Redeeming time and space

Labyrinths, novels and spiritual accompaniment

Joanne Woolway Grenfell

Solvitur ambulando . . .
It is solved by walking . . .
St Augustine

IN CAROL SHIELDS' NOVEL, *LARRY'S PARTY*, the protagonist is a creator of mazes and labyrinths, whose life embodies the postmodern uncertainty and confusion which contemporary notions of spiritual journeying need to address. If life is to be seen in terms of a journey, it is a journey along a distinctly circuitous and uneven path. It involves a meandering route through failed family and romantic relationships, along a seemingly accidental career path, and is travelled from the perspective of Larry's inability to find meaning or significance in anything. First, though, a word about mazes and labyrinths.

Larry notes that,

> A maze . . . is different from a labyrinth, at least in the opinion of some. A maze is more likely to baffle and mislead those who tread its paths. A maze is a puzzle. A maze is designed to deceive the travellers who seek a promised goal. It's possible that a labyrinth can be a maze, and that a maze can be a labyrinth, but strictly speaking the two words call up different *ideas*.[1]

Writers on the use of labyrinths in centuries of Christian tradition concur; the point of a maze is the possibility of getting lost, whereas the point of a labyrinth is to walk a sure and certain path which, although it may seem to be travelling in the wrong direction, is inexorably heading closer to God's centre. An interesting feature of *Larry's party* is that, although Larry is aware of the distinction between the two forms, he often wilfully confuses them. Having memorized the formulae for many different mazes, there is little likelihood of his getting lost in any maze he chooses to walk. For Larry, mazes have become potential labyrinths, whose paths he could follow securely, with little effort. To return any one of these pathways to a maze in his mind, he would have

to take wrong turns deliberately, rather than allowing this to happen accidentally.

On his honeymoon visit to Hampton Court with Dorrie, his new wife, Larry consciously takes what he believes to be wrong turnings in order to lose himself completely. It seems that Larry correctly identifies the labyrinth with the determined path, and because he fears such determinism he naturally prefers instead the baffling puzzle of the maze which allows him to surrender to oblivion: 'here, in this garden maze, getting lost, and then found, seemed the whole point, that and the moment of willed abandonment, the unexpected rapture of being blindly led.'[2] It is appropriate that this episode of recognized confusion takes place just after his marriage to Dorrie. Walking through the Hampton maze Larry recalls a moment in his florist's shop, just before the rather rushed wedding, when he appeared to one of his colleagues to be 'lost in thought'. The metaphor of disorientation is one which begins most actively to operate in Larry's life as he sets off on this journey of confusing matrimonial experience towards unexpected fatherhood and middle age. For Larry, the puzzle of the maze is not an accidental or indeed totally undesirable state: it is the only way he knows to live his life.

The intricate complications of the maze are also as close as Larry gets to spiritual excitement:

> Religion. If he'd ever believed in God, that Being has long since shrunk into the shadows of hedgerows . . . It's really when entering a previously unknown maze, especially a hedge maze, that Larry is brought to a condition which he thinks of as spiritual excitement. The maze's preordained design, its complications, which are at once unsettling and serene, the shifts of light and shade, the pulsing vegetal growth which is encouraged but also held in check – all this ignites Larry's sense of equilibrium and sends him soaring.[3]

Larry's feelings are revealing about postmodern conceptions of religion. God is not present in Larry's thoughts as a detached divine being, but rather as one who might only possibly exist in the shadows of the twists and turns of life. And Larry, living in a complicated world, finds simultaneously disturbing and reassuring the thought that there is a pattern behind the chaos. He recognizes that he is searching for something, yet resists the idea that he might play any kind of active part in recognizing the patterns and significances which could lie behind the apparent surface confusion of failed marriages and unresolved family

relationships. Larry's inclination, we might say, is to remain forever in the uncertainty of the maze, and never to achieve the holistic understanding of the labyrinth's unicursal path and peaceful centre. I am not suggesting that Larry's wilful confusion of maze and labyrinth is a spiritual state for which we ought to aim. The fact that he prefers the 'willed abandonment' of getting lost in a maze whose pattern he knows perfectly well, and fears the determined path of the labyrinth, should not suggest that getting lost is either an inevitable or a positive outcome of life in the postmodern mirage of choices. But what I am suggesting is that this state of abandonment and confusion, fuelled by the worship of (spurious) consumer and moral choices, is the reality of many lives, and is a reality to which the Christian tradition needs to connect.

