

"TORTURE IN THE COUNTRY OF THE MIND":

A STUDY OF SUFFERING AND SELF IN THE NOVELS OF PATRICK WHITE

Albert Pieter Brugman

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Supervisor: Professor A.G. Ulliyatt

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For: LIRIA
SANDRA
ALBERT
KATRIENA
MY PARENTS - IN LOVING MEMORY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

"To talk of suffering is not to talk of an academic problem, but of the sheer bloody agonies of existence, of which all men are aware and most have direct experience." (Bowker)

"It is impossible to do away with the laws of suffering; which is the one indispensable condition of our being. Progress is to be understood by the amount of suffering undergone _ _ _ the purer the suffering the greater the progress." (M. Gandhi - epigraph to Happy Valley)

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The aim of this thesis is to show that some form and degree of suffering as well as individuation of the Real Self are not only fundamental issues in White's novels and *Wel-tanschauung*, but are also prerequisites for the eventual state of grace and understanding of being of his elected characters: "His subject is the suffering that is related to the most intimate affections, aspirations and guilts of the soul, which are almost invisible to the eye of the casual observer. He is concerned with the suffering of ruptured relationships, thwarted affections and failures of communication" (Beatson, 1976 : 25).

Patrick White's solicitude with human suffering is also a concern for truth : "the truth of our subjection to necessity and separation from the God who appears as the 'Divine Vivisector' _ _ _ the power beyond this world who is ultimately responsible for a universe in which human beings exist as vulnerable and mortal" (Brady, 1978 : 113).

What does Patrick White write about? Mark Schorer in his essay on technique supplies an acceptable answer: "_ _ _ modern fiction [as in the case of White's novels] achieves as its subject matter not some singleness, some topic or thesis, but the whole of modern consciousness. It discovers the complexity of the modern spirit, the difficulty of a personal morality, and the fact of evil - all the intractable elements under the surface which a technique of the surface alone cannot approach" (1967 : 83 : my addition).

1.1 THE NATURE OF SUFFERING

The opening chapters of Genesis explain the origin of suffering from a Christian point of view. Man's post-lapsarian state is characterised by negative and spiritually disruptive thoughts and passions that have their source in man's separation from the will of God. These demonic forces have influenced the quality of his being ever since. (The word being is used to denote everything that man is, thinks and experiences.) Most quests, including that of Bunyan's Pilgrim, reveal man's longing to regain his former paradisaical state : at the same time depicting the spiritually destructive morality of a "fallen" world.

Man, aware of his loss of beatitude and confined by his unnatural surroundings, intuits the mysteries of being when he finds himself confronted in a marginal situation by an experience or event totally unfamiliar to him. When the enigmatic situation encroaches upon and fuses with his own existence, man becomes fully aware of its influence upon

his psyche and consciousness. It is the fact that White's elect go in search of such new, illuminating marginal experiences that distinguishes them from other lesser beings.

The unexpected experience usually takes the form of a sudden and serious illness, the death of a loved one or a professional trauma. In White's canon the psyche's "unfamiliar" situation, is being a male or female separated from God as Source, and being thrust involuntarily into life. His elect's agony frequently takes the form of a conflict between the esoteric and exoteric selves¹, intensified by the psyche being "housed" in a body not suited to its gender as in the case of Eddie Twyborn in The Twyborn Affair. Awareness of another dimension of being as a marginal situation can also promote the person involved to a renewed awareness of God.

The psychic impact of the unfamiliar, especially when of a transcendental nature, brings, as a result of introspection, an awareness of guilt and judgment. Simone Weil (1979 : 94) postulates that no other state of being is lower than that of a person enveloped in a cloud of guilt.

1. John Moore (1984 : 58) gives the following definitions:

The exoteric self: "is the part of our selfhood with which one is ordinarily the most familiar. It is the aspect of ourselves with which we outwardly relate to the world, the part we live through. It is the outer mechanism for traffic with others and it is on account of it that they commonly recognize us. It is responsible for public performance in the group and we become particularly aware of it with the inception of self-consciousness."

The esoteric self: "Esoteric is defined as [the] 'private, confidential' self". The sign of its having become mature is the intervention of a further level of consciousness which could be called 'consciousness-of-self'.

The assassin is, for example, never free of guilt until the moment of death. In A Fringe of Leaves, Jack Chance is a convicted murderer who cannot bear the thought of returning to a community which will continually remind him of his guilt. He prefers returning to a naked, savage existence (an analogue for hell) instead of experiencing loss of freedom and continued punishment.

Confession is the generally accepted mode of easing guilt towards a denied God. Its effect is usually short-lived unless it is accompanied by a change of heart and behaviour. White's elect find themselves in such a subordinate position to God as soon as they, by chance or intervention, have shed their material interests and have become intuitively aware of another existence, so fundamentally different from the essentially hostile and exoteric one they are familiar with.

Human beings must look for true reality, grace and the Real Self² within themselves. Patrick White shares Paul Eluard's belief that, "there is another world, but it is in this one." Meister Eckhart, who has influenced White's point of view and stance as a novelist, writes: "It is not outside, it is inside! Wholly within." God does not appear in White's novels, but nothing can be explained without belief in the reality of God (Beatson, 1976 : 9).

2. The Real Self: John Moore (1984 : 161, 162) gives the following definition:

"For example, in the experience recognized as consciousness-of-selves in which then is an awareness of both the exoteric and esoteric aspects of oneself - it can be deduced that, since they are both under observation, there must be a further element of the self witnessing the activities of the other two. This transcendent witness, the essence of come of selfhood, is the Real Self."

The marginal influences White's elect experience are forbidding. In their youth they fondly believe they are entirely self-sufficient. As soon as they come into contact with metaphysical marginal influences, they intuit their need for synthesis with the spiritual world. Their quest for this vision is enacted in the silence of the soul, space and (spatial) art (Chellappan, 1983 : 24).

Simone Weil, whom White admits has influenced his thinking and who is associated with the downtrodden and oppressed, believes real suffering has three major elements : the physical, the psychological and the social. Should the experience of suffering involve only one of the three elements mentioned, the pain will not only be easier to overcome, it will also be easier to forget. Such "single reason" pain does not leave a mark on the soul. Weil, in addition, makes a clear distinction between suffering and affliction. Suffering, says Weil, does not cause a great deal of surprise because it is expected. Affliction, on the other hand, includes an assault on and even the destruction of the human soul. Affliction is anonymous before all things; it deprives victims of their personality and transforms them into mere "things".

It is impossible to subdivide suffering into categories of right and wrong. In Waiting for God Simone Weil states that people respond to the suffering of others in much the same way as fowls³ who instinctively attack a hurt and bleeding member of the same species, "without the mind realizing anything _ _ _ the animal motive in man senses

3. In "The Vivisector" White refers to a "crook-neck white pullet" (p. 9) that is vicimised by the other fowls because "it's different".

the mutilation of the animal nature in another and reacts accordingly" (Weil, 1951 : 40). White's novels have many examples of such acts of "insensitive cruelty" arising from the darkness in the characters' inner selves as well as from a desire to destroy a person who does not conform to the nebulous norms of "the herd". The cruelty of Mrs Jolley in Riders in the Chariot is an example.

Jonker, like Weil, divides suffering into three parts. There is firstly the struggle for daily survival, then the need for complete communication with a view to individuality and fulfilment and finally, there is man's relationship with God and his relationship with his Real Self. Contact with God awakens a sense of guilt a, a form of suffering frequently found in White's elect. Suffering, as a result of guilt, is not in vain because it has greater expiatory value than sacrifice: "Suffering affects the person himself in a direct way and not just his property and possessions" (Soelle, 1975 : 20).

Dorothee Soelle also postulates that we are faced by the problem of whether the manifold forms of pain encountered in life can be integrated into a life-long process of learning. This problem is complicated by the conundrum of why some forms of learning through suffering enrich while others leave us mutilated. The answer lies in the sufferer's attitude and response to his suffering and whether he regards it as a challenge to improvement, not only of his physical condition, but of his psyche as well. Soelle believes man's greatest crime is that he can turn away from a flawed and spiritually destructive life towards God and yet fails to do so.

Real suffering and alienation (an important element in White's canon of suffering) must reveal signs of powerlessness and meaninglessness. Powerlessness signifies "the expectancy and probability held by the individual that his own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements he seeks" (Soelle, 1975 : 11). Meaninglessness occurs when "the individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe - when the individual's minimal standards for clarity in decision making are not met" (Soelle, 1975 : 11). Any attempt to harmonise suffering must begin with the phenomenon of experienced powerlessness and must activate spiritual forces that will enable a person to overcome the sensations of helplessness and meaninglessness caused by the duality in his psyche.

Should the one who suffers be moulded to his adversity as a form of masochism, alternatives outside the sphere of his suffering will offer him no release. If his suffering becomes a part of his life, he is debased in his own estimation and will not be able to experience spiritual growth or victory over his irresolution. Spiritually beneficial decisions cannot be made when the self is divided between consensus with public opinion and the desire for individuality. Sir Basil Hunter in The Eye of the Storm, for example, refuses to acknowledge the fear and timidity of his Real Self. In the end he reverts to his childhood memories and environment in an attempt to escape into a state of non-being, an admission that he has been unable to reconcile the halves of which his being is comprised.

In any study of this nature it is rewarding to examine the characters' response to suffering which is usually associated with curses and prayers rather than with prayers for reform and understanding. Some of White's characters, for example Alys Browne in Happy Valley and Arthur Brown in

The Solid Mandala, experience a premonition of helplessness and fear together with the loss of the will to resist. Such utter despair may lead to suicide as in the case of Frank Le Mesurier in Voss and the artist Gage in The Tree of Man.

Voluntary and even eager submission to suffering can be a form of Christian masochism. Ruth Godbold in Riders in the Chariot gains a measure of beatitude from her impoverished circumstances. She uses the violent, immoral behaviour of her husband to teach herself forbearance. Masochism, according to Soelle, places a low premium on human resources and endurance while it reveals no sensitivity or concern for the welfare of others. Some theologies are inclined to view human behaviour as through the eyes of God. They mistakenly believe that everybody who suffers must have sinned. Such an attitude reveals an insensitivity to human suffering as well as a contempt for humanity. It negates the role of Christ as Saviour and Mediator.

In mysticism people suffer for the sake of the love they feel for God or some deity. The nature of such suffering is mainly physical and the subject's state of mind is one of adoration, not hopelessness. It entails a sense of closeness to a cause or a religious belief with an eventual reward for having endured to the end. Himmelfarb in Riders in the Chariot experiences a feeling of contentment after he has been "crucified" by the mob of workers at the Brighta Bicycle Lamps factory. His reward lies in his belief that he has atoned for the betrayal of his wife Reha.

A particularly significant feature of suffering is that it entails a process of change as well as a mode of becoming. In some religious circles it is believed that the more the

suffering diminishes the self, the greater will be the sufferer's awareness of God. This form of suffering is either self-induced or enforced by the antagonism of others. Voss, for example, inflicts the hardships of the desert on himself. As his body becomes weaker, his spiritual awareness and feeling of transcendence grow. Ellen Roxburgh in A Fringe of Leaves grows in understanding and love during her enforced stay among the Aborigines who maltreat and malign her.

Veronica Bradley's evaluation of Patrick White's concept of suffering is valuable, especially in the light of the religious undertones so evident in his work. She regards the suffering of White's elect as allegories: "In each [novel] the central characters move from a state of alienation, of feeling lost and powerless, towards an experience of completeness, a comprehension of their meaning as purpose, as part of a large cosmic order" (1978 : 72). Veronica Brady (1981 : 72), writing in the same vein as Bradley, maintains that White's novels start off with a sense of imprisonment in an uncontrolled world.

White's elect do not deliberately seek out suffering. When they are born they experience a time of relatively innocent happiness. They are attracted to the phenomenal world "by its sensuous beauty, [and are] drawn into involvement with others by the promise of love and personal happiness" (Beatson, 1978 : 28 : my addition). Beatson warns that a study of White's work demands an examination of the kind of suffering he has in mind. His subject matter is the "suffering that is related to the most intimate affections, aspirations and guilts of the soul, which are most invisible to the eye of the casual observer" (Beatson, 1976 : 25). Beatson is of the opinion that the "root of suffer-

ing [in White's canon] is the separation of the soul from God, its assumption of an individual identity" (1976 : 28 : my addition).

White's credo as a novelist encompasses the full range of human suffering; from the essentially physical aspects of human behaviour to the darkness of intellectual and spiritual anguish resulting from a divorce from God as the source of grace and salvation. His novels "depict the movement of the human experience towards fragmentation, and particularly to a recognition of the irresolute tension between the flesh and the spirit" (Macainsh, 1984 : 66). The moments of crisis the elected characters experience are of a solitary and individual nature which do not affect the flow of events. White's elect, reflecting their creator's own sexual dilemma, suffer more intensely than do the "madding crowds", because they are far more aware of the reality of being and damnation as well as their spirit's "imprisonment" within a cocoon of flesh. Peter Beatson calls this confinement "the soul's foster-home or prison in carnality" (1974 : 220). Insensitive, carnal characters like Clem Hagan in Happy Valley and Huntly Clarkson in The Aunt's Story do not "want to be set free into an endlessness of spirit which costs so much - nothing less in fact, than the desire for all possessions, even of oneself" (Brady, 1973 : 67). They are not predestined to enter a state of grace and consequently do not suffer as the elect do.

White repeatedly, in public and in writing, as in, for example his autobiography Flaws in the Glass, reveals his dismay at the non-caring, materialistic attitude of society in general. Veronica Brady believes that his anger is the reason for much of the "unpleasantness" in his novels. In The Vivisector, for example, White aims at being unpleasant

"because it [the novel] wants to shock the general public's complacency. Hurtle struggles with problems our culture prefers not to think about - death, pain and the intransigent otherness of the physical world" (Brady, 1974a : 137). White moves, uncompromisingly, against the grain of our illusions which "center upon the body beautiful and the happiness of all" (Brady, 1974a : 137).

White views existence as being dialectal. People suffer because they "have closed their lives to all that could release them from an environment which is organized to degrade and finally destroy them" (Bradley, 1978 : 33).

White's elect, in contrast, because of their unique, but socially incompatible beings, and at the cost of their exoteric selves, reject what they intuit to be spiritually stultifying and detrimental to their anticipated state of grace and release from the environment in which they find themselves. Their fear of becoming involved in the lives of others stems from the negative influence of their exoteric selves. Elyot Standish in The Living and the Dead, for example, cannot save the drunk man from being knocked down by a bus despite the realisation that he is morally obliged to do so.

David Myers (1978 : 4) regards the common fear and non-acceptance of the libido as the cause of much spiritual anguish in the novels of Patrick White: "White exposes the euphemism and the hypocrisy of our social code of eider-downiness' which he suggests is partially rooted in a timid communal fear of the libido." According to Myers suffering is caused by man's fear of spiritual growth and his reluctance to come to terms with his consciousness. He stresses the dichotomy between the sexual and the spiritual nature of man. A character's longing for the infinite as well as

his moments of epiphany are often spoiled by an impulsive "affair" with a person of the opposite sex that clouds the longing for the infinite, with the result that the character lives and eventually dies in confusion.

Children in White's novels are the involuntary victims of adult lust. Such sexuality is spiritually destructive. Susan Whaley regards human lust as "the ultimate manifestation of the desire to possess. Woman swallows man during the sex act, hence man's distrust of her as a potential castrator. The fruit of such a vision is also a swallowed being, and its birth represents a kind of evacuation" (1983 : 203). Whaley's statement suggests that the male partner experiences a state of non-being during sexual intercourse.

White's disillusion with the romantic vision of parenthood is already evident in Happy Valley. The parents' inability to understand their children or communicate meaningfully with them is reflected in the rupture of relationships and in open antagonism. In The Eye of the Storm, for example, the Hunter children cannot escape from their mother's influence. Ray Parker's need for real love (The Tree of Man) turns him away from his uncomprehending parents to whores, traditionally and ironically the hearers of many confessions. Flaws in the Glass and The Twyborn Affair reveal the real reasons for White's interest in children who become adult outsiders. William Walsh (1973 : 132) believes the suffering the male parent and the children have to endure, is brought about by the mother.

Brian Kiernan (1971 : 105) remarks that much of the children's suffering is caused by their not continuing or completing the quest initiated by either of the parents: "There is no opening out through the second generation, no unfolding of a pattern of life transmitted; instead by the

end of Stan's [The Tree of Man] life, apart from the epilogue, there is a drawing in, a sense of staleness, futility and impending death" (1971 : 106). The task of transmitting the elect's vision and life-story becomes the task of the novelist. The radical differences between parents and children illustrate the uniqueness of each individual.

David Tacey, a critic who favours the psychological approach in his evaluation of White's work, believes that our struggle in life is for conscious psychic growth away from the unconscious, the earth mother. Tacey is of opinion that White's later novels have to do with the fatal marriage of mother and son. This peculiar, tragic relationship is one of the earliest mythologems in Western cultures. The myth suggests that the earth is the mother and that the masculine spirit continually succumbs to her. It is ironical, according to Tacey, that the child's longing for the female parent (the males are all outsiders to the family), as a revelation of a longing for God, is also a longing for non-being. Many of White's novels focus upon an ecstasy of dissolution, simultaneously revealing the devouring nature of the process. There are frequent references to mothers attempting the "devour" their children with kisses in order to satisfy a need and sense of loss within themselves after having given birth.

White has been influenced by the philosophy of Jung in his portrayal of suffering, especially as regards the unconscious conflict between the animus and the anima. The male ego, according to Jung, must develop together with the unconscious, the matrix, or be destroyed. The female does not incur this danger. The debilitating influence of this conflict is clearly noticeable in the lives of Theodora Goodman (The Aunt's Story) and Eddie Twyborn (The Twyborn

Affair). Julia Goodman, as a living symbol of the earth mother turns against her daughter Theodora because she has strongly developed male character traits. Eddie Twyborn attempts to avoid his fate as "puer" by initially adopting the role of a woman. The male sexual urge is the most deadly weapon the "mother" can use against her "son".

Carolyn Bliss (1986 : 11) makes an important observation which explains White's approach to the fragmentation of the self as an important aspect of psychic suffering: "All separate selves are thus eventually seen as fragments of one great, unified self or consciousness _ _ _." Wholeness is the goal of every living being's life. All the "selves" in White's novels are eventually a part of the omnipresent Self of God. It is paradoxical that the state of grace achieved after suffering does not come from a condition of harmony within the individual. Grace comes from the depiction of "the movement of the human experience towards fragmentation, and particularly to a recognition of the irresolvable tension between the flesh and the spirit" (Macainsh, 1984 : 66).

Patrick White endorses the paradoxical truth that many people have closed their lives to anything, including religion, that can release them from the negative influence of their environment and desires. The Rosetrees in Riders in the Chariot betray their religious heritage for the sake of material and social gain and pay the price for doing so. The sense of evil and hopelessness that permeates society comes from within the community itself, (Bradley, 1978 : 34). Bernard (1965 : 2) describes the sense of evil in society as "unblinkerd atheism which acknowledges cosmic chaos and individual loneliness." Evil can only be exorcised by grace which, as Brady (1981 : 73) points out, can only be experienced in "the mystery of silence", thus

removed from the exoteric influence of society. White's realm of silence and loneliness where grace can be found is in the country of the mind.

The daily lives of the elect reveal a progressive alienation from the society in which they are confined. Society shuns the elect because they have different values and seem to have some secret knowledge they will not share. Each elected character's life is an allegory, a microcosm of the life and passion of Christ, with the major difference that they have only intuitive knowledge of the Father and their destinies⁴.

White's elect do not embark on their voyages of spiritual discovery of their own volition. They are supported by "another force, equally beyond our control, what the theologians would call grace, an impulse which allows the individual to contest evil, endure its onslaught and remain self-determining and at peace" (Bradley, 1978 : 34). Macainsh (1984 : 58), in contrast to the popular and theological concept of grace, describes White's aesthetic illusion as a "glimpse of horror". Macainsh's point of view holds true especially with regard to those elect who are finally committed to institutions for the insane.

Myers (1978 : 9) finds traces of the philosophy of Schopenhauer in Patrick White's portrayal of his characters' demanding and self-denying quest for meaning and grace. Schopenhauer postulates spiritual salvation through the disinterested negation of the will to live, as practised by the saint and artist in their self-disciplinary

4. White's outsiders are not spiritually sustained by organised religion. They have to improvise their own theology.

attainment of metaphysical knowledge. Should an individual, for example, believe in the idea that "God is dead" (as Nietzsche once argued) he may turn away from institutionalized religion to find spiritual meaning elsewhere: "The 'death of God' is, in Jungian terms, understood as a dissolution of the community's projection of the God image" (Tacey, 1977 : 36). This dissolution, evident in White's portrayal of society, is conspicuous in his depiction of the penal colony in Van Diemen's Land (A Fringe of Leaves) and the sordid way of life in the brothel in The Twyborn Affair. Tacey points out that in the past the church acted as the container of the inner self. Individuals then lived in a state of collective identification and did not make any individual relation to the self while the God-image of self was unconscious. Having to rely on himself as a result of the failure of institutionalized religion, the individual may confront the situation by developing his conscious mind. He may, after suffering, discover the lost God-image within himself. The devolution of the power and authority of the church is suggested in The Solid Mandala when the picture of Christ in Mrs Poulter's home comes crashing down after she declares her belief in Arthur Brown. Ellen Roxburgh (A Fringe of Leaves) cannot reconcile the Christian religion of her time with the brutal treatment meted out to the convicts. She manages to find a measure of peace in Pilcher's "church" that he built to atone for his crimes against humanity.

The Nietzschean thought underlying White's premise is that the basic fact of life is a power which destroys individuals with no concern whatsoever for dignity or unfulfilled aspirations. Nietzsche's "superman" is revealed in White's portrayal of the artist who must reveal God in man through suffering. McCulloch (1980 : 317) argues that Nietzsche's idea of "superman" is not a heresy, but a being

in whom the will to power "is sublimated into creativity and whose finest creation is himself, that is, a person who rises above the overcoming of others to self-overcoming" (my emphasis).

Nietzsche's thesis on the death of God reveals his spiritual loneliness and sense of hopelessness. White's elect experience a similar spiritual feeling of being lost before they set out on their quests for their Real Selves and before they achieve a sense of grace. Stan Parker (The Tree of Man), for example, does not need God until he loses his independence and acknowledges the spiritual values of his esoteric self. Nietzsche's spiritual dilemma parallels that of White himself: "Thus in the solitude of his own soul does Nietzsche touch one of his deepest problems: how to love and use the basest qualities in nature, which are essential to complete fruition, without compromising the noblest; how to love the highest values without being thereby disgusted with existence as a whole; how to combine negation and affirmation: in short the problem of evil, of pessimism" (Morgan, 1975 : 44). The soul-destroying sensation of non-being and futility is revealed in the behaviour of men like Cec Cutbush (The Vivisector) and Frank Le Mesurier (Voss).

The nihilism of Nietzsche is relieved by the more beneficent influence of Meister Eckhart, regarded as the father of transcendentalism, in his expression of White's vision of grace. Schürmann (1978 : XIV) explains that the central theme of Eckhart's teaching is releasement. This concept has two major adjuncts: learning to sacrifice everything that can be detrimental to individuation as well as a desire for the understanding and experiencing of perfect identity with God. Profound joy can be found in

detachment. As a solution to the problem of non-acceptance, detachment is a prelude to grace. Eckhart teaches that release can be achieved only after suffering.

Being, in Eckhart's philosophy, is not a passive state of existence: "Being is understood not only as an actuality but as an activity" (Schürmann, 1978, 170). It involves everything man thinks and experiences. Man cannot be separated from his archetypal roots. Schürmann makes the important observation that in the "being of his mind man remains always familiar with his origin; but this being is his own when he commits himself to becoming. Being and becoming are no longer opposed: true being is becoming" (1978 : 170 : my emphasis).

White's elect have their spiritual roots embedded in society and in their archetypal heritage. Much of their spiritual suffering is caused by the dichotomy between the Real Self and the social self. In time the Real Self, through the esoteric self, exerts greater pressure on the exoteric self for supremacy over the physical self and the elected one becomes an alien to society. Alienation from society and its materialistic values is thus an essential part of the process of becoming.

Bernard (1965 : 17) in her evaluation of suffering in the early novels of Patrick White, writes that waiting as a fatalistic and futile activity, is an essential component in the suffering of man. Waiting indicates a lack of spiritual response to the marginal influences to which the character is exposed, either because these influences are negative and spiritually abrasive or because the character himself is psychically too passive to respond. Catherine Standish, in The Living and the Dead, having once exerted herself to marry Willy Standish and so be elevated to a

higher status, spends the rest of her life waiting for help and comfort. Amy Parker (The Tree of Man) watches the road passing their homestead in the hope that some person or event might change her life and bring her some form of romantic release from the monotony of her married life. The final stages of the elect's suffering by "waiting" are characterized by the acceptance of the effects of alienation from the familiar world.

Berg (1983 : 81) examines the extent to which the character's past forms a part of his suffering. His suffering is revealed in his inability to accept the present in terms of the past. It is significant that the elect's individuation to a state of grace depends on their understanding of all the marginal experiences which have influenced their spiritual state. Such an understanding includes an insight into the influences of their unconscious minds. Once the elect have reached such a level of transcendence, they discard their former states of being and enter a new dimension of existence. The fond memory and physical attraction of a past existence may cause the character to experience "stasis" (Berg, 1983 : 84). Sir Basil Hunter's (The Eye of the Storm) acting out his life is a form of stasis because he cannot come to terms with his past, present and future.

Peter Beatson's evaluation of "trial by recollection" (1974 : 229), as yet another relevant form of human suffering, is closely allied to the elect's guilt and inability to come to terms with the past in the present. Beatson is concerned with the spiritually purgative qualities of such suffering. The characters who fail the "trial by recollection" do not achieve grace and are so obliged to live out

the remainder of their lives in the confusing maze that is life. Their failure explains their hopelessness and desire for non-being.

The moment of grace granted the elect cannot "be expressed in words, and cannot be conveyed between character and reader" (Rose Marie Beston, 1973 : 35). The "gift of insight is secret, kept and nourished in privacy, and it is recognized only by those who themselves possess it. Suffering is a necessary condition of its development. Only suffering can reduce the person to that state of painfully earned simplicity which is the essential preparation for a clarified consciousness. And again it invariably provokes persecution _ _ _" (Walsh, 1973 : 136).

The elect's understanding of being and grace is complicated by the mystery of God's role and will in their lives. In The Vivisector Hurtle Duffield expresses, on behalf of the elect, his nonplussed attitude when he attempts to understand the role of God in his life. He scribbles the following poem on the wall of his "dunny" :

"God the Vivisector
God the Artist
God".

The poem reveals that Hurtle Duffield does not fully understand that life is "a statement of the contest between two gods. The single word 'God' at the end leaves unanswered the question that underlies it" (Beston, 1982 : 89).

X X X

Happy Valley is White's first attempt to explore the "country of the mind". The psychic and social dilemmas so characteristic of the lives of his elect are examined, albeit still somewhat tentatively, without any conclusion being reached. Happy Valley does not have an elected character, except by implication. One could consider either Margaret Quong or her aunt, but their 'beings' are not examined as closely as is the case with the elect who are portrayed in White's subsequent novels.

2.0 HAPPY VALLEY

"We start off being afraid of the dark. Then your fear probably moves its center to something more tangible. And most of it rises out of a feeling of being alone. Being alone is being afraid. Perhaps one day we'll wake up to the fact that we're all alone, that we're all afraid, and then it'll just be too damn silly to go on being afraid" (Happy Valley : 125).

X X X

The title of White's first novel, Happy Valley, is not an intended misnomer, but is deliberately ironical. In this novel White attempts to show that contentment does not depend on external factors. Each individual must find grace and acceptance of being within himself. These spiritual attributes may be achieved after having endured meaningful suffering which includes conscious spiritual growth and a release from the physical demands of the body. Oliver Halliday, as the protagonist, is mistaken in his assessment of his future happiness: "This is the part of man, to withstand through his relationships the ebb and flow of the seasons, the sullen hostility of rock, the anaesthesia of snow, all those passions that sweep down through negligence or design to consume and desolate _ _ _" (p. 327). Halliday cannot achieve a state of grace because his life is dominated by his egocentric self.

Patrick White begins Happy Valley by describing the events of a single day in the lives of the more important characters. He narrates, frequently in needless detail, what each one does. By comparison and contrast he draws the reader's attention to the diversity of the suffering, mainly of a selfish nature, of the people who live in Happy Valley. At

the end of the day in question White describes their dreams, hopes, fears and disappointments. He removes their patinated personas, revealing their anguished selves. Their common bond lies in their uneasy sleep, which betrays their lack of inner grace. Waiting passively for happiness or some form of release is a form of spiritual suffering in itself.

In Happy Valley White makes effective use of the seasons as a metaphor to mirror the corresponding behaviour and moods of the people living there. The novel begins in winter thereby reflecting the "dead" ambience as well as the spiritual passivity of the locals. They prefer to seclude themselves in their "boxes", brooding on their unfulfilled lives. Spring does not initiate a spiritual rebirth, merely an awakening of their lust, while Summer gives rise to their sensuous activities. Clem Hagan and Vic Moriarty on the one hand, with Alys Browne on the other, find themselves caught in spiritually vacuous relationships. Inevitably it is winter when Moriarty dies after murdering his wife, and at the same time Oliver Halliday deserts Alys Browne.

An individual like Halliday, who neither reaches an understanding of his Real Self nor experiences the transcendental nature of true grace, becomes increasingly disenchanted with life, usually placing the blame for his spiritual devolution on someone weaker than himself. Many of the male characters in White's novels tend to withdraw into themselves when they feel themselves unable to cope with spiritually destructive forces foreign to their esoteric selves. The women on the other hand become emotional parasites, sustaining their exoteric selves by dominating those close to them. Children unavoidably become like their parents, thereby perpetuating common man's spiritually moribund existence.

The inhabitants of Happy Valley are generally discontented and apathetic. Their daily lives are coloured by wishful thinking tempered by a sense of fatalism. They find little real joy in life: "_ _ _ at Happy Valley you just lived" (p. 29). The sordid nature of their dreams reveals their moral bankruptcy: "In Happy Valley you fornicated or drank. You swung the rattle for all you were worth. You did not know you were sitting on a volcano that might not be extinct" (p. 19). Not one of the inhabitants seems to have any notion of a metaphysical quest for meaning or enrichment of being beyond the monthly cheap film. For their suffering to have any kind of benefit or spiritual growth it must be recognised as such and not as mere spite on the part of a cosmic force like Hardy's Immanent Will. Suffering itself must have a degree of purity for it to have any esoterically enriching influence.

The suffering the people of Happy Valley endure is mainly the result of their having been born into a set of circumstances they cannot or are unwilling to change. They endure the vicissitudes of their lives fatalistically, even as a form of punishment for sins real or imagined, never as the result of their own spiritual and moral inadequacy. Geoffry Dutton (1961 : 9) believes suffering in Happy Valley "comes from living among people 'with eyes closed to the possibility of truth'; the environment is a prison, and the illumination hurts."

Even childbirth, writes Peter Beatson (1976 : 25) "can be seen as a symbol of the pain consequent to the descent of the soul into flesh." The pain the mother suffers at childbirth often clouds her relationship with her husband who is uninvolved with his progeny. The children of Happy Valley are replicas of their parents. Whereas the parents are mostly selfish and inclined to upset the spiritual

well-being of others, the children are more rudimentary, inflicting physical pain on any child different or weak enough to have to submit. Rodney Halliday, who by his mother's own admission is different, is bullied because of his uncharacteristic mien: "Once upon a time you resisted windmills, fought against the sharp twisting of the hair above your ears, and they all laughed, but you fought, and then it was no good. You did not resist. You let it happen _ _ _" (p. 56). Frequently the rape of a sensitive nature like that of Rodney Halliday encourages a withdrawal into a private, spiritual world, coloured by romantic, escapist dreams of happiness and fulfilment.

In White's later novels the youthful, romantic dreams of his elect, make way for an intuitive awareness of transcendental being. White believes that only the naive child has the impulsive courage to rebel against the injustices inflicted upon him. Rodney Halliday strikes back against the impossible adds confronting him and is soundly beaten. His courage does not aid the individuation of his self. He turns for support to his fellow outsider, Margaret Quong, with whom he experiences a degree of spiritual rapport. As with all White's elect, the two children's friendship does not last or develop beyond a momentary, intuitive empathy.

2.1 OLIVER HALLIDAY

Patrick White describes Oliver Halliday's spiritual suffering and romantic illusions in terms of a moth striving to reach a flame that eventually causes its destruction: "Flapping its soft, plushy wings, that moth beat up against the lamp, pressing out of a dark sea towards a yellow island of light" (p. 201). The dark sea and the yellow island suggest his esoteric self reaching out to an attractive, but illusive spiritual fantasy. Halliday's personal tragedy is

that, like the moth beating against the glass, he will never experience the rewards of this endeavour. His suffering is the inevitable result of impulsive, even involuntary choices, made with his own childish ego and well-being as motives. Each choice leads to a further complication. He intuits, without benefit to his esoteric self, that there is "a mystery of unity about the world" (p. 74) that makes existence and suffering endurable and meaningful.

Winter, mirrors the condition of Halliday's psyche. His unadmitted sense of insecurity prevents any spiritual thaw from taking place, thus allowing him to love others and not just himself. Contrary to his initial expectations, he is not accepted by the people of Happy Valley and Kambala because his mien gives the impression that he is superior and disinterested. The reasons for his apparent callousness lie in his loveless domestic life as well as in his need to be pampered.

As a youth Halliday wrote a poem "on clouds and things" (p. 21) which he believed, on the strength of a single doubtful opinion, to have literary merit. Like so many of Patrick White's unhappy people who live on the inner periphery of "ordinary life", he remains attached to the illusory happiness of his past, making the mistake of imagining a "successful" (idyllic?) future for himself on the strength of it. (Inner periphery denotes a life dominated by exoteric values. In contrast, Arthur Brown in The Solid Mandala moves on the periphery of transcendence, because he seems to "know" something other people do not.) Halliday feels cheated when his dreams do not materialise. Typically he finds the reasons for his failure not in himself but in the limitations imposed on him by his family and society:

"Oliver Halliday, father of a family. That's what he was. And it didn't feel any different, in essentials, from what it was at sixteen" (p. 17, my emphasis).

Halliday's impulsive and sentimental nature is revealed in his ill-considered decision to join the Australian army: "You went to the War. Then suddenly in the Indian Ocean you were going to God knows what, and it wasn't so good, but it couldn't go on for ever, it was already '18" (p. 17). He arrives in Europe at the end of the War. Puffed-up with the romantic illusions of a saviour-cum-hero, Halliday "parades" in the streets of war-weary London where he is pointedly ignored by those who experienced the reality of man's inhumanity to man. In Paris he is so moved by the sound of organ music that he weeps, but only for himself, not for the devastation or misery by which he is surrounded. In his later novels, for example in The Tree of Man, Patrick White hints at the mental lesions inflicted on his elect by the War.

The failure of Halliday's youthful romantic illusions to sustain his self-image is revealed in his soured adult opinion that women show "love" for men only out of stupidity, mercenary motives and their fear of facing the anathema of existence without the grace of God to sustain their exoteric selves. Self-pity clouds his relationship with others. He has no religious convictions to sustain him or give meaning to what he believes is his suffering: "There was still some use for the Holy Roman Church. It taught you to turn pain and fear of it to some spiritual use. But you weren't a Catholic, and pain only made you bitter, or made you ashamed because you were bitter and afraid" (p. 18). Halliday's need for spiritual comfort and definition of his doubts about his self diverts him to Alys Browne who, being as lonely as he is, shares his longing for

a soul-mate and alter ego. Alys's attitude to her lover is, ironically, the same as Hilda's was when he was still courting her. It becomes evident that Halliday, never more than a grown-up child, craves a mother-figure to pamper him. Sexual intercourse, ideally a form of communion, brings him no fulfilment: it rather adds to his sense of loss. The only truth he intuits is of his own unhappiness arising from his unwillingness and inability to respond to the promptings of his esoteric self. He is the first of White's "emasculated" weaklings, totally victimised by consensus opinion.

Halliday, as husband and parent, is slow to admit to himself that his marriage has failed because of his inability to measure up to the relatively simple demands of domesticity. His compulsive need to pursue the romantic dream of becoming a poet even triggers thoughts of murder: "you wanted to tip the lot overboard" (p. 74). He does not understand that order does not follow logically after chaos (in this instance emotional stress) has been rejected. Spiritual growth and increased consciousness of being should develop out of the turmoil of daily life, after which there is a changed and rejuvenated approach to 'being'.

Halliday's relationship with Alys Browne allows him to agonise over the causes of his unhappiness. Her need for male companionship blinds her to the obvious flaws in his persona. As he becomes emotionally more involved and compromised, Halliday feels himself morally obliged to agree to her wish that they should emigrate to California to start a new, happy life together. Being torn between his family responsibilities on the one hand and his "owing" Alys some form of security on the other, puts him firmly in a Catch-22

situation. Garthwaite's letter offering to exchange medical practices with him comes as an added complication to his already crushing, Judas-like, burden of guilt.

