

## The Individuation Myth in David Storey's *Pasmore*

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David Storey's ninth novel *Pasmore*, Lewis E. Shelton observes, has the first use of the term "the invisible event" among Storey's works, and that term has become a consistent characteristic of his dramatic mode. Shelton explains: "Storey's prime characters live strange, secret inner lives. When the inner world cannot be adjusted to the world of appearance, life becomes, in effect, an invisible event" (406). In *Pasmore*, the title protagonist, Colin Pasmore, appears to be a failure, both socially and privately outcast, undergoes suffering experiences of dissociation from bases that could provide him identity, and finally resumes the previous life he has led. Nothing seems to change. Storey seems to use the theme of invisibility as a manifestation of a psychological wilderness through which the protagonist must journey to attain a sense of transcendence or selfhood. The novel revolves around a structure in which various kinds of conflicts are detected: the conflicts between ego and self, son and father, industrial town and coal mining town, man and woman. In this paper, I would like to analyze how this mythic structure of the novel reveals the protagonist's individuation process, a Jungian perspective which, I believe, is a key to understanding Storey's orientation of self.

The controlling motif of "invisible event" has two levels of meaning, literal and holistic. Literally, of course, it tells of the prelude of a chain of events which cause Colin's psychological dislocation, the central event of which is his affair with a mysterious woman, Helen; the clandestine relationship must remain "invisible" for the sake of his wife, Kay, and living such a secret life gives Colin a sense of pleasure, often affecting and improving his monotonous married life: "They (Colin and Kay) went out to the theatre one evening. They scarcely went out at all. It seemed part of this invisible event, as if he were entertaining her with the secret, opening the door so that she might see inside" (Storey 40). Eventually, however, his temporal freedom, a product of the affair, comes to an end due to his becoming unable to sustain a sense of increasing guilt. His subsequent abandonment of Kay and the children for almost a year and then return to them seem to leave questions regarding how the invisible event could be reconciled with such a seemingly easy treatment, which leaves full of suspicion, a suspicion that explains the reader's demands to know whether or not Colin's return is meant to redeem all his selfish deeds. Naturalistic criticism, therefore, is likely to call for negative attitudes towards Storey's tendency to incoherence. Martin

Price, for example, says, "the novel never departs from circumstantial detail that we expect of realism, but it never quite gives us the kind or amount of detail we seek. The result is a series of events that were obsessive and almost hallucinating" (557). Roger Scruton too remains in the same vein: "The jumble of abstract thought, from which little can be extracted that throws any light on the hero's motivation, soon gives way to a more concrete of Pasmorre's state of mind" (80).

The second level of meaning of invisibility perhaps gives a hint to solve these critical issues. As for considering the motivation, it seems to stem from the relationship between Colin and his father. This relationship is more deep-rooted than it appears to be. Colin's existence as a whole is an accumulation of filial responsibility to realize his father's (a tired-out coal miner) dream of getting out of the "pit." This vicarious dimension of his sacrificing his life further reveals a crucial rigidity of the working class family environment: Eileen and Wendy, his younger sisters, both married, have been excluded from their father's "private army" to fight against the social war. Eileen is only a domesticated house wife; Wendy, although fulfilling her father's dream by running for the election for the Council, is still "an embarrassment, a liability: without children, wealth, apparently enlightened. It was as if her sex disgusted him" (183). Colin, therefore, has been an atonement for Eileen and Wendy whose female quality is only the one to be appreciated by the father.

From the outset of the novel, Storey concentrates on depicting the tendency of Colin to pursue a life that delineates such a upward-directed passion. A man of thirty, Colin Pasmorre leads a life typical of the middle class in London: accompanied by family, stable work as a college professor, and a house which he himself has renovated. He still sees himself as a working class and longs for the sentiments of a higher class: being unable to understand Abercrombie, his colleague, appearing to teach his class, after just having returned from his weekend trip, makes Colin reserved from greeting him; to his other colleague Arthur Coles, who comes from the middle class like Abercrombie, Colin complains: "What it amounts to, is that for you morality is a function of the sensibility, whereas for me, brought up in a world of working-class aphorism, it's a thing of fetishes and customs" (17).