The Christian journey

Historically, the pattern of the labyrinth has been used in Christian and classical traditions as a moral metaphor to explain error or heterodoxy. Its enforced circuitousness, disorientation and planned chaos has suggested to architects, poets, gardeners and painters the disorder and confusion inherent in a universe which has turned away from God, and which needs to surrender again to the order and unity of divine creation.[4] But it was in the creation of labyrinths in ecclesiastical architecture, such as the famous example at Chartres Cathedral, that Christian thinkers began to develop the notion of a labyrinth as a spiritual tool which could offer a spatial paradigm for the Christian pilgrim's search for meaning, order and ultimately salvation in a world of confusion and disorientation. In the ordered, yet disordered, geometric pattern of the labyrinth as laid out in church floors or gardens it could be seen that our bewildering misunderstanding of our moral situation might be overcome if we would only surrender and follow the path of Christ's example and the Church's teaching, and be led by the divine pattern to God's justice and the perfection of his creation.

The labyrinth thus envisioned operated as a pathway which, through its spatial formation, could offer the Christian pilgrim insight into the twists and turns of his or her own life. As Nigel Pennick explains, for example, the labyrinth's meandering mirrors the pilgrim's own journey of closeness to, and distance from, God, as he or she is taken towards and away from the labyrinth's – and life's – centre. In such a system, the turns away from the centre, which become particularly pronounced as one nears the labyrinth's centre, represent death, which must be experienced before one is allowed to turn again towards the centre

which is both God and salvation.[5] The walking of the labyrinth could take place either in a real labyrinth, in a church building or elsewhere, or could be entered imaginatively, building on Heinrich Suso's conceptual model of meditational 'pathworking', in which the mind was trained to follow, through spatial imagination, the stations of the cross, in order to share in Christ's suffering during his passion journey.[6]

The element of imaginative exercise on which the meditational pathworking technique relies is still further refined in a very recent model of the labyrinth as a spiritual tool; one which can be found on the internet site for Grace Cathedral, which features a virtual labyrinth that can be navigated by the click of a mouse button. Although a diagrammatic rather than truly 'virtual' picture of the view from the cathedral's real outdoor labyrinth, the site picture nonetheless spiritually stretches us through our spatial imagination, and makes available to an electronic community a spiritual tool which was previously only available either to those who lived within reach of a real model, or who were prepared to work with their imaginative powers alone.

Whereas the mediaeval view of the labyrinth involved a somewhat black and white view of 'right' and 'wrong' directions, and of the sins of error on the path of salvation, more recent exponents have tended to focus instead on a rather kinder understanding of our human struggles to discern God's ways in our confused and uncertain lives. This is seen particularly clearly in the work of Lauren Artress, pastor and priest at Grace Cathedral, and author of *Walking a sacred path.* She notes that:

> One of the Christian images that is reimagined in the labyrinth is the 'straight and narrow' path. The labyrinth's path is narrow, but far from straight. The straight and narrow image implies that we can make mistakes or lose our way. The path of life is not easy, and we do make mistakes. But few, if any, are beyond the mercy of God. Losing our way in life is not only a possibility, it is an experience that is part of the spiritual path. We don't often realize that the way to God is generous and error is part of the journey. As soon as we become conscious that we are lost, we have found our way again.[7]