In his cowardly, final letter to Alys, Halliday characteristically blames her for the unhappiness he has had to endure: "I don't know why I am talking like this. You knew it all before. You realized and I didn't. Now I do. That is the difference. So I want you to try and accept what you were willing to accept before" (p. 294).

The Hallidays' relationship should be evaluated in terms of Hilda's cough which becomes the motif of their marriage. It signals the knell of any intimacy their marriage may have had. As the family leaves Happy Valley, Oliver Halliday's warped sense of unfair suffering is charged with the suspicion that his wife "has found something that I have yet to find" (p. 327).

2.2 HILDA HALLIDAY

Hilda Halliday's suffering fulfils the requirements of the test suggested by Dorothee Soelle. She endures physical pain and discomfort as evidenced by her persistent cough that produces blood-specked sputum; she does not fit into the society of Happy Valley because she feels herself superior; finally, her emotional needs are not fulfilled and so she feels she has failed as a wife and mother. She never learns that going with the group only produces relative happiness. Patricia Morley (1972 : 36) writes that "Hilda is increasingly identified with a weak, sick, and suffering world which cannot be ignored." The relationship between Hilda and the world is established on an allegorical level.

Hilda's reasons for marrying Halliday are unconsciously selfish and tinged with a sense of noble martyrdom. Spinsterhood would leave her without security and what she believed to be her rightful status in society. In White's canon, fidelity in marriage is based on a fatalistic acceptance of the inevitable imprisonment of the self rather than a desire to love. Hilda courts Halliday, wooing him with her sympathy and her gentle, grey eyes. Her flattery of his person and future as a doctor-cum-poet verges on seduction, while she uses her cough to manipulate him. Her physical distress and loneliness cause her to spend her time indoors thereby enforcing the impression of snobbery. She cannot play the imagined role of a "beloved rural doctor's wife" and consequently becomes plaintive, causing Oliver to avoid her.

Hilda Halliday remains a shadowy figure drawn with economy and distaste. She and her "different" son will not find real happiness anywhere, least of all by avoiding the truth of their condition. Her inherent weakness as person is revealed in her becoming increasingly slovenly and careless as her relationship with her husband becomes more strained.

As the Hallidays leave Happy Valley, Hilda feels that she is "joined to Alys by a link of pain" (Morley, 1972 : 38). Ironically she manages to keep her husband through his in decision and not by any personal merit. As they leave Happy Valley Hilda's cough eases.

2.3 CLEM HAGAN

Clem Hagan is Patrick White's first sardonic portrayal of a macho Australian male. Björkstén (1976 : 30) offers an interesting explanation of Hagan's name. The French word cle-ment means mild or human. Hagan is one of the fiercest

names in the Niebelungenheid. By referring to him as Hagan, White chooses to emphasize the negative traits of his character.

Hagan accepts brute force as norm in his life: "Hagan _ _ _ comes from life rather than from literature, and is in this sense Vic's [Moriarty] counterpart" (Kiernan, 1980 : 17 : my addition). He is the forerunner of Don Prowse in The Twyborn Affair. Typically White reveals Hagan's Real Self by placing him in the power of a frail young woman who, in a self-destroying manner, both hates him as a man and yet needs him to assuage her physical need. His limited intelligence leaves him uncertain about himself and his future as Sidney Furlow's husband.

In Vic Moriarty's eyes Hagan promises release from the boredom and disillusion of her marriage. For a brief time she appeals to his lust, but then becomes desperate when she senses she is losing him to a younger woman. Hagan treats Vic in a boorish manner. His suffering at the hands of Sidney Furlow is justified if not remedial.

Hagan's "dumb", uncomprehending attitude to what happens to him becomes evident when he is involuntarily drawn to Sidney Furlow. His lust for her is inflamed by her being socially out of his reach. The fact that she belongs to a superior class makes a possible conquest more desirable. In this respect he resembles Rory Macrory (The Eye of the Storm) who marries a landowner's daughter to gain revenge on the moneyed class he believes has victimised him.

Eventually Hagan loses what he values most, his masculinity and freedom, in exchange for her support during the inquest on Vic Moriarty's death. Thus his fate can be seen as an inverted form of seduction.

2.4 SIDNEY FURLOW

Sidney is a masculine name. Björkstén writes that this name for a woman "is not only an excursus into another bi-theme of White's, the hermaphrodite, but also a character hint which is confirmed by events" (1976 : 30).

Sidney, as a frightened introvert, hides behind the facade of a temperamental extrovert. Her sanity is threatened by the conflicting demands of her exoteric and esoteric selves as revealed in her exclamation, "If you were a whore to want the not-want" (p. 184). The duality of her wavering state of mind is revealed when she dances with Hagan: "She knew she was trembling, wanted to snatch away, or press up, press all resistance out of the body that the motion of a waltz, and his breath, and the palm of his hand had decomposed. No, she wanted to say, stop, and the music _ _ _" (p. 238 ; my emphasis).⁵

Sidney gets Hagan into her power by perjuring herself during the inquest on Vic Moriarty's death. She paradoxically hopes to both appease her lust and destroy what she desires carnally: "Because something had happened that was something dirty and she had wanted something dirty to happen all

5. It is significant that Sidney and Hagan, her sexual alter ego, should meet during a waltz as White uses music as an analogue for sexual intercourse during which the female partner may experience an orgasm. In The Aunt's Story, Theodora Goodman is sexually excited when she waltzes with Frank Parrott and lives through an orgasm during Moraitis' piano recital: "The 'cello rocked, she saw. She could read the music underneath his flesh. She was close. He could breathe into her mouth. He filled her mouth with long aching silences, between the deeper notes that reached down deep into her body" (The Aunt's Story : p. 116).

time she had ridden past Hagan hoping not to happen because she was afraid hated herself _ _ _" (p. 185). She hopes to achieve an impossible synthesis between her lust and her spirit through a process of catharsis. Whereas Alys Browne hopes to escape from the wasteland of Happy Valley by emigrating to California, Sidney Furlow contemplates suicide as a last desperate solution to her dilemma: "it'd be rather fun to blow out one's brains" (p. 142). Morley (1972 : 45) believes Sidney's submission to sex is a kind of suicide in itself.

Sidney's threatening insanity, caused by the destructive duality of her being, not only causes her intense unhappiness but also makes her aggressive to all who seek her company, especially her parents whom she intuitively blames for her existence. It is a reasonable assumption to relate White's own dilemma as a homosexual to his portrayal of Sidney and her relationship with her parents.

On one occasion, when Sidney and Hagan are out riding, they come across a snake. Hagan as shepherd and foreman, kills it while Sidney watches in fascination (pp. 182 - 183). The dark and sexual overtones in Sidney's being become evident: "With her other hand she slowly caressed the long body of the snake. She was fascinated by a dead snake" (p. 184). She intuitively connects her demon with the snake. There is even much of a snake in her appearance, which incidentally explains why Hagan, as image of archetypal man, is fascinated by her.

When Sidney lies on her bed after a fearfully disruptive tantrum "her hair spread out over the pillows in little snakey tongues" (p. 86). At the dance held after the races she resembles a snake ready to strike: "She looked up into Hagan's face. She felt herself shrinking in. She felt her-

self shrinking right in, gathering herself to strike. And he stood there, foolishly trying in spite of his voice to ask her to dance" (p. 233). Sidney's slender body as well as the thin slit of her mouth enforce the impression of "the seduction of strength by matter" (Cirlot 1971 : 286).

It is likely that, being unable to resolve her inner conflict, Sidney Furlow will in the end destroy herself. White comes to the conclusion that an ideal, hermaphroditic state is impossible. Characters like Sidney Furlow and Eddie Twyborn are fated to share the spiritual and physical suffering of Tiresias. Sidney's psychosis is intensified by her having to live on a farm where sex and procreation constitute normal biological behaviour.

It is significant that Sidney Furlow and Hagan's love-hate union, with the male as the retiring partner, sets the trend for future husband-wife relationships in White's corpus.

2.5 THE MORIARTIES

Ernest Moriarty is a weakling and a shadowy figure. In spite of these traits, however, he does not deserve being cuckolded by Hagan. White has little sympathy for him, making it clear that Ernest Moriarty has only himself to blame for his humiliation. It is ironical that White should, in the final stages of the novel, use Moriarty not only to bring the loose ends of the novel together, but to resolve the Halliday-Browne problem as well. White makes a mockery of Moriarty, and all his male characters, by making their deaths the only really significant and meaningful event in their lives. His active dislike of weak men mellows to tolerance in his later novels.

Vic Moriarty is a hedonistic, futilely ambitious woman: "Vic is almost completely a 'literary' creation; a Molly Bloom with an embarrassing, Eliotesque chrysanthemum that waxes and wanes with her libido" (Kiernan, 1980 : 17). Her mental distress is rooted in her fear of age. She instinctively realises that she has no hope of rejuvenation or spiritual rebirth. The useless ribbon she purchases on impulse from the Quongs reveals her senseless, compulsive need to compensate for what she believes to be the unfairness of her circumstances. She confuses the lack of luxuries and pleasure in her life with suffering. She only experiences real anguish in the moments before she is murdered by her husband. Her view of life reflects the consensus of opinion of not only the inhabitants of Happy Valley, but that of White's milieu in general.

Typically Vic blames others - in this particular instance the educational authorities - for their privation and inanity. Like Alys Browne she is so blinded by her need for a meaningful relationship to sustain her that she fails to realise she cannot buy Hagan's affection. Having made the wrong choice, she sets in motion a chain of events which destroy her, her husband, Hagan and Alys.

Ernest Moriarty really suffers. Like White he is an asthma sufferer. He is a poor teacher who has no contact with the children entrusted to his care. The fact that the children of Happy Valley are below standard reflects on him as teacher and on the community.

Moriarty's ego is shattered by his inability to please his wife, yet his suffering does not teach him forbearance. In time he becomes the symbol of imminent death: "They [the children] looked. Ernest Moriarty's head was black with flies" (p. 172). His debilitating influence on the lives

of others is as infectious and fatal as his cough. He finds no relief in confessing that he is a failure. He cannot tell his wife, or anyone, about his fears nor that the children hate him. As a failure he is condemned by society, finding relief only in death.

2.6 ALYS BROWNE

Alys Browne, who acts as a foil to Oliver Halliday's selfish need to escape from his oppressing domestic circumstances, remains an obscure, undeveloped character because White does not manage to evaluate her spiritual trauma in a convincing manner within the already fragmented scope of the novel which attempts to cover too wide a range of human suffering. White portrays Alys as a spinster in search of a husband and leaves it at that. In subsequent novels, when he has narrowed down the depth and field of his narrative focus, the lesser characters such as Margaret Quong in this novel, come alive convincingly.

Alys Browne lives alone on the verge of Happy Valley: "like most lonely people living alone, she said she liked living alone" (p. 39). This apparently harmless deceit is part of her romantic persona, at the same time protecting her from too familiar contact with critical women like Mrs. Belper who believe Alys is a neurotic. Alys's voluntary seclusion from society is rooted in her feeling superior to other women, because she not only received a better education in Sydney, but played the piano and had been a female companion to a lady of quality; all attributes that do not qualify her for holding her own in life.

Making choices between right and wrong or having to decide what course of action to follow are facts of life that may cause stress. The motives that influence the choice are

usually decided by the character of the person involved. Man's intuitive knowledge of "good" and "bad" awakens his sense of guilt or justifies the choice made. Alys has no apparent qualms about becoming Halliday's mistress, the end hopefully justifying the means. Her suffering reaches a climax when she is denied the opportunity to escape from Happy Valley. White does not reveal any changes taking place in her psyche as a result of her disappointment and it is doubtful whether she has the spiritual vitality to undergo a significant psychic transformation, anyway.

Like most of White's "narrative" children Alys receives little parental love. Whereas there is no mention of her mother, her father is depicted as a drunkard who leaves her almost destitute. With such a background it is consistent that she becomes a romantic dreamer with visions of finding her own Happy Valley one day. For example, in an endeavour to escape from her past, she changes the spelling of her name to make it sound more exotic.

Alys is alone and miserable when she goes to Halliday for insignificant medical help: "You are no longer part of the whole, to which in your saner moments you like to think you belong. You wait in the strange room and this is another life _ _ _ . Well, Alys Browne was feeling something like this as she waited alone in the doctor's room. There was no fire, and this intensified the feeling of detachment _ _ _" (p. 66). She instinctively becomes aware of Halliday's distress and need for companionship. Her response to him is founded on the belief that she will be able to help him, at the same time fulfilling her craving for consummation with another person.

The only real companion and confidante Alys has is Margaret Quong who is rejected by the people of Happy Valley because of her racially mixed heritage. Alys is Margaret's spiritual sibling and surrogate mother until Oliver Halliday, by his intrusion into their relationship, shatters the gentle completeness of their bond. Alys makes the wrong choice when she breaks her ties with Margaret because of the perfidy of her exoteric self. White regards the betrayal of such trust an unpardonable sin; thereby predicting the unhappy outcome of her association with Halliday. Promiscuity, as in the case of Alys and Halliday, is not only one of the prime causes of mental suffering, but also debars the individual from a state of grace achieved through suffering and individuation. In White's corpus, sex and sexuality are selfish responses to external factors. They have a levelling effect on women, making them all equal. Alys, generally regarded as a snob, is treated more vindictively by society for her relationship with Halliday than Vic Moriarty is for her adultery with Hagan.

At first the relationship between Alys and Halliday has an element of tenderness which arises from their mutual spiritual need for understanding and companionship. There is no mention of the "twisted sheets" so evident in the thoughts of Sidney Furlow nor of cheap bravado which characterises the Hagan-Moriarty affair. Halliday enters into the "impossible" liaison with Alys to sublimate his failure as a doctor, husband and father. Their sexual union, an apparently inevitable consequence of their increasing need for each other's company and the exoteric maze in which they find themselves, falls far short of their dreams of an exquisite experience. Sexual gratification leaves them even more lonely than before their first meeting: "She was leading him anywhere, through the dust, he could feel his feet in the dust, and the peeled stem of a rose, and the fluc-

tuating phrases of a waltz. He did not mind where she led him, was too tired, was waiting for this, to be led by Alys out of a dilemma _ _ _" (p. 233).

Alys's recluse-like existence allows most of the scandal of her clandestine affair with Halliday to wash over her unnoticed: "Alys was untouched by this [scandal], did not seem to realize. That was the odd thing about Alys Browne, as if her consciousness of outer activity had become numbed by her intentness on an inner change. It was in her face" (p. 218). Losing her inheritance through an ill-advised investment adds a feeling of destitution to her social alienation. Contact with people makes her uncomfortable. Her passivity and stoic acceptance of misfortune resembles the attitude of Rose Portion in Voss. Her arrested consciousness suggests there can be no spiritual growth or an improved awareness of being for her.

Unlike Oliver Halliday, Alys Browne cannot flee: she has no "road" out of Happy Valley. Her awareness of being trapped increases her suffering.

2.7 THE CHILDREN OF HAPPY VALLEY

William Walsh (1977: 6) is lavish in his praise of White's portrayal of the children of Happy Valley: "These small figures have the vitality of later White creations, and they are seen with that astonishing clarity of the genuine artist which neither smudges individuality nor films it with sentimentality. The children's thoughts, their relation with adults, their volatile feelings, their nimble recovery from disillusion, their utter misery, their strange and tentative communications are brilliantly presented at a level far higher than that achieved with the adults, many of whom are mobile clichés or densely stock figures."

According to White, children are the result of an illusion on the part of the parents: "The children, Hilda says, there are the children, content to ignore the fact that they have sprung from an illusion. Hilda says this, it is part of her religion to say it, the religion of the world, of Happy Valley with its eyes closed to the possibilities of truth" (p. 218).

The children form a microcosm of the adult world to which they are involuntarily bound by blood and the filial obligations imposed by a society that cannot cope with them. They are replicas of their parents, revealing in various ways, similar flaws. Their viciousness, although less subtle, is as harmful to weaker peer members. To use Simone Weil's comparison, they have the temperaments of fowls that destroy the weak, the "bleeding" and those who are different.

Children, to White's way of thinking, are angered, not fooled, by adult hypocrisy. For example, the youngsters, deemed "dull" by far-removed educational authorities, know that Vic Moriarty is deceiving her husband and they scorn him for allowing it. Ernest Moriarty's weakness leaves him defenseless. It is inevitable in the existing adult-child relationship that he should vent his anger with himself on Margaret Quong, the weakest of the children and not on any of the other children who might resist him.

2.7.1 RODNEY HALLIDAY

The pervasive influence of Rodney Halliday's esoteric self causes him to stand aloof from the other boys at the school. He prefers the company of Margaret Quong with whom he intuitively shares a sense of spiritual empathy.

Rodney's inability to be like the other boys brands him a weakling. In their eyes this weakness is suggestive of some sexual or psychic aberration. Waiting for inevitable pain and suffering, according to Bernard (1965 : 17), is worse than the actual pain itself. At school Rodney is forced to anticipate the bullying to be inflicted on him during playtimes: "They always went behind the urinal in the break. Rodney watched the face of the clock, knew it would happen in so many minutes now, the hands turning, the heart. Then they would go down to the bottom of the yard. His heart fell. He hated Andy Everett and Arthur Ball" (p. 55 : my emphasis). It is, however, significant that Rodney's awareness of suffering enhances his consciousness of the quality of being and hopefully expedites his individuation to independence in later life. Rodney's resistance to physical pain, a trait peculiar to White's elect, reveals the strength of his Real Self to withstand the attacks and malice of an uncomprehending world. The lack of opportunity to express or share his private thoughts adds to his spiritual loneliness, which is somewhat relieved by his relationship with Margaret Quong. As an outsider in the corpus of Patrick White, Rodney is not granted lasting friendships, only brief moments of empathy with the esoteric self of a fellow outsider. White believes that loneliness together with an increasingly solitary existence are prerequisites for spiritual growth, leading to the final discovery of God through the Real Self.

The youngsters tyrannise Rodney without consciously knowing why. They do not understand the archetypal significance of their representing a hostile, even anarchical society poised to destroy any being or philosophy not concurring with generally accepted norms of behaviour. White thus suggests that the child, as involuntary heir to the sins and weaknesses of the parents, prevents the spiritual dilemma of a malevolent society from being resolved. Much of Rodney's chagrin is rooted in the hypocrisy of society. His mother, strangely unlike the "mothers" of White's other elect, is too weak to help her son, or her husband for that matter. Peter Beatson (1976 : 118) on discussing the question of the spiritual wounds inflicted on the son by the father writes: "The Son inherits the Wound of the Father in a lethal form, since his experience in the fallen world goes deeper."

The absence of any meaningful relationship between a child and his parents reflects White's own dilemma revealed with startling frankness in "Flaws in the Glass" (1981 : 5).

2.7.2 MARGARET QUONG

Margaret is the daughter of a Chinese, Walter Quong and Ethel, a European woman. Walter avoids all parental responsibility for his daughter's welfare and happiness by adopting the facade of a suave and apparently enigmatic Oriental demeanour. He leaves Margaret to the loveless upbringing of her mother who believes Margaret is the reason why she has had to sacrifice her opportunities in life. There is no meaningful communication between mother and daughter. Ethel's instinctive racist attitude fills her with shame for firstly having been seduced by a Chinese, and then for having been forced to marry him by a

hypocritical society to legalise a child's essentially undesired existence: "Ethel Quong was sour and thin, her whole aspect was a little virulent, so that people avoided her, and she said she had no friends at all because she was married to a Chinaman" (p. 90).

Margaret reacts to her mother's antagonism in the only way she can. She, like Rodney Halliday, withdraws into her exoteric self where she "creates" a haven to satisfy her spiritual and imaginative needs. The shell Rodney gives Margaret symbolises both her withdrawal from the mundane affairs of people and her initiation into the country of the mind. Margaret intuitively seeks the protective company of her guru-like aunt, in this way becoming her "novice". This quaint association exempts her from having to cultivate a socially acceptable persona.

X X X

In The Living and the Dead White enlarges and intensifies his evaluation of the spiritual poverty and lovelessness of post World War I society. He takes up arms against the spiritual powers of darkness threatening to destroy a traditional and meaningful existence. White suggests that outsiders should attempt to understand the spiritual wasteland they live in by becoming a part of it, using the state of flux to discover their Real Selves.

3.0 THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

White uses a passage from the work of Helvetius as a prologue to The Living and the Dead to explain his general assessment of suffering: "I place you in the custody of pleasure and of suffering. The one or the other will watch over your thoughts, your actions, will engender your passions, excite you aversions, your friendships, your tenderness; your furies, will illuminate your desires, your fears, your hopes, will uncover to you the truths, will plunge you into error and after having begotten a thousand absurd systems of morality and legality, will one day uncover the simple principles on the development of which are dependent the order and happiness of the moral world."

This prologue describes the anguish and the futile quest of White's elected characters as they strive to emerge from the darkness of a mundane, selfish everyday existence into the light of another life within the one they are familiar with. For many of the characters in The Living and the Dead the only avenue of escape from a meaningless existence is through death, when all questions are fully answered: "but soon we shall know, as much as we are allowed to know, there is very little we have seen except dimly" (p. 333).

One of the outstanding characteristics of The Living and the Dead is the lovelessness in the lives of the characters despite the fact that love as a spiritual force plays such an important role in Patrick White's credo: "You reach a point where you have had everything, and everything amounts to nothing. Only love redeems" (Flaws in the Glass: 251). The motif of lovelessness in The Living and the Dead is extended in the song sung in the Café Vendôme, itself a symbol of the "nether world" inhabited by White's characters. Peter Beatson (1976 : 41) supports my views on the sig-

nificance of love in the novels of Patrick White. He says that "Love is the most celebrated and most problematical spiritual principle in Patrick White's novels _ _ _ love and hate operate through the human temperament, express themselves as ethical values but ultimately have a spiritual source and a spiritual goal." It is thus a logical deduction that White mainly records "the difficulties and perversities of love, rather than its fulfilment" (Beatson, 1976 : 44). The one significant redeeming feature in the novel is the love Joe Barnett and Eden Standish have for each other. Their closeness verges on the discovery of the true, spiritual value of love in a "sour, sick earth" (p. 304). In direct contrast to the union of Joe and Eden, the sensual, convenient alliance between Catherine Standish and Wally Collins is the negation of what love should be; offering a brief and, for Catherine, disasterous escape from unhappy circumstances and her "sagging body". Collins regards their affair as an adventure into a so-called upper-class world he has only imagined. He is disillusioned when he discovers it to be a reflection of his own sordid life, especially in its aimlessness.

In The Living and the Dead the characters' quest for God as the Source of Love takes place in the "marble wasteland" of an already spiritually sterile London which White portrays in terms of darkness. This desolation reveals the futility of man's endeavour to build lasting monuments to obscure his own mortality which is repeatedly underscored by scenes of parting, as for example, Elyot's final farewell of his sister at Victoria Station. The station is not only a point of departure; it is like death in that it terminates one existence and introduces another. Elyot's parting from Eden when she leaves for Spain to take part in the Civil War is

final: "He was turning his back on nothing. There was very little indication now that he would ever see Eden again" (p. 356 : my emphasis).

In addition to assessing the effect of lovelessness in the lives of people, White also examines "how the individual, isolated within his own consciousness, can bridge the gulf between personal experience and the apparently unengageable, menacing world he finds himself in" (Kiernan, 1980 : 18). Such an emotional trauma is revealed in the behaviour of the German Jewess at the start of the novel and in the desperation of the Lady of Czernowitz (Riders in the Chariot : 181) doomed to die in the German gas chambers. The personal unhappiness White portrays is placed midway between the impulse to "withdraw into the self and a sense of the need for engagement with the confusion of modern life" (Kiernan, 1980 : 19).

The Living and the Dead, apart from the theme of lovelessness, should be studied in terms of the contextual synonyms for light and darkness used as metaphors to describe the state of the self. Eden Standish, for example "loses herself in the darkness" (p.172 : my emphasis). White's use of the article emphasises the prevailing state of spiritual vacuousness. Eden is not only overwhelmed by the aura of darkness; she personifies darkness. Even her brother regards her as "the dark street" (p. 172) which seems to have no end. Her nihilistic attitude to life finds its parallel in the darkness surrounding her; so much so, that she becomes promiscuous in her behaviour. It is significant that her enervating love for Joe originates in the working-class which, in White's opinion, has managed to retain a sense of lasting values.

Catherine Standish, when she realises that she is dying, indulges in memories of her past life which "had undergone an abstraction too, become the light and shadow, the sensation of an incident" (p. 329 : my emphasis). Beatson believes that "this necessary black night of the soul occurs to almost all White's major characters" (1980 : 55). The death of the individual is transcended by intuitions of a continued life on an elevated spiritual plane: "Out of this [sense of death] you could feel a purpose forming. Just as she [Catherine] had seen, after refusing, a purpose that formed behind his eyes. It was not a malicious desire to annihilate that cancelled the personal relationship, that bound the earth in its harder seasons. The stripping of the bough was a sacrifice of detail to some ultimate and superior design" (p. 330 : my additions).

All White's elect endure some such "inner" spiritual crisis, a circumstance fundamental to White's Weltanschauung. When, as a result of disillusion with herself and her spurious ideals, Catherine Standish becomes drunk at a sordid party she experiences a moment of epiphany which pointedly describes the suffering and change White's elect experience. Her drunken observation (in vino veritas!) explains the change in the individual that results in a consciousness of the Real Self: " 'But that isn't the worst,' she said, the mouth taking control. 'It's happening inside. It all happens from the inside out' " (p. 326). Only at the end of their lives, when it is too late to bring about any change, do the characters realise that such a conversion enriches the self and brings about a state of grace.

3.1 ELYOT STANDISH

Elyot Standish's spiritual predicament is that he is unwilling to commit himself by obeying the promptings of his esoteric self. Instead he prefers living in a spiritual no man's land. The inert condition of his psyche is comparable to the milieu and devolution of T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land. White places Elyot Standish in the marble wasteland of World War II London, which intensifies his isolation and thoughts of nihilism by its lack of spiritual values and religious inertia.

Elyot has a natural inclination for silence and solitude, preferring to shun the nebulous world around him. As a historian he at first mistakenly believes that he will find the genuine meaning of being in the past: "Upstairs, taking off his clothes, he became suspended, isolated, in the lit box of his own room. It contained the whole of Elyot Standish. _ _ _ he ground his fists against his ears to make for himself a layer of silence against the outer world. Either you began to accept the insignificance of your own activities inside a larger pattern, or it was just plain indifference. Or not this. Indifference implied an end, and this was a period of waiting. You could feel the waiting. For a cataclysm perhaps. All around you there was pointed evidence of your own anachronistic activity" (p. 301 - 303). Elyot's adolescent fear of death and darkness has its origins in Macarthy's sermons. (Macarthy acted as his ward during the war years when the Standish children were moved to the safety of the countryside.)

The degree of Elyot Standish's alienation from society is revealed in his emasculating affair with Muriel Raphael, an equally enclosed and self-protecting personality. The brittleness of their relationship is symbolised by the glass

box Elyot mistakenly believes she gave him as a gift. Sexual intercourse between Elyot and Muriel has as much meaning as the cigarette ash left lying between her breasts (p. 268).

As a young man Elyot intuitively becomes aware of "the shadow in the glass" (p. 135). His vague apprehension of his Real Self is hampered by his latent Oedipal love for his mother (p. 71) to say nothing of his deep-seated longing to return to the safety and forgetfulness of the womb, a state of non-being that reflects his fear of existence: "By the time we become sensitive to it and have become conscious of it, our commitment to being particular persons has been made, the predicament cannot be avoided. We cannot, of our own will, go back to the womb and get out" (Moore, 1984 : 52). It is clear that Elyot clings to the past because he fears fusion with the present.

Elyot's spiritual inertia reveals White's own concern with the psychically negative effects of "parasitic" motherly love, a love David Tacey regards as destructive because it negates any form of individuation. Elyot is brought up by Julia Fallon, a devoted servant. He responds to her loving care because she makes no demands on his exoteric self. When Elyot's mother takes him into her bed to comfort her after discovering her husband's adultery, she arouses sexual emotions in Elyot's feminine exoteric self which adversely influence his subsequent relationships with women. Elyot reveals his fear of the struggle for supremacy between the sexes in his petrified reaction to the quarrels between his parents. He achieves his spiritual freedom only after her death.

Another of the major reasons for Elyot's withdrawal from society is his inability to feel at home in the company of men, the influence of his anima being too powerful. It finds its equivalent in the strong male, but equally sterile animus of Muriel Raphael. Elyot and Muriel experience some rapport because of the feminine "gentleness" she intuitively senses as existing in his self. This esoteric trait in Elyot's psyche compensates for her own "metallic" spiritual inflexibility that functions as a protective shield against the loveless exoteric values of London society.

Elyot can also not relate to Connie Tiarks because she epitomises the spiritually stultifying amorphous values of women who need the security of marriage. She tends to smother his individuality as her exclusively exoteric values are in conflict with his longing for union with his Real Self.

As a young adult Elyot creates a world of fantasy in which he is compelled to grapple with the conflict between his awakening sexuality and his esoteric self. His as yet undeveloped spiritual self surrenders to his already "mature" sexual self when he copulates with Hildegard in the German forest. In Elyot's mind Hildegard assumes the archetypal image of the Harlot. (White compares the influence of such a woman on a man to the constrictive behaviour of a python.) At first Elyot is willing to let Hildegard "possess" him - "He was becoming what she wanted him to become" (p. 125) - because it affords him the same comforting sense of dependence he experienced with his mother. Fortunately his spiritual self asserts its influence over his impending surrender to sexuality and he breaks off his relationship with Hildegard.

Elyot's solitary wanderings as a young man reveal his anxious desire to understand his feelings and emotions: "Leaving behind all sense of geographical ties at Aachen, Elyot Standish found himself floating, placeless, timeless, there was no end to his present or past fluidity, there was no connection between himself and any of the intervening years" (p. 116). The sea, as the archetypal symbol of the origin of being, echoes Elyot's unconscious thoughts while the objects he collects on the shore form images from his collective unconscious to which he feels compelled to give conscious expression, for example through his drawings on the wall of the sea cave: "He gathered the coloured stones. And on the wall of the cave he scratched with a crumbling finger of stone, no particular design, but he liked to draw, he liked to sing to himself as the line became more and more intricate on the surface of the rock" (p. 102). White uses artefacts, in Elyot's case the pebbles, as objective correlatives and mandalas to illustrate his elect's quest for God as the Fount of the Real Self to whom the self eventually returns. The Indian fireball in The Aunt's Story, for example, illustrates Theodora Goodman's inner core of fire, while in The Solid Mandala, Arthur Brown uses his "taws" to explain the psychic complexity of Waldo, Dulcie Feinstein and Mrs Poulter.

The rounded stones Elyot collects at Ard's Bay act as mandalas that suggest his own finite world and self in relation to the immensity and mystery of the universe. They open his consciousness to an awareness of the cosmos. Ard's Bay mirrors his esoteric world - "this separate existence" - in which he feels safe once he has renounced his sexuality and exoteric self. Having discovered "the landscape of the mind" Elyot intentionally isolates himself from his mother, sister and so-called life outside their Ebury Street flat by secluding himself in his "box", working at his historical

research. At this stage of his life he mistakenly believes he will discover the real meaning of being in the passage of time and in the affairs of man. He has yet to learn that the meaning of his existence can only be found within himself: that he can only be re-united with his Real Self and God after having rejected his exoteric self and after having suffered in the country of the mind. Elyot's initial unwillingness to admit the influence of his esoteric self on his attitude to life is revealed in his unfriendly attitude to Eden: "He resented her, as a small but fierce searchlight on many moments that he wanted hidden" (p. 15).

Elyot's spiritual suffering as well as his loneliness is manifest in his appearance. When he takes his final leave of Eden at Victoria Station he already looks like a skeleton: "The light that touched him, the street lights that have no respect for the personal existence, shaved his face down to the bones, left it with the expression of the street faces. The sockets of his eyes were dark. Two empty saucers in the bone" (p. 7). Such a "skull-like" appearance is commonly associated with death and the loss of physical well-being, in White's philosophy essential for the subsequent attainment of spiritual grace. The Tarot card, La Morte, however, has much the same meaning, namely "the end of something, prior to change, destruction leading to transformation, change in consciousness" (MacCormack, 1973 : 59). No longer having any family ties Elyot leaves his "ivory tower", his exoteric self, and moves towards the world of "bread and cheese" where he becomes aware of "a darkness, a distance unfurling. _ _ _ He felt like someone who had been asleep and had only just woken" (p. 358). The "unfurling darkness" suggests his immanent discovery of his divinity and his reunion with the Source of being.

3.2 CATHERINE STANDISH

Brian Kiernan (1980 : 20) regards Catherine Standish as the novel's imaginative centre representing the "great tradition" of rural Victorian England when, by contrast to pre-War England, moral standards were stricter and people seemed to have something to live for.

The reason for Catherine's spiritual dilemma lies in her being associated by blood and marriage to two diametrically opposed levels of society. She was born Kitty Goose, her father being a Norwich harness-maker and her mother the daughter of an Anglican minister. Kitty is excluded from her parents' love for each other at the most receptive stage of her life: "There was no time over for any existence apart _ _ _ . The closed circle of two people in love _ _ _ was one of the first mysteries Kitty Goose had failed to solve" (p. 23). She sublimates her need for love by becoming an avid reader of romance. Her imagination convinces her that "somehow she must learn to suffer" (p. 23) so as to focus attention on herself. In time she becomes so divorced from reality that she is filled with discontent when her unhappiness does not bring the rewards she believed it would. As a quasi-intellectual she rejects her father's advice that "there's a belly as well as a soul" (p. 25). White scorns her hypocrisy: "_ _ _ she was above all a flounderer, this Kitty Goose, this irrelevant figure in a winter landscape" (p.25).

Kitty Goose meets Willy (the use of the diminutive at this stage of his life is significant) Standish at the Society for Arts and Literature. She falls in love with his appearance - "_ _ _ above all, Willy was the tilted hat on summer afternoons" (p. 31) - as well as with what he can offer her in material and social advancement. Although

Willy complements Kitty's adolescent exoteric ambitions, his subsequent disdain of her as an intruder into his milieu leads to their divorce. Kitty's affected behaviour and suspect principles remain a facade throughout her life. Eden, pragmatic and socialistically inclined, understands the truth her mother prefers to ignore. Ironically she develops in a spiritual direction through disenchantment with the values her mother cherishes.

Catherine Standish begins her search for prestige and what she believes is fulfilment by "waiting" for Willy Standish. Waiting is not only the leitmotif of Catherine's life, it is also a self-destructive aspect of her being which underscores her inferiority. The indignity she suffers as a consequence is part of the price she has to pay for betraying her heritage and her spiritual self.

Björkstén (1976 : 33) mistakenly argues that Catherine "develops" towards moral bankruptcy. When Catherine reaches old age she reveals an ironic acceptance of not only her failure in life, but also her death: "But Mrs Standish knew now. It was more than an intuition. It was what she had suspected, dreaded most, this warning of what must follow the period of passive peace of mind" (p. 331). Strangely she shares a unique moment of insight with White's elect who usually discover their Real Selves when they die. Björkstén (1976 : 33) is unfairly harsh when he brands Catherine "the Megaera of a mother who uses the life-blood of her children to ensure her own survival." In contrast to Björkstén, Brian Kiernan has sympathy for Catherine. Even if she does over-indulge in drink and sexuality she does at least live although the "author, like Elyot, seems uncertain how to discover any 'intenser form of livin' and contact with 'the faces in the street' " (Kiernan, 1980 : 17).

Catherine hides her deep-seated sense of insecurity by developing the temperament of a "bower bird" (p. 14). She collects bric-à-brac from upper middle-class life in order to establish her claim in her husband's milieu. White describes her acquired penchant as a "coat of gilt" (p. 14) which forms the tragic aspect of her illusion. Her insecurity enslaves her, with a subsequent loss of independence. This forfeiture separates her from White's other elect whose lives are a long process of individuation through suffering: "You had become that detached shimmer of phosphorescent green on the surface of facts, of events. Some day perhaps would come the bang. Only it was difficult still to believe in bangs" (p. 42). In her moments of anguish Catherine turns to Aubrey Silk, a passionless (androgynous), safe but degrading companion because in his company she seems to become sexless and unfeminine. Silk assumes the role of a fairy godfather to Catherine and Eden.

The War "saves" Willy from Catherine. Discipline and wearing a uniform mature Willy, making him independent: "She [Catherine] looked at what had been Willy Standish, safely now that he was ordering the dinner, at what he had become, this separate existence" (p. 88 : my addition and emphasis). Whereas Willy "grows" towards death, Catherine declines into exoteric eclipse. Willy's rejecting her not only shatters her illusion, it also re-establishes her lower class origins.

