this may have been another factor in his return to more orthodox contexts.

offers to help Walter to resolve his problems. Following successful treatment, Walter returns to London, meeting again on the way with a young woman he has met twice before in the village and who, it is suggested, will become his wife.

The novel is constructed on the three-part framework which Courage had used so often before. This time, the main parts are untitled and the chapters are separated only by a row of asterisks, a device which suggests continuity of action in the narrative. As in the earlier works the first part sets the scene by providing background about the protagonist and introducing all the major characters; the central section develops the main action--here, the process of psychoanalysis and the various relationships Walter develops in Penmorten--while the final section looks ahead to a new and happy future for the main character. The third-person narrative technique is employed to good effect; frequently narrative linking is provided in a similar manner to that used earlier in The Fifth Child--for example, the Brookstantons are mentioned at the end of one part, while the next section opens with Mrs Brookstanton greeting Walter (p. 30), and later Walter's reaction to the experience of smoking opium provides a link between two adjoining sections (p. 125). The most common linking device is to end one section with a character, usually Walter, being shown out of a situation and the next section opening with his being greeted or ushered inside. (2)

Walter Lythgo is depicted as intelligent and attractive, but lacking confidence in his relationships with women. He is disturbed by the nightmares he experiences following his father's suicide in which he dreams of shooting his father, and is made ill by lack of sleep and by a sense of guilt over the recurrent dream of parricide. The basic story of his family is related in the narrative: his English father had gone to Australia to take up farming, and had married a young school teacher there. After Walter's birth his mother had run away to the city with another man, only to return when Walter was about five years old, remaining with her husband and son until her death from tuberculosis within the year. A Scottish housekeeper had looked after Walter and his father from that time on. When Walter was 14 years old, his father's announced decision to send the boy away to boarding school had prompted the boy to make an ineffectual attempt to shoot his father. Walter's plans to study at Oxford had been encouraged

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(2) See pp 69, 76, 110, 116 and 139 for examples.

by Mr Lythgo, but shortly after receiving Walter's letter stating his desire to remain in England after graduating, Mr Lythgo had shot himself. His death precedes the action of the novel by some two months. The death had occurred back in Australia, "down under". It becomes the psychoanalyst's task to assist Walter to see what experiences and emotions he has been repressing for so long so that he can live normally once again. The therapeutic process becomes an exploration of the "down under" of the subconscious mind.

Even before commencing psychoanalysis Walter seems to realise that something prevents him from maturing into full emotional adulthood. He reflects that "At 24 no man should remain a child, anxious, abandoned, profoundly guilty..." (p. 37), and much later in the narrative the same idea is restated when he says, "I want to be allowed to be in love as a man, not as a child." (p. 156). In several encounters which are sensitively portrayed, Dr Budden takes Walter back through skilful questioning to his early memories of significant experiences which hold the key to his present unhappiness. The fundamental issue that Walter must face has already been presaged in an incident when Walter, visiting an acquaintance, is shown an article in a magazine in which a psychiatrist writes that "men are always looking for some sort of mother." (p. 53). Dr Budden cleverly avoids a direct confrontation with this disturbing notion, encouraging Walter instead to begin by recalling his father. He then leads Walter through the feelings he holds for his dead father and on to even more painful recollections of his mother. In the analysis several features emerge as important: these include the pre-verbal infant's resentment and guilt over the loss of the nurturing mother, the renewed fear of losing the mother when she returns, the lack of understanding about her death, resentment towards the father for his perceived part in separating mother from son, and the adolescent child's fear that his mother may have resorted to prostitution in order to maintain herself. These feelings are compounded by Walter's guilt that his decision to remain in England may have led to his father's suicide. Walter's feelings of guilt towards his father have a basis in real events: after his mother died he wanted to kill his father because he held him responsible for her death, and during adolescence he made a feeble attempt to carry out this earlier wish. Kirstie, the Lythgos' dour Calvinist housekeeper, had expressed moral judgements on the conduct of Walter's mother, leading Walter to suspect his mother of having been a whore. Although Kirstie only engenders the suspicion, the child's mind feeds on the suggestion.

Furthermore, the adolescent boy is both shamed and aroused by this notion, so that guilt and sexuality become linked in his mind.

In the sessions of psychoanalysis Dr Budden serves as someone on whom Walter can project the love-hate feelings from his childhood relationships. Walter moves through a range of emotional responses to the psychiatrist: at times he suspects the doctor of mocking him or wanting to provoke his reactions, and later he suspects that Dr Budden wants to take the memory of his mother away from him. In this way the analyst becomes a substitute for Walter's dead father. What emerges from this highly-charged emotional involvement is a feeling of love for the man who cares enough to want to effect his patient's cure. This feeling seems to be a truly homosexual feeling, although there is no physical sexual involvement. The notion of transferred attachment is shown to be an essential factor in the healing process. It is ultimately necessary for Walter to take the vital step of yielding up this depth of feeling so that he can begin to relate to other adults in a normal way, just as childish feelings for both parents must be let go to make way for adult relationships. It is interesting in this part of the novel that Courage can detach himself from the psychoanalytic process he is describing to such an extent that he can evaluate its procedures and functions.

The exchanges between doctor and patient ring true. The psychiatrist maintains an air of wisdom, patience and detached concern, while Walter's varying moods of distrust, fear, anger, sadness, gratitude and so on are successfully conveyed. The details of Walter's background which unfold during the treatment sessions fill out the plot in a natural manner without recourse to unnatural narrative devices. The following passage illustrates Courage's skill in describing the therapy process:

> Walter heard the other's pencil scratch a note on paper. 'What are you writing?' he asked.
>
> 'A simple note. Please continue.'
>
> 'I'm living on money sent over from the solicitor in Sydney who's dealing with my father's estate. I've enough to see me through if I'm careful. Is that important?'

'Not particularly, or not here.' The doctor's voice changed tone: 'And your mother? Speak of her.'

Walter put his cupped hands over his eyes. 'She was dead before I really remember her,' he hesitated.

'I think you remember quite a lot about your mother, nevertheless.'

'My hands are shaking.'

'What makes you so afraid that you must cover your face, your eyes?'

'I'm scared of crying, in front of you.'

'You must not be scared. But what is it you don't or didn't want to see, hiding your eyes from it?'

Walter stared at the blank wall. 'I'm not sure.'

'Well, memory is sometimes a poor guide. We may find that your unconscious is surer, for you.'

Walter said suddenly, surprising himself: 'I don't want to think about childhood. It's something that happened to me on the other side of the world.'

'In the antipodes of your mind also,' Dr Budden observed in benevolent tones. 'Down under, shall we say, difficult of access, repressed. But still there, activating.'

'It doesn't seem relevant. I can only think about these nightmares of the gun.'

'Your father died in Australia, several months ago, yet you feel that it was you who shot him. Is that the presenting aspect, as you see it?'

'It's absurd, and yet I...' Walter felt the tears rush into his eyes and voice. 'When you put the question logically it only confuses me more,' he objected.

'You are an intelligent person, a young man of sense and integrity--I don't think you're readily confused. But we're dealing here with something not logical, or not in a conscious fashion.'

Walter wiped his eyes. He felt that he must hang on to reality as he saw it. 'You frighten me when you make this sound like a police investigation,' he protested after some minutes.

'There are no police involved. No crime, and in that sense no guilt either.'

'I feel guilt nevertheless. And panic.' (pp 62-63).

Here Courage suggests the analyst's gentle, reassuring approach and his insightful questioning in contrast with the patient's torment which is expressed verbally and through body language. He also shows these two characters engaged in vital dialogue--questioning, describing, explaining and reflecting on each other's words.