If it is a feature of what has been termed the 'postmodern condition' that we live in a world characterized by choice, by a multiplicity of meanings and relationships, and by a deep-seated uncertainty about the existence of the transcendent, then it follows that thinking about spirituality must address these issues, and must offer tools for meditation which acknowledge our condition of ambivalent journeying

and equivocal searching. To some extent this need has already been recognized in such small changes as the movement away from spiritual 'direction' towards spiritual 'accompaniment': that is, to a form of pastoral and spiritual care which overtly acknowledges that having someone journey alongside you might ultimately be more helpful in a world of endless ambiguity than being offered a fixed direction which seems to ignore the uncertainty of much of life in our shadowlands of meaning, media and morality.

What the Grace labyrinth, with its facilitators and its users, suggests that we might benefit from is a reinterpretation of classical texts through which we can reflect upon our spiritual needs and the context of our relationship with the divine.

Redemption and surrender

The model of the labyrinth suggests several parallels with Christian ideas of self-sacrifice and salvation and aids us in our challenge to relate these ideas to the apparently directionless postmodern life which Larry embodies. It is important to say that Larry, as an example of contemporary life, is neither a particularly good nor a particularly bad model in Christian terms: as Artress points out, all lives contain mistakes and there are few, if any, mistakes which cannot be redeemed. But Larry is interesting as a model more because of the way he goes about ascribing – or not ascribing – significance to events and emotions in his world. There is something quite appealing in the carelessness with which Larry can live: he gives up control to the God whose shadows he only sometimes vaguely notices in a way which could remind any Christian disciple of the need for self-abandon to a divine purpose.

The tension, though, in Larry's life and in all of our lives, lies in the mazes and labyrinths which he spends his life constructing and whose workings he knows intricately, and yet the pattern of which remains elusive in his personal journey. Similarly, in doctrines of salvation there is a tension between salvation as something which is ultimately gratuitous – i.e. *given* – and as redemptory, having meaning which can be discerned and in which we can participate. Larry almost understands the givenness of the labyrinth, but his problem is in translating this givenness into any meaning for his own participation in life. Rejecting the determinism of the labyrinth, he remains forever in the confusion of the maze's dead ends and high hedges, and, until the end of the novel, resists any possibility of using temporal or spatial perspective to connect or compare events in his life. The way that this journey develops,

and particularly the way that the structure of the novel underlines his temporal and spatial progress, offers insights into the redemptive nature of the Christian story. Redemption for Larry is possible, but not until he has firstly surrendered, and secondly begun to see, the bigger patterns marking his life and person.

It is helpful to see these patterns of understanding and redemption unfolding through a novel such as *Larry's party* because they allow the reader to journey vicariously through an imagined world and perhaps eventually to begin to see parallels in his or her own life. The structure of this novel encourages that vicarious journeying: it is always heading towards an end point, but the perspective of that end point is, of course, not provided until the end. We journey, therefore, with the same blindness as the characters, and share with them their mistakes. Because the book's chapters are written almost as independent short stories, Larry is introduced again and again with the reader seeing him and the events of his life from a number of different perspectives. The effect of this literary technique is to fragment the story of Larry's life, making it more difficult to see the connections and continuities. But this, in fact, is what Larry himself experiences. The fresh narrative beginnings represent the twists and turns of the labyrinth: we remain within the structure but turn the corner and are presented with a new path, and a new set of walls or hedges. The eponymous party, which is the culmination of Larry's life and the novel, is a time of reckoning and resolution, not because it erases the mistakes Larry has made, but because it enables him to see them in a new light, and indeed to revisit them in the hope of redeeming the various dimensions of his life. The party is simultaneously the centre of the labyrinth, and the end of the novelistic journey. In spatial terms, therefore, the end is not just the end, it is also a centre from which we see connections and comparisons which were not possible on the indirect and often tortuous pathway.