This moral problem of Colin seems to explain what Jung calls the shadow, the negative side of the personality (*Aion* 10). Colin's projection of inferiority onto Coles and Abercrombie is a condition in which the concept of the shadow works. The recurrent nightmare by which Colin has been troubled is symbolic of this: "He was running a race, not unlike those races he had run, stoically though with no great enterprise, at school, when he had begun to be overtaken not merely by the runners but by all those idlers and dullards who jogged, or even walked along the rear" (21). That he is haunted with a considerable amount of anxiety is identified by the fact that he becomes more and more estranged from the social as

well as spiritual tie that he longs for. In other words, this is manifest of the psychological disintegration of his sense of wholeness, of Self. Corresponding to the myth of Prometheus and the Garden of Eden, this stage of individuation calls for the drama of aggravation. Jung states: "There is deep doctrine in the legend of the fall; it is the expression of a dim presentiment that the emancipation of ego consciousness was a Luciferian deed. Man's whole history consists from the very beginning in a conflict between his feeling of inferiority and his arrogance" (*The Archetype* 230–31). The emergence of the ego from the self, thus, provides Colin a mental picture of locating himself in the center of the world, the state of being invisible from the rest of the world, which is symbolized by such terms of limitation, enclosure, lovelessness, brightness.

The house metaphor, which is predominant especially throughout the first half of the novel, bears the significance of self-confinement. The sense of entrapment is effectively emphasized by a feeling of suffocation caused by the imaginative fire:

On certain mornings he would waken beside her to be immediately aware of the tension, like waking to a room on fire, to flames and smoke. The whole place was alive with the vibrancy of the figure beside him. His body ached. If he had given in and touched her he was sure he would have cried out, in rage, in grief, in some peculiar and wholly unimaginable torment. He couldn't understand it. He was oppressed. (25)

The entire house devours Colin's conscious ego; whenever trying to locate himself to Kay, his closest touchstone of his identity, he feels smothered and scorched. The bright aspect of the fire, here, evokes a consciousness that cannot "see outside itself, like a person in a brightly lit room who cannot see into the dark" (Martin part II, p. 14). Interestingly enough, this fire never lends itself in the role of guide to the psychologically blind like Colin.

Along with the fire image, the emergence of Helen too is associated with that which threatens Colin's psyche. Compared to the class-conscious inferiority that Colin bears against Coles and Abercrombie, the relationship with Helen is far more down-reaching. As an anima figure, Helen is an embodiment of what Colin needs to project this inner hunger for communion with something lacking in him, yet something compatible to the core of his soul. Helen is, in fact, similar to a deification of woman, life, and fertility:

So in her he recognized, beyond his own dilemma, beyond those conflicts that engaged him inside and out, beyond his confusion, an imperturbability and intransigence that both distinguished her from and yet united her with the life around. At first he related it to a common feminine property; to that instinct which had told him from the very beginning that women were superior to men: a superiority which lay in this very intransigence, a permanence of spirit, a kind of contentment, as deep and as imperturbable

as their capacity to create life. Theirs was an instinct for what was “for life,” fed from their own flesh and blood, from their own outpouring: with it they loved, with it they bore children, with it they died, locked in a communion of spirit. What came out of their wholeness, this sense of life, was something which men could only compose for themselves by edict, that moral order which they fitted onto life like a suit of armour, hoping to contain from the outside what could only be directed from within. So it seems to him that women were little less than gods, drawn here to love and be loved, to praise and be praised, the sole illumination of men’s struggle to exist. (66)

This portrayal of Colin’s projection of sexual desire demonstrates only one side of the nature of anima.

Actually, the wholeness of creation comes only after the sense of destruction. Helen is virtually two-fold: attractive yet repugnant. As opposed to his innocent and gullible wife, Helen revitalizes and intensifies his potential for prowess as a man: “He was aware, not of himself, but of a robust, plundering animal, heavy and dispassionate, a composite, bits and pieces of them both” (65). The physical relationship with the mistress even makes Colin appreciate his wife more than he did, though temporally. But more importantly, Helen represents a kind of romantic refusal. That what Colin thinks he has become, both sexually and mentally, with the aid of Helen is illusory is proved by the fact that Helen shares the same problem as Colin has been troubled with. She too is invisible: “She vanished before him. In the end he was astonished to find that he was not alone” (51). Helen is an agent who forces Colin to go further down to the realm of darkness where a sense of dissociation prevails. Helen’s abrupt disappearance leaves Colin alone in a state of confusion, and he becomes a victim of Helen’s husband’s practical joke: having a coffin, wreaths, and flowers set in front of his flat, then being attacked by a man sent by the husband.