The idea of "release" from emotionally charged relationships is recurrent in Courage's work: "Respect and liking flowed in, controllable now, where love had suffered so gentle an amputation. 'Then you give me my freedom,' he said with relief. 'You give it to yourself. It's a condition of your future.'" (p. 184). In Fires in the Distance both Mrs Donovan and her daughter release the young lover Paul so that he can realise his career ambitions; in One House Anne Wanklin releases Roger Hesse from their engagement so that he is free to marry her sister Helen, while in A Way of Love Bruce Quantock resists his lover's request for release from their relationship. In this final novel the release is a natural and necessary conclusion to the doctor-patient relationship, a point to which their involvement has worked.

Dr Budden also benefits from his interaction with Walter, so that their analysis sessions together have a curative value for both. Walter has heard

a rumour that the psychiatrist had transgressed the ethics of his profession by becoming sexually involved with one of his woman patients; while this rumour is neither proven nor discredited the serious discussion between doctor and patient during their last therapy session suggests that Budden has learnt, through bitter error, the sacrosanct nature of the analyst/patient relationship. Assisting Walter towards a resolution of his difficulties seems to restore Budden's belief in himself, and he speaks of the time when he will return to London to resume practice.

Dr Budden's name is intriguing in that it is similar to the name of the man, Burton, with whom Walter's mother absconded; again, both surnames are very close to the notion of "burden", the load of ancient fears and insecurities that Walter has to rid himself of. Such an interpretation of these two names is justified in the light of similar name-games that Courage played in the earlier novels. Not all the names chosen by Courage for his characters are invested with other meanings, but there are sufficient examples of this occurrence to merit comment. Celia Donovan, for example, whose one remaining expressive outlet is music, may derive her name from St Cecilia, the patron saint of music (Fires in the Distance); the Mesuriers provide one sort of "yardstick" for Norman Grant when he looks at other people's marriages (The Call Home); Tommy Tallack's names manage to convey the sense of a well-built ex-public schoolboy who pays lip-service to the conventions of his class but who lacks talent and integrity (The Visit to Penmorten). A number of Courage's women characters are endowed with names from literary sources--Imogen, Beatrice, Cordelia, Isolde--and may derive something of their character from these sources or contrast with them in an ironical manner.

Walter's therapy with Dr Budden continues at the same time as he is getting to know a number of other significant characters in Penmorten. Each of these people seems to illustrate in their concerns or individual makeup an aspect of Walter's own personality or experience. The elderly Brookstantons might be seen as sustaining a relationship in which the husband, reverting to a state of confused dependence, is mothered by the wife; this idea is understated in the novel, but is most apparent on the occasion of the Major's birthday when Mrs Brookstanton notices Walter's stunned reaction to her husband's obsessive belief that a local house is being used as a brothel and says to the young man, "'If you find reason for pity or pain in this room...the burden is mine. He is happy in his own

way...'" (pp 145-146). The couple are obviously settled into a pathetic but mutually gratifying partnership which will be ended only by death. The reader might infer that Walter is likely to spend his life in a similarly dependent partnership unless his immature need for mothering is overcome and sufficient maturity gained to permit him to enjoy marriage as a mature relationship. The exact nature of the relationship between Gregory Skolnitz and the young Welsh painter Morgan, who shares his house, is vaguely stated but seems to be homosexual; certainly it is characterised by affection and interdependence. Their friendship is under pressure from other people; Gregory is Jewish and under particular pressure from his mother to marry and have children. Morgan is anxious to push his friend into direct confrontation with the realities of heterosexual life in order to deter him from such ideas and to strengthen the relationship existing between them. This attempt by Morgan to reinforce his friend's acceptance of a homosexual outlook could be seen as an example of the sort of black humour which is evident in this novel. Morgan is, in effect, practising a form of aversion therapy on his friend; Courage would no doubt have been familiar with the use of aversion therapy by psychiatrists as a form of "cure" for homosexuality, and might be seen to be lampooning this attitude by empowering one of his lay characters to practise an inverse form of therapy. Together the two men seem to represent a sort of father-son relationship; the older man offers security to the younger, but at the same time is provoked by his outspokenness and retaliates by bullying, belittling and even striking him. In spite of this, the final impression of their relationship is that it is based on genuine affection and will endure. The significance of the two men to Walter's case is two-fold: they represent the sort of relationship which Walter did not experience with his father, as well as serving to illustrate that the alternative lifestyle they enjoy is inappropriate for him.

The relationship between the French girl, Ginette, and the elderly Englishman with whom she lives recreates the father-child relationship, with the emphasis on the daughter's experience. Ginette cares for Tallack, prepares his opium pipes and is his mistress. She seems to derive security from the relationship, even though Tallack fears that he is too old for her and is an inadequate lover. In her relationship to Walter Ginette assumes an entirely different rôle, becoming a surrogate mother by telling him, "You must be at peace, like a child." (p. 122). By introducing Walter to opium she provides him with a means of overcoming his usual inhibitions so that he can re-enact with her the experiences of infancy such as nuzzling at the

mother's breast and being held in the mother's arms. This experience allows Walter, during his next therapy with Dr Budden, to cope with discussion about his mother and her death. Later, Ginette assumes another rôle, providing Walter with his first experience of sex with a woman, an experience which he compares to being "reborn". Because of this experience Walter is then able to overcome his feelings about his mother's death, and to explore his true feelings for his father. From this it can be seen that Ginette is a very powerful force in Walter's rehabilitation. She also serves a further function by providing a negative example for him; she is consumed by melancholy and is unable to take any positive steps to give her own life some sort of meaning. She quotes the words of Alfred de Musset, "J'ai perdu ma force et ma vie", as a personal motto, and eventually kills herself. Her suicide is foreshadowed by Walter's recounting the death by drowning of one of the Celtic woman saints who features in his treatise. This story leads to Ginette's account of an earlier attempt she once made to drown herself. Her death is linked to the much earlier death of Walter's mother: both women have been primal sources of love for Walter, and both have to "die"--Ginette literally, and his mother a second time metaphorically--so that he can be free to look for a mature and permanent relationship with some other woman.

In contrast to Ginette's liberating influence Millicent Jaques is a smothering force in Walter's life in Penmorten. Unmarried, and some years older than Walter, she embodies all the restricting forces inherent in maternal love and attempts to care for Walter and to win his live by her solicitude. Millicent still yearns after an idealised relationship such as that which she had with her own father--the yellowing photograph of Mr Jaques dominates the living room mantel--but her life is restricted by the demands of her bed-ridden, senile mother who persists in seeing Millicent still as a child. There are obvious parallels between Millicent's and Walter's lives, especially in the way that they mourn the premature loss of one parent, and feel guilt and obligation towards the other. Millicent's expression of hatred towards her mother and the sterile desire to murder her is similar to the adolescent Walter's desire to shoot his father. It is significant that Walter always feels panic in Millicent's presence and their encounters are always mutually unsatisfactory. Walter only wants to escape from Millicent's smothering attentions while she never comprehends the reason for the antipathy she arouses in Walter. Whereas Walter actively seeks to resolve his difficulties and achieve normalcy, Millicent fails to

find a satisfying solution to her problems. Ironically, she eventually experiences a measure of contentment in mothering Gregory and Morgan, carrying out their household chores for them and cherishing the idea that they are single and interestingly "bohemian".

Elaine Hibbert, with whom Walter eventually falls in love, nurses her terminally-ill father, and her growing attachment to Walter by the novel's end suggests that when her father does die his place in Elaine's affections will be partially replaced by Walter as husband. Significantly Elaine also lost her mother at the same age as Walter lost his. Walter assumes a rôle similar to Dr Budden's in relation to Elaine, helping her through her religious beliefs which are in conflict with his own humanist beliefs and which he sees as amounting to neuroses since they incline her towards a cloistered life. Walter declares, "I refuse to accept my life as a substitution...I may lack grace but I'm aware where I stand as a human being." (p. 219); it is on this understanding that he and Elaine will live their lives together.