Consciousness in spatial terms

Such a pattern highlights what is true of all novels: that the dimension of space is as important as that of time in the construction of a meaningful narrative. Events are synchronic as well as diachronic: they do not happen simply in sequence, they also happen in parallel, even though narrative must always represent them in linear fashion. Space is an important aspect of any communication: Gerard Genette has observed that, 'Language spaces itself so that space, in itself, becomes language, speaks it and writes it',[8] and it is because of this dimension

that interpretation of the novel must involve not only its temporal essence but its spatiality. Events rarely have significance in themselves: what gives them meaning is context, and in a novel, just as a verb needs to be used in a tense rather than in the infinitive to convey a sense of time, so too context is dependent on a spatial juxtaposition of events and characters.[9] This juxtaposition allows the reader to infer the structure of a narrative, and with it a more psychological and subjective understanding of narrative history which interweaves memory, expectations and a fully developed emotional awareness of concepts of future and past.[10] When St Augustine declared in his *Confessions*, 'I say that I measure time in my mind', he surely understood that the true significance of events is measured in affective rather than purely temporal terms, and that this measurement depends upon the insertion of spatial notions of pattern, parallel and perspective into the linear journey through the maze of life.

There is something innately appealing to us as readers to see human consciousness reflected in spatial terms. Mediaeval memory games, which use the rooms of a house as an aid to memory, model the structure of human consciousness as different rooms in a house, and play with space and architecture to represent the self. In *Feeling and form*, Susanne Langer has suggested that this is because 'architecture creates the semblance of that World which is the counterpart of a self. It is a total environment made visible'.[11] Similarly, part of the appeal of the novel is to see in spatial and pictorial terms a location for the emotions. Henry James, in 'The art of fiction', described his own cognitive connection between space, novelistic dimensions and feeling: 'I see dramas within dramas in that, and innumerable points of view. A psychological reason is, to my imagination, an object adorably pictorial; to catch the tint of its complexion – I feel as if that idea might inspire one to Titian-esque efforts.'[12] Emotional meaning in literature relies upon a spatial frame of reference to take the reader beyond a temporal arrangement of events, to begin to introduce meaning and significance through comparison, pattern and perspective, and to mirror, through the form of the novel, the labyrinthine twists and turns of our own interior emotional space. The dilemma of the maze of life is solved, as St Augustine knew, by continuing to walk in the Christian tradition of hope and redemption.

One crucial element that the theology of *Larry's party* demonstrates about Christian redemption is that it is relational. In contrast both to much of evangelicalism's and capitalism's individualistic focus for thinking about our participation in salvation and consumer exchange,

Christian journeying, as seen in the redemptive patterns of *Larry's party*, emphasizes not the isolated, solipsistic process, but encourages instead the recognition of meaning, significance and responsibility in human relationships, and the relation of landmarks on our own journeys to other people, events and contexts. This emphasis on relationships is also highlighted in the idea of a party, which resonates with images of salvation, and which echoes the messianic banquet at the end of time in the Jewish tradition (a tradition to which Jesus alludes in the gospels). And if this relational aspect is true of salvation, it must also be true of spirituality and psychology: in our individual journeys and stories we are fundamentally grounded in our humanity and our life, past and present, in community. As Stephen Crites has suggested, 'identity, recollected out of the past, is the depth dimension of the self, the psychic resonance that gives it character. A self without a story contracts into the thinness of its personal pronoun'.[13] In order, therefore, to be more than a personal pronoun, we have to have a story, and in order to have a story, we have to relate – to our own past and present stories and to the present and past stories of others.