Wally Collins, low-class and brash, represents Catherine's final defeat and return to her humble origins. All that remains for her is "one capricious gust of passion between you [Catherine Standish] and what amounted to ultimate extinction" (p. 283 : my addition). The Café Vendôme where

they meet and where Wally plays in the danceband suggests an "underworld" where the spiritually dead meet to feel "like living again" (p. 256).

3.3 EDEN STANDISH

Eden is, by her very name, associated with man's most precious heritage, lost forever by his disobedience and subsequent fall from grace. Her name suggests her mother's intuitive longing for grace and a re-establishment of her former relationship with her husband.

Whereas Elyot is withdrawn and non-committal, Eden, as an adolescent, is waspishly outspoken and highly critical of her mother, her brother and societal values in general: "She was darker, smaller than the boy [Elyot]. Her small, intense face wrinkled often in emotional storms. You were conscious early of her watching eyes" (p. 64 : my addition).

There is no love lost between Eden and Elyot. She regards her brother with contempt, so much so that even as a child, he felt like killing her. They represent two metaphorically conflicting worlds: "Eden" and "The Waste Land" joined in an incompatible blood relationship. Eden is described in terms of a different and distant shore: "And the hair, the heavy, black fringe, drenching the shore of the white face, was new, done in this different way" (p. 142) and "this foreign country under the black fringe, was still delicate ground," (p. 143 : my emphasis) thus consolidating the idea that there is "another Eden" just as, in The Aunt's Story, there is "another Meroë".

Eden possesses an inner fire Elyot lacks. In this respect she resembles Theodora Goodman in The Aunt's Story who also has an inner core of suppressed violence, explaining her affinity for the black, volcanic hills of Meroë. Dutton (1971 : 11), considering the title of the novel, The Living and the Dead, believes Eden is the only character who is alive. She does not know how to employ her gift of "awareness" until after the death of Joe Barnett. Dutton believes society has marked her for destruction, because she does not behave as convention demands.

Eden's disillusion with sex as a mere act of copulation nudges her into the eddies of spiritual devolution. Her esoteric self is, however, revitalised through suffering, love and an intuitive awareness of her spiritual destiny. Her final departure from England is more than just a break with her environment and family (Dutton, 1971 : 9). In time she becomes filled with compassion for "a sick world mewing at the window-pane, lying with its guts frozen on the sea wall" (p. 277). She wishes to devote herself to some "ultimate and superior design" (p. 330). It is ironical that Eden should become aware of her mission in life through political commitment to a cause characterised by its very cruelty.

Like so many of White's elect, Eden firstly undergoes a process of physical "erosion" before she intuits that there is "some other way" (p. 354) to give meaning to her life: "The arch enemies were the stultifying, the living dead. The living chose to oppose these, either in Eden's way, by the protest of self-destruction or by what, if not an intenser form of living" (p. 354). White grants such a "form of living" only to those who know real love and not lust. Patricia Morley (1972 : 50) explains that Eden Standish and Joe Barnett come "to grips with death and suffering" and

that this experience results in "their leaving the stage" of the dead (London). Morley's statement that Eden is right because she associates with the right people is true of the latter stage of her life when she has already endured a measure of suffering and experienced the spiritually beneficent influence of her exoteric self. Only when she departs on her "pilgrimage" to Spain does she reveal her inner self, suggested by the casual mention of the tear in her glove, which also implies "candour and the frank disclosure of one's mind" (Cirlot, 1971 : 119).

Eden's significant physical and spiritual suffering begins when she leaves school and meets Maynard, a below-average and self-pitying architect with an undeveloped exoteric self. He gains her sympathy for his personal woes and traps her in an involuntary sexual relationship. Eden finds sex unpleasant and disillusioning: "Then her hands touched sheets. This then was sex, the rumpled bed, the sense of aching nausea, the dead weight" (p. 155). In an attempt to escape from her "nausea", her esoteric self attempts to transcend her exoteric self: "She reached out through years, upon her back, through the leaves of trees, and the sound of still, basking water, to the state of physical perfection" (p. 155), to when there was still an Eden. She becomes so disillusioned with sex that she believes there is "much of the dog's attitude in the relationship of women with men" (p. 159). White believes, as revealed in Voss, that spiritual fulfilment can only be achieved in the spiritual union of a man and a woman, because such a synthesis sharpens man's awareness of his better nature and the cosmic, spiritual nature of being. Eden's rebellion against her victimisation is the archetypal female lament against male dominance, the darker powers of the flesh and the

misuse of the female body. Maynard, despite his academic training, shows less understanding of the female psyche than the uncouth Wally Collins.

Eden's unwanted pregnancy increases her loneliness and disillusion with life. Her decision to abort the child is a purely pragmatic one. The removal of the foetus ends her youthful period of relative equanimity. It thus becomes evident that Eden's crises of development fall into two parts, each one encapsulated with a male (Walsh, 1976 : 14). Her spiritual conflict, commanded by her sense of loss and reflected in the winter weather, causes her to walk the streets of London: "She walked hatless, untidily. She walked this way every evening, there were the shops she knew, and the faces, the Italians and the Indians, that became a part of this period of transit, of transformation, of growing foreign to herself, like the dark and just not rational Indian face above the Bombay duck" (p. 156).

Having subjected her body to a second "rape" Eden's feelings of shame, disgust and loss drive her away from her spiritual inclinations into an orgy of promiscuity. She attempts to destroy her very existence through sexual masochism: "Out of these and the numb mind, she would grow again, she felt, not so much herself, this was immaterial, but what she would do. The transient pain in her body, the little whimper for the lost and finally regretted child, waking in her some emotional theme she wanted to express, she lost herself in the darkness" (p. 172). White comes to her rescue by filling the void in her spiritual self with the wholesomeness of Joe Barnett.

Eden's growing love for Joe Barnett fills her with a missionary-like zeal to save the world from the darkness that almost destroyed her: "This is what I have to express,

with you, anyone, with everyone who has the same conviction. But passionately, Joe. We were not born to indifference. Indifference denies all the evidence of life. This is what I want to believe. I want to unite those who have the capacity for living, in any circumstance, and make it the one circumstance. I want to oppose them to the destroyers, to the dealers in words, to the diseased, to the most fatally diseased - the indifferent. That can be the only order _ _ _ And there is no limit to man" (p. 254 : my emphasis).

In contrast to Elyot, Eden's suffering teaches her to disregard the past. In her adult awareness of her esoteric self, she realises that consensus being is mainly selfish and dishonest, that man must have some commitment to grow spiritually. Joe's death commits her to carrying on his message of love and dedication to spiritual values. Thus her departure from England is a form of rebirth and an exodus from the "wasteland" of London.

Eden discovers her Real Self when she is alone in the country and feels the "heartbeat" of a tree. This moment of epiphany links her to the earth and God by the symbolic vertical lines of the tree. Northrop Frye (1971 : 119) explains that when we pass into anagogy " nature becomes, not the container, but the thing contained, and the archetypal universal symbols, the city, the garden, the quest, the marriage, are no longer the desirable forms that man constructs inside nature, but are themselves the form of nature. Nature is now inside the mind of an infinite man who builds his cities of out the Milky Way."

X X X

The Living and the Dead is characterised by a deadening of spiritual certainty in the lives of its characters. They are all negatively influenced by inherited and self-inflicted consensus values of which self-deception and spiritual devolution are major traits. The characters' suffering is rooted in the conflict between a youthful desire to conform to the deceptive norms of society on the one hand and their awakening disillusion with these norms on the other.

X X X

The loneliness resulting from the rejection of the exoteric self as a prerequisite for discovering the Real Self is the theme for White's next novel, The Aunt's Story, a theme complicated by bisexuality, hermaphroditism and the soul-destroying conflict between the feminine self (the exoteric) and the masculine self (the esoteric).

4.0 THE AUNT'S STORY

The Aunt's Story concerns the spiritual anguish of one woman, Theodora Goodman, who embodies much of White's own life in her contra-relations with her mother and those men and women who are unable to understand her unsocial nature or sense her quest for her Real Self.

Theodora Goodman is an extremely complex character burdened by archetypal symbols, psychic aberrations, hermaphroditic attributes, thoughts of matricide, guilt, loneliness, sadness, loss and social exclusion that are hardly credible. In the hands of a lesser craftsman than White she would have been surreal. Her spiritual predicament is reflected in the epigraph to Part One of the novel: "She thought of the narrowness of the limits within which a human soul may speak and be understood by its nearest of mental kin, of how soon it reaches that solitary land of the individual experience, in which no fellow footfall is ever heard" (Epigraph to Part One of The Aunt's Story). Her only link with society is being an aunt.

Theodora is an outsider with an intuitive awareness beyond her consciousness and so particularly suited to undertake a quest "to discover ultimate reality" (Kiernan, 1980 : 23). Such a self-sacrificing quest, complicated by her subjectivity, cannot be undertaken by spiritually bourgeois people whose lives are "a 'charade' which denies the ambiguous forces of life that break through in fire, war and sexual passion" (Kiernan, 1980 : 31). As a young, spiritually immature woman, Theodora wishes her life could be like that of the cadre mentioned by Kiernan. As she matures she painfully divorces herself from the self-destroying power of consensus truth.

The "real" Theodora Goodman is enclosed within a shell composed of many conflicting selves. Her life-struggle is to free her Real Self from the maze of values that constitute life. Although she is a woman as regards her gender, her appearance and behaviour reveal several typically masculine traits. She has, for example, a faint moustache and walks like a man. She is seen by others as "some bloke in skirts" (p. 70). The solution to her gender problem seems to be in an androgynous state: "Theodora can thus be seen as among the first in a series of White an hermaphrodites" (Bliss, 1986 : 47).

It is only in her late forties that Theodora understands that her ultimate goal in life is to destroy her ego: "So it will not be by these [religious] means, Theodora said, that the great monster Self will be destroyed, and that desirable state achieved, which resembles, one would imagine, nothing more than air or water" (p. 134). Theodora at first attempts to liberate her Real Self from exoteric influences by repeated "murders" of her many selves. She, for example, shoots the little red hawk which is the alter ego of her own destructive self. She has a feeling of empathy for the bird and equates herself with its fierce, fearless independence. She "becomes" the bird just as she "becomes" the charade-like characters she conjures up in the Jardin Exotique. She does not want Frank Parrot to kill the bird because she does not wish to "surrender" her inner self to his inbred male prejudice against women. Theodora does not forget the hawk or its significance in her life: "After that Theodora often thought of the little red hawk she had so deliberately shot. I was wrong, she said, but I shall continue to destroy myself, right down to the last of my several selves" (p. 74).

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The first line of the novel, "But old Mrs Goodman did die at last" (p. 11), is the answer to Theodora Goodman's own unhappy question on her mother's longevity and harrassment of her strange daughter. The phrase "at last" reveals not only that it is a much desired event, but also suggests the smouldering antipathy that existed between Julia Goodman and Theodora. Death, ironically, is seldom a sad event in the novels of Patrick White. It usually affords some form of release or relief for the living. Theodora feels no sorrow to the extent that she does not know how to behave in the presence of her mother's corpse. Although the old woman's death brings to an end a particularly traumatic phase of Theodora's life, she still has to come to terms with and free herself from the insidious influences that emanated from her mother.

She cannot, for example, continue living in the house she occupied with her mother in Sydney because it is too "thin" and holds too many memories, not least of which is her momentary urge to murder her mother. The kitchen knife Theodora thought of using to commit the murder becomes a symbol of cruelty, sacrifice and revenge. References to the knife run through the novel like a tenuous thread continually linking Theodora to her past. Theodora even relates it to the paper-knife Julia Goodman used to rap her knuckles with when she made mistakes during her music lessons. Theodora's feelings of guilt exorcise, through suffering, the core of evil in her own self.

Theodora and Meroë, the homestead where Theodora grew up, are synonymous. Among the black volcanic hills surrounding the house, Theodora manages to avoid uncomprehending and

hurtful people. The black hills and the pine trees that are "always a stirring and murmuring and brooding vague discontent" (p. 22) parallel Theodora's nature. At the end of her quest, which takes place in America, she finds fulfillment in similar surroundings. Julia Goodman and Fanny, Theodora's sister, in contrast, are unhappy at Meroë because they cannot live in tune with natural surroundings. They are too materialistic. Their antagonism towards Theodora stems from their unfounded suspicion that she has "something" they lack.

George Goodman, avid reader of myths and victim of his wife's unpredictable moods, once tells Theodora that there is another Meroë which promises escape from the present: " 'There is another Meroë _ _ _ a dead place, in the black country of Ethiopia,' _ _ _ In this dead place that father had described the roses were brown as paper bags, the curtains were ashy on their rings, the eyes of the house had closed" (p. 25). Theodora cannot imagine "her place" existing somewhere else. She fears her uncertain future when her Meroë will also turn to dust. The reference to her own mortality is clear.

Theodora's possessive love for Meroë changes the yellow stone of the homestead to gold. The feeling of contentment she experiences at Meroë is one of its attributes: "There was peace of mind enough on Meroë. You could feel it, whatever it was, and you were not certain, but in your bones" (p. 26). It is therefore not surprising that when Theodora comes to the end of her stay at the Hotel du Midi she should feel the urge to return to "Abyssinia", the Meroë in that country having become confused with the Meroë of her childhood. It is ironic that the appearance of the place

she longs to return to should resemble the traditional image of a wasteland. The change in appearance is most likely allied to the change in her sense of values.

The duality of White's elect is reflected in the duality of the two, vastly different Meroës. Carolyn Bliss (1986 : 38) points out that the Goodman garden with its "epoch of roselight" (p. 15) is situated on the southern side of the house: "On the north is its complement: the pines, which express by their ceaseless 'motion' a 'brooding and vague discontent', and beyond them the dead abstractions of trees with their roots in Ethiopia' " (Bliss, 1986 : 38).

It is at Meroë that George Goodman poses a question that not only influences the nature of Theodora's quest but, at the same time, pinpoints the root cause of much of her unhappiness:

" 'But at Meroë I shall be free,' Theodora said. 'Free?' said Father. 'Free from what?' Handing it back on a plate of air" (p. 62).

Theodora's idea of freedom is as yet limited to being liberated from the entanglements of a young girl's life as well as the malice of women like Una Russell: "It was both desolate and soothing to sit on the black hill. There are certain landscapes in which you can see the bones of the earth. And this was one. You could touch your own bones, which is to come a little closer to truth" (p. 63). Theodora does not yet understand that her father's idea of freedom implies a liberation of his Real Self from the demands imposed on it by society and circumstances.

As a child, ignorant of the hostile world beyond Meroë, Theodora finds much pleasure in the rose-garden her mother had planted as a whim and proof of her authority: "She said from her sofa, let there be roses, and there were, in clay carted specially from a very great distance. For a moment it gave Mrs Goodman a feeling of power to put the roses there. But the roses remained as a power and an influence in themselves long after Mrs Goodman's feeling had gone" (p. 22).

The rose-garden suggests Theodora's youthful innocence and stands in sharp contrast to the cacti of the "Jardin Exotique" she visits as an elderly spinster who has experienced almost the full spectrum of life. The manner in which Theodora and her mother react to the rose-garden - "She [Theodora] ran, slowed, walking now alone, where she could hear a golden murmur of roses" (p. 22 : my addition) and "Theodora I forbid you to touch the roses" (p. 23) - reveals not only the nature of the conflict between them, but their different approaches to life. Whereas Theodora's enjoyment of the garden verges on the transcendent, Julia Goodman's attitude is selfish, materialistic and uncomprehending.

The beauty of the rose-garden is, however, merely a facade, an analogue for the patinated appearance of a spiritually vacuous society. The grub Theodora finds in a rose represents not only the brevity of beauty but the Great Destroyer as well. Mrs Goodman is related to the grub by her destructive nature. In time Theodora acknowledges the "grub's" presence in all aspects of life. Her personal grub - "But she could not condemn her pale and touching grub. She could not subtract it from the sum total of the garden" (p. 23) - is her hermaphroditic nature that has not yet become so insidious as to imperil her youthful, exoteric happiness.

In contrast to her loveless relationship with her mother, Theodora has strong ties with her father who is one of the quiet, wife-emasculated husbands in Patrick White's novels. The nature of their relationship and the essence of Goodman's self are suggested by the pine trees (foreign to Australia) where they often walked together. Like the pines, George Goodman does not belong in those surroundings. His study of Greek mythology has divorced him from his present circumstances and he, like a schizophrenic, emulates the life of Ulysses: "More actual even than the dream of actuality was the perpetual odyssey on which George Goodman was embarked, on which the purple water swelled beneath the keel, rising and falling like the wind in pines in the blue shore of Ithaca" (p. 69). Unlike the Greek hero he never returns "home" to Ithaca: " 'In the end,' his voice said, out of the pines, 'I did not see it' " (p. 89).

Theodora and her father, especially when they go out hunting, both experience a separate existence in which silence plays an important part: "Anyway, carrying the rifle, she was free _ _ _ . He respected silence, and besides, whether it was summer or winter, the landscape was more communicative than people talking" (p. 34). It is during the moments of transcendence among the black, volcanic hills of Meroë that Theodora experiences the "detached eye" (p. 26) a noncommittal and apparently uninvolved Life Force. Peter Beatson writes that this experience "rewards [her] for [her] perseverance up to this point [in her life], lifts [her] for a moment onto a higher plane where [she] glimpses the numinous world behind the forms of nature, and then drops [her] back into the stream of becoming" (1976, 78 : my additions).

Towards the end of his life, George Goodman withdraws into his private self, leaving Theodora without his moral support: "If you went inside, Father was sitting with his chin on his chest, looking at books. He would sit like this for many hours, only his breath lifting his beard, as steady as a tree" (p. 24). He is no longer "Father", merely an old man. His spiritual retreat into his esoteric self increases Theodora's loneliness, especially in the face of Julia Goodman's malice. Theodora's sorrow at his death is as much for herself as for him: "Mother, I am dead, I am dead. Meroë has crumbled" (p. 89). The manner in which Theodora kneels at her father's knees when he has passed away, sets the scene for her kneeling at the feet of Holstius who is to a remarkable degree an image of her father.

Theodora Goodman's being generally regarded as "ugly" in comparison to her sister Fanny adds to her unhappiness.

Frank Parrott, who cannot understand why he is attracted to Theodora, says, "God, Theodora is ugly. _ _ _ These days she certainly looks a fright" (p. 118) and "Her ugly mug, that was always about to ask something that you could not answer" (p. 16). His outburst reveals overtones of anger at his exoteric self's inability to develop beyond the parameters of group conditioning. Julia Goodman's obvious favouritism of Fanny causes Theodora intense pain: "Fanny, my roses, my roses, you are very pretty" (p. 28). Theodora, in contrast, is "yellow" and dull: "But I don't think we'll let you wear yellow again, because it doesn't suit, even in a sash. It turns you sallow" (p. 29).

The Goodmans once brought home from abroad a brass filigree Indian fireball. Now empty of the fire it once contained, it becomes the children's plaything. As a symbol it resembles White's elect who, despite an unattractive ex-

terior, have a hidden "core of fire" that may flame unexpectedly. Beatson adds that "the world of Patrick White burns constantly with an inner fire. It is a fire that bursts out from time to time in moments of intense joy or suffering. It is the fire of inner life, of the emotions, which expresses both the torment and hidden poetry of the individual. It is also the fire of the soul whose sufferings are purgatorial, whose poetry is finally transformed into revelation" (1976 : 141).

Theodora Goodman is intensely aware of her "molten core" and its parallel to the fireball. Once, for example, her soul flames out from her inner self during a church service: "Theodora's own soul opened and flamed with the light that burst through the dragon's wounds" (p. 58). When she understands her own self better she admits that she has a "core of evil" (p. 126) within her. Peter Beatson believes that this inner core of fire "arouses and expresses the capacity of the Unique One to experience an intensity of emotion, both good and bad, unknown to others. Beneath Theodora Goodman's unprepossessing exterior is a hidden passion, just as the ugly landscape of Meroë or the battered Indian ball contain a secret fire of which she alone is aware" (1976 : 141). Beatson adds that the inner fire in the elected character is an essential part of White's novels: "It is a fire that bursts out from time to time in moments of intense joy or suffering. It is the fire of inner life, of the emotions, which expresses both the torment and hidden poetry of the individual. It is also the fire of the soul whose sufferings are purgatorial, whose poetry is finally transformed into revelation" (1976 : 141). When the Hotel du Midi burns down the fire purges Theodora's mind and being of the core of evil she believes she once had in her.

In portraying Theodora's growth towards individuation the reader's attention is focused on a number of significant incidents in the life of Theodora as a young girl. These incidents in which unusual visitors figure prominently seem to suggest that her life and suffering have been predestined. One such incident is the visit by the Syrian Hawker whom Gertie Stepper calls Ali Baba. The silver-coloured shawl (a symbol of illusion) the hawker displays is beautiful and gains the bystanders' admiration until Gertie Stepper points out the Syrian's deceit: "How it [the shawl] blew in the winter wind! It streamed like a fall of silver water from the Syrian's hand", and then the "splendid shawl that everyone had pushed to see was a poor, ragged, flapping thing that fell. It lay exposed on the hard ruts. The Eastern shawl had a hole in the corner, which the Syrian had held hidden in his hand" (p. 31 : my addition). The effect of the Syrian's presence and the shawl on Theodora is transcendent: "Her hair flew. She had increased. She walked outside a distinct world, on which the grass quivered with a clear moisture, and the earth rang" (p. 31). This experience is Theodora's first intimation of "another world", a spiritual one, existing within the familiar, unhappy one she knows. Her moments of transcendence, immediately after the hawker's visit, suggest the ultimate state of grace she will achieve once her esoteric self has been re-united with her Real Self.

Another important event in Theodora Goodman's life takes place on her twelfth birthday when she is knocked down as lightning strikes a tree near which she is standing. Theodora loved the tree and even slept under it. One night she had a dream in which she was under the tree with a faceless person who at the end of her quest becomes Holstius. In traditional symbolism a tree symbolises a rooted family life and has a bisexual nature (Cirlot, 1971 : 349).

Theodora's loss of unity with her family and society foreshadows Theodora's odyssey away from the place she loves and where, she believes, she belongs. The destruction of the tree by lightning thus indicates that the problem of Theodora's bisexual nature will have to be "overcome" before her esoteric self is re-united with her Real Self.

David Tacey (1977 : 38) equates Theodora's tree with the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. He believes that when the tree is destroyed, Theodora unconsciously becomes aware of the duality of being and the dark powers of her unconscious self. The lightning, says Tacey, may be equated with the flaming sword mentioned in Genesis keeping the suffering mortal from a Paradisal state. It is significant that when the lightning "trembles" in Theodora she is intuitively afraid of what is to come: "In all that she did not know there was this certainty. She began to feel that knowing this [the man's return] might be the answer to many of the mysteries. And she felt afraid for what was prepared" (p. 48). It is thus feasible to equate the lightning with a momentary flash of illumination and Theodora is afraid of what she might perceive.

It is Theodora's awakening awareness of another dimension of being that causes her to attach particular meaning to the unexpected visit to Meroë of the Man who was Given his Dinner. The stranger seems to know a great deal and his presence "made the walls dissolve, the stone walls of Meroë, as flat as water, so that the people sitting inside were now exposed" (p. 43). The visitor has a "beard, like a prophet, greyer than Father's, thick and big" (p. 143) and the effect of his presence and appearance on Theodora is so intense that he resembles Holstius, the mystic figure who teaches Theodora to accept the fragmentation of her being. Later, when Theodora has become an alien to society, she

remembers the visit of the Man who was Given his Dinner and how, at the time, she was "infused with a warmth of love that was most thinly separated from expectation of sorrow" (p. 288). The man's departure from Meroë leaves Theodora with the feeling that she has lost an ally in her search "to know everything" (p. 41).

One day Theodora, feeling herself threatened by "a great spreading shadow, which grew and grew" (p. 39) impulsively lies down in the warm, brown water of the creek that flows through Meroë: "She took off her clothes. She would lie in the water. And soon her thin brown body was the shallow, browner water. She would not think. She would drift. As still as a stick. And as thin" (p. 40 : my emphasis). Her merging with the water is not only an intuitive form of baptism, it also reveals her unconscious desire to return to the womb to be eventually reborn into another existence, far removed from the unhappiness she experiences. By immersing herself in water Theodora "flows" with the collective unconsciousness of all time. Later in her life, when she has come to terms with her being she understands that the "beginning of all things" (p. 289) is in water: "She swept back a dark shadow from her face with her quite solid hand. Out of the rusted tin welled the brown circles of perpetual water, stirring with great gentleness the eternal complement of skeleton and spawn" (p. 296).

When Theodora leaves Meroë to attend school at Spofforths she is uprooted from empathetic surroundings and subjected to contempt and loneliness. She cannot share in the other girls' idle chatter about husbands and marriage for the sake of financial security. Her bisexual nature even raises some questions about her friendship with Violet Adams. The two girls are kindred souls only as regards their solitariness. Theodora cannot truthfully respond to Violet's overtures of

friendship. Although she warms to Violet out of gratitude, there are times when she prefers "to risk the darkness and walk alone" (p. 59). Violet, for example, could never become a part of Meroë: "Because she did not feel there was much connection between Violet Adams and Meroë. _ _ _ There was no connection at all" (p. 59).

Thoughts about religion begin to enter Theodora's mind during her stay at Spofforths. Religion is as yet less compelling than the mystery of her own being. She does not feel the need to pray, because she has not yet developed her esoteric self to such a degree that she has become aware of the reality of God. She does, however, question her existence when in a moment of anguish she cries out, "Why, God, am I this?" (p. 72). During one of the tedious church services the pupils of Spofforths have to attend, Theodora discovers a dead crow, "folded neatly and decently as a soul should be" (p. 58). In Christian symbolism (Cirlot, 1971 : 71) the crow is a symbol of solitude and it seems right that Theodora should accept it as her totem.

Miss Spofforth's analysis of Theodora's dilemma as an outsider is remarkable for its accuracy and insight. As one of White's elect Miss Spofforth could explain a great deal about life and being to Theodora, but in White's canon the wisdom gained through suffering cannot be communicated. There is no short cut, via others, to a knowledge of the finite and infinite. White's elect may well recognise one another, but they cannot share their exclusively individual and private experiences. Miss Spofforth could even have predicted Theodora's fate as an outsider - which is incidentally White's own view of life:

"And she sighed. Because she would have offered this girl her wisdom and her kindness, of which really Miss Spofforth had much. She would have touched her hand and said: Theodora, I shall tell you the truth. Probably you will never marry. We are not the kind. You will not say the things they want to hear, flattering their vanity and their strength, because you will not know how, instinctively, and because it would not flatter you. But there is much that you will experience. You will see clearly, beyond the bone. You will grow up probably ugly, and walk through life in sensible shoes. Because you are honest, and because you are barren, you will be both honoured and despised. You will never make a statue, nor write a poem. Although you will be torn by all the agonies of music, you are not creative. You have not the artist's vanity, which is moved finally to express itself in objects. But there will be moments of passing affection, through which the opaque world will become transparent, and of such a moment you will be able to say - my dear child" (p. 66).

It is thus Theodora's fate, as one of White's elect, to "grow" away from the sensuous life and surroundings of the wealthy towards the dry and barren regions where the bare earth is revealed and where she will be able to "touch [her] own bones, which is to come a little closer to truth" (p. 63). Because of her introverted nature, Theodora finds herself more at ease among pieces of furniture which have a form of reality and honesty lacking in people (p. 75). People and their houses confine her soul in its search for

freedom. On the evening of the Parrott's dance, for example, she prefers moving outside in the dark to mingling with people. White emphasises the colours of the dress she wears to this party in order to stress her dissociation: "She was dark and upright in her bright striped dress, the red, the yellow, and the black. Her eyes burned the eyes" (p. 77). In these colours Theodora represents the essence of Meroë and her own inner core of fire. Her tense behaviour reveals the stress she endures to cope with the volatile nature of her emotions. The moment Frank asks Theodora to dance with him they seem to lose control over themselves, transcending their immediate surroundings. Respectively representing the conflicting exoteric and esoteric forces in man they appear intent on destroying each other:

"She touched his arm, and they danced. She was close to his breathing, close to his fire, to the short fierce hairs on his close neck. And the music took them and flung them, the cool and relentless music that they entered, to lose control, that they did not question. Inside the dictatorial stream they were pressed into a dependence on each other that was important _ _ _ the proud striped skirt of Theodora streamed with fire. Her body bent to the music. Her face was thin with music, down to the bone. She was both released from her own body and imprisoned in the molten gold of Frank Parrott _ _ _ and it was something strange and wonderful that they saw, also shameful, because they did not understand" (p. 79).

The power of Theodora's spiritual energy dominates Frank's lesser being.

In Patrick White's novels music provides an uplifting, even orgasmic awakening, an awareness of man's finiteness. It is never merely mechanical, as Julia Goodman would have it. Vernon Young (1948 : 36) and John Beston (1972 : 36) agree that Theodora substitutes music and dancing for sexual intercourse. In this way she manages to gain a measure of fulfilment and communion with her esoteric self without having to sacrifice her freedom by committing her self to another being. The people at the Parrott's party sense that something "shameful" takes place between Theodora and Frank. After the dance Frank, who has involuntarily ventured far beyond his normal spiritual awareness, falls back into his "common" body. He is not, unlike Theodora, prepared to destroy one of his spiritually encumbering selves. Frank fails to live up to Theodora's expectations. She realises anew that it is better "to be a stick" (p. 80), a part of the natural world.

Theodora's sexuality also responds to the influence of the moon as a sexual symbol. The moon, which, in White's novels, participates in the individual experience as it encounters carnality in its many forms (Beatson, 1976 : 157) shines brightly on the night Theodora Goodman waits for Frank Parrott under the apricot tree. In her isolation Theodora feels old and oracular, almost as if she does not belong there. Her sexual nature, aroused by the influence of the full moon, longs to gain fulfilment and communion from the expected encounter with Frank Parrott, but she understands, in the light of her intuition of another world within this one and from what happened at the dance, that it is not to be.

Although Theodora cannot love Frank Parrott she gives him her affection in the same way she would pet a dog: "She unbent inside and stroked him as if he had been a dog's head offering itself out of the darkness" (p. 84). Had she touched the bones of his hands she would have revealed her hidden self and would have confessed her anguish to him. The fumbling spiritual contact between their souls ends in an anticlimax when Frank Parrott fails to respond to Theodora's esoteric self, leaving her "impotent as the tree" (p. 85). After this emotional nadir, Theodora becomes "thin and yellow" (p. 87), because her attempt at establishing a meaningful communion with another being has failed, leaving her even more isolated than before. Frank's proposal to Fanny after his unnerving experience with Theodora is a mere formality, devoid of any real spiritual meaning.

The failure of Theodora's "romantic" encounter with Frank paradoxically enables her to repress her sexual self. The conquest of her Real Self over her exoteric self follows after the fire that not only destroys the Hotel du Midi, but also Weatherby and Lieselotte who through their libidinous behaviour (p. 254) symbolise Theodora's sexual self.

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The Meroë stage of Theodora's life comes to an end with the death of her father. Her sense of loss and subsequent loneliness leave their mark on her well-being: "She was thin as grey light, as if she had just died. She would not wake the others. It was still too terrible to tell, too private an experience" (p. 89). Her spiritual desolation is increased when Meroë falls into the hands of Una Russell who is her antithesis. Una Russell, by her materialism,

desecrates everything with which she comes into contact. Theodora never again belongs anywhere until she finds eventual peace in the "country of the mind".

Julia Goodman becomes even more demanding and cantankerous after the death of her husband. Her relationship with Theodora is made intolerable by her belief that Theodora is withholding something from her. White compares Julia Goodman to Calypso and Circe because of her efforts to change Theodora: "And like the cannibal Laestrygonians, Mrs Goodman aspires to consume Theodora's heart and soul, to lock them 'in a little box' [p. 96] upon which Mrs Goodman's words will beat as regularly as an African drum" (Morley, 1972 : 74).

Theodora finds no peace for her restless and confined soul during her stay in Sydney. A drunken soldier sums up the unhappy state of her spiritual self when he remarks, "You are walkin', sis, as if you didn't expect no end" (p. 94). It is ironical that White, despite the injunction "in vino veritas", should use drunkenness as a door to insight and understanding of not only the drunken soldier's own plight, but also that of others.

The "thin" house in which Theodora and her mother live in Sydney contrasts with Theodora's experience of expanding worlds and her consciousness of her self. The spiritually confining effect the house has on Theodora is aggravated by the view she has of Moreton Bay: "we have a view across the bay, which is full of delightful dancing boats" (p. 90). The inference to Ulysses' desire to sail away once again in search of a meaningful existence is clear. When Theodora sees the straw from the packing cases she visualises a "sea of pines _ _ _ hinting at some Odyssey from which there was

no return" (p. 93). She "cultivated a vision of distance, _ _ _ even when she walked close, under fire from scarlet salvia" (p. 100).

Even though Theodora, like Elyot Standish in The Living and the Dead, feels inclined to withdraw even further from the company of people and deeper into her self, the "thin" house and her mother's unpleasant company force her out onto "common" ground where she becomes involved in the lives of others, especially of soldiers whose need for confession and understanding is almost as great as her own. Under these desperate circumstances her plain appearance is no longer a barrier to conversation.

Huntly Clarkson, a solicitor and one of the people Theodora becomes involved with, plays an important role in her life before she leaves Australia on a prolonged European tour. She finds him attractive, her esoteric self responding to his unconscious need for a spiritually meaningful existence. Theodora, despite her inclination to accept his offer of marriage, refuses so that she can continue her quest for her Real Self. She ends their relationship at the Agricultural Show where she humiliates Huntly and his companion by her display of shooting ability: "They all gathered, watched, spoke, but they were speaking now at a door that had closed tight, leaving them embarrassed and surprised. They did not know what any of this might signify" (p. 124). Theodora wins a Kewpie doll, a prize she refuses because it reminds her of her sterile and loveless life.

When Theodora shoots the clay ducks - "Now she stood in the smell of flint and powdered flesh, from which the world of Huntly Clarkson had receded, and she took aim at the clay heads of the jerking ducks. She took aim, and the dead, white, discarded moment fell shattered, the duck bobbed

headless" (p. 124) - she is unconsciously destroying the last vestiges of herself as a public figure, the wife of a respected citizen. In the fantastic world of the Jardin Exotique she acts the part of Ludmilla, turning destruction upon herself, imagining she has been killed by Russian revolutionaries.

Theodora meets Moraïtis, a famous Greek musician, at one of Huntly Clarkson's parties. They share an immediate sense of empathy because they are "compatriots in the country of the bones" (p. 113). The similarity between Meroë and Peloponnesse acts as a further bond, placing them on a higher level of spiritual existence than those who neither know the country of the bones, nor death and suffering.

Moraïtis tells Theodora, "It is not necessary to see things _ _ _ If you know" (p. 113). This pronouncement relates to Theodora's childhood wish to know everything (p. 41). The fact that she is able to grasp and apply the full meaning of his wisdom to events in her life shows how far she has come along the road to an understanding of being and individuation. She does not need to go to Moraïtis' concerts because she already "knows" what she will experience. She "knows" every aspect of her life with Moraïtis because she has already experienced it in her imagination. She understands that knowing is not gratis: "And yet, for the pure abstract pleasure of knowing there was a price paid" (p. 114), namely her exclusion from the deceitful security of society.

As in the relationship between Theodora and Frank Parrott, music is once again the link between herself and Moraïtis, the important difference being that her union with Moraïtis takes place on a metaphysical plane. White's description of the 'cello music and Theodora's experience of it is one of the most dynamic and meaningful pieces of prose in all his

works. Theodora becomes the 'cello and the music their sexual communion and fulfilment: "The 'cello rocked, she saw. She could read the music under his flesh. She was close. He could breathe into her mouth. He filled her mouth with long aching silences between the deeper notes that reached down into her body" (p. 116). After the concert during which their "union" took place, Theodora's sense of "conception" and fulfilment adds to her spiritual awareness of life's forces: "This thing which had happened between Moraitis and herself she held close, like a woman holding her belly" (p. 117). The music resembles Theodora's life. At first it is "full of touching, simple shapes, but because of their simplicity and their purity they bordered on the dark and tragic and were threatened with destruction by the violins" (p. 116).

Having experienced a unique spiritual union as well as a fulfilment of her Real Self, Theodora believes "existence [has] justified itself" (p. 117 : my addition), especially when Fanny, now married and living at Audley, writes to Theodora to tell her that she is pregnant and ask if Theodora would like to help her with the child. From the moment Theodora first holds her surrogate baby she is a changed person. She is now "exempt from the painful, spiny conditions of ordinary life" (Walsh, 1970 : 92). Her love for the child makes even her "stone" figure beautiful: "So Theodora loved the child. Theodora became beautiful as stone, in her stone arms the gothic child" (p. 119).