For much of the time Elaine's true identity is a mystery to Walter, and he does not finally learn her real name or the story behind her stay in Penmorten until they are both leaving the village. Walter first sees Elaine emerging from the house which has been pointed out to him by Major Brookstanton as being run as a brothel. His first face to face encounter with her takes place on a lonely moor, when he is charmed by her but what she says in all innocence only serves to compound the possibility that she is a prostitute. The parallels between the feelings Walter has for Elaine and those he has held for his dead mother are obvious, and even further underlined by the fact that he imagines Elaine's name to be that of his mother, Isolde. Just as Walter has had to solve the mystery of his feelings for his mother, and resolve the complexes he has had towards the idea of her sinfulness, so he has to demystify his feelings for Elaine until he knows the truth about her and can recognise his true feeling for her.

Finally, Walter's widowed cousin Elizabeth also acts as another mother figure for Walter. She had provided him with the letters of introduction which he presented in Penmorten, her action stemming not only from a desire to help Walter but also from a mischievous wish to throw Walter and his various hosts upon each other. Elizabeth seems to have wisely foreseen that forcing Walter to visit Penmorten and providing him with the opportunity to

meet these people would be beneficial for him. She is also portrayed as the widowed mother of her own young son, and expresses her concern for the future world that her child will have to live in. She is involved in anti-nuclear campaigns in her attempt to better the world for the next generation, but on a more personal level she also acknowledges the stresses and difficulties of being a parent. As a sympathetically-conceived character Elizabeth offers the most positive example of parenting in the novel, an example which Walter may recall, should he eventually become a parent.

In this novel Courage relies on a certain amount of character stereotyping, and the question to be considered is what this finally achieves. In some cases this seems rather shallow and achieves little; the maternal concerns of Gregory's Jewish mother, Morgan's Welsh hot-headedness, Elaine's religiosity are examples of this point. At other times a grim comic effect results from such characterisation; this is best illustrated by Major Brookstanton's obsession with the idea that the house that Elaine Hibbert lives in is a brothel, and that he is the only one who sees the danger and can act against such a corruptive influence. Mrs Brookstanton however has her own private eccentricities, rejecting the work of a local artist because she imagines the paintings of vegetables are obscene. A further instance of the black humour to be found in this novel is the incident in which Walter's visit to the Jaques house is suddenly interrupted by old Mrs Jaques appearing in the living room, trailing grimy bandages like a disintegrating Egyptian mummy, muttering about a filthy tomcat which has leapt through the bedroom window and upset her tea, all the while peering malevolently at her daughter's male visitor (pp 193-194). The characterisation of Ginette suggests, on first consideration, a conventional form of stereotyping; she is French, and therefore beautiful, sophisticated and given to moods of melancholy. There are touches of the exotic in her background such as her experiences of the East, her family's circus background and her familiarity with drugs. These considerations seem to go beyond the conventional, however, and represent more than simply a colonial writer's attempt to invest his story with exotic details from worlds outside the limits of colonial experience. Together with such details as Balkan and homosexual characters, the interest in old Celtic saints and experiments with narcotics, they comprise an attempt to exceed the confines of time, place and the physical body in order to show that physical drives, love, happiness and unhappiness, human relationships and so on are all part of universal

human experience. The recognition of this point is necessary if the novel is to hang together, without appearing, at times, to strain reader credulity and to bring the tale close to the realms of pulp fiction.

AFTERWORD

A detailed examination of the novels of James Courage from the earliest to the last has revealed a notable growth in his skill and confidence as a writer. Despite his expatriate status, Courage emerges as a novelist of merit who deserves to be more highly regarded than he has been until now. He deserves a place of respect in New Zealand literature for several reasons: he succeeds in describing one small section of New Zealand society as it was at a particular period, he was innovative both in terms of style and in the themes with which he was concerned, and he ha a special place not only in the gay literary history of this country but also in the history of its censorship of the arts. Each of his novels has its individual strengths, but each can also be seen as belonging to a body of work which deals with the same central concerns in a variety of ways and from a range of viewpoints.

Much more work remains to be done in the study of James Courage as a writer. The link between the writer's life and his work which this thesis proposes remains to be proven, and must wait until such time as restrictions on the availability of biographical material are lifted. The exact circumstances and the consequences of the banning of A Way of Love remain to be fully researched as one aspect of this biographical study. The examination of Courage's short stories, while beyond the scope of this thesis, could be rewarding, and strong links between ideas and incidents in the novels and the stories remain to be explored and described. A full study of the unpublished fiction could also serve to extend our present view of the author. For the student of New Zealand social history, Courage's New Zealand novels could provide an invaluable insight into the lives and attitudes of the class and age which they describe; the relationships between children and parents which are explored in these works could provide insights into patterns of family behaviour with possible relevance to the broader society. Finally there remains the work of republishing or possibly adapting some of Courage's novels so that they are made available to today's readers. Apart from the posthumous publication of Such Separate Creatures in 1973, the adaptation for radio of The Fifth Child in 1982 and the republishing of The Young Have Secrets in 1985 Courage's novels have been largely ignored. Because most of these works were originally published in relatively small runs they are not easily obtainable and therefore are not as well known as they deserve to be.

APPENDIX A

Material in this appendix derives from records held by Victor Gollancz Ltd, London, and by the University of Reading Library (Archives of the publishing firm of Jonathan Cape Ltd, London). It includes a letter from Livia Gollancz, 27 June 1989, giving background to the publication of One House, a letter from Michael Bott, 9 October 1989, backgrounding the publication of James Courage's last four novels, and a Biographical Questionnaire completed by James Courage prior to Cape's publication of The Young have Secrets.

NOTE: Information contained in Michael Bott's letter and the Biographical Questionnaire is covered by the copyright which Jonathan Cape Ltd holds on its own archival material. Any queries regarding use of this material should be directed to the University of Reading Library Archivist.

Victor Gollancz Ltd

14 HENRIETTA STREET LONDON WC2E 8QJ
TELEPHONE 01-836 2006/2515
TELEX 265033 FAX 01-379 0934

27 June 1989

Grant Harris Esq
c/o English Department
Massey University
Palmerston North
Manawatu
New Zealand

Dear Mr. Harris

Thank you for your letter of 16 June concerning James Courage's One House. In answer to your questions:

1) Courage had no hand in the financing of the publication. The novel was published on our normal terms for the early 1930s, as a commercial proposition. However, in his offer letter my father mentioned that he did not expect a big sale for the book, which he liked very much.

2) There is no breakdown of sales figures from so long ago. 1500 sheets were printed, and 750 bound up in the first instance. From the number of rebinds, I would deduce that, out of a total bind up number of 1100, around 400 were probably sold in Australasia. A number of copies (perhaps 3/400) were lost at the bindery.

Our contract with Courage gave us an option on his next two novels, and there is no note attached to it suggesting that we might have declined our option book. When Courage submitted One House he was living in a sanatorium in Suffolk and I suspect that, if he returned to New Zealand before writing his next book, the option clause may simply have fallen into abeyance.

Yours sincerely

Livia Gollancz

The Library

University of Reading

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Librarian A. J. C. Bainton MA ALA

Whiteknights
PO Box 223
Reading RG6 2AE

Telex: 847813
Fax: (0734) 314404

Telephone: Reading (0734) 318773: *Library Office*
(0734) 318770: *Library enquiries*

9 October 1989

Mr Grant Harris
English Department
Massey University
Palmerston North
Manawatu
New Zealand

Dear Mr Harris

Thank you for your letter of 2 August which must have arrived shortly after I left for a fairly long holiday. Please excuse my delay in replying. The records relating to James Courage are rather thin and throw no light on the difficulties experienced by a New Zealand writer in having work published in Britain. No correspondence has survived and, apart from the biographical questionnaire (copy enclosed), the only records are entries in a ledger which include details of numbers printed, bound and sold. There is no evidence that Courage financed his own publications - they seem to have been produced in the normal manner. Nor is there any breakdown of sales figures except that totals for six-monthly periods are recorded, presumably so that they could be included on royalty statements. The short-hand used in the ledger is not always easy to understand, but I give below a summary of the entries:

The call home: 5000 printed, bound and sold. Published 30 July 1956 at 13/6. Out of print 24 April 1963.