Repetition and the pattern of faith

The patterns of our stories and relationships also have a larger context: that of Christian tradition and the stories of its faith communities. In this bigger picture it is possible to see the ways in which transformation and salvation can come about despite the mistakes that we make on an individual level. There is an element of repetition in patterns of Christian history: although Old Testament salvation history has often been construed as having a very clear goal and purpose, and thus being emphatically linear (in opposition to the more cyclical accounts of history central to Canaanite religion's soteriology),[14] repetition is nonetheless evident in the parallels which are drawn, for example, between the Exodus and the experience of the Exile. In patristic theology too, repetition is part of the pattern of the narrative of faith: Irenaeus' proposal of a doctrine of recapitulation, with Christ as the second Adam who succeeds where the first Adam failed, uses Romans 5:12 to establish the possibility of redemption through historical repetition.

Such a concept touches us all at the point where our own confused lives are inserted into a Christian narrative of hope: although Larry's life, like many others, involves the repetition of mistakes, for example in relationships,[15] this repetition nonetheless brings with it the possi-

bility of transformation and salvation. Unlike the protagonist in the 1990s film *Groundhog day*, Larry is not condemned to an endless cycle of fateful mistakes, but is instead offered release from the cruel determinism of a kind of blind, arbitrary fate which, because it never reaches the centre of the maze, never achieves any sense of its own meaning or pattern, or its meaning or pattern in the redeeming narrative of Christian salvation.

But both the repetition and the godly determinism of the labyrinth are for Larry ultimately healing, because it is only by revisiting his relationship with Dorrie that he gains perspective on the rest of his life and realizes the possibility of making a better life for them both through a second attempt at marriage. T. S. Eliot's famous conclusion to 'Little Gidding' is an appropriate epigram for Larry's arrival:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

Because the narrative of *Larry's party* is strung between the two points of Larry's relationship with Dorrie, there is a sense of completion at the end of the novel when Larry arrives at the place where he started, and, through grace, is allowed to know the place as if for the first time. He is not given a blank page, but afforded a fresh perspective. When Larry steps into this perspective, he enacts a theoretical point which he made earlier in the novel. Talking with Beth during their European tour of mazes, he remarks that: 'The whole thing about mazes . . . is that they make perfect sense only when you look down on them from above.' Beth replies: 'Like God in his heaven, you mean. Being privy to the one authentic map of the world.' She sees the maze as a sign that God is playing games and enjoying humanity's confusion. Larry, on the other hand, sees it more as the way the world is: 'Isn't that what we've always had? Chaos from the first day of creation? But mazes are refuges from confusion, really. An orderly path for the persevering. Procession without congestion.'[16] To live life from the perspective of the end days is not to avoid confusion, but it is to see the confusion from the perspective of a greater order. If it is true, as Samuel Wells has suggested, that the Church is a body of people whose vision of the world is retrospective from the End, then it is also true that, for the individual in the Christian story, the maze of life is not seen as *teleological*, but rather as *eschatological*: labyrinths, and even to a

lesser extent mazes, do not always seem to be heading towards God, but their patterns do make sense from the end.[17]

The experience of journeying

To offer such a focus on the *eschaton* is not to suggest that the process of journeying through the labyrinth is simply about accumulating facts and perspectives: the salvation offered at the centre is not based upon supreme self-awareness or privileged insights into the structure of reality. Moreover, Christian salvation is not gnostic and thus the experience of journeying, with both its damaging and therapeutic elements, is as important as the arrival at the centre. Augustine did not suggest that it is solved by arriving, but by walking. And if, as Augustine also noted, we navigate not by calculations, but by love, then the task of both pastoral theology and spirituality is to help incorporate, from the perspective of the one who walks alongside, the loving and hopeful perspective of the *eschaton* into the pattern of all our lives as we live them.