The resemblance between Theodora and her niece, Lou Parrott, is remarkable. Lou seems to "imbibe" Theodora's features and alien nature. Theodora, like Miss Spofforth, cannot pass on to Lou the wisdom of being she has gained through suffering which is what a mother would want to do for her child. The initial estrangement in their relationship comes

when Theodora goes to Europe. The final severance occurs when Lou attaches herself to Sister Mary Perpetua. Lou's "betrayal" causes Theodora to break entirely with the familiar world. Lou had been her only "lifeline" (p. 137). In her loneliness Theodora had consoled herself by saying: "I am an aunt _ _ _ . I suppose there is at least that" (p. 131). The child is the parent's link with the future; once it is severed there is only the present, the past and the self for the parent.

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The Jardin Exotique section of The Aunt's Story is the most profound and perplexing section of the novel. It comprises a kaleidoscope of impressions from Theodora's unconscious mind. As a kind of puppeteer she "replays" and exorcises those events which have had the greatest influence on her being. John and Rose-Marie Beston (1972 : 34) believe that mentally Theodora never really leaves Meroë: "The jardin exotique is another Meroë , as she senses when she first enters it: 'she began to be afraid she had returned to where she had begun, the paths of the garden were the same labyrinth, the cactus limbs the same aching stone' [p. 146]." In a subsequent article the Bestons (1974 : 99) make the observation that "frequently in White severe illness _ _ _ or some kind of 'doffing' of the body, precedes spiritual illumination." The Jardin Exotique phase of Theodora's life is thus an important transitional movement to her spiritual illumination at the end of her odyssey. Vincent Buckley (1958 : 194) believes that at this stage of Theodora's life she reaches "a spiritual and emotional climacteric long before it comes to a physical one."

At the Hotel du Midi, Theodora fears her box-like bedroom, because it confines her Real Self within the parameters of common behaviour and thought. That her spirit flags serves only to increase her fears: "Now in this one, more formidable because it was the latest, her hopes were faint. Encouraged by the thought of the garden, she could not escape too soon from the closed room, retreating from the jaws of roses, avoiding the brown door, of which the brass teeth bristled to consume the last shreds of personality when already she was stripped enough" (p. 145). The roses on the wallpaper are as unreal as the jardin itself. They remind Theodora of her sexuality. The roses are wide open, acting as megaphones for the sexual behaviour of Weatherby and Lieselotte, who act out the charade of Theodora's unconscious sexual desires.

The cactus garden, the Jardin Exotique, suggests the honest, analytically detached state of her mind. She has reached the stage of knowing, mentioned by Moraitis: "Thus exposed, she begins to project herself imaginatively into the fictive recesses of her fellow lodgers' lives, that is, she discovers the potential of empathic narration as a kind of psychotherapy" (Ian Reid, 1986 : 214). Theodora becomes her own harshest critic, an essential attribute for self-awareness and self-realisation.

In the Jardin Exotique Theodora's exoteric self is no longer of any account: "It was obvious enough now, Theodora knew. This [the jardin] was a world in which there was no question of possession" (p. 146). The few artefacts she retains no longer have any personal value. Unlike the Bloch sisters she no longer cares about possessions that lend an illusive sense of security, "because without possessions one ceases to exist" (p. 154). The final destruction of Theodora's exoteric self takes place when she imagines the fire that

destroys the hotel: "As she unleashes the fire within her, she identifies her destructiveness with her mother's and dons the garnet ring: 'All the violence of fire was contained in the hotel. It tossed, whether hatefully or joyfully, it tossed restraint to smoke. Theodora ran, breathing the joy or hatred of fire' [p. 256]" (Beston, 1972 : 40). The ugly garnet ring that once belonged to Julia Goodman and which Theodora is so anxious to preserve from the fire suggests that she has at last come to terms with her mother (Burrows, 1966 : 171).

Theodora's complete, chrysalis-like emergence from the inhibiting cocoon of her old self is almost complete when, after leaving the train at a siding in America, she destroys her train-tickets and all other forms of identity: "Slowly, quietly she divests herself of everything, of name, her identity, her aunthood _ _ _ Holstius comes to her" (Bernard, 1950 : 54). When she reaches the Johnsons' homestead, she is so far removed from everyday reality that she seems to be unaware of her surroundings and even the danger of the red dog.

Theodora's transcendent state of being epitomises White's vision of grace: "_ _ _ in spite of outer appearances, Theodora Goodman suggested that she had retreated into her own distance and did not intend to come out" (p. 265). She has managed to penetrate the "great intolerable pressure from which it is not possible to escape" (p. 269). Theodora no longer fears death "because the death rattle of time is far more acute, and painful, and prolonged, when its impermanence is disguised as permanence. Here there were no clocks. There was a time of light and darkness. A time of crumbling hills. A time of leaf, still, trembling, fallen" (p. 286). Having come to the end of her quest she "smiled for this discovery of freedom" (p. 274).

The Johnsons' house, where Theodora finds shelter, is as natural and "sandy" as the surroundings. Their hospitality and simplicity form a contrast to the intolerance of society towards those who do not conform to its demands for uniform behaviour. The Johnsons' poverty is eclipsed by the love they have for each other. Even Zack, a fellow outsider and forerunner of the Quigleys in The Tree of Man, is loved and accepted. Theodora joins the fellowship of the family which is in itself a religious consummation: "Theodora swallowed the food. Very palpably she felt the presence of the Johnsons, their noise and silence. Their sphere was round and firm, but however often it was offered, in friendliness or even love, she could not hold it in her hand" (p. 281). Theodora knows she cannot stay with them; her "movement" towards the discovery of her Real Self is now involuntary. She even gives herself a new name:

"They waited. Her forehead pricked with sweat.

'Pilkington,' she said.

'Glad to know you, Miss Pilkington,' said Mr Johnson.

The room loosened. She felt Mr Johnson's hand. Theodora could have cried for her own behaviour, which had sprung out of some depth she could not fathom. But now her name was torn out by the roots, just as she had torn the tickets, rail and steamship, on the mountain road. This way perhaps she came a little closer to humility, to anonymity, to pureness of being" (pp. 279 - 280 : my emphasis).

Pureness of being implies a union with and an understanding of God (see page 280). The God whose presence Theodora is becoming aware of is not the God of the stained glass windows at Spofforths or routine church services, but the Source of all being.

The derelict Kilver house Theodora goes to has been stripped of all signs of identity and ownership. It seems as unreal and ethereal as the state of Theodora's psyche. When she peers through a window she transcends her immediate surroundings and finds herself where "the valleys flowed. In this light the valleys did flow. At the foot of the mountains they moved in the soft and moving light, the amethyst and grey. They flowed at the roots of the black sonorous islands. All the time the light seeped deeper into the craters of the earth" (p. 286). The disintegration of the solid objects parallels Theodora's own physical disintegration and the liberation of her Real Self from all ties: "In the house above the disintegrating world, light and silence ate into the hard, resisting barriers of reason, hinting at some ultimate moment of clear vision" (p. 286).

Theodora's attempt at housekeeping in the mountain shack is a token gesture at being normal as well as a welcome to Holstius who comes to comfort her at the moment of her final break from so-called normal society. He teaches her to accept the duality of body and spirit: "Theodora Goodman, you must accept. And you have already found that the one constantly deludes the other into taking fresh shapes, so that there is sometimes too little to choose between the reality of illusion and the illusion of reality. Each of your several lives is evidence of this" (p. 289 : my emphasis).

In the end Theodora knows everything: "There was nothing she did not know, only this had to be laid bare painfully. Holstius laid his hands on, and she was a world of love and compassion that she had only vaguely apprehended" (p. 294). Colmer (1982b : 199) believes that Holstius is an allegorical figure: "He is Theodora's composite picture of all those characters who have seemed to represent some aspect of wholeness and totality: her father, the Syrian, the Man who was Given his Dinner, and the musician Moraïtis."

Theodora is eventually taken away to be cared for by a society dreadfully in need of care and spiritual reformation itself. The Johnsons and Rafferty speak of Theodora "as if she were dead" (p. 298). It is comic that whereas Theodora spent the greater part of her life attempting to break through the charade of others she herself now adopts, sardonically, the role of a woman of fashion: "And she held her head on one side as she had seen ladies do on receiving and thanking for a cup of tea" ((p. 298).

The black rose on her hat is in itself a mandala. She no longer needs any form of identification with the archetype: "she now sees clearly the crucial distinction between her own ego - consciousness and the unconscious self" (Tacey, 1977 : 38). Theodora's own mandala appears in the shape of the sun itself, the rose-light. She no longer needs the rose-world of her youth: "Her face was long and yellow under the great black hat. The hat sat straight, but the doubtful rose trembled and flattered, leading a life of its own" (p. 299).

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Theodora Goodman's spiritual quest to be free of the influences of her exoteric self is reappraised in Stan Parker (The Tree of Man), a fellow outsider, who bears the added burden of being a husband and parent.

5.0 THE TREE OF MAN

The Tree of Man was first titled A Life Sentence on Earth. It was apparently White's original intention to reveal man's longing for the ineffable intensified by the promptings of his esoteric self. The revised title reveals a change in White's point of view; from pessimism to an admission of the brevity of life and the beneficent influence of nature on man's psyche.

The title, The Tree of Man, is an echo from Housman's poem On Wenlock Edge in which the thoughts of a man watching a gale blowing through the trees are expressed:

"There, like the wind through woods in riot,
Through him the gale of life blew high;
The tree of man was never quiet;
Then 't was the Roman, now 'tis I."

(A Shropshire Lad, XXXI)

In the context of the novel it is important to note that man "for whom the tree stands as metaphor, will survive to reproduce himself, to ensure that there is no end" (Bliss, 1986 : 51). Stan Parker, as an analogue for Everyman, is at first as ignorant of the nature of his Real Self as the ancient Roman was.

An understanding of The Tree of Man hinges upon an acknowledgment of the self. The "core of the mandala - personal is the spark of divinity that is planted as potential in every human at birth. This [is referred] to as 'the higher soul', as 'the hidden soul' or simply 'the soul' _ _ _.

Surrounding this like a womb or an alchemist's retort is a lower or working soul. This [is called] the 'self' or 'the core of being'" (Beatson, 1976 : 81 : my additions).

The Tree of Man is characterised by the conflict between the search for permanence (Amy Parker) and the need to grow and change through experience (Stan Parker). William Walsh (1977 : 33) points out that the fundamental disharmony between Stan and Amy comes from his commitment to the land and its rhythms and her "dislike of the wind and the distance and the road". Tacey (1986 : 197), from a psychological point of view, adds that the spiritual disharmony between the Parkers stems from Stan's involuntary attraction to the Earth Goddess "in whose matrix he is involuntarily caught."

Amy Parker's unfulfilled longing for experience and material security directs her self to exoteric experiences.

Björkstén (1976 : 52) explains that every human needs love and participation in another soul to find out what lies beyond the merely physical. White's elect are not granted this "participation" in another soul. Amy, unlike her husband, does not experience a self-fulfilling love and consequently remains enmeshed in her unhappiness. When she is old she realises, too late, that "lives can only touch, they do not join" (p. 434).

White leads the reader through the stages of innocence, experience, reconciliation and death in the lives of Stan and Amy Parker. He matches these stages to the four seasons and the elements of fire, water, drought and storm winds. Björkstén (1976 : 47) points out that each moment has some natural disaster to accompany it. Each of the disasters in turn causes a mystic crisis, thus redirecting the character's quest for what is meaningful. Part of White's

success lies in his discovering the extraordinary behind the ordinary, "the mystery and the poetry which alone could make bearable the lives of such people" (Kiernan, 1980 : 35).

Apart from the shaping tension of "original sin" mentioned by William Walsh (1977 : 33) the characters in The Tree of Man also experience the dark and evil undercurrents of guilt and suspicion, demonic forces that deny the Real Self its sustenance. Stan, for example, carries with him the memory of the old man hanging upside down in the branches of a tree during the flood as well as the knowledge that he has failed as a husband and father. Amy on the other hand cannot forget her adultery: "It was as if she had spat into the face of her husband, or still further, into the mystery of her husband's God, that she saw by glimpses, but could not reach deeper to. So she was fighting her disgust, and crying for her own destruction before she had destroyed, as she must destroy" (p. 303). Because guilt is never forgotten it constitutes a protracted form of suffering appropriate to the achievement of eventual grace.

5.1 STAN PARKER

William Walsh (1977 : 30) is extravagant in his praise of Stan Parker in his role as an "Australian Adam". The sum total of Stan's life is an allegory of the "fall" and "salvation" of man through suffering. As a pioneer he manages to create a measure of order out of the comparative "chaos" of the Australian bush by beginning a farm. To give his life an element of universality, Stan is at first "unnamed", "an anonymous representative of a future race, in the growth of family and community" (Walsh, 1977 : 35).

As a young man Stan Parker is a self-sufficient loner who finds pleasure in his own company: "He built a fire. He sighed at last, because the lighting of his small fire had kindled in him the first warmth of content. Of being somewhere. That particular part of the bush had been made his by the entwining fire. It licked at and swallowed the loneliness" (p. 9). In time he "grows" away from the demands of his exoteric self towards an awareness of being and the spiritual reality of his Real Self. He is led by a "transpersonal factor at work, a kind of muse or daimon which often eludes White's own sense of himself and his work" (Tacey, 1986 : 192). The major reason for Stan's departure into the bush is that he does not find any real meaning in life among people, his parents included.

Before Stan Parker sets out on his pioneering trek into the bush he happens to see a whore staring out of a window: "And once some woman, some whore, neither young nor pretty, had pressed her face against a windowpane and stared out, and Stan Parker had remembered her face because he shared the distance from which her eyes had looked" (p. 12). He shares her desire for release from confining, self destroying circumstances. White suggests that "hell" can be within the self cut off from its Source; that suffering and fear of damnation is intense and private. Stan Parker is free, but like the whore he will be "enslaved" by his physical self until he dies. The esoteric self is nourished from without. Only when it has reached a stage of development close to an understanding of the Real Self, is it ready to be released from the confining physical mould. It thus follows that those characters who do not find release from the physical demands of the body will not reunite with God.

It is not clear why Stan marries Amy Fibbens. He does not really love her. The answer seems to lie in his youthful desire to conform to traditional values. It is also true that she is available, has no other way out of her domestic predicament and will make few demands on him, her life up to then having been servile. There is nothing quaint or romantic about their courtship and marriage. At the start of their married life they both entertain an unfounded hope that things will work out. Their marriage is, however, doomed to failure because the predominantly esoteric values in Stan cannot be reconciled with the exoteric tendencies of Amy's self. Their suffering comprises disillusion, loneliness and guilt. Even their children are not the focal point of mutual interest; indeed they are the cause of stress between Stan and Amy. They only "unite" when they are at the mercy of the elements or busy with farming activities. Amy never penetrates Stan's self: "If he was not exactly closed, certainly he opened with difficulty. There were veins in him of wisdom and poetry, but deep, much of which would never be dug" (p. 29).

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The flood that overwhelms Willunya negates the blessing and fertility associated with water. According to Frye (1971 : 146), when water is no longer beneficent, it changes into a demonic symbol. Stan unconsciously, and strangely uninvolved in the natural disaster, transcends his own relatively safe condition. His esoteric self shares the traumas caused by the flood and he merges with the state of flux. As a young man he finds it difficult to come to terms with death. He experiences what Peter Beatson calls "the necessary black night of the soul" (1976 : 55) because of the introspection it initiates.

The Biblical overtones in the scene of the old man caught up in the tree during the flood are many and varied. Carolyn Bliss (1986 : 54) writes, for example, that the "ram _ _ _ also suggests Christ, the Lamb, who was sacrificed for man's redemption. These implications, dimly but deeply felt, intensify Stan's guilt, which acts, in turn, to humiliate and to humble him."

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The War, in contrast to the flood at Willunya, involves Stan in man-made chaos. Far removed, he remembers his farm and family as blessings he has not yet fully appreciated. His most vivid memory of the War is of the amputated hand of an unknown soldier: "The fireworks showed him the hand that had just fallen at his feet, thrown there. The fingers of the lost hand were curled in its last act. It lay there like a tendril that had been torn off some vine _ _ _" (p. 199). The significance of this memory should be seen in the light of the importance White attaches to the human hand; by touch and gesture one of the few real mediums to understanding and expression⁶.

6. Dismemberment, as in the case of Eddie Twyborn (The Twyborn Affair) indicates not only dissociation from the past, but also the absence of any future: "A detached hand was lying in a stream of blood nor'-nor'-west of Eddie Twyborn's left cheek. It was neither of the soldier's hands he began to realise, for these were arranged on the pavement, a dog's obedient paws had it not been for blunt fingers with nails in mourning still attached to bristling wrists. It was his own hand he saw as he ebbed, incredibly, away from it" (The Twyborn Affair : p. 430).

Stan Parker's war experiences deepen his understanding of his esoteric self. He spends more time in nature, pondering the soul of man and the pervasive influence of God: "He was a grey man now, of strength, but also great mildness. His eyes were lost in hopefulness. He had already observed the behaviour of ants, the flight of hawks, calves moving in the belly, men calculating _ _ _observed these in some detail and with the greatest accuracy, but from the dream state of the sleeper in which he was slowly stirring and from which he would one day look out perhaps and see" (p. 212). His workshop on the farm becomes the "box" that contains his hidden self. He even begins to understand the unusual behaviour of Doll Quigley with whom he shares moments of spiritual empathy: "What was the secret which, he sensed, he might share with this woman? Their souls almost mingled, as well as their lives _ _ _ . But Stan Parker continued to think of Doll Quigley, her still, limpid presence that ignored the stronger, muddier currents of time. It was through ignorance perhaps. Or else the purposes of God are made clear to some old women, and nuns, and idiots" (p. 214).

When Stan returns to Durilgai after the war he and Amy, after initial shyness, share an unusual feeling of empathy - "So they were reunited at last. Their mouths and their souls were open to each other. They could not press closer than they did _ _ _" (p. 210) - which fades when they once again continue the routine of their everyday lives: "So he forgot about her for the time being, knowing that he would return to her, to share their habitual life" (p. 220).

X X X

Glastonbury is Armstrong, the butcher's vain attempt "to become a gentleman and perpetuate his importance in red brick" (p. 68). The fire that destroys Glastonbury reveals man's finiteness in the face of elemental forces and the foolishness of his material aspirations. The blaze briefly unites Stan's being with that of a woman he desired: "It was not their flesh that touched but their final bones. Then they were writhing through the fire. They were not living. They had entered a phase of pain and contained consciousness. His limbs continued to make progress, outside himself" (p. 180). Stan experiences the joining of their souls as "an exultation by fire" (p. 184) which at the same time reveals their common humanity (Kramer, 1974 : 273). Madeleine, usually proud and distant, admits "without repugnance, that the sweat of his body was drugging her, and that she would have entered his eyes, if she could have, and not returned" (p. 180). Stan never forgets his spiritual fusion with Madeleine, remembering their passion, in time, as "an exchange of souls" (p. 275). His experience remains an invisible barrier between himself and Amy who senses that something transcendently meaningful passed between them.

X X X

In White's philosophy the loss of physical strength and independence are indispensable for spiritual growth and final union with God as the Source of being. Stan, as an adult was proud of his strength and prowess as a farmer. The younger men venerated him as a patriarch.

One day, when helping his friend Ossie Peabody remove a boulder Stan's strength fails him, forcing him to abrogate his efforts and surrender his superiority as well as leadership to the younger man. His sense of loss and defeat is intense: "Stan Parker was full of humility, not that he had

ever been a proud man. But he looked humbly at the knees of his pants, and at Peabody's earth floor, from which the face of a child was staring back at him" (p. 365). Learning to cope with his physical weakness is an essential aspect of his suffering and initiation to a state of grace. Amy realises that her husband has lost his appearance of independent masculinity: "She touched his skull, for all the flesh seemed to have gone from it in sleep _ _ _ . This time it was she who strained to move the rock, which lay beside her heavy in the bed" (p. 366). His weakness does not draw him to Amy. He attempts to come to terms with himself in solitude:

"Stan Parker would draw up in those parts [uninhabited regions]. He would roll a cigarette. He liked to be there. He would sit with his hands on the still wheel, till their dried-up skin had disintegrated in the light of sand and grey leaf, so that his body was no longer surprised at the mystery of stillness, of which he was a part. If his wife continued to stand, in his mind, beside the house in her clean apron, with the anxious and thwarted look on her face, it did not avail her for the moment, he could not have done much to answer her poignance with rational assurances, or even the deceptive gestures of the body" (p. 220).

Stan becomes as old and gnarled as the rose they planted when they had first gone to Durilgai. Stan's loss of physical self is emphasised by pieces of his land being sold for suburban development, leaving him with the bare minimum and only one cow. His esoteric self, threatened by encroaching villadom compensates for his loss of freedom by a growing

and fulfilling awareness of peace and of the rightness of nature in comparison to man's futile scrabbling on the surface of reality: "After she [Amy] had gone Stan Parker walked about his property, slowly, and with all the appearance of aimlessness, which is the impression that spiritual activity frequently gives, while all the time this communion of soul and scene was taking place, the landscape moving in on him with increased passion and intensity, trees surrounding him, clouds flocking above him with tenderness such as he had never experienced _ _ _ he went away shaken by the ruthlessness of divine logic" (p. 397 : my emphasis).

White as creator, also in search of his Real Self, is unfortunately unable to let the reader share in Stan's progressive transcendence of the material world. Stan, in his close examination of life and nature, resembles Gage, the artist. The clarity of Stan's vision depends on the growth of his esoteric self towards spiritual awareness, having finally sloughed off his exoteric self's need for consensus with the values of society in general. Even Amy's adultery is no longer a source of real concern: "Stan Parker remembered how that little play [Hamlet], in which he himself had been poisoned, had hurt. Yet he was not hurt now" (p. 404). At the end of the production, Stan comes to the conclusion that life is not a question of living, but of dying: "There he sat. A grey light prevailed, by chance or intention, similar to that which is seen in bedrooms at morning. This is the light in which a man becomes aware that he will die (p. 405).

The peace Stan experiences in nature is marred by the nagging conviction that he has failed as a parent; that somehow he is responsible for what happens to his children, especially Ray. Parenthood seems thrust upon Stan who never

comes to grips with the problem of the dissimilarity between parents and children, one of the great mysteries of being. In White's fiction the father figure, in this case Stan Parker, "is an isolated, sometimes rather sad figure, seared by his inability to break down the barriers between himself and his wife and children" (Beatson, 1976 : 76). Stan's sense of failure draws him more deeply into his esoteric self. He thus becomes more of an introverted, even schizophrenic character, who, contrary to the nature of his quest for his Real Self, avoids what he cannot understand or manipulate physically.

The fact that Stan's son, Ray, does not share his love for nature increases his loneliness and sense of failure. Stan worries that he will not be "able to convey to his son the quivering of his own soul on the brink of discovery" (p. 115). He blames Amy for his failure to communicate meaningfully with their children: "But his face quickly composed itself, returning to a suspicion that it was she who had moved the children out of his reach after they had created them together" (p. 148 : my emphasis). Stan's accusation is an unfair attempt to inculcate Amy who has unstintingly, if without reward, devoted herself to the children to compensate for their father's aloofness.

The hostility, emotional neutrality and selfishness Stan has to endure in his endeavour to save Ray from being destroyed by his own schizophrenic personality is an integral part of Stan's suffering. Like all White's elected characters Stan must first experience human depravity before he, by contrast, becomes aware of his own divinity. Stan's willingness to allow Ray to go to Sydney, is a form of surrender, rather than the result of defeat by the powers of darkness he intuitively will destroy his son. His failure to duplicate his self in Ray and win the boy over to his point of view

leaves him with an awareness only of his past failures and the fruitlessness of his life, his farm having dwindled in size and his marriage being mere co-existence.

When Stan finds out about Amy's adultery he reaches what Carolyn Bliss calls the "via negativa" (1986 : 53) of his life. His compulsive journey to Sydney in his old car is an instinctive form of flight. Stan's debauched behaviour in the city parallels Amy's betrayal of her marriage vows: "it appeared rather that some vision of actuality had got the better of him, and he was stuck in it, rigid, forever" (p. 322). Stan cannot communicate his sorrow and disillusion: "All these men, rocking on their heels or inclining gravely, were anxious for Stan Parker to assume their size, to tell them something from his own heroic life. So they inclined, and waited. There was one thing to tell. But he could not" (p. 323). In his drunken state Stan discovers the truth about himself: "This is the key to me, Amy, he said, I cannot see things in time" (p. 324). Caught up in self hate, Stan turns his back on God, his "life-line" to his Real Self: "There was a paper sky, quite flat, and white, and Godless. He spat at the absent God then, mumbling till it ran down his chin. He spat and farted, because he was full to bursting; he pissed in the street until he was empty, quite empty. There the paper sky was tearing, he saw. He was tearing the last sacredness, before he fell down amongst some empty crates, mercifully reduced to his body for a time" (p. 324). David Tacey (1986 : 202) explains Stan's behaviour as an act of anger against God: "This is the rage of a man against his 'absent God', a man deceived and rejected by his highest value." Stan augments his anguish by recalling his feelings of guilt about the old man, who drowned in the flood, a vain sacrifice to overwhelming and cruel forces. It is black comedy when Stan attempts to find comfort in the lap of an ancient whore: "Stan Parker, who

had listened to this woman until he had grown tired, had got down beside her on the warm sand. Here her breath came over him in a metallic blast, but the smell of the woman was less fetid than his own condition. Disgust had died in him. So he put his head in the woman's lap" (p. 331).

Having fled from the whore whom he tried to strangle, Stan finds "permanence of a kind" (p. 338) in the company of Panayóta (after the Virgin of Greek Orthodoxy), the daughter of Con, a Greek who once worked on his farm. For a brief moment she becomes his spiritual child. In contrast to Panayóta, the whore on the beach is his psychopomp. Panayóta reminds Stan of his youth and Amy when she kissed him passionately under the mulberry tree.

When Stan goes to Sydney to find out more about the murder of his son, his journey by train (suggesting his dependence) is like the pilgrimage of a penitent: "In the train the old man cried a bit at last, turning so that he was crying in the glass, and at the sightless houses. His mouth was all watery" (p. 437). Stan has changed, the void in his being having been filled by God after he almost killed himself in a shooting accident:

"As the sky tilted he pulled the trigger of the gun. It all happened so quickly that it was searingly slow on his mind. The comet was still soaring slowly past him, hot and cold, material and fearful, as he lay on the ground, and realized he had just failed to shoot himself.

He was sitting in the meantime. And ants came out across the ground.

'Oh God, oh God,' said Stan Parker.

He was suspended. [Between his familiar world and union with God in a moment of grace.]

Then his agreeable life, which had been empty for many years, began to fill. It is not natural that emptiness shall prevail, it will fill eventually, whether with water, or children, or dust, or spirit. So the old man sat gulping in. His mouth was dry and caked, that had also vomited out his life that night, he remembered, in the street. He was thinking about it intolerably" (p. 407 : my addition and emphasis).

Having come so close to death and God, Stan feels the need for Communion: "The blood began to flow. The flesh of words grew out of marble" (p. 412). At the start of the service, Stan cannot pray: "I cannot pray, he said, not trying, as he knew the hopelessness of it. So he stood or knelt, a prisoner in his own ribs" (p. 413). As he drinks the wine Stan "hope[s] for God" (p. 416), expecting some dramatic transcendent revelation to take place. The change in his being becomes evident in his admission to Lola that his life, spent scrabbling on the surface of things, has been in vain. He confesses that he has found freedom, not in the bush or in farming, but in prayer: "Freedom. But prayer is freedom, or should be. If a man has got faith" (p. 440). In his new-found faith and understanding of life, Stan feels oracular when he speaks to Lola, but like all White's outsiders, he does not communicate his knowledge of what is to be, futurity being detrimental to equanimity.

Stan Parker's death has apocalyptic significance in that it ends the negative influence of his exoteric self on his Real Self, leaving it free to escape into cosmic awareness and union with God. Having suffered and having experienced the lowest levels of existence, Stan, in the end, understands the true significance of life, suffering and death: "I believe, he said, in the cracks in the path. On which ants were massing, struggling up over an escarpment. But struggling. Like the painful sun in the icy sky" (p. 477).

When he dies he merges with rocks and shadows in that part of the garden in which he is sitting. The encompassing natural growth resembles the outer ring of a mandala through which he must escape to become united with that "One" who is the origin of all Being: "The last circle but one was the cold and golden bowl of winter, enclosing all that was visible and material, and at which the man would blink from time to time, out of his watery eyes, unequal to the effort of realizing he was the centre of it" (p. 474).

Stan Parker's life exemplifies Beatson's law of suffering: "The law of suffering is overcome by the power of love in those who _ _ _ willingly take the full charge of suffering to themselves. Only by this act of acceptance, by the heroic act of self-renunciation, does the voluntary Lamb rise above His earthly state. In the light shed by this last act of sacrifice, it is revealed that the knife which slit the animal throat released the human soul" (1976 : 153).

Stan, who has "hoped for God" (p. 416) and peace realises that God has been within his Real Self all along and that his disregard of this intuitive knowledge has been the root cause of his suffering. This is why he says, when he points

at the gob of spittle, "That is God" (p. 476). He realises "man must find in himself his divinity, his own and very private grandeur" (Riemer, 1966 : 13).

Brian Kiernan (1971 : 112) writes that the setting of Stan's death is a vision of the harmony of man with nature, but he goes on to warn that "inflationary tendencies in the way it extends to embrace the whole personal universe are held in check by the dry particularity which relates it intimately to the story by drawing upon the imagery of the circle of cultivation he has created in the wilderness and which in his old age is reverting to its natural state."

5.2 AMY PARKER

Amy, as an orphan waif, is "adopted" by the thriftless Fibbens family. She grows up in squalid and spiritually moribund circumstances: "Amy Fibbens had not got great affection for her uncle or her aunt. She had not yet felt affection for any human being, except in a respectful and unsatisfactory way for Mrs Erbey _ _ _ . There her life was not so different from what it was in the Fibbens shed. She wiped the noses of a string of children. She stirred the morning pan of porridge. But she also ate the remains of puddings. And she did wear shoes" (p. 21).

The sterility and fecklessness of the Fibbens family is a wasteland in its own way: "Because old man Fibbens had been employed shovelling up the cow manure and putting it into bags. It was only for a bit, because where Uncle Fibbens was concerned, it was always only for a bit. He liked to lie on a bed beneath a tree and look at his toenails from a distance" (p. 21).

In spite of the independence marriage affords Amy, she retains her archetypal feminine sense of servitude. White contrasts her materialistic and even parasitic Weltanschauung with Stan's instinctive empathy with nature in order to illustrate the diversity of their selves and the impossibility of their achieving a meaningful harmony within the bonds of marriage. After many years of a disparate life, Amy realises "Lives _ _ _ can only touch, they do not join" (p. 434). The conflict between the selves of Stan and Amy reveals the duality of spiritual and material values as they appear in the elect and the non-elect. Such disharmony can result only in marital conflict which is the most spiritually destructive form of human suffering because of its far-reaching and undefined effects on the individual and those bound to him by the involuntary ties of blood.

On their way to the shack in the bush after their marriage, a branch whips back and scratches Amy's cheek causing it to bleed. This prophetic incident hints at Amy's incompatibility with her surroundings, eventually causing her Real Self to dwindle into insignificance. She is as much a stranger to the Australian bush-country as the imported "tobacco-rose" she plants at their home to keep her company and remind her of another world and way of life. Stan's kissing the scratch and colouring his lips with her blood is a form of communion in which Amy really becomes his "bride", the church service having been a formality to conform with tradition.

Although marriage "fills-out" Amy's body, her Real Self remains "unnourished" because she attempts to find her Gold Coast in material values: "this in the end had been her one contribution of treasure, her Gold Coast, only it was real, her silver nutmeg grater" (p. 42). She is never given the understanding that, although her esoteric self is nourished

from without, it cannot grow by dependence on material, non-spiritual values. Amy cannot improve her Logos until she changes her values in life. This limitation proves to be an impossible task in the light of her background and the commanding influence of her exoteric self. She uses her apparent commitment to her family and the homestead as a placebo for a genuine sacrifice of her own interests and well-being for the sake of spiritual growth.

Amy, on occasion feeling neglected and misunderstood by her husband, desperately attempts to appease the yearnings of her esoteric self by "adopting" one of the cows on the homestead. Pregnant at the time, her maternal self experiences a sense of empathy with the cow and its unborn calf. For a time she becomes a part of the natural, procreative cycle of nature: "So his wife became fonder of the cow, especially now that she would have her child. She buried her forehead in the cow's soft side, and there was a continual stirring, and the gentle cow smell. The whole air those evenings was soft with the smell of cow's breath, as if the blue tongue had slapped it on. The old cow stood wisely waiting. _ _ _ Stillier ever than the dusk was this peaceful relationship between Amy Parker and the yellow cow. Their soft, increasing bodies were in full accord" (p. 55). The death of the cow foreshadows Amy's own miscarriage on a night she runs in fear from the "powers of darkness" wishing to destroy her:

"She began to run, accompanied by her own animal breath. Wet leaves of flesh spattered on her marble face, or discovered whips, and cut deeper. She had to get back, to tell, to leave the dead cow, to run, if her ankles and the branches allowed. She was running through a slow and solid moonlight. Vicious

shadows held her hair. She could not run fast enough through the agonizing trees towards the houseful of light that she had in her mind's eye. Running. But the farther she left their dead cow behind, the closer she came to all that she had not experienced. So that her skin was cold as she ran through the nets spread to catch her, straining without much thought, except to escape as directly as possible from her own fear" (p. 63).

As she aborts the foetus she feels her body slipping away from her.

Amy's need to have a child of her own becomes obsessive because she believes it will bring her the fulfilment she craves, at the same time establishing a romantic union with her husband. Stan does not share her belief: "Even the mystery of possession is a mystery that it is not possible to share. And now, as they stood in the path, verging on the discovery of half-veiled shores, the child was not theirs, and he was already embarrassed by those things he would be unable to say to the stranger-child" (p. 56). Stan is afraid a child may blame them for having been given life.

It is significant that similar fears and hopes are echoed throughout White's work. He believes the most serious cause of a woman's suffering arises from her inability to maintain vital, sustaining contact with her child as well as from her disillusion when she finds she cannot mould the child as she wishes or keep it for herself by force of love (p. 97). Amy kisses her children and husband in a manner that is not an act of love. The gesture becomes a threat of impending

anger should her demands for love not be satisfied. When women's dreams for their children fail to materialise they turn upon their husbands, blaming them for neglect and lovelessness.

Having aborted her first child Amy Parker dreams that the destitute boy they care for after the floods at Willunya is a mythic and heroic child who will one day liberate and rule the world. Like all women she feels the compulsion to complete her ternary, the spiritual principle within totality: "The ternary system is created by the emergence of a third element which so modifies the binary situation [Stan and Amy] so as to import to it a dynamic equilibrium" (Cirlot, 1971 : 336). It is one of the ironies of being in White's canon that the son they eventually do have does not bring about the ternary she so ardently desires. Cirlot points out that mankind has three essential functions, namely conservation, reproduction and spiritualisation. Amy fails to fulfil the first and last of these three requirements, thereby causing her own unhappiness. Stan, however, manages to "vomit out" the nagging influence of a spiritually defunct world, turn his back upon the temptation to become a part of it and so deny Satan his soul by meeting God through nature and the Eucharist. It is only after the birth of Thelma that Amy experiences a sense of being continuous: "Quigleys seemed the antithesis of that fullness of love and summer which Amy Parker now sensed, herself all roundness and warmth as she held the baby in her arms, and the head of the little boy against her skirt. She was at last continuous. She flowed" (p. 117).

It is typical of White's sardonic view of life that the reasons for Amy's brief happiness should also be the cause of her sorrow when in time Ray betrays her love and Thelma dissociates "herself from the geography of that place [the homestead]" (p. 338 : my addition).

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Amy's encounter with the glittering Armstrong "turnout" (p. 108) increases her feeling of "insufficiency" (p. 139). She is filled with a feeling of jealous unfairness as well as a romantic longing to share such an apparently carefree life: "Amy Parker did not so much see this as know, in shame beside the tamarisk. That the women rocked with the gig, laughing and eating caramels and tossing the silver paper on to the road. No other pastime could have been theirs, because none would have been careless enough" (p. 108). Amy, unlike her husband, cannot accept their own lowly status and poor circumstances.

White's mention of carelessly discarded silver sweetpapers is a graphic gesture to illustrate the deceitful happiness the rich young people seem to enjoy. The ostentatious mansion, Glastonbury, built to satisfy the conceits of a man who wishes to show his success in life, serves the same purpose as the sweetpapers. Once the mansion has been gutted by fire nothing of its former glory and promise remains. Amy's exoteric self does not understand the quality of impermanence suggested by both these symbols. Amy, who later takes final leave of her son amid the ruins of Glastonbury, and old man Armstrong, once so proud of his wealth but now saddened by the death of his son, are, in the end equally destitute.