The visit to Penmorten: 4000 printed, but only 3000 bound and sold. Published 15 May 1961 at 16/=. Out of print 5 February 1965.

A way of love: 3000 printed, plus 2nd impression of 1600. All bound and sold. Published 12 January 1959 at 15/=. Out of print 7 March 1962.

The young have secrets: two impressions of 3000 each printed before publication on 2 December 1954 (price 12/6). A further 20,000 printed Sept. 1954 of which 16,000 are recorded as bound for "B.S." (Book Society?). Of these 8250 were sold for home market and 7750 for export. A cheap paperbound edition was made up from stock for publication on 4 February 1957 at 3/6, and discontinued on 17 February 1958 after which 12/6 edition available until it went out of print on 29 August 1961.

I hope this information is of some use. Please sign and return the enclosed undertaking which requires that you seek Cape's permission before publishing any of it.

Yours sincerely

Michael Bott
Keeper of Archives and Manuscripts

Jonathan Cape Ltd., 30, Bedford Square, London W.C.1.

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. If you write under a pseudonym, would you object to our disclosing your real name? And how do you wish your name to appear on the jacket of your book?
I write under my own name, James Courage. I'd like that name to appear on the jacket.

2. Birth place: year of birth:
Born in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 1903.

3. Notable ancestors or members of family:
My mother's family are descended, deviously, from that scoundrel the first Duke of Buckingham: my father's from a French Huguenot couple who fled to Scotland (?1689).

4. Single, or married to whom:
Single.

5. Children:
None that I know of.

6. Occupation other than writing:
At present I'm convalescing from a long illness. Formerly I was the manager, for about ten years, of a Hampstead bookshop (not my own). I have also been a journalist, a profession I loathed, so don't publicise it. I also study music (piano).

7. Brief outline of education: University degrees received etc.
From twelve to nineteen I was educated, badly, at Christ's College, Christchurch, New Zealand. I then came to Oxford - St. John's College - where I read Eng. Lit. (a useless but delightful school). I have an Oxford B.A. degree.

8. May we have a good recent photograph of you? Sharp outlines, not soft focus; and a glossy print for preference. We must be able to let newspapers reproduce it without having to apply for permission, so the copyright must be yours. (If you paid for the sitting and bought a print you own the copyright).

Photograph enclosed. Own copyright (and an awful picture).

9. A brief summary of your career: when you first started writing; whether you have lived abroad, if so where; your most interesting experiences; occasions in connections with which your name has been before the public, etc; war service; clubs, organisations of which you are a member;

See above (6). I first started writing at Oxford, in the 'Isis' and 'Oxford Outlook': both prose and poetry. I've lived for brief periods in Paris and Buenos Aires, but prefer Hampstead. I suppose my name has had a little publicity through my earlier books (see below). No clubs or organisation

10. Personal idiosyncrasies, likes and dislikes, superstitions (if any);

I'm extremely shy. Am superstitious about 13 and ladders.

11. Favourite occupation, hobby, sport;

Reading, piano-playing, concerts, walking, conversation.

12. How, when and why did you come to write your book, which we are shortly to publish? Can you suggest any circumstances surrounding it that may have news value? I wrote the book primarily because I wanted to, but also because I seem to be the only person with literary inclinations enough to record a very particular morsel of life at a very particular time and geographical point, i.e. certain effects of the outbreak of the First World War on certain imagined characters living in a remote country, New Zealand, at a time I can clearly recollect. But the first impulse is a purely creative one.

13. Are there any particular people to whom you would like us to send advance notification of the publication date? If so please attach a list of names and addresses.

All N.Z. bookshops, but this will be dealt with by your own traveller, I imagine, in N.Z. itself.

14. Are there any particular local or specialist papers to which you think review copies of your book should be sent?

'LANDFALL' (N.Z. quarterly): Editor's address - 31 Royal Terrace, Dunedin, S. Island, New Zealand. Also the N.Z. Listener, Box 2292, Wellington, N.Z. : and 'The Press', Christchurch, N.Z..

15. What other works have you had published? (Please give titles, and in each case some indication of the type of book? the year it was published and by whom).

Novels: ONE HOUSE, Gollancz, 1933.
THE FIFTH CHILD, Constable, 1948.
DESIRE WITHOUT CONTENT, Constable, 1950.
FIRES IN THE DISTANCE, Constable, 1952.

I must leave it to you, of course, whether these titles are included, as a list, in THE YOUNG HAVE SECRETS. I'd certainly like them to be. Constables have most of the reviews, but I have a few of the last three books.

Incidentally, I had a play performed in London in 1938, at the Gate theatre. The play's title: PRIVATE HISTORY. The text has not, however, been published.

APPENDIX B

This appendix contains items related to the "banning" of A Way of Love in New Zealand in the early 1960s. I was interested in locating the document in which an actual banning was declared during this period which immediately precedes the establishment of the Indecent Publications Tribunal in 1963. The response to my inquiry to the Customs Department suggests that the records held by this department are incomplete; Customs was unable to help in regard to Courage's novel. Information provided by Ewan Hyde of the National Library, and Dr W.H. Pearson of Auckland, prompted a check with National Archives, Wellington and with Wellington Public Library. Dr Pearson's response is not included in Appendix. B.K. McKeon's reply, 10 August 1989, confirms that lists of censored materials were compiled by Customs during this period and circulated to public libraries; Courage's novel was listed on 19 December, 1958, but as the novel was not published until January, 1959, I suspect that the date of listing has been recorded wrongly, and may have been 19 December 1959. This reply also suggests a gap in the official records for this particular period.

The information supplied by Eamonn Bolger of National Archives is particularly helpful. It seems that a letter to the Editor of The Press, Christchurch prompted the newspaper to write to Customs in an attempt to confirm the process and criteria by which the novel was banned. The inquiry was passed from Customs to the Justice Department which gave a reply. This reply is notable for two points: it reveals that the novel came to the attention of the Inter-Departmental Committee responsible for the banning through the action of the police--one wonders at the background to the seizing of the collection referred to, and wonders also at the way that the collection may have initially come to the attention of the police authorities; it also suggests the possibility of the novel having been damned by association. The final part of the Justice Department's reply might be seen as containing an insidious threat, suggesting that objectors to such rulings were likely to be intimidated by the legal process and deterred from challenging the justice or legality of such rulings.

Although the issue of the novel's banning became more and more intriguing, it was unrelated to my main thesis and was not explored in greater depth. Such material as I obtained is collected together here as a starting point for any future full investigation of the matter.

CUSTOMS
HEAD OFFICE
Investment House Whitmore Street Wellington New Zealand

Private Bag Telephone 736 099 Telegraphic Address: SECUSTOMS
Telex No. 31213 Ref. C 226.300
For enquiries please ring Ext.

20 JUN 1989

Mr C R Harris
C/- English Department
Massey University
PALMERSTON NORTH

Dear Mr Harris

I refer to your letter of 14 June 1989 in which you have asked for information on the book 'A Way of Love'.

I have researched the files the department holds on publications that were considered to be indecent, during the early 1960's. However, I have been unable to find any reference to the publication 'A Way of Love'.

Attached for your information is a decision made by the Indecent Publications Tribunal in 1972 on a publication titled 'Ways of Loving', which may be of assistance.

Yours sincerely

M J Wotherspoon
for Comptroller of Customs

enc

Alexander Turnbull Library
131

National Library of New Zealand

Te Puna Matauranga O Aotearoa

Cnr Molesworth & Aitken Streets
P.O. Box 12349
Wellington 1
New Zealand

Telephone: (04) 743-000
Fax: 743-035
Telex: 30076

24 July 1989

AT 13/19/4

Grant Harris
English Department
Massey University
PALMERSTON NORTH

Dear Mr Harris

A WAY OF LOVE BY JAMES COURAGE

I have received your letter of 28 June 1989 requesting information about the banning of James Courage's book A way of love (London: Jonathon Cape, 1959).