The physical damage causes Colin a sense of humiliation, an awareness with which he comes to realize that he needs to undergo a kind of purification experience. The trip he took to visit his parents living in a coal-mining town in the north part of England is literally no more than a trip to prevent them from visiting Kay, who let them know the disastrous situation in which she is confined. Symbolically, this train trip leads Colin to another world, the world of the unconscious that he so far has avoided: “Trees, like squat spiders, slid out of the wilderness of waste that began to open up on either side. Rows of factories and chimneys covered the horizon. It was like moving into a cavern. A dark and massive gloom settled round the train” (87). This journey seems to underscore what Jung calls “the night sea journey” potential of coming back from the depth of the unconscious to the world of consciousness together with higher level of insights. Jolande Jacobi writes:

Jung draws an analogy between the "way of individuation" and the archetypal image of the night sea journey. Once the psyche reaches the midpoint of life, the process of development demands a return to the beginning, a descent into the dark, hot depths of the unconscious. To sojourn in these depths, to withstand their dangers, is journey to hell and "death." But he who comes through safe and sound, who is "reborn," will return, full of knowledge and wisdom, equipped for the outward and inward demands of life. He has pressed forward to his limits and has destiny upon himself. (186)

Colin's ordeal of an unavoidable confrontation of his father is comparable to any dangers possible found in the course of this symbolic, nocturnal journey of regeneration.

Both traditionally and symbolically, the image of the father is that of the divine-related; English poets and novelists have been seeking for a metaphorical father as a mentor for a kind of replacement of the loss of religious faith (Tindall 185-223). Colin's father embodies this image, although in his own terms. He is an incarnation of the mass of people who have been victimized by industrial England. He hates coal mining, the unendurable hardship which consumes his physical and mental health: "When his father came down he saw easily enough the signs, almost the signature, of his father's illness, a kind of self-immolation, as if he'd buried himself underground, bricked up the tunnel, refusing even now to acknowledge that he'd been released, let out" (180).

This is the journey into Hell where he appears to accept the dangers of death. As Jacobi claims elsewhere, this seemingly negative-sounded journey with no destinations but the darkness of death also has the mythic dimension. The repetitive, self-sacrificial rite made by the father transcends any successes whatsoever in the socio-economic world, the success that the father has so much wanted Colin to achieve at the cost of Eileen and Wendy. Ironical as it is, the father, having committed his life to earth-digging, makes his psychological balance between what he is and what he should be.

This sound nature of the father is powerful and affective to Colin's psyche. Suffering from the anima-possession, he now becomes vulnerable to being influenced by such a strong moral code. Jung suggests that "in the case of an anima-possession, for instance, the patient will want to change himself into a woman through self-castration, or he is afraid that something of the sort will be done to him by force" (*The Archetype* 39). Colin too is apprehensive of such a metaphorical castration; he finds pathetically that Kay has retaliated. After coming back from his visit with his parents, he is struck by the fact that Kay has been courting with another man, Norman Fowler, a fat man with no admirable qualities. It makes Colin feel jealous, disgusted, furious, and miserable; he eventually ends up being jailed as a result of sauntering around his own house, where Fowler now

takes place, with some telegrams in his pocket to be sent to Fowler, which makes a policeman easily suspect Colin of breaking into the house. One telegram reads: "Fowler do you believe in the sanctity of marriage stop" (150). Along with the least hope of reunion that he could have with Kay, the father's violence of righteousness, both physical and verbal, devastates Colin: "He seemed to descend with it (high-pitched wail erupted from his father's mouth), crying, as if, finally, he had lost grip on everything and he were falling, physically and in his entirety, through the ground" (159).

The reconciliation with his father is only possible if Colin comes to realize his own death experience equivalent to his father's digging ritual of the "night sea journey." The series of misfortunes consumes Colin's psyche, and the symbolic image of the mid-point of life thereby becomes visible, at which place the psyche resumes the return journey:

He saw, first of all, black disc. It was like a hole; but then a hole without dimensions. It was merely an absence of things. He felt himself sliding towards it. It was, on the one hand, like a hole in the top of his head; it was, on the other, like a hole in the ground. It was both within him and without. He felt himself slipping over the edge. He was drawn into it and consumed by the darkness.... he appeared to pass on into some other dimension. It was a pit, yet the sides were indiscernible: it was bottomless, yet there was no movement either up or down. It was merely an absence and somewhere, at its centre, he hung there in torment. (160)

This is a psychological wilderness evoking a sense of completeness and wholeness, which will compensate its one aspect for its counter aspect. The hole Colin falls into is both linear and circular; the pit is confined yet not confined; he is at the peripheral and at the same time in the center. The pit's darkness is a kind of resolution whereby the victimized become aware of the need of light, the light which guides them to the threshold of sanity. Colin appears to save himself because he can see the darkness itself by the symbolic act of putting on "a pile of candles standing by the bedside; the closed curtains during the day filtered down the light" (156).