It is vital that pastoral and spiritual care continually reassert that any experience can be redeemed, and that there is nothing that cannot be touched by God's love. Although we may often feel that we are travelling in a direction which takes us away from God, redemption is actually a journey which always ultimately arrives at the God who is our centre, if we can only abandon ourselves to God's interpretative grace. It is through God's love that what seems from our perspective to be a maze is transformed into the peaceful certainty of the labyrinth. The question for those engaged in pastoral care and theology, then, is how to accompany those who make this journey, how to enter imaginatively into their narrative, and how to become part of the relationships which define their world. A style of prayer, such as that found in the Ignatian tradition, which encourages an imaginative response both to biblical narratives and to individual experience, is one possible way in which spiritual accompaniment might be undertaken, particularly where it focuses on narratives of journeying. To be in touch with another through the imagination is to take seriously the spatial dimensions of narrative: the patterns, the repetitions and the perspectives which make up our perception of experience are not always linear and logical, but can only be seen if we learn to feel our way imaginatively around the issues at hand. This process of accompaniment must take place from the perspective of one who has a sense of the

redemptive centre of the labyrinth of life, but who also chooses to become immersed in an individual narrative.

A note of warning, though. To suggest that we need, as spiritual accompaniers, to understand the confusion and ambiguity of the individual's journey, is not to suggest that the postmodern overestimation of the value of constant choice and veneration of the individual will at the expense of community relationships should go unchallenged. For whole sections of our community, such as the outer housing estate where I live and work, exclusion from society, the workplace and the economy leads to a kind of isolated, drifting, unbounded existence where there are no real choices, and where a postmodern delight in playful possibilities and ambiguities would serve only to heighten their sense of dispossession and disempowerment.

What I am suggesting in response to the isolation and confusion suggested in a sign-of-the-times novel such as *Larry's party*, is not a still greater elevation of the individual story and perspective, but is in fact the need for a greater integration of the personal story into the community narrative, for a framing of the confusion of individual choices in the bigger tradition of Christian wisdom and spiritual guidance, and for the integration of the individual present moment into the vision of the Christian *eschaton*: in other words, for a recognition that our stories and our salvation are bound up with our lives in community. Rowan Williams makes a similar point in a discussion about remorse, where he comments on the storied and interconnected nature of human moral behaviour:

> But the reason for approaching issues about selves and souls by way of reflecting on remorse, honour and shame is that these areas of our human experience and discourse are unintelligible except on the assumption that my part, my publicly identifiable history, the story that can be told of me, does not *belong* exclusively to me. I can set out to reorder it, to rewrite it in various ways, but I don't in fact control it . . . I cannot separate out my biography as a thing in itself. But that in turn means that I cannot *absolve* myself; just as I cannot love myself truthfully without another person's love, because I cannot without deceit and corruption love a self abstracted from the vision, involvement and investment of others.[18]

'My' narrative is never separate from 'our' narrative, and both forgiveness and redemption involve an acknowledgement of the times and places where, perhaps by focusing too much on our individual rights

rather than our collective responsibilities, we have caused hurt. Spiritual accompaniment is thus also not about the endless shoring up of fragile selves repeating their individualistic mistakes and being encouraged to feel good about it, but is rather about encouraging others, from their place in the labyrinth, to see the bigger pattern of all of our relationships to each other and to God, and, from a better understanding of the pathways of the past, to attempt to make better, more surefooted decisions in the future.

To try to place the insights of the journey into some kind of narrative structure – whether by reading (or indeed writing!) a novel, or by engaging in our own spiritual journalling – is therefore a useful process, both because it offers healing on an individual level, and because it ties us more securely into our sense of place in the bigger human narrative. As Emmanuel Larty observes, though, we may all need help to unbury our words and meanings:

> Many writers have commented on the great relevance and significance of words in pastoral care . . . The expression in words of thoughts, feelings and action may have cathartic value, especially where their expression has been, for any number of reasons, inhibited, suppressed, misunderstood or misinterpreted. The pastoral carer then becomes a 'story-listener, story-stimulator, story-interpreter and story-prohibitor.'[19]