Two photocopied reviews of the book are enclosed. The first is from the New Zealand Listener of 26 March 1959 when the book first came out. The second is a review from the Christchurch press of 14 July 1962 which is actually a reprint of a 1959 review. The introductory paragraph, written in 1962, mentions a decision by an Interdepartmental Committee on the book which effectively banned it from libraries and bookshops.

The Listener article of 12 June 1982, which you quote in your letter, confirms this Interdepartmental Committee and describes it as being made up of members of the Crown Law Office, Justice Department and Customs Department. I can find no record of this report in any of the Government's official publications for 1962 or 1963. The National Archives, PO Box 6148, Te Aro, Wellington may have this report amongst the papers of one of these Departments. You may wish to write to them to enquire about this point.

Our Manuscripts and Archives Section had no further information about the banning of A way of love.

I hope that this information is of use to you and wish you well with your research.

Yours sincerely

Ewan Hyde
for Reference Librarian
Alexander Turnbull Library

A Subject Of "Advice"

[The "advice" of an inter-departmental committee (in fact, an implied threat of prosecution to persons not taking the advice) has caused booksellers and libraries to withdraw from their shelves "A Way of Love," a book by the New Zealand author, James Courage. By request, this review of Mr Courage's book, printed on this page on March 28, 1959, is reprinted. — Literary Editor, "The Press."]

A Way of Love. By James Courage. Jonathan Cape. 255 pp.

Mr James Courage is well known here as an accomplished expatriate New Zealand author who, in a series of sensitive novels dealing mainly with personal relationships, has drawn largely upon his early experience in this country and evoked the New Zealand scene of 20 or 30 years ago with considerable skill. His new novel is a change from all this, and will come as a surprise to many of his admirers. There have been hints of an interest in homosexuality in isolated scenes in the earlier novels; but this time Mr Courage has written a full-length sympathetic study of a homosexual relationship. His approach to the subject is sober, serious and dignified. His aim apparently is to enlarge public understanding of the delicate problems facing the homosexual who is also a man of conscience and integrity. But obstinate doubts are likely to remain in the reader's mind as to whether the subject should have been attempted —or at any rate attempted in this form.

Artistically the novel is not a great success: it is too much of an argument in novel form, a "roman a these." It is pervaded, too, by a certain air of tedium, although this is perhaps because nearly all the characters are perforce leading emotional lives that are more or less frustrated and sadly empty.

The central figure is a cultivated and honourable middle-aged architect, who has long ago acknowledged his homosexual nature and adjusted his life as best he can to the facts. He lives in London—the anonymity of a great city is essential to the discreet homosexual—and his few intimates are all men of the same kind. Only one of them is married (and he is merely introduced as an example of a homosexual who has taken the wrong solution to his problems). All the others suffer either the miseries of loneliness or of promiscuity, with the exception of one couple who have settled into an apparently permanent joint existence and found as much happiness as can be hoped for.

But Mr Courage indicates that such cases are rare. More frequently matters follow the course that the architect's case takes: he approaches the young man whom he meets at a concert and divines to be of his own kind, with scrupulous care not to influence him unduly; the young man makes a free choice and for a time lives with the architect. But he is unwilling to accept his own nature and all that it involves, and in the end the architect is abandoned once more.

The sadness of this tale, told with such matter-of-fact candour, must affect the most prejudiced of readers. And Mr Courage's accurate observation (without satiric intent) of the manner of speaking and the tastes in dress, entertainments and ornaments of his characters is admirable. He does not touch, except very lightly in passing, on the criminal fringe of homosexual life in a great city. His purpose is only with the honest man of this kind trying to make for himself a life as near normal as possible. Within this limited range, it is very interesting, and bound to increase the sympathies of all who read it for the men who tread this difficult path.

Chch Press 4-7-62

—G.D.

AN ALIEN SOCIETY

A WAY OF LOVE, by James Courage; Jonathan Cape, English price 15/-.

IN two at least of his earlier novels James Courage has studied abnormal states of mind, insanity in *Desire Without Content*, a nervous breakdown in *The Call Home*. Now he has written a novel about a homosexual relationship.

The Wolfenden Report has almost raised this abnormality from the criminal to the respectable, and the social, though not the legislative, acceptance of its practice appears to be growing in Britain. Many eminent persons have been homosexuals (though not always to the exclusion of ordinary love affairs) from kings of England to the late André Gide, and the ancient Greeks made a cult of male relationships. The unanswered question with homosexuality is still, however, to decide whether its adherents are victims of a malignant predestination which has twisted their natures or followers of a fashion which for a time they find seductive. There are too a number of other problems verging on the clinical which leave the outsider puzzled and alarmed.

A Way of Love does not completely answer these questions, but it does describe, with grace and sincerity, the progress of a love affair between males. The scene is wholly in England. The first-person narrator is a middle-aged London architect who describes his two years' "marriage" with a young, rather uncouth provincial who in the end turns his back on abnormality.

The narrator is a well-realised character. He is an intelligent man, highly conscious of his separateness from the ordinary. There are defensive references throughout the novel—"no worse than other people," "a people apart," "the private face shown to a few" and "the world always insists one wears a mask." (Perhaps it would be fair to transfer some of this self-consciousness to the author himself, at least where a character remarks that murder is considered a proper subject for fiction "while love between two men definitely isn't.") It may well be this defensive and explanatory vein which makes this novel much less effective than James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*, where the abnormal characters are far more tragically embroiled with the normal.

For in a sense homosexuality is not a "problem" in *A Way of Love*. Nearly all its characters are "of our persuasion" (as the narrator puts it), and judge life by the values of their cult. Here is where a normal critic, or reader, is at a loss. In the ordinary novel even the elderly can identify themselves with hero or heroine in most of their vicissitudes. James Courage is describing an alien society, meeting at Walpurgis parties, with its own jargon and its own code (apparently immune even from the forays of blackmailers) whose idiom he reproduces for us with accuracy and candour. Can he complain if we find it difficult to avoid reacting to his fictional people as we might react to them in life?

A Way of Love is as well-written as Courage's earlier novels, but it is not as successful, partly for the reasons I have sketched above. It is almost a *roman à thèse*, to prove his subject as worthy of fiction as murder. In attempting to suffuse it with an atmosphere of domesticity, of normality in fact, he can be occasionally frankly dull. This novel is a turning aside from Courage's earlier development as a novelist: where will he go next?

—David Hall

Wellington Public Library
Address all communications to the City Librarian Box 1992 Wellington New Zealand
The Central Library is located at 8-18 Mercer St Wellington Telephone 729·529

10 August 1989

Mr G Harris
Massey University
PALMERSTON NORTH

Dear Mr Harris

Doctor Pearson was correct; Stuart Perry did assemble a collection of the lists of censored materials that were compiled by the Comptroller of Customs. The collection was bound into a volume, covering the period August 1935 to May 1964.

The lists were sent to Stuart Perry in his capacity as the City Librarian, Wellington. He retained them in his office because they had been issued on a confidential basis. At the time of his retirement in 1973 he still regarded them as confidential documents, not to be released for general public use. Your enquiry has brought the issue of their status to my mind again. I shall take steps to clarify the matter; the information within the papers should be made more accesible. I cannot believe that the contents of the lists would cause embarrassment to anyone or raise other sensitive questions.

It would be a matter of interest to me whether you had difficulty gaining access to the approporiate Customs Department files and whether you found any trace of these lists. It may be of use to you to know that the lists and correspondence in our file cite variously C 36/959, C 24/43 and Order C.8(3) as references.

A way of love, by James Courage appears on a list that was published by the Comptroller on 19 December, 1958. It received a classification in category (i) There is on the file, with a receipt date of 19 December 1958, a consolidated list of classified publications which carries definitions of the various categories. Class (i) is described thus:-

"Publications which are regarded as indecent and are prohibited from importation under Section 46 of the Customs Act 1913. They are to be detained and notice of seizure given."