Amy Parker's sexual nature, her inner core, responds to the sexual vibrancy of young Tom Armstrong. Her romantic nature compensates for her husband's modest and reserved manner by having him speak to her in young Armstrong's voice: " _ _ _ he spoke to her with the thicker accents of the rich young man, and their mouths exchanged a lazy sensuality" (p. 109). Amy becomes increasingly divorced from reality and thus, by implication, from Stan's world. Her active imagination is a survival mechanism in the face of the estrangement between herself and her husband.

Amy tries to compensate for her loneliness and exclusion from Stan's "inner self" by devoting herself to the bitch, Blue, yet another of her possessions. With Blue she imagines herself young and once again innocent: "So she could not help loving the clumsy, fruitful dog. She liked to hold in her hands the warm, blunt puppies, to change them round from teat to teat, and see that the runt was fed _ _ _ alone with the dog, she was young again" (p. 129).

One evening, shortly after Amy's meeting with Tom Armstrong, she and Stan are alone when the wind begins to blow strongly through the trees. The wind, commonly associated with the promise of rain and growth, rejuvenates Amy's dulled sprit as she sits darning. For a brief moment she transcends her earthly existence to find herself at the hub of the universe, controlling the threads of life. In the unreal quiet (the eye of the storm), when the wind has died down, she copulates with her strangely acquiescent husband and once again conceives. In the light of their almost separate existences it is strange that their union, a symbolic act of worship and fulfilment, should be accompanied by prayer, an acknowledgment of their spiritual need and insignificance in the face of the forces of nature: "In the cool of the released world, amongst the dreaming furniture, at the heart

of the staggy rosebush that pressed into the room and wrestled with them without thorns, the man and the woman prayed into each other's mouths that they might hold this goodness forever. But the greatness of the night was too vast" (p. 112). It is an illustration of White's cynical view of life that an essentially evil child should be born as a result of their prayerful sexual union: "Ray's career is a demonic parody of the fruitfulness of Durilgai and of the tree of man: the rotten fruit and the bag of runty plumbs" (Morley, 1972 : 105).

When she senses that she is pregnant, Amy, for a brief time, feels she has transcended her mortality. She believes she has joined the ranks of those women who have created life and so perpetuated themselves. She hugs "her full body _ _ _ obsessed by wonder and contentment" (p. 113).

The first indication of Ray's inherent evil is the disappearance of Blue's puppies under suspicious circumstances. Amy reacts to the loss of the puppies in much the same way she reacted to the loss of the nutmeg grater, a wedding present and memory of a dream of a better life. Her anguish is aggravated by her instinctive knowledge that Ray is guilty. The Parkers, in their disillusionment, prefer to ignore the loss and do not confront Ray with his suspected complicity, thereby initiating a series of similar events, for example the wilful destruction of Con the Greek's keepsakes: "_ _ _ his hands that held the Greek's belongings, which he had taken because he wanted them, had become quite possessed. The hands were not his. The hands took the knife. It began to cut through the yellow snapshot, to cut in zigzags, to saw and destroy. When it was done, and he could press the blade no deeper into the heart of his friend, the boy threw away the knife and the shreds of paper somewhere, he did not look" (p. 235).

As Amy's dream of blissful motherhood fades, she senses herself once again confined by her circumstances. She reveals the same undefined longing and dissatisfaction of White's other non-elected characters when she develops the habit of watching the road passing their farm in the hope that "something" will bring about a fortunate change in her circumstances. By an ironic twist of fate Leo, a "flash" salesman, travels along the road and, without difficulty, seduces Amy who in turn uses him as a means of ending the "yellow drought" (p. 297) in her own spiritual life. Amy's esoteric life reaches its lowest ebb when she realises she has betrayed and destroyed, by her lust, everything that has real value in her life: "So she was fighting her disgust, and crying for her own destruction before she had destroyed, as she must destroy" (p. 303). Leo, as the agent of her death-wish, is unmoved as he watches "the soul writhe mysteriously in her body" (p. 303).

Having committed her exoteric self to the demands of her lust, Amy, too late, realises that the "remedy is worse than the desire" (Burrows, 1969 : 270). She cannibalises Leo's body to fill the void in herself caused by her husband's withdrawn behaviour.

Ray's departure and her inability to benefit spiritually from the "experience of great tenderness and beauty" (p. 282) when she examines Gage's paintings leave her spiritually destitute. Her guilt and awareness of spiritual decay make her aware of threatening damnation: "It was as if she had spat into the face of her husband, or still further, into the mystery of her husband's God, that she saw by glimpses, but could not reach deeper to" (p. 303). Driven by her demon Amy refuses to embrace the source of her redemption. The "illumination of her soul left her weary,

but indifferent" (p. 317). She attempts to find peace for her soul amongst people and not in nature as Stan does. She prefers the O'Dowd's "dump" with its overtones of hell - "there was a fire in the middle of the yard, or a sulky black heap of ash with smoke upon it, just rising and coiling, dirtily. There was the fire, and there was the stink" (p. 285) - to "the boundless garden" (p. 478).

It is difficult to accept that Amy, so dominated by her exoteric self, should respond to Gage's paintings with empathy and insight: "But Amy Parker, who had been quiet all this time, because she was opening to an experience of great tenderness and beauty, had not suspected such jewels of blood as the husband of the postmistress had put on Christ's hands. Then the flesh began to move her, its wincing verdigris and sweating tallow. She know this, as if her sleep had told her of it. Great truths are only half-grasped this side of sleep" (p. 282).

It is an integral part of her suffering as well as a negation of her Real Self that her identification with Gage's epiphanies does not lead her to a reunion with God and an understanding of being. Amy intuitively recognises herself in the painting of a woman reaching for "that sun" in a romantic gesture of longing: "Her simplicity was that of silence and of stone. Her breasts were as final as two stones, and she was reaching up with her ponderous but touching hands towards that sun which would itself have been a stone, if it had not glowed with such a savage incandescence" (p. 283). Just as Gage's tortured inner self attempts to escape from his cage of ribs, so Amy's "thin" soul longs to be free from her sensual body: "Then Amy Parker, who had been standing inside the uproar, noticed in the corner [of the painting], at the feet of the woman, what appeared to be the skeleton of an ant that the husband of the

postmistress had scratched in the paint with some sharp instrument, and out of the cage of the ant's body a flame flickered, of luminous paint, rivalling in intensity that sun which the woman was struggling after" (p. 283 : my addition).

The teleology of suffering is the purpose for which it is intended. Amy does not grow spiritually as a result of her suffering, because she regards each phase of her life as yet another chance to do the same things again. The ruins of Glastonbury, once the acme of her aspirations and the scene of her final departure from Ray, however enforce her realisation that her life has been a waste, a solipsistic return to her beginnings (p. 355). She bitterly resents the suspicion that her acquaintances, unlike herself, have gained something of value that makes their lives happier than her own.

Her suffering at this stage of her life is, ironically, mainly caused by her knowing about God. When she uses Communion with Stan shortly before his death, she admits that she does not know God: "She would have embraced a religion of her own needs, and mounted quite high. But her husband would not let her. What is God to Stan? she wondered, at his shoulder, I do not know God, Stan will not let me. She liked to blame other people for herself, and was almost persuaded" (p. 413 : my emphasis). Her blaming Stan for her disbelief once again illustrates their growing incompatibility and the fact that Stan Parker cannot share his awareness of God through nature with anyone, let alone Amy.

Amy's spiritual devolution reaches its nadir when she remarks: "I have nothing. I know nothing" (p. 366). Her only hope of a meaningful future is founded in her grandson who is also called Ray (a strange inversion of the Biblical

injunction that "sweetness came from the strong"). The young boy listens to her as a "willing recipient of her secrets" (Burrows, 1969 : 273). Amy vainly attempts to forget her past instead of learning to live with and learn from it. Her selfish nature has no compassion for the hardships of others. She cannot, for example, share the sorrow of Mrs O'Dowd's death.

After having attended a production of Hamlet Amy regards herself as a stage figure seeking "by introspection for an understanding of her past. Thus the ghost becomes for her an image of her past" (Maack, 1978 : 128). As Gertrude she wants to come closer to her Hamlet (Ray) and to terms with her "possessive instincts as they are expressed in her sexuality" (Maack, 1978 : 128).

Her failure to keep Stan from dying leaves her utterly alone: "They clung together for a minute on the broken concrete path, their two souls wrestling together. She would have dragged him back if she could, to share her further sentence, which she could not contemplate for that moment, except in terms of solitary confinement. So she was holding him with all the strength of her body and her will. But he was escaping from her" (p. 477)

5.3 DOLL AND BUB QUIGLEY

Doll Quigley is White's masterpiece of angelic simplicity. He writes that she "was ugly and tender" (p. 67) and that she "had clear pale eyes that had not yet recognized evil" (p. 214). White elevates her above the characters in his novels by saying "the purposes of God are made clear to some old women, and nuns and idiots" (p. 214). Doll seems ageless and timeless: "She had been born old-young or had grown young-old" (p. 213). Like Stan Parker she loves God

and His Creation: "Yet Doll Quigley was full of love. She would have suffered willingly if she had been asked. But she was not" (p. 117). To the demonic Ray she is "an ugly old bitch" (p. 258).

Through Doll, who "relieves" Bub from his suffering, White raises the question of euthanasia. He suggests, in The Tree of Man and elsewhere, that life can be terminated, by suicide or euthanasia, when suffering is no longer a spiritually shaping force or when the afflicted character, as in the case of Bub, has already achieved a state of grace. In terminating Bub's life, Doll herself reaches the "heights of simple sacrifice" (p. 464).

Doll has the gift of being able to share the silences of places (p. 462). Her attitude to nature is that of Communion and prayer. Her awareness of the true spirit of being absorbs Stan Parker and answers his spiritual needs. In Doll, Stan recognises "purity of being". She offers Stan "completeness" when she gives him a batch of rock cakes, a kind of communion with a kindred soul.

Bub Quigley's spirit lives in the present, the "other world" White so frequently refers to. His Real Self fluctuates between a mystic world of which only he is aware and the dark night of despair. Like Mary Hare in Riders in the Chariot and Arthur Brown in The Solid Mandala Bub Quigley is one of the "genuine idiots-savants" (Burrows, 1969 : 263) whose belief in transcendence awakens opposition in others who do not believe the universe is the unity of subject and object, "that the barrier between them cannot be said to have been dissolved as the result of recent experience in the physical sciences, since this barrier has never existed" (Fromm, 1964 : 7).

White makes it clear that man is most threatened by circumstances created by himself. Doll is not concerned with the material problems of everyday existence and remains free from external influences until she is confined in an asylum after having killed her brother. She does not mind caring for Bub: "He is what I have got" (p. 348) and shows transcendent insight into his condition: "he is too young in spirit" (p. 348).

Doll and Bub Quigley's lives and their relationships with their neighbours illustrate the crises in our apocalyptic epoch, namely that of man's separation from man as well as man's separation from God, thus the failure of love. Amy, unlike Stan, cannot respond to Doll because she does not have the same quality of love. Doll, together with White's other elected characters, reveals that, by the closeness of pain and suffering, man's struggle can be transmuted into a spiritual triumph: "The personal reality of freedom and providence of will, of will and conscience, may demonstrate that 'he who knows' commands a depth of consciousness" (Fromm, 1964 : 8).

When Doll is confined in a "nuthouse" for killing Bub she is, in the opinion of Amy, "in hell" (p. 465). In her deranged state of mind she exchanges roles with Bub in an attempt to keep him "alive" (p. 465). She promises Bub the salvation she so desperately needs herself, but cannot receive because of her overpowering sense of guilt: "She said, 'Bub, God will receive you.' But I was not received yet, Amy. Now was this kind?" (p. 465). Doll's anguish in the asylum adds an unknown dimension of suffering in "the country of the mind". Grace under such circumstances can only be imagined.

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White's quest for union with the Real Self and communion with God is continued in the metaphorical journey of Ulrich Voss into the heart of the Australian continent during which he discovers his own finiteness through suffering.

6.0 VOSS

At some time in our lives we are all faced by the question of whether we are what we are because of our parents or as the result of some quirk of nature. A sailor on board the "Osprey", the ship in which Voss's expedition sets sail, comes to the conclusion that "a man is caught all ways" (p. 97). White puts one of his own theorems for living in the mouth of Voss: "To make yourself, it is also necessary to destroy yourself" (p. 34). This pronouncement sets the theme for Voss and Laura's lives. To "destroy" yourself it is necessary to exchange a physically orientated life for an essentially spiritual state of being: "Only a few stubborn ones will blunder on, painfully, out of the luxuriant world of their pretensions into the desert of mortification and reward" (p. 74).

6.1 ULRICH VOSS

There seems to be a measure of truth in the assumption by some critics that Patrick White used the megalomaniac Adolf Hitler as a model for his eccentric "explorer" Voss. It is also known that the portrayal of Voss was influenced by a painting by Sidney Nolan (see the cover illustration of the Penguin edition of Voss). This painting which resembles a photographic negative suggests that the real nature of man is only revealed after "exposure", in the context of the novel, to the "light" of suffering.

Voss, after his death, becomes fabulous in the hinterland of Australia: "Voss did not die _ _ _ . He is there still, it is said, in the country, and always will be. His legend will be written down, eventually, by those who have been troubled by it" (p. 448). Voss, in his vainglory, weaknesses, eventual liberation from the demands of the body

and in his "pure", spiritual love for Laura Trevelyan reflects the esoteric self's longing to be united, spiritually, with the Real Self and God.

At the start of the novel the reader is immediately struck by Voss's habitually tense attitude, his fear of intrusion into his privacy and the distress caused by the cluttered furniture in the Bonner mansion. His as yet vaguely intuited ideal to discover what he believes to be his divinity in a new world, is strengthened by his aversion to the company of man and the stringent demands of a materialistic society. Voss's inability to communicate easily with people is rooted in his dominant anima. Beatson (1970 : 114) explains that part of Voss's suffering is his struggle to maintain that side of his being which is the Logos. In contrast, we have the feminine aspect of his psyche which commands his fearful attention. His animus is material, capable of expressing pain and love, attributes he scorns. This disdainful attitude explains why he is repelled by the gentler traits of men's characters, especially the figure of Christ which he associates with pain and weakness. It soon becomes clear that Voss's (un)planned expedition into the interior of Australia is in actual fact a metaphor for his venture "into the country of the mind".

Dorothy Green (1974 : 290), in considering Voss's intentions to penetrate the unknown regions of his mind, says: "In psychological terms, the fringe represents the thin layer of the conscious; the desert, the depths of the unconscious, so that Voss's journey becomes a progress of penetration to the center of his being. In metaphysical terms, the fertile rim is the physical world at its most richly and seductively concrete, the desert its most rarified and abstract analogue. In erotic terms, the rim is the area where all the testimonies of love are visible and tangible, the desert

where they must be taken without evidence, on trust, in solitude." The Bonners, for example, are afraid to abandon the security of "the hierarchial class-status system with its accompanying rites, ceremonies, icons and conventions" (Beatson, 1976 : 124) because they fear the unfamiliar and have no urge to discover their Real Selves and God through suffering.

Voss's attitude to society is revealed in the scorn he feels for people who do not dare venture away from their familiar, confining ambience. He tells Laura it is a "pity you huddle _ _ _ Your country is of great subtlety" (p. 11).

Voss is not bound by time or place. His non-conformity to the demands of society is revealed in his almost total disregard of fashion, his one redeeming feature being his beard which attracts Laura Trevelyan's attention. It is only his lack of pretence and his independence that engages our sympathy. Morley (1972 : 122), however, admires Voss despite his egotism and death-wish.

Voss's youthful desire to escape from the self-constricting influence of his parental home in Germany is rooted in his disapproval of his parents' unwillingness to sacrifice the success and comfort they have achieved by saving and conforming to the demands of society. Even as a young student, Voss's restless psyche caused him to roam the heide in search of his predestined, "glorious" future. His eccentric behaviour is an unconscious attempt to hide the weaknesses that are inducive to his future role as "ruler" of a kingdom he still has to find. His odyssey may be described as a journey from the darkness of ignorance to the "light" of an understanding of his Real Self.

Voss avoids the company of other men because they are too involved in their own "secret gift" (p. 61) and masculine image to understand his vision: "Some pitied him. Some despised him for his funny appearance of a foreigner. None, he realized with a tremor of anger, was conscious of his strength. Mediocre, animal men never do guess at the power of rock or fire, until the last moment before those elements reduce them to - nothing. This, the palest, the most transparent of words, yet comes closest to being complete" (p. 61). In his endeavour to realize his own divinity, however, he goes to great lengths to abnegate his self by caring for the diseased body of Frank Le Mesurier, one of his followers: "Then he began to clean up the invalid's mess with equanimity, even love. Noble gestures of doubtful origin did stimulate him most of all. If they left him haggard, as from suffering - for he was aware of his human nature also - it was good that he should suffer, along with men" (pp. 283 - 284).

Even when Voss enters the final stages of his journey into the country of the mind and has become a shadow of his former physical self, he still believes himself superior to other men: "Sometimes he would be visited by a sense of intolerable beauty, but never did such experience crystallize in objective visions. Nor did he regret it, as he lay beneath his pale eyelids, reserved for a peculiar destiny. He was sufficient in himself" (p. 15). His obsession with his future apotheosis makes him insensitive to the feelings of others.

Laidlaw (1970 : 6) believes Voss's vision has two poles. On the one hand there is the world of light, "which is man's nearest approach to apotheosis," and on the other the blind, instinctive existence of the worm: "Somewhere between the two extremes is the slight possibility of there

being a human existence which is beautiful, which involves neither the renunciation of the flesh, nor the humiliation and filth of physical decay" (Laidlaw, 1970 : 6). This "utopia" does not exist in the lives of the lesser characters in White's novels. Voss experiences intimations of it in the metaphysical or extra-terrestrial dream world of his illusion: "I can imagine some desert, with rocks, rocks of prejudice, and, yes, even hatred. You are so isolated. That is why you are fascinated by the prospect of desert places, in which you will find your own situation taken for granted, or more that that, exalted. _ _ _ Everything is for yourself" (p. 88).

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The question arises why Voss selects such unassertive men like Harry Robarts, Frank Le Mesurier and Turner to accompany him on his expedition. The answer lies in his own unconscious sense of incompleteness, and confirms the suspicion that Voss is not honest in his professed intention as regards the expedition. Le Mesurier and Robarts represent facets of Voss's own psyche that will have to be shed before he can learn humility and thus acknowledge his own insignificance in the order of things. Voss unconsciously fears the influence of these aspects of his self and hence his choice. Frank Le Mesurier is an introvert, but as Wolfe (1983 : 113) points out, he is at least part of and learns from the material world which he has rejected as inferior.

Harry Robarts, "who sees with his belly's eyes" (p. 40) and Turner, "a long, thin individual, whose mind had gone sour" (p. 41) represent the uninspired physical aspects of Voss's exoteric self.

Willie Pringle as an artist, and in contrast to Voss finds the world to be aesthetically meaningful: "I am confident that the mediocrity of which he speaks is not a final and irrevocable state; rather is it a creative source of endless variety and subtlety. The blowfly on its bed of offal is but a variation of the rainbow. Common forms are continually breaking into brilliant shapes. If we will explore them" (p. 447).

Frank Le Mesurier, as a poet, is a meticulous observer of men: "The latter's steps were thoughtful. He was somewhat moody. _ _ _ Le Mesurier could not look too much, though what he did with what he saw was not always evident. He did not communicate at once" (p. 32). Voss becomes curious about, and even jealous of the book Le Mesurier uses to write down his observations. Voss does not have the ability to annotate his thoughts, a weakness which makes him feel inferior. One of the reasons why Voss nurses Le Mesurier when he is ill, is to preserve him as the chronicler of his thoughts and achievements.

Voss's meeting with Palfreyman (p. 47), the gentle ornithologist, reveals that he is more at home in shadow and semi-darkness than bright sunlight which seems to reveal his flaws. Voss fails to impress Palfreyman: "He would have liked to be quite certain, not from any weakness in his own armour, but from his apparent inability to undermine his companion's strength. Naturally it was unpleasant to realize this" (p. 47). Voss is uncomfortably and intuitively aware that the "diaphonous fly" (p. 47) Palfreyman draws his attention to could well allude himself.

The mystic darkness the elected members of the expedition penetrate at the time of their deaths, hangs like a cupola over the members of the expedition. It is once again sig-

nificant that many of the "suddenly occurring moments, in the sense of a sudden intense perception of self-identification with actuality" take place in semi or complete darkness (Macainsh, 1984 : 60).

On the night of the Bonners' party, for example, Voss invites Laura to walk with him in the dark. Laura warns him, somewhat ambiguously, that "walking in this darkness is full of dangers" (p. 87). The prophetic quality of her admonition is borne out in her starkly honest vision of their future together: "I am fascinated by you. _ _ _ You are my desert" (p. 88).

Voss's darker self which nourishes the deceit of his future divinity suspects Laura Trevelyan's honesty: "Unaccustomed to recognize his own dishonesties, he was rather sensitive to them in others" (p. 86). Even Laura doubts her motives for being alone with Voss. She wonders whether she went into the "nihilistic darkness with agreeable resignation" (p. 85) or to meet Voss and her destiny. The reader gains the impression that their meeting is predestined. Laura, filled with the dark powers of her unconscious mind and excited by her insight into the hidden recesses of Voss's esoteric self, says: "I think I can enter into the minds of most men _ _ _ An advantage we insect women enjoy is that we have endless opportunity to indulge the imagination as we go backwards and forwards in the hive" (p. 86). This "advantage" explains why she is able to share his desert experiences.

The "desert" (p. 88) Laura refers to, one of "a series of symbolic precincts" (Beatson, 1976 : 137), symbolises the suffering all humans have to endure in their endeavour to discover their Real Self and arrive at an understanding of being before they can return to their Source. Laura,

despite her qualms, pledges to share Voss's agony and victory as part of her life plan. Her undertaking is akin to accepting him as her alter ego. In this manner she legitimises her adoption of Mercy as her own child. She takes upon herself, as a form of penitence, the task of teaching Voss humility and self-abnegation before God (p. 144).

The unexpected result of the spiritual fusion of Voss and Laura in the dark of the night (p. 87) is her recovery of her belief in God. Her disavowal of God up to this stage of her life has caused her much anguish. She finds that she can now pray for Voss (p. 90). He scorns her offer of intercession because he regards it as a sign of weakness: "My poor Miss Trevelyan! I shall be followed through the continent of Australia by your prayers, like little pieces of white paper. I can see them, torn-up paper, fluttering, now that I know for certain you are one of those who pray" (p. 90). There is an element of divine punishment in the reversal of roles that takes place when Voss has already progressed far into the interior of Australia. It is his letter - "that part of himself, the weakest, of which was born the necessity for this woman" (p. 215) - that is shredded by Dugald and blown away by the wind.

An understanding of Voss, especially in the light of the above quotation depends in part on an understanding of some of Nietzsche's thoughts. Nietzsche believed that the basic power of life is one that destroys individuals without the slightest concern for dignity of unfulfilled aspirations. Voss, portrayed by White with Nietzsche in mind, unconsciously subscribes to this power and even attempts to act as its instrument, as we see in his treatment of Palfreyman, his needless killing of Gyp and his condescending attitude to the Aborigines in relation to himself. It does not enter

his thoughts that the power he serves could turn upon himself and his party of explorers, as it eventually does when he is hacked to death by the very people he has, ironically, come to redeem from their ignorance and unhappiness.

Voss, like Nietzsche, but unlike Judd, Palfreyman and Angus, the unaffiliated appendages to his expedition, does not believe in an ordered universe. For him "there is no inherent ordering, no true nature of things, no thing-in-itself. The dionysian moment is a mediation through the Apollonian principle of form whether in dreams, art or natural phenomena, of the horror of existence which _ _ _ is seen as 'evil, brutal, destructive'" (Macainsh, 1984 : 59). The moment of horror can, in a perverse manner, also be enjoyed by the perpetrator. The irrational and needless slaughter of Gyp fascinates Voss. When he mourns the death of the dog, Voss, from the depths of his unconscious mind, laments his own loneliness and preoccupation with death. There are even elements of sadism in Voss's killing the dog and stage-managing Palfreyman's death. It is in such aberrant behaviour, according to Nietzsche, that the "cry of terror", the "new", the "unheard of", the "never experienced" and the "incommensurable" are experienced (Werke in drei Bänden: 625). Such moments of extreme absorption with the mystery of life and death are meaningless unless they serve some purpose. Voss, for example, is confronted with the mystery of Being and his awesome power to maintain or take life.

Nietzsche promulgated the hypothesis that God is dead and that man should step into the void left by God and develop his powers to the utmost. Voss attempts to do this and so develop the illusion of his own diversity. He tells Laura: "Even though I worship with pride. Oh, the humility, the

humility" (pp. 89 - 90). Voss refuses to believe he has been "caught all ways" (p. 97). He fondly believes religion is meant for women whom he relates to weakness.

Despite Voss's sporadic endeavours to emulate the acts of martyrs and religious leaders, for example when he cares for Le Mesurier in the cave, he cannot be regarded as a Christ-like figure. The unnerving failure of his almost demonic motives to assume such a role is not only blasphemous, but the one sure fate of a man who believes he is a Christ-figure. Morley (1972 : 126) points out that although Voss may be described as a megalomaniac at the start of his expedition, this is not his final condition. On the contrary, he is extremely humble at the time of his death: "Man is God decapitated. That is why you are bleeding" (p. 364).

Laidlaw (1970 :7), in the light of the above statements, writes that "Voss's view of fleshly life is dominated by his awareness of physical decay. Hence his rage against Jesus Christ, a god who chose to become flesh against all who lose their faith in a god because they have made him in their own fleshly image." Voss refuses to acknowledge the significance of the birth of Christ because he declines to worship anything that is flesh. Laidlaw points out that in the case of Voss's party their celebration of Christmas is dominated by death and that the slaughter of the sheep by Judd is actually a symbol of Easter and not the birth of Christ.

Voss, in the role of a divinely obsessed leader and to justify his expedition into the hinterland to himself, condemns the normative life of society at large. Mc Auley (1965 : 36) writes that "the Bush, that stands in opposition to the city, is 'the country of the mind' in which man stands unprotected before fundamental issues, and faces the real

revelations if ever they come _ _ _ . The Bush is a symbolic region, a way of picturing an inner world that urban man, too, enters if he has the courage and metaphysical depth to explore his selfhood and his relation to God."

The Moravian Mission, an analogue to the "Bush" motioned by McAuley, standing in sharp contrast to Sydney society, is an example of viable Christianity. (The Mission is comparable to Rhine Towers where love prevails and where harmony and not the fragmentation of the individual's esoteric self is a way of life.) Voss's conceited and arrogant attitude jars the spiritual equanimity of the Mission (pp. 48 - 49). Voss cannot bear the doubt placed over his beliefs and attitude to God by Brother Müller and the people at the mission: "Mr Voss _ _ _ you have a contempt for God, because He is not in your own image" (p. 50).

Voss's vanity prevents him from understanding the spiritual and social forces he is opposing. Durix (1979 : 345) believes Voss, as a German, has to defy Australian social, moral and political agencies and influences which are strongly biased by Victorianism and Puritanism. In the bush he is confronted by natural and foreign cultural forces equally set on destroying him. The Aborigines, for example, regard him as an intruder and evil presence.

The motley group of men who set sail on board the "Osprey" lack esprit de corps. Laidlaw (1970 : 5) bears out this comparison when he writes that Voss's decision to move into the desert is determined by the absence of form represented by sand. This is apparently why he later beats his head against the "soothing rock" and dreams of young ladies serving tea in delicate cups. Even Laura becomes sand thereby indicating the nature of their relationship and future communication.

Rhine Towers, one of the first stops on their journey, in contrast to the sand of the desert, promises to be the fulfilment of a long-cherished ideal, almost a promised land, in the Biblical sense of the word. The name of the homestead, because of its German allusion, makes it even more appealing to Voss despite his aversion to any show of sentimentality or weakness: "_ _ _ his eyes shone with bitter pleasure. Now the beauty of their approach to Rhine Towers appeared to have been a tragic one, of which the last fragments were crumbling in the dusk. He had been wrong to surrender to sensuous delights, and must now suffer accordingly" (p. 129 : my emphasis).

Voss's negative influence and attitude at Rhine Towers is compared to that of the serpent in the Garden of Eden: "But he continued to sit, thoughtful, with his mouth folded in. The serpent has slid even into this paradise Frank Le Mesurier realized and sighed" (p. 129). Voss is angry with himself for having insulted the Sandersons by at first refusing their hospitality. His dislike of "softness" is greater than his longing for comfort. He intuitively regards Rhine Towers as a form of temptation to deter him from his self-destructive expedition, the eye of the needle before he gains his "kingdom" somewhere in the hinterland of Australia. Accepting hospitality seems to threaten his independence.

The demands of his exoteric self are, however, greater than his rather feeble attempt at masochism and he enjoys a blissful night's sleep in a lovingly prepared bed. His loutish behaviour, an inexcusable aspect of his narcissism, stands in stark contrast to the traditional Christian principles of love and humbleness prevalent at Rhine Towers. The contradictory nature of Voss's sense of values and his

hypocrisy are revealed by his feeling "at home" at Jildra in the company of a reprobate like Boyle, who symbolises his exoteric self. It is unfeasible that he should mistake Boyle's morality and life-style as a form of self-inflicted suffering.

The aura of love and fellowship prevalent at Rhine Towers awakens Voss's love for Laura (or does he hope to emulate the Sandersons?) and results in his written proposal of marriage. Her acceptance and their apparent love for each other sustain Voss in the crises he endures - mainly the result of his stubbornness and inadequate leadership. Laura's love, even if of a highly suspect nature, helps him to achieve grace and humility, which enables him to transcend his self. The extraordinary nature of their love is revealed when, in a moment of mutual transcendence, Voss imagines that he and Laura enter the "Elysium Fields" where sexual intercourse is a spiritual form of communion and orgasm, fulfilment.

Voss is shrewd enough to realize the real danger of their determination and incentive weakening should the members of the expedition remain at Rhine Towers for a long time. Le Mesurier, a cynic at heart, for example experiences a wonderful sense of joy among the children of Rhine Towers (p. 142). The innocent children's unconditional and pure love awakens the sublimated creative and artistic urges in his esoteric self and fills the spiritual void in his Real Self.

Turner and Robarts, both insensitive men, are so mellowed by their ambience that they feel the need to "confess" their hidden, dark selves to Voss. Voss despises them for this compulsive need to gain spiritual relief, but nevertheless listens to them in order to use this knowledge against them at a later and opportune moment.

Voss's treatment of Palfreyman at Rhine Towers antagonises the reader. His unsolicited vindictiveness stems from his dislike of Palfreyman's gentle, "feminine" nature: "I detest humility _ _ _ . Is man so ignoble that he must lie in the dust, like worms? If this is repentance, sin is less ugly" (p. 151). Palfreyman's dependence on Judd, a resolute man who has accepted and come to terms with life as a result of Sanderson's loving solicitude, further antagonises Voss.

The men who join the expedition at Rhine Towers embody the spirit of the place and its people, and remain in passive opposition to Voss until the death of Palfreyman when Judd, Angus and by chance, Turner break away from Voss and his chosen few. White does not give an acceptable reason why Voss should have had such a hold on them that they accepted his Quixotic meanderings and poor leadership without protest. Voss fears Judd's self-sufficiency, natural leadership qualities, inquiring mind and enigmatic acceptance of the cruel blows inflicted on his body and psyche in the name of justice. Judd gives the impression of strength and wisdom, attributes he has gained through suffering.

In contrasting ways Voss and Judd illustrate the teleology of suffering. Judd's suffering has been mental and physical. Voss's torment is rooted in his unconscious mind and archetypal past. It does not influence his body as much as the apperception of his as yet unrevealed spiritual qualities. The common denominator uniting these two extremes of being is that they both fail their followers in the final instance. Voss prepares the way for Judd's defection by secretly putting the expedition's compasses into the latter's saddlebags, thereby suggesting that he should go

his own way. Judd can never be a part of his vision or his kingdom because both exist only in the "country of the mind".

Judd, in contrast to Voss who uses his self-imposed isolation as leader as a form of masochism and a bulwark against any attempt at "mateship", wins the support of the members of the expedition by his charisma. Voss intensifies his isolation by patronising the two blacks, Jackie and Duguld. He regards them as subjects of his future kingdom, but fails to gain their support because he, as a foreigner, cannot break through the cultural, historical and linguistic barriers.

Parting from Rhine Towers, comparable to being expelled from Eden, is in itself a form of suffering through loss. Even Voss feels purged and yet at the same "possessed of some sort of humility which Palfreyman extolled as a virtue" (p. 152). Dorothy Green (1974 : 294) observes that it is right that Voss should meet his obverse at Rhine Towers and poetic justice that he should encounter his executioner, Jackie, to whom he gives the knife he is decapitated with, at Jildra.

The disparate expedition arrives at Jildra at sunset, a fact in itself symbolic of the spiritual quality of the place. Boyle, whose name suggests his morally corrupt nature, comes to meet them out of the setting sun. His welcome lacks the qualities of love and hospitality so evident at Rhine Towers. Boyle's way of life denies his cultural heritage: "Mr Brendan Boyle was of that order of males who will destroy any distinction with which they have been born, because it accuses them, they feel, and they cannot bear the shame of it" (p. 166). The idyll of Rhine Towers makes way for dull immorality as well as a pervading sense of defeat

and loss. The tattered copy of Homer Boyle uses to prop up a table-leg suggests that classic and western civilizations have no place or influence there.

The strange sense of empathy that exists between Voss and Boyle stems from their mutual desire to destroy their ex-otic selves, albeit in dramatically different ways. Whereas Voss moves out into the neutral sterility of the desert, Boyle continues to live in filth and moral decadence.

It is evident that the conflict in Voss's unconscious mind will not let him rest. One night, soon after their arrival at Jildra, Palfreyman in a moment of acute spiritual awareness sees a vision of a white eagle in the branches of a dead tree. The eagle's wings blot out the meagre light of the night sky. Immediately after this vision Palfreyman observes Voss, naked, sleep-walking. For no apparent reason Palfreyman associates Voss with Christ and almost loses his faith.

These two visions, that of the eagle and of Voss sleepwalking, are ominous and presage the deaths of the members of the expedition. The eagle suggests Voss's Real Self trying to find a way out of the darkness of his unconscious mind. In Christian teaching the eagle is regarded to be a messenger from heaven. Morley (1972 : 133) writes that "the apparition of his [Voss's] naked body becomes a torment for Palfreyman, suggesting to him that Christ is an evil dream, his lifelong deception." The pleasant, releasing dreams of Rhine Towers thus change into nightmares at Jildra.

As the men move further away from civilization they dissociate themselves from their previous existences: "So they advanced into that country which now possessed them, looking

back in amazement at their actual lives, in which they had got drunk, lain with women under placid trees, thought to offer their souls to God, of driven the knife into His image, some other man" (p. 194). Kiernan (1971 : 119) sees the journey into the desert as not only a withdrawal from society, but also from sanity. The men's physical suffering occupies their thoughts while the surroundings dull their senses. Veronica Brady (1974 : 48) believes that what frightens the men is "the 'other half' of life, everything that is not orderly and manageable, which is beyond his rational control." This "other half" is not only the desert but the unconscious mind as well, the irrational "country" where man loses control.

Voss sets out into the literal and symbolic desert deliberately: "It is only here that he will find himself truly and test himself against the absolute antagonist death" (Brady, 1974 : 48). Garebian argues along the same lines when he writes that Voss intends using the desert as the harshest testing ground, " 'to wrestle with rocks, to bleed if necessary to ascend' [p. 231] through his suffering to a throne of achievement" (1976 : 560).

The explorers, already physically weak, find shelter in a cave during the rainy season. The relative protection they experience suggests a symbolic return to the safety of the womb. They seem to change into ethereal-like creatures. The surrounding darkness and masses of water resemble original chaos.

Their re-emergence in the Spring resembles a rebirth, a new beginning and even a new world, the old one having disappeared in the flood (p. 332). It is no wonder that Judd, Augus and Turner cannot find their way back into the once familiar, old world.

Le Mesurier becomes so ill that he seems to waste away, becoming transparent (p. 281). White suggests that he has shrugged off his former life and become a visionary: "At one point during his struggles, the sick man or visionary, kissed the slime of the beast's mouth, and at once spat out a shower of diamonds" (p. 281). Voss emulates Christ and castigates his esoteric self by caring for Le Mesurier: "He was all tenderness for the patient, as if he must show the extent of his capabilities. To dispense love, he remembered suddenly. If nobody was impressed, it was not that they suspected hypocrisy, but because they could expect anything of Voss. Or of God, for that matter" (p.268).

Voss feels the urge to prove himself better than Judd who only washed Palfreyman's feet. Voss has not yet learnt that for his deed to have any real spiritual meaning his motives must be founded in self-denying love for all human beings. Voss would never admit, for example, that his major reason for nursing Le Mesurier was to have him continue recording his apotheosis: "Le Mesurier whose mission it was, he was convinced, to extract the last drop out of their relationship, leaned forward, and asked: 'Since I am invited to be present at the damnation of man, and to express faithfully all that I experience in my own mind, you will act out your part to the end?' " (p. 272).