For Larry, part of the problem in his confusion is his inability to use language: the narrator comments that, 'It strikes Larry that language may not yet have evolved to the point where it represents the world fully. Recognizing this gap brings him a rush of anxiety. Perhaps we're waiting, all of us, he thinks, longing to hear "something" but not knowing what it is.'[20] If we are all waiting in a state of anxiety to hear the 'something' that will make sense of our stories, then we are all in need of someone who will guide us along the path, alert us to recurring patterns, and help us re-examine the details of our lives in the light of new experiences. Pastoral theology and spiritual accompaniment need to understand this connection between language and self, story and identity and to set as their task the helping of people along the pathways of self-knowledge, better relationships, and, ultimately, redemption through the recollection and repossession of their individual and community narratives. For, as Charles Gerkin has observed, 'To tell a story is to have a self and to lose the sense of story of one's life is to lose the sense of being a self.'[21] The labyrinth as a spiritual tool offers us a

model of the way in which, on the pathway of the walk towards the story of self, both solution and salvation can begin to find their expression.

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NOTES

1 Carol Shields, *Larry's party* (London: Fourth Estate, 1997), pp 81–82.
2 *Ibid.*, pp 35–36.
3 *Ibid.*, pp 171–172.
4 See Penelope Reed Doob, *The idea of the labyrinth from classical antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990), especially her introduction and the chapter on labyrinths in churches.
5 Nigel Pennick, *Mazes and labyrinths* (London: Robert Hale, 1990), p 113.
6 *Ibid.*, p 135.
7 Lauren Artress, *Walking a sacred path: rediscovering the labyrinth as a spiritual tool* (New York: Riverhead, 1996), p 42. For a virtual tour of the Grace labyrinth and further information on workshops and other materials, see their web site at www.gracecom.org
8 Gerard Genette, *Figures 1* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), quoted in Joseph A. Kestner, *The spatiality of the novel* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1978), p 15.
9 Kestner notes Adolf Grünbaum's observation that happenings in themselves are tenseless, following the ideas of Moritz Schlick, who declared that 'the structure of the past is inferred . . . from the spatial arrangement of objects'. *The spatiality of the novel*, p 17.
10 'Emile Borel has enunciated in *Space and time* the idea that causality, which we presume to be based on time, is in reality much more spatial, dependent on distance and our identity with a particular group of observers.' *The spatiality of the novel*, p 17.
11 Susanne Langer, *Feeling and form: a theory of art developed from philosophy in a new key* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953).
12 Quoted in Kestner, *The spatiality of the novel*, pp 27 and 134.
13 'Storytime: recollecting the past and projecting the future', in T. Sarbin (ed), *Narrative psychology: the storied nature of human conduct* (New York: Praeger, 1986), pp 152–173: 171.
14 See John Bright, *A history of Israel* (London: SCM, 1988), pp 161–162.
15 There is also a fear of the repetition of genetic mistakes in the novel: we are reminded several times about Larry's fear that his changing physical appearance is gradually coming to resemble more closely that of his father – see for example, pp 21, 22, 25 – and many of Larry's fears for his son are based on a negative appraisal of the genetic inheritance which he and Dorrie might have passed on to their offspring.
16 *Larry's party*, p 219.
17 Wells also notes that, 'When a story has been told, whether non-fiction or fiction, one can look back over the story and see which actions and people in the story were oriented towards the story's ending, and which actions and people hinted at a possible alternative ending. One can trace what one might call a 'critical path' through the story, of actions and people which, though not necessarily bringing the end *about*, had the same *character* as the ending. I suggest that it is the

role of the Church, placed as it is in the "middle" of the narrative, to strive to live on that critical path. This is what is means to live teleologically – according to the end.' *Transforming fate*, p 151.
18 Rowan Williams, *Lost icons: reflections on cultural bereavement* (Edinburgh: T &T Clark, 2000), p 104.
19 Emmanuel Larty, *In living colour: an intercultural approach to pastoral care and counselling* (London: Cassell, 1997), p 45.
20 *Larry's party*, p 95.
21 Charles Gerkin, *The living human document* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1984).