You refer in your letter to the procedures under which such prohibitions were exercised. I do not believe that your description of the procedures quite matches the facts. Stuart Perry gave a clear account of the manner in which the Ministers of Customs and their Comptrollers handled their responsibilities under the Customs Act in his book The Indecent Publications Tribunal, 1965, from page 37 onwards.

A substantial gap that exists in the history of Government censorship during the period leading up to the establishment of the Tribunal is the absence(as far as I know) of records of the deliberations of the Ministers' advisory committees.

I hope that this information will be of some help to you. Please let know if you require more.

Yours faithfully

B K McKeon
CITY LIBRARIAN

BKMCK:NB

A WAY OF LOVE. James Courage. *Cape*. 15s.

In the Wolfenden Age, it is inevitable that the serious writer should wish to write of homosexual love as frankly as he is now accustomed to writing of heterosexual love, whether licit or illicit. It is not impossible for him to treat it as an inherently tragic situation, as, for example, Mr Angus Wilson and Miss Iris Murdoch have done; but once he tries to present it on the lines of a grand passion, he is immediately up against two apparently insuperable difficulties.

The first difficulty is to persuade most of his readers to accept homosexual relations as being on the same plane, or even of the same kind, as heterosexual ones: they may be serious, destructive or pathetic; but any attempt to make them the subject of exalted lyricism must almost inevitably collapse into disgust or derision or (even worse) banality. The relation of man and woman is profoundly complementary, and not simply on the physical level. It is 'natural', in either sense of the word, whether one regards Nature as the manifestation of a controlling intelligence or as the working of blind evolutionary forces. And it is not only a social function — it is the basic function without which no society exists; whereas homosexual relationship is outside any possible society, in a world of illusion and sentimental make-believe. That is why any homosexual love-story must almost automatically come out on the same level as the unreal and sentimental heterosexual love-story.

The second difficulty is of a more general kind. Even if the writer can persuade us to accept his story on the same level as a tale of normal love, there is the difficulty of writing, truthfully but unselfconsciously, about the act of sex itself, at once the most natural and kindly of human acts and yet

> mysterious law, true source
> Of human offspring, sole propriety
> In paradise of all things common else

There was a time when it could be done. Chaucer and Shakespeare could write of sex as it is; Milton or Fielding could, without

false delicacy, draw a line around it; but Dickens is forced to hocus his readers about it. With freedom of speech restored, it is still difficult to avoid the distortions of coyness, clinical detachment, Swiftian disgust or purple prose. A serious writer, like Lawrence, sets himself to write of the act of kind; sweat beads his brow, his muscles strain, his teeth grind like millstones, as he strives with all his might to make the natural seem natural.

To this double problem Mr Courage, in his new novel, has found a solution so unobtrusively clever as to deceive his reviewers and even his blurb writer. He has written a brilliant satire on a homosexual love-affair by clothing it — *en travesti*, as it were — in the clichés of the usual sentimental love-story. Consider, for example, this passage:

> 'No. Come and sit beside me again. Put your arm round me.' He relaxed, his head of tawny hair burrowing into my shoulder. 'I'm so innocent, I want to ask you things,' he went on presently, his voice little more than a whisper. 'We're decent people, both of us. I can't see why it should be wrong for us to want to be together in the way we do — none of it seems unnatural to me, or not any longer. You don't despise me for it, do you?'

It is the classic chaise-longue scene; only a pronoun or two is unfamiliar; otherwise it might be spoken by any innocent young heroine to any ageing roué. And when the hero, as it were, flings himself into the hero's arms, a height of indelicate absurdity is reached.

The first-personal narration is handled with some care. The characters remain, perhaps deliberately, an assortment of case histories — beside the sentimental passion of the two principals, there are a 'married' couple, promiscuity both genteel and otherwise, a homosexual caught up in normal marriage, a lesbian house party involving an ambiguous young man and woman. Some attempt is made to distinguish the serious characters who live in chic little flats and know about cooking from the ones who give tarty parties; but all alike have the same tone — the coy, flirtatious talk of affaires and housekeeping and well-preserved waistlines is the chatter of ageing and sentimental cocottes.

There is throughout an unconvincing note of apologia. Plato, Gide and Proust are duly trotted out, and there are references to 'another kind' and 'our immense league'. The attempts to persuade us of the reality of this passion have a desperate and, at the same time, conventional ring. The most serious thing in the book is the note of abiding loneliness, and even that the ending seeks to deny.

A Way of Love is a quietly ruthless exposure of the pretensions of homosexuality, and a sad book, despite its appearance of an urbane and sensual exterior. Or such, at least, I take it to be.

M. K. Joseph

Landfall
Vol. 13
No. 2,
June 1959.

NZUK - AUTHORS C

Courage in exile

atures editor David Young looks at the life of one of the few New Zealand writers to be censored in his own country.

EXPATRIATES MAKE their own choices and must live with the consequences. In the past ny of our artists and writers emi- ed in order to breathe creatively went unrecognised and un- ented by their fellow countrymen. es Courage, who died of heart ure in his London flat in 1963, is unregarded as any of New Zea- d's established writers in the post- era.

The sense of loneliness that assails work and pervades his central acters seems almost to have af- ed his literary reputation. Today would be hard put to find a ary that holds all eight of his pub- ed novels and his posthumous col- ion of short stories. All but one of e books, *The Young Have Secrets*, h went into paperback, failed to h a second edition and few of general public outside his native terbury recall him.

"I'd say he's tragically neglected," Bill Baer, the Auckland writer has adapted *The Fifth Child* as a for radio to be broadcast this k. "He's an excellent technician, work really flows. You can tell he as when it works."

tter, a North American, finds ele- nts in this story, with its "alcoholic father, way-out neurotic mother", homosexual son and a daughter pushed into marrying a neighbouring farmer that are "pure Tennessee Williams, with the plantation exchanged for a sheep farm." The fact that Williams's reputation was almost non-existent here in 1948 suggests to Baer that both men were, unbeknown to each other, grappling with similar themes and problems.

Although Courage wrote fiction, he drew heavily upon the experience of his squatter family and his youth. Born the first of five children, he grew up on the family farm at Seadown, Amberley, North Canterbury, which was settled by his grandfather in 1866. The estate's division caused his father, as overall manager, considerable worries but it remains in diminished form in the hands of James Courage's nephew today.

His nearest sister, Mrs Constance Amy Gray, now in her late 70s, remembers the author with great affection and pride: "We grew up together, he had a terrific wit and was very popular at school — he was tremendous fun." She says that she is Barbara in *The Fifth Child*. Courage's love of company and laughter is endorsed by his friend, the late founder-editor of *Landfall*, Charles Brasch.

For all those qualities, however, the gentility of his origins, personified in several of his novels by a yearning mother, was offset if not blighted by the austerity and detachment (characterised by the father figure) that came from the need to tame and farm the land. This conflict of cultures, embodied in one marriage, results inevitably in his stories in a partnership of neurosis and alcoholism.

Courage spent a number of his later years in psychoanalysis. Not even the prospect of trips up the Ashburton Gorge to Mt Somers station to visit his beloved grandmother, a remarkable person by all accounts, were sufficient to bind him to New Zealand.

The psychological dislocation of that childhood seemed nevertheless to imprint images and incidents strong enough to haunt him across the world and across most of his writing life. "With only one exception until 1952, his best stories are set in New Zealand," wrote Brasch of the *Such Separate Creatures* collection. Six of these are about Walter the boy who is central to *The Young Have Secrets*. These works are charged with the wonder of childhood learning and with a sympathy for the child's view that is rare in adult writing.

Like the children in several of the novels and stories, the boy finds himself going to school, boarding away from home. Constance Gray reflects on the fact that Courage attended a Christchurch private establishment: "Mr Wiggins — a funny old man with a long white beard." He boarded with the Wiggins under Scarborough Hill at Sumner. *The Young Have Secrets* remains a beautiful evocation of Sumner, though not, says Gray, one that endeared Courage to the Wiggins family. The Peter family, on the other hand, who provided the grist for *Fires in the Distance* "liked it and admired him for writing it".