When Colin, towards the end of the novel, visited by Coles, he discovers the meaning of the obsessional relationship between people and the objects they possess. What he seems to have achieved ever since the novel started is to break such a partnership; he has deserted his wife, family, friends, and social values. He says to Coles, "We're in the hands of revolutionary simpletons.... Millions have died in order to bring into existence a state as intransigent as that" (161). But his discovery or awareness further reveals the possibility that assumes something utterly new and creative as a replacement for something old and destroyed; this might be called revolution from revolution.

Inevitably Colin becomes capable of associating again with Bill and Marjorie

Newsome, the artists. The generative aspect of art-making unites light and dark; man and woman; good and evil. Bill Newsome is the one capable of sharing the strange malaise into which Colin has fallen: he hurries to the police station for Colin to be released; although refused, he continues to come over to Colin's estranged flat in order to discuss the moral issue on the "divisibility of nature" which Colin has presented. Marjorie too is compassionate in supporting the deserted Kay from her further loss of herself: she keeps calling Colin to let him know Kay's unstable life needs to be sustained; she introduces Fowler to Kay. Fowler's function, as far as love experience is concerned, is ironically to give Colin an insight that the paramour never fulfills the love relationship with Kay; he is only a temporary seducer for Kay but not more. At this point, the abrupt disappearance of Fowler echoes to that of Helen. Kay, having left in the course of re-establishing the self through love, is now ready to accept, though not fully, Colin. His first recognition of Kay as the counterpart of his psyche reads: "She went to the stove across the room. He watched her. This, perhaps, was what he had always recognized in her: her compactness, the way she carried everything around with her, her vulnerability, her correctness, her incapacities; her general air of good will. He wondered he hadn't seen it before. The thing was held inside her" (174). That Colin can appreciate these feminine virtues in Kay demonstrates that he has already developed his regenerated masculinity.

The last part of the novel serves as an objective correlative of the affirmation of reunion. The setting of this chapter takes place again in the coal-mining town, Colin's birth place, the place to confirm his identity. The structure of the novel is circular: it is at the beginning of the academic year when Colin slides into the enigmatic danger of loss of his identity, and it is at the same time of a year after when he becomes aware of the certainty of establishing a spiritual tie with the universe. Near the end of the novel, Colin is overwhelmed with such a sense of rebirth, when he sees his father in tears with his face red, his eyes shrunken, the moment of revelation of the coal miner's dignity and humbleness, the hidden happiness of life. The succeeding illustration in which Colin takes an action of walking with his father to the coal mine just before sunrise involves an archetypal initiation rite. The novel ends with deliberate ambiguity which confirms judgment of Colin's ordeal as a journey of individuation:

In the winter he returned to teaching. Outwardly, despite the events of the preceding year, little had changed. He still had a regular job, a home, a wife and children; the apparatus of his life from his books to the commercial van was virtually the same. Even the despair, it seemed, persisted. Yet something had changed. It was hard to describe. He had been on a journey. At times it seemed scarcely credible he had survived. He still dreamed of the pit and the blackness. It existed all around him, an intensity, like a pre-sentiment of love, or violence: he found it hard to tell. (189—90)

It is self-evident that the nature of the individuation process is both linear and manifold. As Edward F. Edinger claims, the way of individuation is virtually a process seeking a goal of completion, a static and eternal state of mind in which one is entitled to be exempted from participating in conflicts through life, but "since individuation is never truly complete, each temporary state of completion or wholeness must be submitted once again to the dialectic of the trinity (symbolic of goal-oriented egohood) for the life to go on" (193, parenthesis mine). His name—"Pasmore"—effectively assuming this concept, Colin Pasmore is now at the beginning of launching for another stage of life.

As has been seen, the process of Colin's psychological growth is that of converting the ego-reliant soul to the self-reliant serenity. The state of his invisibility is carefully selected as a metaphor to emphasize the inner drive for him to abandon his endless building and even his own existence. Such a crucial commitment testifies to the need of redemption of the soul through its oscillation between its dialectical experiences. Helen, for example, is the soul-molesting, as well as the soul-guiding, as the name (light) subtly indicates. Colin Pasmore, immersing himself with this anima, becomes capable of confronting the enigma of his roots with his father's guidance. This is only a first step that Colin has to take so as to go on to a further stage of maturity and wisdom. The process of individuation directs one towards ever-lasting synthesis, leading to an ensuing trail of birth, death, and rebirth.

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