Voss cannot gain peace of mind as long as he does not acknowledge God and has no love for Creation: "Left alone, Voss groaned. He would not, could not learn, nor accept humility, even though this was amongst the conditions she had made in the letter that was now living in him. For some time, he sat with his head in his hands. He did truly suffer" (p. 199). Even his love for Laura is an avenue of escape from his predicament in the desert. Man is the eternal

hermaphrodite (Beatson, 1970 : 114) and only when this fact has been accepted can man accept his true divinity. Voss refuses to accept what Beatson (1970 : 114) calls the "Laura-aspect of his soul". This denial of compassion plays an important part in his suffering.

Voss's senseless killing of the dog Gyp reveals his fear of weakness: "He was never so hateful as when identifying weakness" (p. 248). Kiernan (1971 : 120) believes Voss kills the dog out of a desire for self-mortification and out of spite against Judd whose chance remark leads to the dog's death. Kiernan links the "sacrifice" of the dog to Laura's self-sacrificing decision to give her adopted daughter Mercy to foster parents. It is typical of Voss's conceit that he shoots Gyp in private so as not to let the men share in his experience. Voss incorrectly believes that the affection the men have for the dog detracts from their loyalty to him, thus turning the dog into a rival for total obeisance to himself. The unnecessary cruelty of his behaviour not only detracts from the vision of his deification but inflicts unnecessary suffering on others for the sake of his own selfishness. His self-centredness determines his behaviour, as for example, his eating the mustard greens Palfreyman cultivated for their general use, while knowing that Turner, suffering from scurvy, would have benefitted greatly.

Voss becomes so besotted by his vision of a kingdom filled with adoring Aborigines and his egotism that "it seemed that he was resigning his part in the expedition" (p. 332). He sends Palfreyman to his death because the latter's gentleness and humility, attributes related to Christ, (whom Voss regards as a weakling) stand between him and his divinity which is based on a vague concept of benign autocracy. Carolyn Bliss (1986 : 72) believes Palfreyman obeys Voss's command to meet with the Aborigines in an attempt to redeem

his sin of not having returned the love [?] of his hunchback sister: "His willingness to give his life for Voss takes on an added significance in that the sister whom he would love and save is so like his leader: wilful, perverse, self-punishing, and anxious to make others in her image" (Bliss, 1986 : 72). Palfreyman has learnt to read his leader's eyes (p. 197) and intuits the German's true motives. The irony of Voss's betrayal of Palfreyman and his own Real Self is that it is Palfreyman's death Judd remembers (p. 444).

When Voss, Le Mesurier and Robarts - "the trinity of whites" (p. 378) - finally separate from Judd and his followers; time and place are no longer important to them. They seem to move with greater ease having separated themselves from reality: "Those under his command, including the aboriginal boy, were struck by the incandescence of the man who was leading them. They were in love with that rather gaunt, bearded head, and would compel themselves to ignore the fact that it was a skull with a candle expiring inside" (p. 358). Isolation and deprivation cause them to hallucinate, their conversation centring on matters of life and death.

Despite his weak and hopeless condition Voss still cannot accept reality. He is infuriated by Le Mesurier who echoes his own mind (p. 361) when the latter tells him that he has been taught to accept damnation: "But Voss was often infuriated by rational answers. _ _ _ 'That is men all over _ _ _ They will aim too low. And achieve what they expect'" (p. 360). Goaded by his now futile dream of a kingdom among the Aborigines in which Jackie would be his footstool (p. 361) he refuses to accept Le Mesurier's pronouncement, "Dying is creation. The body creates fresh forms, the soul inspires by its manner of leaving the body, and passes into other souls" (p. 261).

Jackie's unexpected desertion at a critical time of their meanderings shatters Voss's dream, and opens his eyes to his plight: "Then he did begin to falter, and was at last openly wearing his own sores that he had kept hidden. Vermin were eating him. The shrivelled worms of his entrails were deriding him. So he rode on through hell, until he felt her [Laura] touch him" (p. 363 : my addition).

There are elements of dark comedy in Voss's pathetic overtures of friendship being rejected by the Aborigines and his emaciated body being subjected to further torture. White drives home Voss's humiliation by describing how he was unable to remount his horse, once a symbol of his elevated status: "In his feebleness, or in the dream he was living, as he was hauling himself up by the pommel he felt the toe of his boot slither from the stirrup-iron. He felt some metal, undoubtedly a buckle, score his chin for a very brief moment of pain before he was back standing on the ground" (p. 366).

Voss finds grace in "the varying speeds at which the process of decomposition took place, and the lovely colours of putrescence that some souls were allowed to wear. For, in the end, everything was of flesh, the soul elliptical in shape" (p. 388). In the presence of a "congregation" of blacks (p. 388) Voss is given a wicketty grub by an old black fellow shortly before he is sacrificed. Patricia Morley writes that the eucharistic ritual celebrated by the Aborigines is a renewal of the customary moral association of archetypes - "a modulation of a modulation, or the reversal of demonic imagery back into its angelic or apocalyptic form" (1972 : 147). The solemn moment the two racially different men share is a true eucharist and not a black mass: "Men, to the native mind, are no more than

wichetty grubs in the hands of children" (Morley, 1972 : 147). Managing to swallow the grub fuses Voss with man and God.

Voss's last moments of torment are intensified by the bloody slaughter of the horses: "None of this was seen by Voss, but at one stage the spear seemed to enter his own hide, and he screamed through his thin throat with his little, leathery strip of remaining tongue. For all suffering he screamed" (p. 392). The fear the irrational animals feel stands in contrast to the manner in which Voss accepts his death.

A second eucharist celebrating Voss's true love for Laura takes place in a dream which is placed in an atmosphere of joyous calm "with white lilies of prayer and love serving as communion wafers" (Morley, 1972 : 147).

The Aborigines allow Voss to live as long as the comet, symbol of the Snake and God and related to Voss's arrival, remains visible in the sky. When the comet disappears the Aborigines believe they have been cheated by Voss and determine to kill him. His execution is a solemn rite, part of a sacrifice. It is significant that Voss's last thoughts do not centre on himself, but turn to love and fulfilment with Laura. He finds a balance between joy and sorrow. His greatest joy lies in "the great legend becoming truth" (p. 390) and his ability to express his love for others: "But of greater importance were his own words of love that he was able at last to put into her mouth [another reference to the eucharist]. So great was her faith, she received these white wafers without surprise" (p. 393 : my addition).

White reiterates his credo when he evaluates Voss's death: that it is only "through love we overcome the division to which created nature is subjected. Especially the primitive and the mystic feel the solidarity with mankind and nature, the former through the unity of the collective unconscious and the common strong feelings of the supernatural: the latter through the experimental knowledge of contemplation, which sees all the universe as the mirror of the perfections of God" (Moreno, 1970 : 13).

6.2 LAURA TREVELYAN

In contrast to her step-sister, Belle Bonner, who is a joyous, fun-loving young woman, Laura Trevelyan prefers to keep to herself, improving her mind by reading, a habit which alienates the young men of her acquaintance: "She would seldom have come out of herself for choice, for she was happiest shut with her own thoughts, and such was the texture of her own thoughts, and such was the texture of her marble, few people ever guessed at these" (p. 7). Taking her solitary life-style into account it seems a logical assumption that she should long for some person with whom she can share her thoughts: "Yet, in spite of this admirable self-sufficiency, she might have elected to share her experience with some similar mind, if such a mind had offered" (p. 9). She finds such a similar mind and alter ego in Ulrich Voss. Despite an initial unwillingness they are attracted to each other, the outcome of which determines her life and the course and nature of her suffering. She becomes Voss's spiritual associate in a mutual quest for God.

The first encounter between Laura and Voss, although hesitant and a kind of intellectual sparring, sets the tone for their subsequent meetings and predisposes Laura's attitude to Voss and his undertaking. She commits herself to

him and even toys with the idea of how she would react to a proposal of marriage by Voss. Her involuntary physical response to Voss's wrists and hairy fingers betrays her sexuality which she has managed to hide behind a facade of proper and dignified behaviour, but which now becomes a life-force she has to contend with. In the light of their similar natures and Voss's instinctive dislike of everything that is feminine and gentle, it is unlikely that a real marriage would have succeeded.

Much of the complexity of Laura's self lies in the duality of her psyche and her physical appearance. She is both attractive and ugly, depending on her posture and the light: "Her face, it had been said, was long-shaped. Whether she was beautiful it was not at first possible to tell, although she should, and could have been" (p. 9). She adopts the pose of an ignorant female because it conforms to general opinion while protecting the privacy of her thoughts. After having suffered she realises, like Himmelfarb in Riders in the Chariot, that the intellect alone cannot save the individual soul or humanity from destruction.

Laura's liberal attitude to life and religion is regarded with distrust by the Bonner family. She, for example, decides that she will not have children of her own because she does not see the necessity of duplicating her own image. This attitude is one of the reasons why she finds a spiritual relationship with Voss attractive. In time the pain of love changes her superior, inexperienced attitude, teaching her humility and acceptance of her role in life. Love, however, does not ease her loneliness.

Laura's love for Voss and the realisation of her insufficiency to save him from himself cause her to abandon her agnosticism, a stance she adopted in reaction to the "fuzz

of faith" (p. 9) she saw in others. She feels a pressing need to pray for Voss: she even wants to teach him to pray to save him from his destructive pride. Laura's decision to devote herself to prayer stems from her intuitive knowledge that her own suffering, as Voss's alter ego and feminine self, will be as great as his own and that she will need prayers and the grace of God as much as he will. In this regard she is far more rational than Voss who is blinded by his own conceit. When she has suffered in tandem with Voss she finally understands the meaning of the triangle of being: "How important it is to understand the three stages. Of God into man. Man. And man returning to God" (p. 386). The only way in which she can save Voss is by undertaking a similar quest, but with a radically different spiritual approach characterised by love, humility, sacrifice and prayer (Mc Auley, 1964 : 40).

Laura's doctrine may be explained as follows:

"The First Stage, 'God into man,' refers to the act of creation, whereby God breathes a spirit into man, and with it some of His own divinity. Further, it is a time of dependence, usually associated with childhood.

The Second Stage, 'Man,' describes the time when man rejects the notion of his dependence and feels strongest, in control of himself and the world around him. At the height of his pride, he assumes the role of God - an illusion he must renounce before he can achieve union with God.

The Third Stage, 'Man returning into God,' involves the renunciation of man's belief that he stands alone and in control. In this Third Stage, the attainment of humility is crucial before man can be drawn back into God. Humility is reached through the embracing of suffering and the experience of failure. In its extreme form, the attainment of humility means a dissolution of the self" (Rose-Marie and John Beston, 1974 : 100).

When she has suffered physically and spiritually, Laura is able to transcend the usual limits of human understanding as regards God and creation. Moreno (1970 : 106) points out that the transcendental as Voss and Laura experience it, is "a manifestation of the collective unconscious which reveals itself in the experience of the numinous." Their concept of God bears anthropological traits of both a rational and irrational character. Laura, for example, experiences a sense of transcendence and union with the cosmos at Rose's funeral: "As I stood there (I hesitate to write you all this, except that it is the truth), as I stood, the material part of myself became quite superfluous, while my understanding seemed to enter into wind, earth, the ocean beyond, even the soul of our poor, dead maid. I was nowhere and everywhere at once. I was destroyed, yet living more intensely than actual sunlight, so that I no longer feared the face of Death as I had found it on the pillow" (p. 239).

Dorothy Green (1974 : 302) argues that Laura's task is "to break down the masculine striving towards the infinite, to turn the man [Voss] again towards the truth of what is human, to compel him to acknowledge that he cannot become God by willing it. Voss's task has been to direct the

feminine stress on the particular towards the universal, to compel Voss to trust that for which there is no evidence" (my addition).

Laura hopes to reshape Voss's attitude to God by tearing out the Christ thorn, thus ridding him of the masochistic tendencies she has discovered in him. Sylvia Gzell (1964 : 182) argues that Laura's efforts are aimed at convincing Voss not to deny the truth of religion: "She suffers, becomes gravely ill when Voss denies Christianity to the point where he denies his own humanity, and recovers where he makes the ultimate gesture of acceptance in the delirium vision before death."

Laura accepts Voss's proposal of marriage on condition that they "may pray together for salvation" (p. 186). Her letter to Voss, in itself almost a sermon on ethics, reveals the duality of her feelings for him: "So, Mr Voss, we have reached a stage where I am called upon to consider my destroyer as my saviour!" It is unlikely that she believes his protestations of affection - "I must take on trust those tender feelings you profess" (p. 185) - or whether she loves him - "All the more since I have remained almost morbidly sensitive to the welfare of one whose virtues do not outweigh the many faults I have continued to despise" (p. 185). It thus becomes clear that Laura's acceptance of Voss's proposal is motivated by her being fascinated by him and the opportunity to discover her Real Self through his suffering: "I am fascinated by you _ _ _ . You are my desert!" (p. 88).

White uses a water image, symbol of the vital potential of the psyche, to describe Laura and Voss's union subsequent to her acceptance of his proposal of marriage: "Then Voss began to float, and those words last received. But

together. Written words take some time to thaw, but the words of lilies were now flowing, in full summer water, whether it was the water or the leaves of water, and dark hairs of roots plastered on the mouth as water blew across. Now they were swimming so close they were joined together at the waist, and were the same flesh of lilies, their mouths, together, were drowning in the same love - stream" (p. 187).

In time Laura, as the weaker partner, becomes the stronger and Voss has to resign his masculine self to her. His unwilling abdication drives him to acts of irrational behaviour as, for example, in his treatment of animals. In moments of crisis he unconsciously reveals his inherent weakness as man and leader by his growing dependence on Laura: "He would have liked to be told, in that voice, what to do next, since communication is not an end in itself" (p. 118).

Having accepted Voss's proposal Laura is prepared to commit herself to him totally. Her decision to do so is made evident in her second letter to him in which she intimates that she is "in love with" the benefits her commitment can offer her esoteric self in her quest for her Real Self. Voss thus becomes the means to an end.

Beatson is correct when he writes that Laura's professed love for Voss seems to be composed of pity and even contempt: "These emotions [pity and contempt] are generated in her by her confrontation with a specific individual man, but as she nears, and then passes the climax of her involvement with him, the emotions become more and more detached, more nun-like in their remoteness from any personal contact" (1970 : 117 : my addition). At the end of the novel her attitude to her "husband" is of a "formally theological

nature". She ends her life as a saint, "detached by her experience of suffering and death" (Beatson, 1970 : 118). She manages to establish contact with Australian culture through Rose Portion and Judd; Rose and Judd being ex-convicts. Through Voss she gains a measure of union with the country and the Aborigines.

Just as Laura's esoteric self is attracted to a possible union with her Real Self and God through Voss's suffering, so her exoteric self, her darker nature, is drawn to Jack Slipper, the anticipation of sexual intercourse and the bamboo bush in the Bonners' garden where much illicit fornication takes place (p. 54). It is significant that White links this kind of "fertility" with darkness and rotting to contrast it with the spiritual growth that takes place in the blinding light of the desert.

Laura attempts to suppress the urgings of her sexual self by adopting Rose Portion's child as her own. She even experiences labour pains during Rose's confinement: "In spite of her stone limbs, Laura Trevelyan could have screamed with pain. Her throat was bursting with it. They would all be strangled by the darkness, she suspected, when a curious transformation of their faces began at last to take place. Their livid, living stone was turning, by divine mercy, into flesh" (p. 230). The importance of Laura's "maternity" lies in the diminished importance of the memory of Voss which merely "fluctuates" in her mind.

At Rose Portion's funeral, comparable to that of her exoteric self, Laura experiences intense moments of transcendence as her flesh, symbol of suffering and pain, is stripped from her bones, symbols of truth and honesty in White's novels: "Then, when the wind had cut the last shred of flesh from the girl's bones, and was whistling in the

little cage that remained, she began to experience a shrill happiness, to sing the wounds her flesh would never suffer. Yet such was their weakness, her bones continued to crave earthly love, to hold his skull against the hollow where her heart had been" (p. 235). She, as one of White's illuminati finds intense pleasure in the realisation that "terrestrial safety" (p. 235) is not assured, cutting her off from "pure happiness [that] must await the final crumbling, when love would enter into love, becoming an endlessness, blown at last, indivisible, indistinguishable, over the brown earth" (p. 235). Because of Laura's humility and aspirations for sublime release from her confining body, her awareness of another dimension of being is more vivid than in the case of Voss who, in contrast, is too self-centered to experience such an epiphany until the time of his death.

In Laura's last letter to Voss, who has become her medium to salvation through suffering, it is patent that she has become obsessed with the thought of humility - "When man is truly humbled, when he has learnt that he is not God, then he is nearest to becoming so. In the end, he may ascend" (p. 387) - not only as a form of masochism but as a way of worshipping God: "I am not really so proud as to claim to be humble, although I do attempt, continually to humble myself" (p. 239). In order to externalise her desire that they should worship God together she attempts "to work it [the word together] in wool" (p. 239 : my addition). Laura is convinced that the one cannot be saved from damnation without the other, hence her desperation to change Voss.

The colours of the wool she uses in her tapestry are in themselves significant: blue stands for the sky and the infinity of the cosmos; brown represents the earth and crimson epitomises the glory of the Trinity. The crimson is, however, still too brilliant for her as yet limited con-

sciousness and she cannot complete the tapestry until she is sure of Voss's humility and their union with God. Judd's confusing Palfreyman's death with Voss's adds to her uncertainty.

Although Laura treats the child Mercy as a treasured possession and not a mere extension of herself, it is tragic that she should involve the child in her own emotional distress and uncertainty: "The young woman was going up and down, but, in the familiar room, amongst the solid furniture, the two beings had been overtaken by a storm of far darker colours than human passions. As they were rocked together, tossed, and buffeted, helplessness and desperation turned the woman's skin an ugly brown. What could she do? The baby, on beginning to sense that she had been sucked into some whirlpool of supernatural dangers, could at least let out a howl for her mother to save her, and was probably convinced she would be saved" (p. 306). Laura dresses the child in unsuitable clothes, changing her into a freak in the eyes of others. Mercy does not enjoy the normal childhood she would most likely have had with the Asbolds. She is regarded as Laura's illegitimate daughter and is snubbed. Mercy's humble attitude to Laura is the same as that of her natural mother, Rose Portion.

Although White prepares the reader for the joint suffering of Laura and Voss by repeated references to their becoming one and to her fusion with Voss during moments of high tension, it is difficult to accept the blending of two lives to such a degree that Laura suffers the same spiritual trauma Voss does and at the same time. Laura regards her suffering as a "belt of nails" (p. 304) she can remove at will. It becomes clear that her suffering is an act of will arising from the intuitive knowledge that the human soul is separated from God in a voluntary manner. Beatson (1976 :

26) points out that although the individual has no choice in the matter of his suffering, he can determine the quality of his response. Laura, at the climax of her delirium calls out "Dear Christ, now at last I understand your suffering" (p. 386). She understands, as Voss does not, that existence can have no meaning without a belief in His reality. It is thus a reasonable supposition that such suffering is far more traumatic than any form of suffering inflicted upon the individual by humans. Mrs Bonner, for example, believes Laura's illness is a form of suffering inflicted on the members of the family (p. 355).

Laura, at the nadir of her spiritual crisis, reverts to the archetype of sacrifice. She is willing to sacrifice her "daughter" for the sake of her "husband" and, by implication, herself. The Bestons (1974 : 110) warn, lest we be inclined to compare Laura's suffering to that of Christ, that she retains the qualities of a pythoness because she manages to keep those closest to her in a state of continued subservience. There can be no retaliation for her demanding behaviour because she is not exposed to people who have stronger personalities than her own.

Laura does not return to public life after her brain-storm. She retreats into her esoteric self:

" 'Like some foolish nun,' were Mrs Bonner's last words.

But Laura was, and continued, content. The vows were rigorous that she imposed upon herself, to the exclusion of all personal life, certainly of introspection, however great her

longing for those delights of hell. The gaunt man, her husband, would not tempt her in." (p. 404).

Laura has no friends, only acquaintances. She rejects Dr Badgery's tentative advances as she would have refused any serious intentions on the part of Voss, had he been there: "Circumstances that would humanize most others are turned by Laura into occasions of further alienation" (Beston, 1971 : 215). Brian Kiernan agrees that Laura becomes old by avoiding life around her and by pursuing an illusory ideal: "She believes self-mortification to be nobler than submitting to the demands of life" (1980 : 52).

Veronica Brady, on the other hand, rises to the defence of Laura as the heroine of Voss because she believes it requires far more courage "to go on living in the city of man, honestly and true to one's personal values, _ _ _ more heroic perhaps than to die, however splendidly in the desert" (1975 : 17).

Laura prefers not to consider Voss's fate. She refuses to speak to Hebden because she is afraid that he might discover the truth about Voss and herself and so prick the fragile bubble of her illusion. Hebden becomes her "torturer" (p. 411). She betrays her "love" for Voss by saying, ambiguously enough, that she hardly ever knew the man (p. 412). She even accuses Voss of having had undesirable qualities.

Laura, as Voss's spiritual mentor, does not gain real peace of mind or discover her Real Self. Voss's unknown fate stands between her, her Real Self and her much hoped for union with God.

6.3 PALFREYMAN

Albert Palfreyman, a gentle man, has all the qualities of the beast of burden suggested by his name. White calls him "the quiet man" (p. 99) who suffers in silence, because he has no one with whom to share his burden of guilt. His redeeming character trait is his humility, a quality Voss despises because it suggests weakness and is part of his vision of Christ.

It is a quirk of Palfreyman's destiny that his being an ornithologist places him in an obligatory position as regards the expedition. Unlike Voss, Palfreyman believes that everything that happens is the will of God. He senses that Voss "is the ugly rock upon which truth must batter itself to survive" (p. 98).

Palfreyman accepts his poor state of health and Voss's harsh treatment as part of his punishment for almost having submitted to his sister's erotic caresses and for having deserted her in her hour of spiritual need. His masochistic behaviour places a question mark over his own professed Christian behaviour.

Palfreyman personifies White's belief that each individual has a private "hump" that is his share of suffering on earth. Part of Palfreyman's hump is the fact that he "has not been Christ-like enough to take his hunchback sister's sense of guilt upon himself and so release her from self-torment" (Green, 1974 : 290).

The essence of Palfreyman's suffering is rooted in his sense of guilt for having seen his sister privately trying to make herself "respectable" enough to appear in public despite the physical deformity of her body. Her embarrassment at being

discovered, unleashes an emotional storm over which she has no control. The recollection of being thrown through a window by his sister and her subsequent hope that he too would be deformed remain nightmare memories for Palfreyman (p. 262). He believes he has failed in life because he is not able to convince his sister that her deformity does not disqualify her from being accepted by God: "She is too plainly marked with the sign of His disapproval. Recently, she attempted to take her own life by opening her veins" (p. 264). Voss blames Palfreyman for having saved his sister thereby denying her "the Gothic splendours of death" (p. 264).

Palfreyman is a "feminine" character who is lovingly nursed by Judd at Rhine Towers (p. 130). As an outsider in the company of men, he attempts to live the life of an academic to compensate for his loneliness. Dorothy Green (1974 : 299) concludes that his faith becomes the substitute for life: "It is not a question of my will, Mr Voss. It is rather the will of God that I should carry out certain chosen undertakings" (p. 47). His inability to confront Voss, for example, in the matter of the mustard seedlings, causes Palfreyman endless worry. Voss becomes his daily nemesis: "Oh, Palfreyman _ _ _ you are humble. And humility is humiliating in men. I am humiliated for you" (p. 339). Only when he has endured "baptism" in the flooded river and emerged from the caves after an enforced and protracted stay is he able to face the truth about himself. During the explorers' stay in the cave, Palfreyman, driven by introspection, attempts to atone for his "sins", which time and Voss have made to seem enormous, by performing particularly unpleasant tasks like shaving and cleaning Turner's pustule-covered face.

Palfreyman is a willing martyr when he moves out to meet the party of Aborigines at the command of Voss who believes he has "hit upon the means of revealing the true condition of a soul" (p. 341). Palfreyman regards his mission as a form of expiation for living. His murder becomes the turning point in the lives of the men: "All remembered the face of Christ that they had seen at some point in their lives, either in churches or visions before retreating from what they had not understood, the paradox of man in Christ, and Christ in man" (p. 342).

Judd, for example, remembering "his own fat paddocks" and "the big breasts of his wife, that would smell of fresh-baked bread" (p. 345), decides to return home: "if there is hell before and hell behind, and nothing to choose between them _ _ _ I will go home. Even if I come to grief on the way, I am going home" (p. 346). Voss, by contrast, glories in what he believes to be his triumph over materialism: "Small minds quail before great enterprises. It is to be hoped that a small mind will stand the strain of such a return journey, and unaccompanied" (p. 346).

6.4 FRANK LE MESURIER

Le Mesurier's name describes his role in the novel. He is "the measurer" of men and their motives. Voss affords him the opportunity of going in search of the meaning of being and God: "If he had become coolly cynical rather than embittered, it was because he still entertained a hope that it might be revealed which part he was to play in the general scheme" (p. 34). Truth about being is revealed to him when he dies and can do nothing to understand the life he has left behind.

Le Mesurier convinces by his humanity and lack of pretence. He is important to Voss as the recorder of his life and destiny. Le Mesurier does not make friends with the members of the expedition because he prefers his own company, a contributory factor in his suffering and his search for selfhood.

His spiritual anguish (his demons) are revealed in his urgent need to discuss God when he is drunk and his guise of cynicism has been removed. He tells Turner that drunkenness is sometimes necessary to people who are not worms. Worms are "merely physical" and the worst that can happen to them is that somebody can step on them. Alcohol relieves his spiritual drought for a time.

When Voss explains to Le Mesurier how he can discover his own genius he is actually attempting to convince his doubting self:

"Every man has a genius, though it is not always discoverable. Least of all when choked by the trivialities of daily existence. But in this disturbing country, so far as I have become acquainted with it already, it is possible more easily to discard the inessential and to attempt the infinite. You will be burnt up most likely, you will have the flesh torn from your bones, you will be tortured probably in many horrible and primitive ways, but you will realize that the genius of which you sometimes suspect you are possessed, and of which you will not tell me you are afraid" (p. 35).

At times Le Mesurier senses that he has some divine purpose ("his pearl" p. 99) in life. His belief matches Voss's own vanity. White allows the two men to cherish this illusion while they are still in good health. As their physical well-being deteriorates, they are forced to admit their insignificance and mere mortality. White creates the impression that his own vision of God is one of a God of cameleon-like propensity. Le Mesurier, unlike Voss, does not in the end surrender his life to God. He takes his own life in an attempt to retain a sense of independence and individuality. Le Mesurier's vision of the immensity of the unknown appeals to his poetic and creative soul. It is the same threatening, spiritual darkness Hurtle Duffield in The Vivisector has to deal with. Le Mesurier is forced to penetrate this darkness before he can understand and know God. The conflict between his esoteric and exoteric selves is his "hump" as revealed in his notes which he keeps hidden because they are a part of his soul.

At the start of the rainy season, when the expedition has already progressed some distance, Le Mesurier becomes desperately ill. The cave in which the bedraggled members shelter resembles a huge tomb with the men as corpses: "At that hour of night, sound was thin and terrible. Even the sleepers, who would stir, normally, and call to one another, were turned to rock, a dust of pale sleep lying on their rigid forms of pale brown" (p. 296). Le Mesurier's illness is a period of transition from the physical to the spiritual essence of being; from a man with a limited vision to a man with prophetic powers as regards his other evil self, Voss: "There were occasions, this fever-gutted man suspected, when his leader was not sensible of their common doom, and so, he must see for him, he must feel for him" (p. 293).

Le Mesurier (here echoing White's own sentiments as reflected in Flaws in the Glass) writes about the cruelty of parents. He postulates that the children are the ones who are devoured by their parents: "Only the old see and understand that the child suffers and he will go on to the illusion of his parents in the Second Stage, of strength and independence and destructive power" (Beston, J. & Beston, R., 1974 : 104). Le Mesurier compares childhood to a house of nettles, in the oeuvre of White's symbols, comparable to a world of sin.

Le Mesurier's poem, "Conclusion", is a character sketch of Voss and an accurate prophecy of what will happen to the members of the expedition. Le Mesurier acts the part of a chorus and oracle because he concentrates on the conscious motives as well as the life and death of Voss. Voss admits that "the sophistications of Frank Le Mesurier could have been echoes of the master's own mind" (p. 361).

Le Mesurier's vision of Voss's death has a pastoral simplicity about it and stands in sharp contrast to Voss's personal dream of Gothic splendours. He writes "Humility is my brigalow, that I must remember: here I shall find a thin shade in which to sit. As I grow weaker, so I shall become strong. As I shrivel, I shall recall with amazement the visions of love, of trampling horses, of drowning candles, of hungry emeralds. Only goodness is fed" (p. 296). Voss, at the time of his death realises that all his visions of grandeur and royalty have been "dreck". His spiritual growth out of "dreck" is yet another example of White's belief that grace and personal salvation can germinate in and grow out of impurity.

When Voss acknowledges that he can no longer help the remaining members of the expedition - "I have no plan _ _ _ but will trust to God" (p. 379) - Frank Le Mesurier decides to take his own life. By tearing up his notes he highlights the fact that Voss's chronicle has also come to an end (p. 281). His prayer "O God, my God, I pray that you will take my spirit out of this my body's remains, and after you have scattered it, grant that I shall be everywhere, and in the rocks, and in the empty waterholes, and in the true love of all men, and in you, O God, at last" (p. 297), is by proxy Voss's own prayer which seems to have been granted. As his alter ego, Laura Trevelyan says, "Voss did not die _ _ _ . He is there still, it is said, in the country, and always will be. His legend will be written down, eventually, by those who have been troubled by it" (p. 448).

Frank Le Mesurier's intense and devoted artistic temperament is revealed in his desire, when his old self has been burnt away by the desert heat, to experience every moment of his death: "I would want to feel the last fly crawling on my skin, and listen to my conscience in case it should give up a secret. Out of that experience I might even create something" (p. 361). His belief in reincarnation is shattered when he dies and finds himself in another world: "_ _ _ with his remaining strength [he opened] the hole wider, until he was able to climb out into the immense fields of silence" (p. 381 : my addition). In life Voss makes fun of Le Mesurier "for his inability to split open rock and discover the final secret" (p. 250).

Le Mesurier's suffering reaches a peak with the realization that Voss has failed him. Voss's exclamation that he "will trust to God" (p. 379) may save his soul from damnation, but it condemns his followers in their hour of need: "Le

Mesurier was blasted by their leader's admission, although he had known it, of course, always in his heart and dreams" (p. 379).

6.5 ROSE PORTION AND ALFRED JUDD

Rose Portion, her name is a sardonic comment on her femininity and appearance, joins the ranks of those men and women in White's corpus, who have suffered greatly at the hands of fellow humans who advocate an inhuman sense of justice. Her life is a prolonged punishment for a crime she regards as an act of love and compassion: "I did trust and expect over much. Well it is all past. I loved my little boy that was given me, but I would not have had him suffer. That is what they [the authorities] did not understand" (p. 76 : my addition).

Rose Portion's behaviour is similar to that of Doll Quigley in The Tree of Man. The two women's acts of euthanasia add a new dimension to the act of love, namely relieving a loved one of his suffering by taking his life, and enduring the subsequent sense of loss and guilt.

White describes Rose Portion and her suffering in terms of animal behaviour. She even dies like an animal, without human dignity: "Rose Portion had turned aside her face. The watery blood had stained the pillow, her leather tongue was already stiff, in fact, this poor animal had suffered her last indignity _ _ _" (p. 233 : my emphasis). Ironically, however, Rose not only makes people feel uncomfortable, she causes them to do introspection by her mere presence.

Rose Portion and Judd have a Stoic attitude to life. Whereas Judd has forgiven the brutal crimes committed against him and has found happiness through the beneficent influence of Sanderson, Rose could not care less. Apart from her emotional passivity and intense desire to win Laura's approbation through devoted service, Rose Portion has an intuitive if inarticulate knowledge of life and people that upsets Laura Trevelyan (p. 75). What she observes causes her to accept her fate with unusual disinterest.

Judd's strong, confident attitude to life causes Voss to fear him. Judd has already gone through "hell" and survived which makes him superior to Voss in an ordinary, everyday world. Judd comes from a world of men where leadership demands qualities Voss does not have. Dorothy Green (1974 : 298) writes that Judd and Voss's disagreement about the compass "is part of the symbolic pattern of the philosophic argument: which can show the way to the central meaning, the flesh or the spirit?" Voss is fully aware that Judd cannot be a part of the expedition he has in mind: "Voss, who was looking down all the time upon the man's massive, grizzled head, could not feel superior, only uneasy at times. It was necessary for him to enjoy complete freedom, whereas this weight had begun to threaten him" (p. 136 : my emphasis).

The tension caused in Voss's mind by Judd's presence causes him to sleepwalk and secretly put the compasses in Judd's saddle-bags, thereby unconsciously intimating that Judd should go his own way and leave him to proceed into the country of the mind.

When Voss visits Judd's homestead to inspect his "soul" he is at first dismayed by the general appearance of efficiency. He subsequently discovers that Judd has interests

like astronomy which he regards as feminine pursuits and hence weaknesses. Their meeting and conversation show that Judd has managed to free himself from material concerns and material welfare to which Voss's exoteric self is still bound.

Much of Judd's distress comes from his mistrust of words, ironically a virtue, because many of his esoteric self's insights are beyond human articulation. Dorothy Green (1974 : 296) concludes that although Judd is the master of objects he does not allow them to possess him. The major flaw in Judd's psychological make-up is that he regards matter as the sole reality: "All my gifts are for practical things" (p. 136).

Voss's uncalled for antagonism towards Judd becomes an important part of the latter's suffering. He suffers agonies over Voss's inept leadership and temperamental behaviour. He discloses that he has come to the end of his emotional tether when he throws stones at the body of the horse he has shot at Voss's command. He can no longer cope with the "unearthly situation" (p. 333) and the longing to return "home" to his familiar world becomes overwhelming. Voss does not have such a focal point of his being. Green (1974 : 300) believes Judd decides to return to Rhine Towers because he cannot cope with the realm of the spirit they seem to enter after Palfreyman's death.

Judd, practical to the last, is correct in his assessment of their situation that there is "hell before and hell behind" (p. 346). He is, however, incorrect in his assumption that he can disregard the "other world". He never escapes from the influence of the desert or Voss.

Whereas Voss enters the realm of the spirit after his death, Judd's wandering mind suggests that he has been caught between the spiritual and material worlds and that Voss's sacrifice and determination, in contrast to his own, have been worthwhile after all.

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In Riders in the Chariot White describes the quest of four different characters, not only for an understanding of being, but also a reunion with God. He uses the vision of the Chariot mentioned in Ezekiel as the leitmotif for his novel.

7.0 RIDERS IN THE CHARIOT

The epigraph to Riders in the Chariot suggests that White's general aim in this novel is to reveal how four very dissimilar people gain a perception of the infinite through suffering: "The path to truth, White's novel suggests, lies through suffering, madness and solitary vision" (Colmer, 1978 : 9). Colmer reaffirms White's belief, once again apparent in this novel, that there is another world within the apparent one, we are familiar with: "It affirms that there is a reality in the material world which is accessive only to the pure in heart, those who have kept or regained their integrity in spite of persecution, madness and neglect" (Colmer, 1978a : 1).

An appreciation of Riders in the Chariot depends largely on the supposition that material and physical defeat can be changed into a spiritual victory through platonic love and suffering. Colmer stresses love, because suffering without love, even of nature as in The Tree of Man or the fraternal alter ego as in The Solid Mandala, cannot generate an awareness of the Real Self or God.

In this novel only the four Riders, caught up in a world of malice and inherent evil, are granted a state of grace: "The four illuminati [people who have, according to the epigraph to the novel quoted from William Blake's work, perceived the infinite] all transcend the [exoteric] self by negating it and denying the will; like the four living beings in the prophet Ezekiel's vision of God, they attain a wisdom and a freedom beyond the reaches of common sense" (Wolfe, 1983 : 125 : my additions).

It is meaningful, in the light of White's aim in this novel, that each of the Riders endures a spiritually debilitating load of guilt. Mary Hare believes she could have saved her father from drowning; Ruth Godbold blames herself for her brother's death; Himmelfarb has betrayed not only his wife but, in his opinion, also the whole Jewish nation; Alf Dubbo, an Aborigine, mistakenly believes he has been accursed to betray those near to him. Their suffering as a result of this burden of guilt, is intensified by the awareness that they wittingly made the wrong choice in a moment of spiritual weakness.

Apart from the yoke of guilt, each of the Riders experiences a particularly "dark moment" in his life. Delmonte (1974 : 51) explains that Mrs Godbold experiences her "dark moment" in Mrs Kahlil's brothel where she goes to fetch her husband. Alf Dubbo accepts his period of intense suffering, namely his ill health, after Himmelfarb's crucifixion which enables him to understand the "concept of blood" (p. 412). Mary Hare experiences her dark, animal side when she enters the burning shack to save her "animal" friend.