At 13 Courage attended Christ's College for five years and in 1923, aged 20, he went up to St Johns College, Oxford, where he took a Second in English. Though as an undergraduate he had some success in publishing stories, music criticism and plays, once he left Oxford a period of 20 years — broken by illness and the war years — elapsed before he was to publish again. Following his discharge from a Norfolk sanatorium he paid his only return visit to New Zealand and the Mt Somers station in 1934-35. During the war he was classed medically unfit but doubled as a fire warden and manager of a Hampstead bookshop.

With his income supplemented by the generosity of his father, Courage produced a novel every two years between 1948 and 1956, with his last two published in 1959 and 1961.

As a number of commentators on his work have observed, Courage's writing is strong on sensitivity, compassion and formalism - characteristics which, in the movement for a truly indigenous writing, may not have been highly prized here at the time.

One interpretation of this attitude, carried in the National Coalition for Gay Rights magazine *Pink Triang* by Bobby Pickering, goes a step fu ther. It holds that it was Courag unwillingness to conform to the "l erary mafia's" assumptions abo "national identity", based on a m cular vernacular that condemned hi to obscurity. Even Frank Sargeson, whose homosexuality Courage mig have been imagined to find an all charged him in a *Landfall* review wi "too much of the South Island she farmer pukka sahibs".

Worse yet, Courage's absorptio with homosexuality in a number his male characters and, in particul his use of this theme in his last tw novels, *A Way of Love* and *The Vi to Penmorten* ensured his literary ar moral reputation in this countr remained closeted.

It is fair to say that the form work, although it postdates the Wol enden report on homosexuality, su fers considerably as literature from i didactic nature. However that, Pickering suggests, hardly warran the hostility that Michael Joseph i his *Landfall* review brought dow upon it. "Homosexual relationship outside any possible society, in world of sentimental love and make believe. That is why any homosexu love story must almost automaticall come out on the same level as the un real and sentimental heterosexual lov story."

Unacceptable therefore to th emerging New Zealand literary estab lishment because he was to bourgeois, Courage was anathema t the bourgeoisie, whose family rela tions were challenged by his writings.

Indeed in 1962, a year before hi death, Courage officially became prophet without honour in his ow country. *A Way of Love* was one of number of books seized by the police and referred for recommendation to an interdepartmental committee (with Customs, Justice and Crown Law representation) which was the forerunner to the Indecent Publications Tribunal.

The committee decided that the book ought to be withdrawn from sale and from libraries on grounds of indecency and because it lacked redeeming literary merit. Effectively, it was banned. The recommendation could have been challenged in the courts, but never was. It is available from some libraries today and it is unlikely that it would be deemed offensive.

Courage provides an important link — albeit out of step and out of time — between the landed, Jane Mander literature and the social realism tradition that started about the 1940s.

As Baer says, "He deserves to be resurrected and judged by contemporary people."

Works by James Courage

Fires in the Distance Constable
The Fifth Child Constable
The Young Have Secrets Jonathan Cape
A Way of Love Jonathan Cape
The Visit to Penmorten Jonathan Cape
Such Separate Creatures Caxton

THE FIFTH CHILD, National Programme, Wednesday, 8.45 pm.

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Wellington, New Zealand

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Wellington, New Zealand
Telephone (04) 856 109 & 738 699

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Department of Internal Affairs

EB:VMCT
NA 84R/704-3

30 August 1989

Mr G Harris
c/- English Department
Massey University
PALMERSTON NORTH

Dear Mr Harris

Thank you for your letter of 2 August.

Due to the complex nature of censorship prior to the 1963 Act creating the Indecent Publications Tribunal, a complete search of Justice, Police, Customs and Crown Law records for information regarding James Courage's novel A Way of Love is impossible given the limits of our reference service.

However, on the assumption that the Justice Department probably had a major role in administering book censorship I concentrated my attention to our Justice records.

I located a number of files relating to the Indecent Publications Amendment Act (1954) which oversaw censorship until 1964. Unable to search all of these rather large files I concentrated my attention to a file headed General Correspondence (J 18/45/5 Part 2). In this file I found reference to A Way of Love in the form of a newspaper editor writing to the Customs Department concerning the novel. The eventual reply provides most of the information sought in your letter.

If further detail is required you may wish to visit personally. If you believe that such a trip is required I suggest that you first write to the Department of Justice as many of the files relevant to your query are restricted.

Trusting that the information provided is of assistance in your research.

Yours sincerely

Eamonn Bolger

Eamonn Bolger
ARCHIVIST

ABM

J.18/45/5

10 July 1962

The Editor,
The Press,
CHRISTCHURCH.

Dear Sir,

"A Way of Love" by James Courage

The Comptroller of Customs has asked me to reply to your Chief Reporter's letter of 2 July.

In August last the Assistant Commissioner of Police submitted "A Way of Love" for an opinion along with twelve other books to the Inter-Departmental Committee, which advises on suspect literature. The thirteen books formed a single private collection of pornographic, indecent and near-indecent publications, which had been seized by the police. The Committee expressed the view that the book was indecent because it appeared to it to place undue emphasis upon matters of sex.

If the Press or any correspondent wishes to challenge that opinion arrangements can be made for the matter to be tried in the Courts.

Yours faithfully,

(J.L. Robson)
Secretary for Justice

The Comptroller of Customs.
The Solicitor-General.

A copy for your information.

Secretary for Justice

J/S 4 6 5 6

24/43/407

Customs Department
HEAD OFFICE
WELLINGTON C.1.

6 July 1962

RECEIVED
- 9 JUL 1962
Justice Dept.

The Secretary for Justice,
Justice Department,
WELLINGTON.

For attention of Mr A. B. Miller.

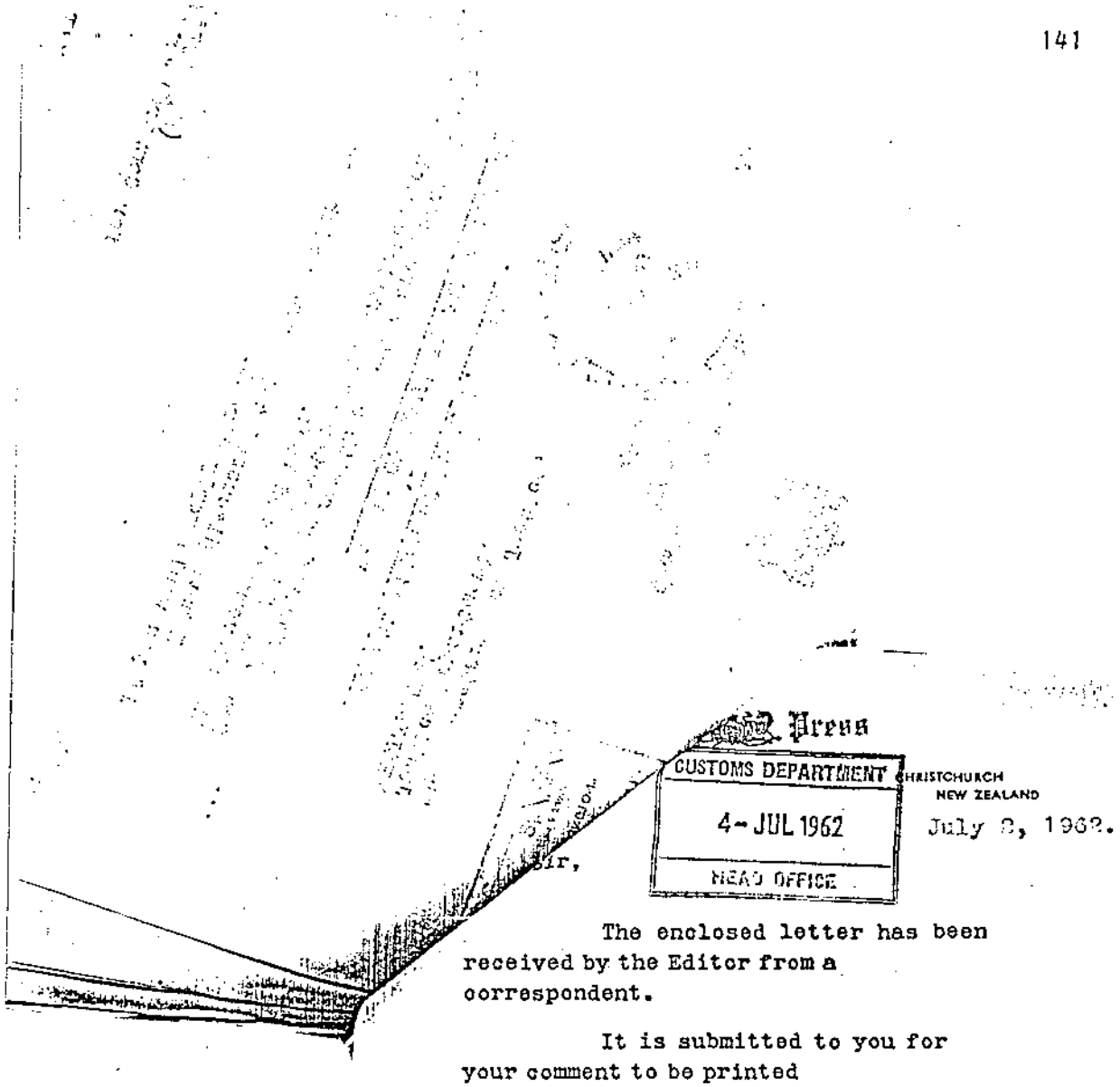
"A WAY OF LOVE" BY JAMES COURAGE.

I forward herewith a letter and paper clipping received from the Chief Reporter of the Christchurch Press concerning the abovementioned book.

I have discussed this matter with you and would be pleased if you would reply direct.

(N. Payne)
for Comptroller of Customs.

Enc/



The Press

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT
4-JUL 1962
HEAD OFFICE

CHRISTCHURCH
NEW ZEALAND

July 3, 1962.

Sir,

The enclosed letter has been received by the Editor from a correspondent.

It is submitted to you for your comment to be printed simultaneously with its publication in "The Press."

A prompt reply would be appreciated as publication of the letter cannot be unduly delayed.

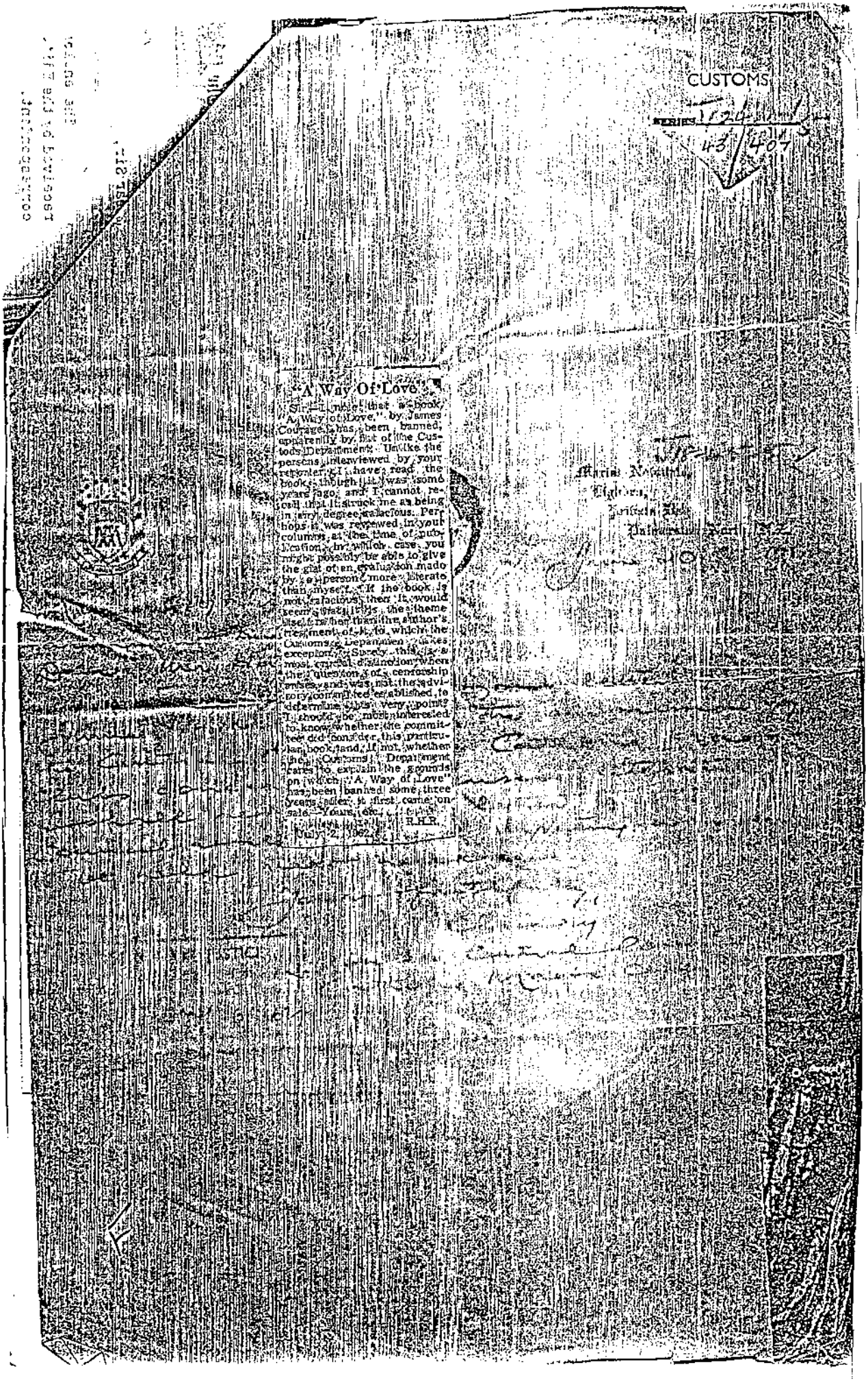
Yours faithfully,

Chief Reporter.

Comptroller of Customs,
Head Office,
Customs Department,
Wellington, C. 1.

ADMINISTRATION

5 JUL 1962



CUSTOMS
SERIES 1/24
43/407

"A Way Of Love".

SIR,—I note that a book, "A Way of Love," by James Courage, has been banned, apparently by fiat of the Customs Department. Unlike the persons interviewed by your reporter, I have read the book, though it was some years ago, and I cannot recall that it struck me as being in any degree salacious. Perhaps it was reviewed in your columns at the time of publication, in which case you might possibly be able to give the gist of an evaluation made by a person more literate than myself. If the book is not salacious, then it would seem that it is the theme itself rather than the author's treatment of it to which the Customs Department takes exception. Surely this is a most critical distinction when the question of a censorship arises, and was not the advisory committee established to determine this very point? I should be most interested to know whether the committee did consider this particular book, and, if not, whether the Customs Department cares to explain the grounds on which "A Way of Love" has been banned some three years after it first came on sale.—Yours, etc.,

R.H.R.

July 2, 1962.

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(i) Material contained in Appendix A, relating to the publication of Courage's books:

Letter from Ms Livia Gollancz, Victor Gollancz Ltd, London to Grant Harris, 27 June 1989.

Letter from Michael Bott, University of Reading, to Grant Harris, 9 October 1989.

(ii) Material contained in Appendix B, relating to the banning of A Way of Love:

Letter from M.J. Wotherspoon, Comptroller of Customs, Wellington, to Grant Harris, 20 June 1989.

Letter from Ewan Hyde, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, to Grant Harris, 24 July 1989.

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