White constructs his four Riders around the four different functions of the psyche. Himmelfarb is the extroverted thinker; Mary Hare, his disciple, is the introverted, emotional type; Ruth Godbold has extroverted feelings and Alf Dubbo introverted intuition. Their traits and experiences are not revealed in isolation.

Morley (1972 : 154) points out the significance of their being paired. This technique illustrates the duality of their psyches. There are two men and two women, two adherents of recognised religions and two who seek the Deity independently in nature and in art. They may relate events

to the Chariot, but never to themselves because man's fate is not in his own hands. Their faith is revealed in what they do and not in what they think or say.

Carolyn Bliss (1986 : 95) reveals the interesting fact that each of the four Riders appears in Dubbo's paintings, "in forms suggestive of their essential natures." Ruth Godbold, for example, is revealed as the mother who cares and Mary adopts the posture of one of the animals.

The Riders' conflict is not so much against what surrounds them as against an internal and even unconscious fiend (Wolfe, 1983 : 125). They seem to hurt themselves more than they are hurt by others. They do, however, manage to cope with adversity because of their gift of immediate apprehension of reality and values: "modes of understanding which have been rejected by the modern, materialistic world which is filled with a hatred for God and which no longer considers love essential to an understanding of Being" (Walsh, 1977 : 54).

With the exception of Himmelfarb as a young man, the other three visionaries refuse to regulate their lives through reason alone. White, according to Kirpal Singh (1977 : 172), is concerned that an obsession with the intellect and theory may obstruct deeper truths from becoming known, as these two tracts of the human soul are inclined to simplify the complexities of life as well as the mysteries of the supernatural world. Himmelfarb experiences his severest emotional crises because he attempts to regulate and understand his life through his intellect alone.

Apart from revealing the dangers of an over-dependence on the powers of the intellect, White discloses his belief that all humans are basically the same. The differences that ex-

ist between people are imposed on them by external factors beyond their control and can cause intense anguish, as in the case of Haim Rosenbaum. Ruth Godbold, who as her name suggests, epitomises what is best in mankind, explains that men "are the same before they are born. They are the same at birth, perhaps you will agree. It is only the coat they are told to put on that makes them all that different. There are some, of course, who feel they are not suited. They think they will change their coat. But remain the same, in themselves. Only at the end, when everything is taken from them, it seems there was never any need. There are the poor souls, at rest, and all naked again, as they were in the beginning" (p. 445 : my emphasis).

All the events in the novel move relentlessly to the climax of Himmelfarb's crucifixion and a revelation of how the three remaining visionaries are influenced by this "prank" (Morley, 1976 : 153). Such a climacteric provides the focus through which the other events and inner experiences can be examined.

7.1 MARY HARE

At the outset Patrick White makes it clear the Mary Hare, one of his rarest outsiders, is meant to be related to one of the two Biblical Marys: "As they lowered their Lord with that almost breathless love, the first Mary received him with her whitest linen, and the second Mary, who had appointed herself the guardian of his feet, kissed the bones which were showing through the cold, yellow skin" (p. 436 : my emphasis). The hidden significance of Mary's name is in her surname which comes from patristic tradition and from analogy, as in the case of the hare and the hawk. The implied imbalance represents the inner stress of unbalanced opposites which cannot find equilibrium.

Mary attaches so little significance to her name that she is sometimes unaware of her human identity and behaves as an animal would (pp. 11 - 12). She is the "divine fool" on whom White focuses much of his creative and imaginative ability. As "animal" and "divine fool", she does not experience the spiritually destructive force of lust. Björkstén (1976 : 67) believes that Mary Hare is one of White's hermaphrodites, "more essence than usual being".

Patricia Morley (1972 : 154) calls Mary Hare a "nature mystic" because of her uncanny ability to enter into the thoughts and feelings of animals and even plants, deducing intimations of human behaviour from them. She feels herself most at home in the natural setting of Xanadu, an "archetype for the whole natural world" (Morley, 1972 : 162). Living in such harmony with nature enables Mary to ward off the negative influence emanating from her parents and the servants. It is an ironic comment on human values that Xanadu becomes a paradise for Mary Hare and animals when it begins to crumble as a result of neglect and the return of natural growth.

Mary Hare endures a loveless childhood, indelibly influenced by her father's eccentric behaviour and her mother's apathy. Even the servants, with the exception of Peg who acts as a surrogate mother, scorn her because she is physically unattractive and has strange manners. It is ironic that her suffering should occur within the confines of Xanadu. Her "wedding" to Himmelfarb, her saviour, however, takes place outside the mansion where she can be free, where her soul is "joyfully serene" (p. 11). Her need for love compels her to find loving-kindness at "the roots of trees and plants, not to mention hair, provided it was of the human variety" (p. 162).

Norbert Hare is so jealous of his daughter's innocence and inherent wisdom - "it was doubtful whether he would ever forgive her for that of seeing" (p. 36) - that he attempts to destroy her by involving her in his own darkness and tragedy. Mary cannot communicate with her father because she is afraid of him and because she, as one of the chosen Riders in the fiery chariot, cannot associate with the forces of evil. As her father's alter ego and one of the elect in search of her Real Self - "Eventually I shall discover what is at the centre, if enough of me is peeled away" (p. 52) - she can either save him or damn him, because without her he is lost, a fact he will not acknowledge. Much of Norbert Hare's frustration stems from his intuitive knowledge that Mary, and not he, will be a Rider in the chariot (p. 55). In anger he refers to his daughter as a "fetus" which ironically places her "among the 'unborn', whom he had earlier acknowledged as the only souls to be 'whole' and 'pure' [p. 36]" (Bliss, 1986 : 90).

Mary Hare does not have an ally in either of her parents: "So the child learned, as far as her natural clumsiness would allow, to move softly, like a leaf, and certain words she avoided, because they were breakable. The word LOVE, for instance, brittle as glass, and far more precious" (p. 16). Mary's unusual behaviour (p. 16) and her silences make her parents uneasy in her presence: "the latter [her father] looked at her with hate for what she saw and understood" (p. 33 : my addition). Whereas Mary has the unique ability to become one with everything she touches, smells and experiences, her parents remain cocooned, but not unaware, inside their mansion and their illusions.

Mary's sexless appearance and behaviour upset her mother who expects her to marry Cleugh, also a strange, sexually neutral male, who suspects that Mary could be a personal insult to him. Had Cleugh rebuffed Mary, he would have destroyed her belief in loving-kindness (p. 32). White offers Mary a modicum of acceptance when Cleugh acknowledges her devotion, thereby establishing a life-long pact between these two lonely outsiders. Cleugh, for example, supports Mary financially when Norbert Hare has squandered the family fortune.

Mary is prepared to suffer to achieve the state of grace she believes is promised by the Chariot. She believes that if enough of her exoteric self is destroyed through suffering she will discover her Real Self: "Eventually I shall discover what is at the centre, if enough of me is peeled away" (p. 52). Norbert on the other hand intuits the damnation of his Real Self and in a moment of rebellion and desperation decides to take his own life by lowering himself into a cistern. The circumstances of his drowning are vague, leaving the reader with the impression that Mary left her father to drown as a form of revenge for his cruelty. Kiernan (1980 : 68) believes Norbert committed suicide and deliberately involved his daughter "to manipulate her physically so that whatever the outcome she will be made to feel guilty."

Norbert's death is given cosmic significance by the effective use of contrasts and paradoxes. The most striking contrast, suggesting Mary's eventual rapture and Norbert's damnation, is between light and darkness. Mary stands in the light outside the cistern holding a pole (indicating the Cross and salvation) while her father struggles in the black water paradoxically refusing her help: "Although rigid, her pole was merciful, but he warded it off with his hands,

which were blue, she observed, and he would bob under, and return, each time his deathly fringe falling into place again on his forehead" (p. 57). Norbert's dark inner self cannot believe that Mary wants to save him. His behaviour is self-destructive and the manner of his death a denial of symbolic purification by baptism: "If there is anything the schizoid individual is likely to believe in, it is his own destructiveness. He is unable to believe that he can fill his own emptiness. To be loved threatens his self; but his love is equally dangerous to anyone else. His isolation is not entirely for his own self's sake. It is also out of concern for others" (Laing, 1969 : 93).

There is a measure of duality in Mary's reaction to her father's death. She feels obliged to him for having told her about the Chariot and she can remember moments of shared intimacy (p.23). The death of her pet goat (p. 52), however, causes her more pain than the death of her parent. Even though she relishes her freedom from parental influence and censure she remains "entombed" in the crumbling mansion until she gains final release from her earthly being through Himmelfarb's death on the "cross" at Rosetree's Brighta Bicycle Lamps factory: "Miss Hare had, in fact, entered that stage of complete union which her nature had never yet achieved. The softest matter her memory could muster _ _ _ was what she now willed upon the spirit of her love _ _ _ . So she wrapped and cherished the heavenly spirit which entered her, simply and painlessly _ _ _ . She herself would embrace the dust, the spirit of which she was able to understand at last" (p. 438).

Mary's isolation at Xanadu is a form of protection against corrupting external factors (Gzell, 1964 : 183). For some incomprehensible reason she destroys her privacy by employing Mrs Jolley as a housekeeper. This woman's evil in-

fluence is cathartic in that it awakens Mary's esoteric self into rebellion and then victory over the evil emissary from the outside world. The conflict between the two women assumes universal proportions because it involves evil, material and humanistic qualities on the one hand and the spiritual values of light on the other.

The enmity between the two women comes to a head one evening at the equipoise between light and darkness: "It was almost evening. Great cloudy tumbrels were lumbering across the bumpy sky toward a crimson doom" (p. 70). When they meet they are both engrossed in their mana or sustaining psychic force. Jolley sounds forth on her maternal successes to gloss over her feeling of guilt and damnation. Mary, engrossed in her own thoughts, watches a beetle, symbol of life after death (Cirlot, 1972 : 54), to protect her self from the housekeeper's malign influence. Jolley probes Mary's greatest weakness by referring to her parents, "so that Miss Hare was cut. She removed her finger from the beetle, which ultimately she could not assist" (p. 71).

During Mrs Jolley's denunciation of Mary, the latter, to her dismay, discovers unknown depths of evil and violence in herself. She even realises that she too could be damned: "But Miss Hare for her part could not resist the black gusts of darkness that were bearing down on her, and if she did not know the satisfaction of recognizing Mrs Jolley's fear, it was because she became engulfed in her own; she was removed from herself, at least temporarily, at that point" (p. 72).

Mrs Jolley, sensing a spiritually superior being in Mary Hare, tries to make her the scapegoat for her own fears and apprehensive sense of displacement. Looking for an occasion to cause Mary Hare pain, she finds a delicate tortoise-shell fan on a buhl-table (p. 85).

Pantomiming past splendours, she begins to dance with Mary. The dance, instead of symbolising the act of creation as in Arthur Brown's dance in The Solid Mandala, is demonic because it parodies Mary's memories of her ball and her cousin Cleugh (p. 86). Jolley instinctively knows that she can hurt her employer most by destroying her past. Mary fears breaking her contact with the past because it could mean losing her sanity which, Mrs Jolley suggests, she already lost on the night of their struggle on the terrace (p. 72). Ironically, by destroying the past, Mrs Jolley also frees Mary from the shackles that held her to Xanadu and her father.

As Mary runs away from the hateful influence of Mrs Jolley, she unexpectedly meets her spiritual sibling, Himmelfarb, in the shade of her plum tree. Himmelfarb's presence and their meeting seem to have been ordained - "She was making little grunting sounds of happiness and recognition" (p. 89). Mary finds her own "messiah" and happiness in Modercai Himmelfarb whose devout disciple she becomes.

7.2 MORDECAI HIMMELFARB

Himmelfarb is introduced to the reader when he is at the apogee of his austerity and free from the exoteric demands of his self. He has sufficient spiritual authority and charisma to attract the other Riders to him in a spiritual fellowship.

Himmelfarb and Mary Hare meet in the secluded shade of a plum tree where Xanadu's orchard had once stood. The tree is an "island" (p.89) which isolates and protects them from the outside world. White frequently uses similar devices to enhance the value and intimacy of his elect's moments of grace. Elizabeth Hunter in The Eye of the Storm, for example, is alone on an island and in the eye of a cyclone when she manages for a brief time to transcend her physical being.

The shade of the tree where Himmelfarb and Mary meet creates the impression of a separate existence: "_ _ _ the two people ignored each other for a moment, staring back at the material world as if to take a last look at those familiar forms which further experience might remove from their lives" (p. 91). Himmelfarb finds that he can "confess" his life because all inhibiting influences have been removed from his mind by the secluded setting and the presence of Mary Hare, his catechumen. For the first time in her life Mary feels that she is needed and has been accepted for her spiritual qualities. Through Himmelfarb she "enter[s] that state of complete union which her nature had never yet achieved" (p. 438).

Himmelfarb becomes familiar with suffering as a child in pre-war Germany. Many German refugees from Russia moved through their home on their way to America. Himmelfarb's father remained selfishly aloof from these homeless people. His self-centred behaviour adversely influences his son's thoughts causing the youngster to become bigoted in his attitude to others.

Chapman (1979 : 192) points out that as a youth Himmelfarb is faced by a division between his father's secular rationalism on the one hand and the devout Jewish piety of

his mother on the other. The final alienation between Himmelfarb and his father comes when the older man betrays his religion, his family and his son's pride by going with a whore. His dissolute behaviour destroys Himmelfarb's belief in the religious principles his mother cherishes and consequently he, like Elyot Standish in The Living and the Dead, attempts to find meaning in life via his own intellectual abilities. Himmelfarb, at that stage of his life, is too bigoted and vain to condemn himself for doing the same as his father.

The young Himmelfarb's brilliant academic career, during which he reads about the Chariot, distends his conceit. He even believes that he is one of the Zaddikim. He anticipates the Chariot as his right: "It is even told _ _ _ how the creative light of God poured into the Zaddikim. That they are the Chariot of God" (p. 155). The Cantor warns him about his pride: "If a Jew is proud, Mordecai, it is all the harder when he bites the dust. As he certainly will" (p. 101). A dyer whom Himmelfarb saves from a nasty fall adds fuel to his vanity by giving him the title "Crutch of the Infirm, and Protector of the Poor" (p. 109). Even his wife Reha regards him as the saviour of the Jews in oppression.

As an academic Himmelfarb's most formidable enemy is the destructive wave of unreason sweeping over Nazi Germany. Having basked in the glory of his fame as a scholar for so long, Himmelfarb as the chosen one, cannot bear the thought of being ostracised by the people he must save. (It is ironical that after Reha's death Himmelfarb is saved by the people he scorned. With the approaching holocaust Himmelfarb's vain independence changes to a state of almost unnatural dependence on his wife Reha: "Together they would stave off the agonies of mind, and the possibility of

separation, by the practice of small touching rites" (p. 147 : my emphasis). Himmelfarb reaches the nadir of his self-esteem (he "bites the dust") when he deserts Reha in her hour of need. (The family dog shows more courage and fidelity than Himmelfarb by staying with its mistress.)

Himmelfarb's intuition of disaster on the night of Reha's arrest is the cumulative result of a long period of mental hypertension. Viktor Frankl in "Der Mensch vor der Frage nach dem Sinn" (1979) believes the intuitive knowledge of disaster which Himmelfarb experiences is possible. When Himmelfarb "speaks" to Reha at Herrenwaldau where he is in hiding, his fear for himself is stronger than his love for his wife: "At the same time Himmelfarb realised he could never convey that sudden stampeding of the heart, sickening of the pulses, enmity of familiar streets, the sharp glandular stench of unreasoning fear. For words are the tools of reason" (p. 149). In White's novels only the elect manage to redeem their Real Self from the disruption of the mental equipoise all humans experience at some time.

White does not attempt to explain Himmelfarb's intuition as regards his wife's arrest and subsequent "extermination". In retrospect Himmelfarb's knowledge of his exoteric self enables him to understand the behaviour of Haim Rosenbaum and to forgive him for betraying his Jewish heritage by becoming Harry Rosetree. Himmelfarb, bound to his belief in reason, makes the mistake of turning to friends and not God in the hour of his spiritual need: "A friend was safer than one's own blood, so much better value than the arch-abstraction, God" (p. 148). He does not yet understand that his spiritual distress is caused by his refusing God's help. Severance from the Real Self and God is literally hell. At the lowest ebb of his existence he acknowledges that God is his only salvation and that he cannot escape

punishment: "We are one. No particle may fall away without damaging the whole. That, I fear, is what I have done. In a moment of unreason" (p. 151).

As Himmelfarb's vainglorious dreams come to nothing, his friend, the dyer, urges him to go to Liebmann in Bienenstadt where he would be received with loving-kindness (p. 123). He is much older and wiser before he understands the full import of this invitation. The principle of loving-kindness becomes the goal of the Riders and the antithesis of what they experience in life. The dyer himself personifies the truth that no man can change from what he is "marked" as at birth. White reiterates the truth of Ruth Godbold's statement that all men are the same except for the coat they are told to put on when they are born (p. 445).

Himmelfarb, like Mary Hare, is frightened by the dark powers of potential evil he discovers in his psyche. His growing awareness of man's need for loving-kindness and his will to remain alive, as revealed in the life and death story of the "Lady from Czernowitz" (p. 184), turn his thoughts away from his exoteric self to the welfare and suffering of others.

Through Himmelfarb White raises the contentious subject of divine punishment and ordained suffering: "Inside the prevailing darkness, worse because it was imposed by man - or could it have been sent by God? - the lost soul mourned, and tried to deduce the reason for the unreasonable" (p. 172). White reveals his concern with the apparent anomaly of how the God of love can allow such suffering, as in the case of Nazi Germany, to be inflicted upon His chosen race, and then especially on the innocent. This incongruity is intensified by the paradox of the perpetrator and victim praying to the same God. The difference between White's

elect and the rest of suffering humanity lies in the reaction of the injured party to the cause of the torment. The elect do not despair because they apprehend some divine intention and a subsequent reunion with God.

Himmelfarb's voluntary surrender to the German authorities is the first step following his decision to atone for his sinning against Reha and the Jewish race by destroying himself, so abandoning his claim to being one of the Zaddik. He is taken to an extermination camp where he is shoved into a "bath house", a grim form of satire on baptism. Faced with the prospect of certain death Himmelfarb surrenders himself into the hands of God, thereby admitting his dependence (p. 182).

Himmelfarb is saved in a "miraculous" fashion (p. 183) to, ironically for a Jew, take up his "cross" and follow "a very definite pillar of fire" (p. 194) which will lead him to his salvation. The blast that allows Himmelfarb to escape from the concentration camp also causes him to lose his spectacles. His temporary blindness, comparable to the blindness inflicted on Paul on the road to Damascus, compounds his sense of dependence on God. He emerges from the holocaust of the War a humbled and chastened man.

Himmelfarb is the only one of the Riders mentally equipped to ponder the esoteric significance of his suffering. His idea of redemption is strongly influenced by his study of the Cabbala: "Kabbalistic gnosticism very easily understood the return of the soul from earth through the halls of light to the throne of God as redemption" (Roderick, 1962 : 60).

Bearing his "cross" and filled with the sense of his mission Himmelfarb becomes an outsider to his own race. The reason for the widening gulf between the messianic Himmelfarb and

the Jews' pragmatic attitude to life in post-war Israel - "work as the panacea" (p. 192) - lies in his zealous endeavour to convince them (and not the Germans) of their responsibility to atone for the sins of the Jewish nation. He develops the upsetting habit of "entering into the faces that he passed" (p. 157) thereby alienating possible companions. He attempts to "receive into his own formlessness, the blind souls of man, which lunged and twisted in their efforts to arrive at some unspecified end _ _ _ that he was not always acceptable to those he was trying to assist. For the unresponsive souls would rock, and shudder, and recoil from being drawn into the caverns of his eyes" (p. 158).

Himmelfarb leaves the "promised land" and goes to Australia where he does menial work at the Brighta Bicycle Lamps factory as a form of masochism (p. 205). He "hermitizes" himself to enrich his soul and transcend his environment. His autism is similar to that of Stan Parker (The Tree of Man) at the end of his life.

On one occasion at the factory a momentary lapse of concentration causes Himmelfarb to hurt his hand with the drill he uses. The blood flowing from the wound, an essential part of the Eucharist, does not upset Himmelfarb; it rather fills him with a sense of "stillness and clarity, which was the stillness and clarity of pure water, at the centre of which his God was reflected" (p. 413) and introduces the following phase in his life during which his Real Self becomes ready to shed his mortified and already wasted body. As with Voss, Himmelfarb's self seems to have become numinous. He spends the time of his convalescence cleaning his shack, despite the pain it causes him, in yet a further attempt to achieve greater humility.

Mordecai Himmelfarb, who has become a "man-child" is "crucified" by a drunken mob of unthinking people who, oddly enough, are his colleagues at the factory. As an outsider, Jew and mystic he appears to constitute a threat to his persecutors' hedonistic way of life. Himmelfarb suffers willingly because he senses a glorious chance to atone for the crimes of all Jews. Ironically, he remains unaware of his own vanity as the driving force behind his behaviour. Like Christ, Himmelfarb is completely forlorn when he is tied to the tree, his attempt to celebrate Seder with Rosetree having failed.

White chooses crucifixion as the finale to Himmelfarb's quest because it is a powerful symbol of death, rebirth and resurrection.

Despite the personal tragedy involved, the scene of the "crucifixion" has an element of comedy as well: "The Jew's incomplete and inadequate Passion is like the clown's pantomime: both are faced with tragic implications. In one of the clearest statements of principle which informs much of his work, White insists, 'there is almost no tragedy which cannot be given a red nose'. Life, White has said repeatedly, is 'tragiface'. Himmelfarb can and indeed must be simultaneously Christ and clown, mythic hero and muddled human being" (Bliss, 1986 : 86).

Although Moore (1975 : 54) believes that to the people of Sarsaparilla suffering is something to which they pay lip service at Easter, Himmelfarb's "crucifixion", unbeknown to himself, has an immediate effect. Blue, the initiator and perpetrator of the pain inflicted on Himmelfarb, disappears and Harry Rosetree completes his role of Judas by committing

suicide. In retrospect one is not so much reminded of the crucifixion as of the fearfulness of human frailty (Bannerjee, 1979 : 105).

In the final scene of Himmelfarb's death which takes place in his humble shack, White stresses the "holy and the homely" (Colmer, 1978a : 34). Colmer believes these two elements of living are integral aspects of the state of grace. Himmelfarb finds all the simple wisdom he associates with his late wife in Mrs Godbold, the woman who cares for him with loving-kindness. He no longer feels guilty about his wife's death and experiences a sense of lasting peace: "He becomes Adam Cadmon, Primordial Man, who, according to the Kabbala, unites masculine and feminine, begetting and receiving, the potencies of God" (Colmer, 1978a : 34).

In the end, however, Himmelfarb knows "it had not been accorded to him to expiate the sins of the world" (p. 418). He finds contentment and grace in the company of the Riders who gather around him at the time of his death.

7.3 ALF DUBBO

Alf Dubbo, the ostracised (p. 312) half-caste son of a black "gin" and an unknown white father grows up in the dubious care of the Rev. Mr Timothy Calderon, (minister of religion, bachelor and homosexual) and his sister who attempts to teach Dubbo the principles of painting in water colours.

Dubbo does not care for Calderon's theological teaching because he cannot visualise it: "It did seem as though he could grasp only what he was able to see. And he had not yet seen Jesus Christ, in spite of his guardian's repeated efforts, and a succession of blurry colour-prints" (p. 321). Dubbo is captivated by the print of the "four

figures, so stiff, in the body of the tinny chariot" (p. 320) Calderon shows him. It becomes his abiding aim in life to improve on the print.

Dubbo's contact with organised religion, as practised by Calderon and his sister, disillusion him and temporarily blind him to the powerful bond that exists between religion and art (Moore, 1976 : 65). This bond can only be re-established, in a post-lapsarian state, through suffering as well as a desire to understand and fulfil the spiritual needs of the Real Self. At the end of his life Dubbo manages to harmonise his inner and outer worlds in his paintings.

Dubbo's ignominious flight from the Calderon home after having been seduced by Timothy in sordid circumstances, leads him to the town "dump" and the hospitality of Mrs Spice, an alcoholic whore (p. 336). (It is a reflection of the quality of Dubbo's life and the attitude of society that he should find comfort and lodging only with whores.) Dubbo's allegoric venture into "purgatory" with Mrs Spice, is comparatively, also an entry into the realm of his esoteric self (p. 337). He becomes what Colmer (1978 : 36) calls the "seeing eye".

Sylvia Gzell (1964 : 184) is correct in her assumption that Dubbo's reaction to Calderon's overtures of "love" is not only disillusion with religion but also distrust of society and so-called friendship. Gzell points out that it is only by examining, from the outside as it were, the love and lives of Ruth Godbold and Mordecai Himmelfarb that Dubbo regains his faith in loving-kindness.

Once independent of charity, Dubbo develops his artistic talent (p. 342). True to White's own vision of the artist, Dubbo develops into an unusual character with a creative urge that verges on paranoia. The artist, according to White, can only "create" after in-depth contact with life, which he believes is to be found in putrescence. The artist has his moment of brilliance which culminates in his magnum opus and passport to cosmic understanding of being. Hannah, for example, in a fit of pique, tells Dubbo, "But you Alf, you got something shut up inside you, and you bloody well won't give another person a look" (p. 352). White, rather cryptically, calls Dubbo "that most miserable of human beings, the artist" (p. 407).

Alf Dubbo departs from the "dump" and Hazel Spice when she, paradoxically, accuses him of having given her syphilis (p. 340). He learns to prefer the anonymity of the city, "that most savage and impenetrable terrain, for the opportunities it gave him of confusing anyone who might attempt to track him down in his personal hinterland" (p. 340). While actively engaged in painting he is "sufficiently sustained both physically and mentally by his vocation to ignore for the most part what people called life" (p. 344).

Hannah, yet another benevolent whore, helps Dubbo to get rid of the syphilis that is destroying his body. It seems a logical consequence of their meeting and Dubbo's need for accommodation that he should rent the spare room she has available. It is here that Dubbo meets the "puffer" (p. 348) Norm Fussell. Norm and Hannah suggest a union of animus and anima, the complete hermaphrodite. Their relationship is not marred by lust and subsequent conflict, the root cause of much suffering. Dubbo paints them as non-sexual beings inside an egg: "in one big egg of flesh:

forehead to forehead, knee to knee, compressed into the same dream" (p. 349). This androgynous state suggests the ideal condition for man.

Dubbo's relationship with Hannah comes to an end when she and Norm Fussell steal and sell two of his paintings, "The Fiery Furnace" and "The Chariot - thing". Having lived sterile lives themselves they cannot understand that the paintings are Alf's "children", the fruit of his soul. Alf finds a measure of fulfilment in looking at his paintings because he believes they remind him of his innocence. Their loss is tantamount to a rape of his psyche.

Intemperance, learnt from Hazel Spice (p. 337) and ill-health drive Dubbo to the verge of insanity: "Occasionally he would persuade somebody of an accommodating nature to buy him an illicit bottle. There he would rediscover the delirious fire works, as well as the dull hell of disintegration, which he had experienced first in Mrs Spice's shack." (p. 350) Dubbo first has to endure the shame of betrayal of himself and by himself before he will gain enough knowledge to transcribe his experience "into his own terms of motion, and forms partly transcendental, partly evolved from his struggle with daily becoming and experience of suffering" (p. 368). Dubbo is betrayed by Hannah and Norm when they steal his paintings, and he in turn plays the part of Judas when he denies any knowledge of Himmelfarb having been crucified.

Dubbo begins to understand the cosmic significance of living after he has witnessed the crucifixion of Himmelfarb: "The black fellow would have run after him to tell him what he had seen and understood. But could not. Unless it burst from his fingertips. Never from his mouth" (p. 418).

Having "understood" the true meaning of life Dubbo ritually prepares himself to paint his masterpiece (p. 453) of the four Riders in the chariot, each portrayed according to the traits revealed in the story of their lives. The blood flowing from his haemorrhaged lungs via his mouth is a terrible communion with the painting for which he gives his life. His compulsion to create his Deposition allows him no rest. He enters a state of grace when he has completed his painting and the red colour of his blood has changed to gold (p. 459).

In the end Dubbo's suffering teaches him to comprehend the real message of the Bible, which he has read without real understanding: "Through direct, solitary immersion in grief and anguish, he is able finally to comprehend the Passion in all of its colours, and to connect the world of the human and the world of the divine" (Moore, 1976 : 66).

7.4 RUTH GODBOLD

Mary Hare has no doubts about the excellence of Mrs Godbold: "Oh, but she _ _ _ she is the best of women" (p. 64).

Wolfe (1983 : 137) calls Ruth Godbold the moral avatar of the novel. She is associated with wholesome domestic activity on the one hand and compassion on the other. She "measures her life in loving acts" (Wolfe, 1986 : 137). Ruth personifies the Christian principle of understanding and forgiveness. She is the only one of the Riders who remains alive, thereby suggesting that spiritual love is the only emotion that has the right to exist.

William Walsh, on an equally positive note, believes Ruth Godbold epitomises simplicity, normality and "the central traditional morality raised by gentleness and candour to the

point of genius" (1977 : 58). White himself reveals his partiality for this female paragon of virtue without reservation. He moulds her into a symbol of values which act as a precept for a spiritually fulfilled life. He does, however, cloud her joy with suffering to temporarily obscure her eventual state of grace from her.

The shack where she raises her family in love is situated off the beaten track, not only to protect her from the evil exoteric influences of society, but also to stress the fact that wholesomeness is not to be found in suburbia, as, for example, in the case of the Rosetree family. On an allegorical level her home is comparable to the "eye" of the cyclone mentioned in The Eye of the Storm.

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Ruth Godbold's father was an honest if taciturn workaholic cobbler. He was fair and strict, but seldom demonstrated his love for his family. Ruth becomes an admirable surrogate parent after the death of her mother. Her father's dedication to his work becomes her norm in life. After her brother's death, for which she feels she is to blame, work becomes a means of sublimating her feelings of guilt.

Ruth's decision to emigrate to Australia, stems from her refusal to surrender her "home" to a stepmother. Her devout nature sustains her during the voyage and keeps her from sexual adventures: "At night when the other young women were fumbling with temptation on the steerage deck, she said her prayers, and was mysteriously, personally comforted. Released finally from the solid body, her soul was free to accept its mission, but hesitated to trust to its own strength" (p. 249).

It is clear that White relates Ruth Godbold to her Biblical namesake by her unquestioning belief in and worship of God through her daily labour. She is the subject and source of Himmelfarb's assertion to Mary Hare that "the simple acts of daily work may be the best protection against evil" (p. 304).

Ruth's period of service as a maid with the vapid Mrs Chalmers - Robinson in Sydney, even though uneventful, demonstrates her integrity and moral superiority over those she serves. Ruth's attitude to her employer as regards moral values is adamant. She condemns the older woman's misuse of alcohol and, by dint of her spiritual determination, emerges as victor over the sham, anger and temptation to which she is exposed.

Ruth learns the important lesson that wealth does not guarantee happiness. Chalmers - Robinson, for example, vents his anger and frustration on his wife when he has been declared bankrupt. He is as cruel to his wife as Tom Godbold is to Ruth.

Even before she shoulders the yoke of marriage, Ruth Godbold's quest for transcendent understanding seems unwavering. She believes her spiritual strength comes from her "ability to rise above the elements which tie her to everyday concerns" (Gzell, 1962 : 192). The growth of her esoteric self is revealed in her "good Samaritan" attitude to those who suffer: "She steps out of the framework of social mores while remaining true to her Christian ideals of love and compassion. Ruth's transcendent knowledge of freedom fulfils her need for an interpretation of life as harmonious and fruitful, not as the chaos of conventional bias and viciousness seen in the members of society whom White presents satirically" (Gzell, 1962 : 192).

Tom Godbold does not bring about a dramatic change to Ruth's life even though he adds physical harassment to the burden of her spiritual self. Although no apparent reason is given for Ruth's marrying Tom, it is unlikely that she is prompted to do so by either a religious or masochistic impulse. Tom does not love Ruth. He even finds the thought of having sexual intercourse with her distasteful. He agrees to marry Ruth because her plain appearance and obedient attitude would not pose a threat to his vanity or his licentiousness. He cannot oppose her gentleness because he fears "the darkness of his own skull" (p. 258). As a machismocist Tom cannot share Ruth's love for mankind or creation: "Ruth's conception of love is large, embodying Christian ideals, and her love for Tom is inevitably linked with her love of God: she is to sacrifice personal desires and bear the sins of herself and her husband" (Gzell, 1962 : 188). Unlike so many other characters she feels no racist aversion when she wipes the blood from Dubbo's mouth when his lungs have haemorrhaged.

Even though Tom seems to interfere with Ruth's quest for fulfilment by his infidelity and brutality, these traits, in spite of the suffering they inflict on the innocent members of his family, are cathartic in that they purify Ruth's love of any narcissistic elements. The emotional quietitude she reveals when she once goes to fetch her husband from Mrs Kahlil's brothel is, however, abnormal. It seems paradoxical that the more Ruth suffers at the hands of her husband the greater her compassion for the hardships of others becomes. Her stable behaviour and temperance give the impression of permanence in a spiritually and morally unstable society. Ironically it is Ruth's love that causes the

divorce between herself and her husband. Tom's deep sense of failure and imminent damnation drives him to his own spiritual "dump", Mrs Kahlil's brothel.

When Ruth is summoned to claim her husband after having deserted his family, she finds him "beneath a thin blanket, stained by the piss and puss of other dying men" (p. 287). She cries and prays, not as much for Tom who gratifies his sensual self to the last, but "for all those she had loved, burningly, or at a respectful distance, or for her father, seated at his bench in his prison of flesh, and her own brood of puzzled little girls, for her former mistress, always clutching at the hem and finding it come away in her hand, for her fellow initiates, the madwoman and the Jew of Sarsaparilla, even for the black fellow she had met at Mrs Kahlil's _ _ _" (p. 288).

Ruth Godbold's reward for her suffering lies in her ability to communicate meaningfully with the other Riders and in the success with which she brings up her daughters who promise to carry the light of her "loving-kindness" into the darkness of a post-lapsarian world.

7.5 HAIM ROSENBAUM (HARRY ROSETREE)

Ruth Godbold in her wisdom speaks of the futile and soul-destroying efforts of some people to change their religions and the religious permeations of their cultural heritage which lives in their unconscious minds. Any betrayal of the Real Self and God for the sake of material or social gain, however, dooms the individual to unhappiness and a sense of having lost contact with his Source.

Harry Rosetree, abetted by his wife, betrays the religion and culture of his Jewish ancestors because he does not want to be different from his peers in post-war Australian society. They become Christians (?) and change their names for the sake of financial and social gain. Haim, now Harry, attempts to avoid any religious commitment by following a "middle of the road" approach to life. Such behaviour is contrary to White's belief that anyone in search of grace must pledge himself to God, his umbilical cord to transcendent being, should he hope to endure and survive the suffering he is inevitably exposed to.

Harry Rosetree, beguiled by his business acumen, fits the part of the rich young man in the parable used by Christ to illustrate the soul-destroying power of material possessions. In exchange for wealth and accendence he forfeits peace of mind and prayer, his only real life-line to a meaningful life. In his home he loses his traditional role of pater familias and falls into the habit of gratifying the whims of his family. Only after Himmelfarb's visit at Seder does he admit to himself that he has made the wrong choice. The dyer, who figures so prominently in Himmelfarb's life, explains the axiom that you cannot change from what you are and that you must, like Ruth Godbold, accept your destiny and find happiness in exploring your esoteric self.

The Jewish festival of Seder is a time of fellowship when a stranger may enter a Jew's house and claim fellowship and hospitality. Himmelfarb, as a lonely Jew in need, claims this hospitality, but is refused. Rosetree's Jewish nature, steeped in Judaism, quails at the betrayal not only of Himmelfarb but the Jewish religion.⁷ Himmelfarb, at first

7. Harry Rosetree's behaviour resembles the behaviour of Mrs Goodman in The Aunt's Story. Julia Goodman refused hospitality to a former friend of her

filled with religious zeal becomes apathetic because tradition has been broken. In this way he learns that grace and salvation do not depend on the observance of religious festivals only, but on the absolute submission of the Self to the will of God. Rosetree (Haim ben Ya'akov) and his socialite wife Shirl (Shulamith), pathetically, have nothing to offer the old Jew.

Himmelfarb is Rosetree's nemesis. He brings the aura of Jewish tradition and divine punishment back into Harry's life. Before Pessach Rosetree attempts to avoid Himmelfarb's silent condemnation of his betrayal by offering him money for the Jewish festival. His greed is his hamartia. On the eve of Easter and Pessach Harry slips into the role of Pontius Pilate. He attempts to save Himmelfarb from "punishment" by the workers by offering him a period of leave. He fails to bribe Himmelfarb who, like the dyer, believes you cannot avoid what has been ordained for you.

Rosetree fails the test of his faith and shatters his persona when he hides in his office, denying that any harm is being done to Himmelfarb by his employees. His spiral into utter despair commences when his once comatose religious conscience has been activated. He sets out on an "inward journey" into his past and esoteric self. His erratic behaviour reflects his troubled mind and the destructive power of his dark, inner self.

Harry Rosetree's futile attempt to atone for his betrayal and involuntary part in Himmelfarb's crucifixion by affording him a proper Jewish funeral is crushed by Mrs Godbold who has buried Himmelfarb as a Christian because of the

husband because he did not measure up to her social standards.

parallel she sees between Christ and Himmelfarb. Harry's fragmented being cannot withstand the spiritual "wholeness" of Mrs Godbold and he leaves her deeply convinced of his own damnation. Leaving her is like leaving the light of salvation and moving into the darkness of Gehenna: "While all the time Mrs Godbold's stream flowed, warmer, stronger, all-healing. Only, Haim ben Ya'akov regretted, certain wounds will not close" (p. 446).

Rosetree cannot confess or atone for his crimes against God and all Jews. He experiences great difficulty to accept that in death all "is the same" (p. 445) and that salvation and reunion with God is all that matters. The merging of the festivals of Easter and Seder in Rosetree's house suggests that there should not be any division between men. Morley (1972 : 197) points out that White's vision of man fuses Judaism with Christianity. The common denominator is love and faith in God. Harry has neither of these redeeming qualities.

As Himmelfarb's employer Rosetree believes he is responsible for the old Jew's death. His guilt is compared to a knife entering the body, quietly, painfully and mortally (p. 415). Just before Rosetree commits suicide he traces the word "Mord" on the steam-covered bathroom window. This single word suggests both death and Mordecai Himmelfarb, the one being like the other.

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White uses yet another visionary in The Solid Mandala to reveal the selves of people mutilated by their tortured, perverted sexuality as well as the desolate condition of their Real Selves incarcerated within the physical mould.

8.0 THE SOLID MANDALA

The Solid Mandala describes the lives of the twins Arthur and Waldo Brown seen through the eyes of each in turn. Waldo is an embittered bisexual, quasi-intellectual who wants to be a writer. Arthur, his brother, who appears to be a "dill" (a simpleton) turns out to be one of White's "divine fools", a being ironically not normal enough to be destroyed by his ego-centricity and ambition. William Walsh (1977 : 86) adds that Waldo and Arthur are the divided parts of one person and "the tension which divides and unites them dramatises the disturbance within man and within a single person. The brothers act out that impure mixture of love and hate which is both a condition of the relationship of every human being to another and the condition of the attitude of the individual within himself and to himself."

White uses four glass marbles, "taws", as solid mandalas to reveal the psychic totality and complexity of four widely different beings who represent a cross-section of suburban society: "The Solid Mandala is a glass marble with a knot inside it which acquires mystic properties by association with a symbol from the Yeatsian arcane, the Mandala, which means 'totality' and may be meant as a figure for this human involute, for the twins' togetherness" (Miller, 1985 : 407). Carolyn Bliss (1986 : 101) adds that The Solid Mandala reflects the Jungian mandala⁸ which is "its organising metaphor and to which the novel's title alludes. Jung sees this geometric figure, often a squared circle or a circle quadrisected by a cross, as a pattern generated by the psyche in its attempt to integrate itself and to find wholeness." Riemer in much the same vein writes that "in

8. White stated that he had not read Jung until he wrote The Solid Mandala.

the twin brothers Arthur and Waldo Brown White is following [a] duality described by Jung, of the two Adams or original man, one divine in his purity, the other mortal and corruptible" (1976 : 5).

In my opinion White should have given Arthur a fifth mandala, one that compositely reflects his own traits as well as those of his brother Waldo. In this manner he could have debated the mystery and duality of the individual psyche. Veronica Brady (1983 : 179) writes that The Solid Mandala reveals a new dimension of White's analysis of the "inner man", one in which he rejects the stereotyped distinction between the sexes. His enriched insight challenges the principles of accepted cultural and normative values as regards human behaviour. White postulates androgyny as being a consummation. The self is not sexually one-sided, but a composite of anima and animus. The twins dramatise the concept of the antithetical self, comparable to the opposition of Voss and Laura Traveyan in Voss (Thelma Herring, 1970 : 74). It follows that the bond between Arthur and Waldo Brown is that of a marriage rather than a "relationship of siblings" (Miller, 1985 : 407).

Waldo Brown personifies the exoteric, physical and sexual aspect of the human self that is sloughed off in a moment of intense passion before death, leaving the esoteric, spiritual and prophetic components of the self (Arthur) to try to continue living in a state of intense, divided spiritual suffering in an institution erected by well-meaning people for those beings whom they do not understand and who do not conform to accepted norms of behaviour. Arthur's extended suffering as a "madman", a dimension of being unfamiliar to ordinary people, adds yet another dimension to White's vision of suffering and grace. His fate, after the death of Waldo, resembles that of Doll Quigley

(The Tree of Man) whose soul is in "hell" when she is physically confined in an asylum after having committed an act of love by easing her brother out of an unbearable existence. White, apart from amplifying his canon of spiritual growth (?) in his portrayal of Arthur's regressing to the level of an infant who surrenders his self to the maternal care of Mrs Poulter whose child he becomes, touches on the perplexing question of "rebirth" and Christ's injunction that no one can gain eternal life unless he be "born again" (John 3 : 3). The individual dilemma is given cosmic significance by clear reference to the conflict between the powers of light and darkness for domination over the entire universe.

Like White's other visionaries, Arthur and Waldo Brown do not marry. Arthur does not marry because he does not feel the need for sexual experience and procreation. Women especially do not react to Arthur's male presence, even in intimate situations, as they would to another sexually vibrant male. Even men, for example Leonard Saporta, experience no jealousy when Arthur befriends their wives. Arthur is perturbed when Saporta informs him that they wish to name their son after him because he has no desire for paternity nor for his suffering to be continued. His role cannot be repeated because his fate is inextricably fused to Waldo, his alter ego (p. 62). Waldo, as a secret transvestite, cannot marry.

Patricia Morley (1972 : 185) points out that apart from examining the duality of human nature, Patrick White again explores the existence of another mystic world within the familiar one in which the two brothers search for unity of the self which they seem to find "within some ultimate maternal matrix, which reunites the separated ego with the ground of all being, fusing nature and spirit" (Brady, 1983 : 186).

Like so many of White's other elect, the characters in The Solid Mandala have an imagined and secret jardin exotique in which they can hide from the harsh reality of life and be themselves. Arthur and Waldo, as male and female principle, merge into a single, unfragmented being, when they share a bed together: "But they would lie together, and the dark bed was all kindness, all tenderness towards them, the pillowed darkness all feathers. Skin was never so velvety by day. Eyelashes plait together in darkness. As Venus said, in the old book Arthur came across years later: I generate light, and darkness is not of my nature; there is therefore nothing better or more venerable than the conjunction of myself with my brother: (p. 220). Mrs Brown relives her former, upper-class Quantrell existence; Mr Brown escapes from failure and a depressed existence by reading; Mrs Poulter suckles her "plastic baby" in the privacy of her bedroom and Waldo, the most tormented of them all, "becomes" a woman when he puts on his mother's dress.

The location in which the Brown family finds itself in Australia explains the quality of their lives and the emptiness of their future hopes. Their illusions fade as they settle in Terminus Road in the suburb of Barranugli (barren and ugly). There can be no growth demographically or spiritually. William Walsh (1977 : 89) calls them "terminal people".

8.1 WALDO BROWN

Waldo Brown is an emotional and spiritual solipsist: "Life and experience seem to him a violation of his enclosed perfection, an assault on his privacy" (Walsh, 1977 : 93). Walsh believes the tragedy of Waldo's life is that his very passion to protect his self works against the one reality he

is capable of accepting, his own. Waldo resists any overtures of friendship because he is ashamed of his identity and femininity.

The major facet of Waldo's suffering is his involuntary contiguity with Arthur (Mackenzie, 1969 : 247). He mistakenly believes that Arthur is the major obstacle to his success and happiness. In his desperate moments he imagines how his life would be "if Arthur died". His hate for Arthur becomes maniacal when he discovers that Arthur, his "dill" brother, has surpassed him in every facet of their life together. He subsequently becomes secretive in order to hide his fears and failures: "he did not understand people, except those he created by his own imagining. If it hadn't been for his own visions he might have felt desperate" (p. 91).

Waldo's futile anger at being what he is (the feminine principle in a male body) awakens a need for revenge in his soul. He focuses his hate on Arthur his twin and alter ego and in this way, ironically, destroys himself: "They took it for granted it had been decided for them at birth, and at least Waldo had begun to suspect it might not be possible for one of them to die without the other" (p. 62 : my emphasis). Waldo forces Arthur to go on long and tiring walks in the hope that he will die of a heart-attack. Paradoxically he kills himself in a fit of insane anger: "he virtually dies of spontaneous corruption, thus consummating his career of spite" (Mackenzie, 1969 : 248).

Moreno (1970 : 31) believes that the solution to the fragmentation of the individual, as in the case of Waldo, lies in a balance being struck between the conscious and unconscious minds, the latter being the root of religious experience and the dwelling of the God-image. White's hypothesis suggests that neither Waldo nor Arthur can

achieve a state of grace because they cannot be reconciled. This is the reason why Arthur, despite his suffering and inherent goodness does not at the end of his life enter a state of transcendent grace similar to that of Stan Parker in The Tree of Man. Waldo in turn cannot achieve a balance between good and evil and thus cannot reconcile his male and dominant female selves. As with Arthur, the duality in his self is unresolved at the time of his death.

Thelma Herring typifies Waldo Brown as an introvert who unsuccessfully attempts to find his Real Self through memory, that is, in the past and not, as he should, in the present. Herring calls his memory "the glacier in which the past is preserved" (1975 : 204). Waldo enshrines his past through his mother and he fondly believes he would have been at home in her upper-class milieu: "His quest is entirely egocentric, a 'penetrating voyage into the glass of the dressing-table': it is always his own reflection he sees" (Herring, 1975 : 204). The only "being" he can really love is his own mirror-image. He even kisses it.

Waldo is, at first, his mother's favourite child because she hopes he will, by his professed literary talent, rise to the social status she abandoned when she married George Brown. Waldo, however, does not return his mother's love because of his transvestite tendencies. He unconsciously blames her for his sexual dilemma and in the later stages of her life, when his suffering has become almost too much to bear, he tries to destroy her by making her an alcoholic.

Waldo cannot forgive his mother for having deserted her class, thereby jeopardising his own happiness. It is likely that she preferred social eclipse, not having been able to cope with the demands made on her. Even her married sur-

name, Brown, suggests her desire for anonymity. In the moments of her deepest need she turns to Arthur who is masculine and protective, traits her husband never possessed.

When Waldo reaches his spiritual nadir, he becomes a child again and longs for his mother: "He longed for Mother's hand to reach out and touch some part of him which perhaps could never be touched" (p. 41). This "core" is his "bleeding" feminine self which Arthur recognises and mentions in his poem (p. 202).

The complexity of Waldo's psyche and behaviour becomes evident when one considers him as transvestite, homosexual and bisexual. His bi-sexuality is revealed in his consideration of proposing to Dulcie Feinstein and admitting that he could be affectionate to Wally Pugh. His true self is, however, revealed when he puts on his mother's dress which he kept hidden as a guilty secret: "To the great dress. Obsessed by it. Possessed. His breath went with him, through the tunnel along which he might have been running. Whereas he was again standing. Frozen by what he was about to undertake. His heart groaned, but settled back as soon as he began to wrench off his things, compelled. You could only call them things, the disguise he had chosen to hide the brilliant truth. The pathetic respect people had always paid him - Miss Glasson, Cornelius, Parslow, Mrs Poulter - and would continue to pay his wits and his familiar shell. As opposed to a shuddering of ice, or marrow of memory" (p. 183 : my emphasis).

Waldo's moment of epiphany reveals no "flaws in the glass". Manfred Mackenzie (1969 : 242) writes that from Waldo's point of view "this moment is a crisis of being all seen."

The moment of truth is shattered by the unexpected return of Arthur who accidentally witnesses the pathetic Cinderella scene: "As the situation splintered in his spectacles Waldo was appalled. _ _ _ Exposed by décolletage, his arms were turning stringy. The liquid ice trickled through his shrinking veins. Shame and terror threatened the satiny lap, under a rustle of beads. Each separate hair of him, public to private, and most private of all the moustache, was wilting back to where it lay normally" (p. 184).

Mackenzie believes Waldo hides his secret self even deeper than the dress by assuming the feminine role of someone else: "Thus Waldo kills two birds with one stone. He compulsively secures for himself ignorance of his exposed self. At the same time he voids his raging resentments on someone who during her life persistently humiliated him, he can violate his dead mother into a parody of 'society' life, a life she had always desired but never enjoyed" (1969 : 244).

It is significant that Waldo dons his mother's dress as an impulsive sexual reaction to the surprise visit (during which Waldo remains hidden) Johnny Haynes pays their drab house. Johnny's mere presence titillates Waldo's feminine sexuality for the second time, the first time being when they were still at school together.

This climacteric moment in Waldo's young life takes place behind the school "dunny" where Haynes and his crony pretend to sacrifice Waldo for whom the incident assumes the personal significance of a voluntary submission to a sexual rite. Waldo, as the female element of the rite, is brought close to a "spiritual" orgasm (p. 38). Arthur's intrusion as the "flaming angel" (p. 38) of justice brings Waldo's brief moment of euphoria to an abrupt end. Arthur's split-

ting Johnny's lip in defence of his brother's "virginity" assumes archetypal significance. Waldo feels cheated when his father, as heterosexual, defends Arthur's behaviour.

When Waldo destroys the dress that affords him the truest insight into his tortured exoteric self he eliminates any possibility of ever assuming his true identity. Closing this avenue of escape from self-destruction inevitably leads to his death.

Waldo discovers only darkness when he examines his inner self. Even his social life, in which he experiences the "ugly and abrasive roughcast" (p. 19) of existence, is marred by his inability to relate to people because he is sexually different. It is part of Waldo's tragedy that his only real talent, namely singing, has to be kept from public notice because it is rooted in his feminine self: "Men, the sensitive ones, sometimes recoiled from the silken disclosure of Waldo's voice" (p. 20).

Waldo's femininity is involuntarily attracted to the masculinity of Bill Poulter: "Waldo used to walk quite prim and virginal, wondering whether Bill would recognize or not. It began to matter a great deal" (p. 134). One evening he secretly goes to the Poulter home to find out more about Mrs Poulter who not only has the ability to answer Arthur's questions but is also able to attract Poulter sexually. He unexpectedly discovers Mrs Poulter washing her body before an open window. The impression she makes is far from erotic. Waldo, looking in from the darkness at what should have been his role in life, resembles a lost soul, floundering in spiritual darkness. The Poulter's sexual compatibility causes Waldo to cringe for being an enforced outsider to what is accepted as normal behaviour.

Waldo and his father, with whom he has an uncompromising relationship, both find themselves in a spiritually terminal situation. George Brown is imprisoned in the barred "cage" (p. 47) at the bank where he works and Waldo is surrounded by stacks of books which, ironically, do not afford him any wisdom because they are merely the front for his intellectual pose. Waldo never aspires to become a librarian. He opts for the lesser, "feminine" role of assistant, because it does not carry responsibility or the menace of imposing discipline on others. His animus reacts to the books in a sexual manner: "And he would stand shivering for the daring of words, their sheer ejaculation _ _ _ . He shut the book so quick, so tight, the explosion might have been heard by anyone coming to catch him at something forbidden disgraceful which he would never dare again until he could no longer resist _ _ _ . A throbbing of books. He went to the lavatory to wash his hot and sticky hands" (p. 114 : my emphasis).

Neither Waldo nor his father ever experiences freedom from material and sexual ties as long as their unconscious minds, their "cores of evil", dominate their lives. Waldo's idea of freedom is demonic and lies in "isolation [and in] spiritual celibacy" (Morley, 1972 : 193 : my addition).

The relationship between George Brown and his son, apart from being defensive, may also be regarded as an inverted Oedipus complex stemming from Waldo's femininity: "He bent and kissed Waldo. Waldo kissed him. Or touched with his lips his father's cheek, which in spite of the clammy summer evening, was colder than he remembered of any other person's skin. It was a shock to discover, through the smell of sweat and crushed weed. While Dad and Waldo stood looking at each other. So Waldo was in the position of a stranger, but one who knew too much" (p. 28 : my emphasis).

It should be noted that in White's oeuvre nettles and weeds are associated with sexuality. The reference to weeds gives added significance to the demonic elements in the relationship between father and son. The sexual ambivalence in Waldo's feelings for his father prevents him from announcing his father's death. Mackenzie (1969 : 244) believes Waldo is his father's negative counterpart because he is correct in his assumption that his father is also a failed writer.

Like his father Waldo cannot face the "Inquisitor" of The Brothers Karamazov. Arthur, on the other hand, is particularly interested in the Grand Inquisitor as the judge of good and bad as well as his explanation of man's need to worship some thing or person. Without the need to worship or a suitable object of worship man is lost. This sense of loss is Waldo's major problem. He, like his father, refuses to acknowledge either his dependence on God or his own inferiority. His spiritual self is swamped by his exoteric self.

Waldo commits the archetypal sin of denial when he withdraws into his isolation, the opposite of a state of grace, because it affords him no serenity. He denies God, his parents, his brother and, most important to his spiritual well-being, his hidden feminine self. It is only after bouts of intense loneliness and self-hate that he finds consolation in his brother's arms where they unite into one totality, in this manner accomplishing what they cannot do at any other time: "They seemed to flow together as they had, once or twice, in memory or in sleep" (p. 199). Waldo, as Arthur's hidden Eve (p. 272), regards himself as a grass-halm caught in the crook of the sweater Mrs Poulter knitted for Arthur. The implication that he is their child is substantiated by his offering Mrs Poulter a plastic doll.

Waldo's bruised self is finally fragmented when he discovers his disreputable-looking brother actively busy reading in the library, his own sanctum sanctorum. Arthur's unexpected and extensive reading knowledge, an attempt to understand the mysteries of being, is amazing. He has read unobtrusively and without comment to save Waldo from embarrassment. Waldo, however, regards his brother's presence as an assault on himself and his intelligence.

White, keeping in mind Waldo's femininity, determines the tone and the metaphor for the confrontation between the unlikely siblings by referring to it as a "rape" (p. 187). Waldo is left so powerless and defeated that he retires from the library two years later.

Waldo Brown's suffering reaches its climax when he realises that his whole life has been in vain because he preferred to disregard the Selbst or the God within. Arthur's love is not powerful enough to save either himself or his brother. It is for this reason that "Arthur was afraid Waldo was preparing to die of the hatred he had bred in him. Because he, not Waldo, was to blame. Arthur Brown, the getter of pain" (p. 284).

8.2 ARTHUR BROWN

Arthur and Waldo Brown are like Cautes and Cautopates in that the one signifies life and the other death: "they also symbolize the counterbalancing principles of good and evil, and hence the twins are portrayed as mortal enemies" (Cirlot, 1971 : 356). Arthur, who has reddish hair is, even as a child, attracted to the sun (p. 207). He and Waldo, as

his alter ego, are "the two essential aspects of the sun: its alternate appearance and disappearance - day and night" (Cirlot, 1971 : 355).

Björkstén (1976 : 87) believes Arthur exists on a prophetic, hopeful level. Although he is seldom able to express what he conceives, he has a far more meaningful existence than many of the other characters in The Solid Mandala. The knowledge of his own role in life as "the getter of pain" (p. 284) and the fact that he has no religion to sustain him (p. 304) are the sources of his greater suffering. The tragedy of his love for Waldo is that the latter, as demon, cannot accept his love. It is ironic that in trying to save his brother, Arthur unintentionally becomes his executioner (Björkstén, 1976 : 88). Added to this is the paradox that when he "executes" his brother he also takes his own life because the one half cannot exist without the other: "They took it for granted it had been decided for them at birth, and at least Waldo had begun to suspect it might not be possible for one of them to die without the other" (p. 62).

Thelma Herring (1966 : 180) finds it difficult to reconcile the many facets of Arthur Brown's being. He is, for example, regarded as a "dill" by his acquaintances; as an avenging fury by the depraved boys who pretend to "sacrifice" Waldo in a boyish sexual rite and, paradoxically, as a student of Dostoevski. On a purely domestic level he fulfils the role of gardener and handyman with a head for figures.

At heart, however, Arthur is a naive man despite being categorised as a Tiresias figure or hermaphroditic man: "As a wonderfully unreserved naif Arthur persistently brings out and aggravates Waldo's sense of naïveté before his all-seeing audience of the self" (Mackenzie, 1969 : 243).

Shahane (1975 : 63) adds that Arthur is the Grand Inquisitor, the enemy of chaos and the champion of theocracy. He suggests the way to a state of grace and salvation through truth, love and understanding. His intervention in the life of old Mister Feinstein, for example, not only brings about a complete change in the old man's attitude towards the religion of his ancestors, but also reconciles him with God.

Thelma Herring (1966 : 185) points out that even as a child Arthur was concerned about the identity of the gods. Those who come into contact with him wonder about his role in relation to God. Dulcie Feinstein comes close to understanding Arthur as a prophet of love and humility: "You, Arthur, are you, I wonder, the instrument we feel you are?" (p. 269). It seems that Arthur personifies universal religious principles. He embodies a spirit concerned with the suffering of fallen mankind: "his brother's voice was convincing him of his blasphemy against life. Not so much against God - he could understand God at a pinch - but against the always altering face of the figure nailed on the tree" (p. 284).

The relationship and understanding between Arthur Brown and Dulcie Feinstein (a Christian and a Jew) is love and not amor (Morley, 1972 : 197). They find themselves under the spell of caritas and not eros. Their love deepens in esoteric quality because Arthur, unlike Waldo, is honest and without deception. He can, for example, watch the milk oozing from Dulcie's full breasts after her pregnancy, without embarrassment to either of them. Their "common mind" (p. 266) affords them peace and union without conflicting interests. Arthur understands that without his help Dulcie "could have no means of relieving her continued drought, of filling her dreadful emptiness" (p. 244). Ar-

thur and Dulcie's roles of saviour and saved respectively are reversed after Waldo's death. Then Arthur has only Mrs Poulter to fill the void left in his soul by the demise of his twin. Morley (1972 : 200) is of the opinion that Arthur loses his intellect after the death of Waldo. This belief is substantiated by his aimless and desperate wandering about the suburb.

Arthur's prophetic and spiritual life reaches a climax during his prayerful "mandala" dance in a secluded bay-shaped place, in itself an incomplete mandala and feminine symbol. Mrs Poulter enhances the intimacy of the moment by letting down her hair, in this way leaving herself defenseless and receptive. The dance unites Arthur, Waldo, Dulcie and Mrs Poulter⁹ in a "center that expresses the myths of the Incarnation and the Crucifixion" (Cotter, 1978 : 22).

In the first corner of the square, as expression of the quaternity, Arthur recalls his youthful memories about the time they emigrated to Australia: "In the first corner, as a prelude to all he had to reveal, he danced the dance of himself" (p. 256). In the second corner he tells of his love for Dulcie and her husband: "he declared his love for Dulcie Feinstein, and for her husband, by whom, through their love for Dulcie, he was, equally possessed, so they were all three united, and their children still to be conceived" (p. 256). In this way he reveals how important their trinity is. Mrs Poulter's corner is filled with fruitful and sweet symbolism and reveals Arthur's wish for her happiness. There is grim irony in the granting of his wish as it is he who becomes her child (p. 304). Waldo's

9. Arthur Brown's dance can be equated to Alf Dubbo's painting which unites the four Riders in the Chariot.

corner reveals the brittle quality of his psyche as well as Arthur's conviction that creativity of a literary nature can never be "skewered", that is to say, be contained: "Thus pinned and persecuted, what should have risen in pure flight, dropped to a dry twitter, a clipped twitching" (p. 257). Arthur draws all of them together at the centre of the mandala to dance "the passion of all their lives, the blood running out of the back of his hands, water out of the hole in his ribs" (p. 257).

Although Arthur's transcendent ordeal is clearly associated with Christ's passion, its true meaning, because of its spiritual nature, is not quite clear. White intimates that Arthur, in his dance, has in an attempt to emulate Christ, (and Himmelfarb in Riders in The Chariot) taken the characters' hardships on himself and has achieved forgiveness for them: "And then when he had been spewed up, spat out, with the breeze stripping him down to the saturated skin, and the fit had almost withdrawn from him, he added the little quivering footnote on forgiveness. His arms were laid along his sides. His head hung. Facing her" (p. 258).

Arthur's allocation of the "taws" to Dulcie, Mrs Poulter and Waldo, whose lives and esoteric selves he has observed closely, has the Biblical significance of the Final Judgment. Riemer (1967 : 6, 7) supplies a useful explanation of the significance of the "taws'" colours. He mentions that a fourteenth century mystic, Guillaume, saw four colours in his vision of heaven, including two circular systems, one gold and one blue. The vertical circle is blue and the horizontal one containing the four colours is golden. Jung explains that the golden circle denotes the heavens, while blue is the circle of time. Two of Arthur's "taws" are "cloudy blue" and "speckled gold" respectively. The gold and blue "taws" are distinguished from the others because

they are coloured. The other two have inner shapes or whorls. The four colours mentioned by Guillaume are included in three of Arthur's "taws". The fourth one is colourless. Arthur never guesses "the final secret of the mandalas because he cannot recognize his own face reflected in the most perfect one" (Riemer, 1967 : 8).

Waldo refuses to accept his "taw" because he is unable to unravel the knot inside the glass without smashing the whole. By offering the "perfect" mandala to Waldo, Arthur reveals that he is willing to sacrifice his own chances of discovering his Real Self and so achieve a state of grace. Should Waldo have accepted the "taw" he would have admitted the condition of his self and committed himself to suffering as the only means of understanding his Real Self. Mrs Poulter also refuses to acknowledge the plight of her self when she puts away her "taw" and forgets about it.

The tragic irony of the Brown brothers' last moments together is that although truth does prevail, it does not bring happiness to either man. Arthur's poem kills Waldo by revealing the fatal flaws in his psyche. Truth, instead of bringing insight and understanding, plays the part of the "Viviseckshunist" and destroys by revealing the secret of the personal "taw".

Arthur Brown's via dolorosa begins with the death of Waldo. His aimless wandering, after having fled from their house, leads him to a garbage-filled alley smelling of faeces and urine. Here he prepares himself for the putrefaction he believes is his fate. To his way of thinking there cannot be any growth or resurrection out of such "dreck". Manfred Mackenzie (1969 :248) believes Arthur's subsequent removal to an asylum is comparable to a crucifixion into self-consciousness.

Arthur's rebirth, however, begins when he loses Waldo's "taw" and, as Mrs Poulter's child, begins a "new" existence: "In her wrinkling misery for a moment she was pretty certain she saw their two faces becoming one, at the center of that glass eye, which Arthur sat holding in his hand" (p. 306).

The epigraph to The Solid Mandala, "There is another world, but it is in this one" reveals the importance and reality of a fourth dimension of being as a source of grace. It is ironic and evidence of White's perplexity that this unknown sphere also includes the asylum, "Peaches and Plums" to which Arthur is sent when he becomes insane.

The novel ends on a peculiar note of hope: "In this closing section, he [Arthur] functions as the Christ-bearer for Mrs Poulter, while at the same time suiting the Zeitgeist by remaining a mere mortal in whom one can rationally believe. In a world of dead and dying gods, he is the 'man-child' given 'as a token of everlasting life' [p. 307]" (Bliss, 1986 : 112).

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In The Vivisector White switches from a "dill" prophet to an artist, as a "third eye" or vivisector, to lay bare man's self-destroying core of evil that resists and often destroys his tenuous, tentative awareness of God as the Alpha and Omega of his being.

9.0 THE VIVISECTOR

White's novels prior to The Vivisector are mainly concerned with beauty and wholesome domestic objects. The Vivisector reveals a radical change in the author's point of view since he now discloses an absorbing concern with the dreck of life. This about-face is already evident in the closing stages of Arthur Brown's life in The Solid Mandala: "Like Dostoevski, White is identifying the filth which necessarily accompanies man's bodily life and his essential putrescence in death with man's inner spiritual state" (Morley, 1972 : 210). White now postulates the belief that Beauty and the understanding of being stem from the filth and corruption in which we find ourselves. In Voss Willy Pringle, an artist, tells Laura Traveyan that "the blowfly on its bed of offal is but a variation of the rainbow. Common forms are continually breaking into brilliant shapes. If we will explore them" (Voss), p. 447). In the end, according to White's way of thinking, the "darkness" suggested by moral decay makes the "light" of eventual spiritual understanding so much more illuminating and fulfilling.

Patricia Morley (1972 : 211) writes that the dreck in which the major characters in The Vivisector founder complicates their search for God. In this context man's suffering is essentially an overpowering sense of loss and despair rooted in his post-lapsarian state. Hero Pavloussi, for example, symbolises the mortal's fall from a state of grace. Her physical appearance, behaviour and Christian name are an ironic comment on the body as the temple of God. White shows his disillusion with this Christian principle. He believes that the duality of man's being, namely the destructive conflict between body and soul, is not man's fault, but the will of God, the Vivisector. In this manner God separates the elect from the damned. The body, which

man does not create out of himself, is the battlefield. The intensity of the conflict is intensified by deviations from sexual "normality". Boo Hollingrake, for example, is heterosexual, lesbian and a transvestite, a condition that cannot bring her any happiness.

In The Vivisector White "cuts deep" to reveal what is wrong with society and the individual. He also delineates how people react to what they discover within themselves. Walsh (1974 : 209) writes that Hurtle, the vivisector, "uses the damaging razor more than the healing scalpel."

Patrick White adds a new dimension to his examination of the human psyche by introducing the problem of the animus within the anima. Arthur Brown in The Solid Mandala becomes aware of this dilemma in a book: "As the shadow continually follows the body of one who walks in the sun, so our hermaphroditic Adam, though he appears in the form of a male, nevertheless always carries about with him Eve, or his wife, hidden in his body" (The Solid Mandala, p. 271).

Patrick White uses Kathy Volkov, Hurtle and Rhoda's spiritual child (p. 457) to explain and actuate Hurtle's quest for and eventual understanding of being and his Real Self. Despite the transcendental meaning White attaches to the relationship between Hurtle and Kathy (p. 425) Hurtle never really "knows" God except as an omnipresent and almighty influence. Kathy explains that there is an extra sense in the human psyche which is the source of human creativity. This extra sense is revealed after real mental and spiritual anguish resulting in the eventual triumph of the esoteric self over the material or non-spiritual self.

The quality, degree and nature of the suffering endured by the characters in The Vivisector are directly related to the milieu and background. The hardship the Duffield family, for example, endures is allied to their lowly station in life. They do, however, belong to the fellowship of the poor, a sense of belonging Boo Hollingrake and Hero Pavloussi do not share. Hurtle, after his adoption by the rich Courtneys, often recalls their friendship and fellowship with regret. The Courtneys and their peers live isolated lives, each individual encapsulated within his own loneliness behind the high, laurel-covered walls of their mansions. Harry Courtney attempts to find a cure for the estrangement between himself and his wife by keeping company with his employees. Individuals like Courtney labour under the illusion that others are happier than they are.

White's hypothesis is that the individual's search for beauty and meaning in life is at the same time a search for God and the Real Self (p. 211). Patricia Morley (1972 : 220) remarks that it is through characters like the Courtneys, Boo Hollingrake and Hero Pavloussi that White introduces the failure motif into his novels. Hero Pavloussi and Alfreda Courtney, for example, fail to find spiritual tranquillity because they are overly concerned with gratifying their lust and physical needs to compensate for their intuitive knowledge that they have forfeited any chance of experiencing grace. Boo Hollingrake's longing for her youthful illusion of purity is reflected in her fascination with Hurtle's rock paintings which reveal how difficult it is to penetrate the formidable carapace of the exoteric self to unite with the Real Self.

These disillusioned characters experience a loss of faith in God and themselves which is, according to Morley (1972 : 221) the worst trauma that can befall any human. Such suf-

fering suggests the existence of God as a "Vivisector" (p. 213) and not the Heavenly Father. Boo Hollingrake, after having endured several marriages in an attempt to prove her "normality" eventually believes that nobody is innocent and that everybody deserves to suffer to some degree.

Veronica Brady (1072 : 139) carries Morley's assertion a step further by suggesting that in The Vivisector White wants to play the role of the vivisector himself. He does this by "insisting on the humiliating limitations of the body, even the sexual act itself" (Brady, 1972 : 139). Her point of view once again illustrates the destructive dichotomy between the physical and spiritual selves of man. Brady believes that it is the sheer, physical facts of life which generate White's vision of man as a fallen creature.

In a subsequent article Brady reveals the influence of Simone Weil on White's portrayal of Hurtle Duffield. When he is old, Hurtle reaches the stage of being Weil advocates for man's spiritual growth: "man's proper attitude to life is looking beyond himself, in an emptiness which is open to and in waiting for what she [Weil] calls grace, some power which seizes upon man, transforming him so that he begins to live on a new level of intensity which fulfils his profoundest desires" (Brady, 1974 : 140). In Hurtle Duffield's life this state of grace is included in the unnameable "i_n_d_i_g_o" which is the colour of God in the alchemical spectrum" (Brady, 1974 : 140). It is an integral part of Weil's belief that construction begins in destruction and creation in decreation.

It is important to note that White's "vision of God" is not found in sentimentalities, but in pain, suffering and endurance (Brady, 1974 : 141). God's presence and reality is found in people who have been "stroked" by Him. As the Al-

mighty He makes man aware of his finitude; as Source of being He turns man's thoughts to reunion with Him - this being the "third movement" in the "triangle of being" postulated by Laura Trevelyan in Voss. Weil believes modern Man has so surrounded himself with illusions and ersatz teachings that he believes himself master of the universe and, alas, even of his own fate. She calls the traumatic moment when a man is "stroked" by God "the evil hour" (quoted in Brady, 1974 : 141). Man achieves his final vision of being because of and not in spite of the "stroke" that enfeebles him physically. The results of having been "stroked" are far-reaching. Robert Baker (1979 : 204) writes: "the ego-shattering stroke _ _ _ emptying the self of the socially approved constituents of personality, including communally sanctioned moral values and sentimental, social or religious illusions."

White sets the tone and establishes the prevailing metaphor of The Vivisector early in the novel. The "crook-neck" pullet pecking in the Duffield yard is victimised by the other fowls "because they don't like the look of it. Because it is different" (p. 9). Rhoda Courtney's spinal deformity is the physical manifestation of the "hump" or weakness each of White's elected characters carries within his self, hidden and unacknowledged until the character reaches a stage of acceptance and understanding after suffering.

9.1 HURTLE DUFFIELD

A study of Hurtle Duffield's suffering includes an evaluation of his childhood in the poor areas of Sydney. He enjoys a more intimate and loving relationship with his parents than do the children of White's earlier novels. His youthful sense of belonging, security and fidelity is shattered where he is "sold" to the Courtneys, ostensibly for

his own good. He never again belongs to a family and in spite of his own efforts cannot create a home where he belongs. The transfer from the drabness of the Duffield home where mere existence is an all-abiding obsession to the order, symmetry and brightness of Sunningdale brings no happiness to the young Duffield.

Mrs Duffield's life of repeated, undesired pregnancies is an allegory of what appears to be the fate of the women of her class. Her unwanted fecundity focuses the attention, by contrast, on the wealthy, pampered Alfreda Courtney's inability to have a healthy normal child. There seems to be some grim irony in White's suggestion that more people are born to exist in adversity than in affluence. A further corollary is that in White's novels more people are saved through suffering than living in relative ease.

White believes women, mainly because they have been condemned to endure pain during childbirth, do not regard men as mere instruments obeying the divine injunction to procreate: " 'The father! Does the father know what it is to be a walking pumpkin most of every year? Was 'e ever bloodied, except when 'e cuts 'imself with the razor" (p. 70). Being bloodied during confinement makes women part of the Covenant and symbols of sacrifice. Mrs Duffield feels the "sale" of her son more intensely than her husband who soothes his conscience by spending some of the blood-money on drink. Mrs Duffield's behaviour and motives are, ironically, influenced by her ignorance of the reality of the Courtney way of life. She, like the rest of her class, is blinded by the deceitful appearance of Sunningdale.

Hurtle is truly fond of his mother. A sensory person, he enjoys sitting on her lap and "cuddling up" to her. He reveals an unusual understanding of and sympathy for her

role of woman, fated to endure maternal martyrdom at the hands of a man who, although a weakling and a poor provider, understands the need of the female psyche for tenderness. Hurtle's empathy for his mother's inescapable position forms the framework of his "maternal" role in his relationship with Kathy Volkov. His oedipal love for his mother and her betrayal of his trust explains why he never accepts Alfreda Courtney as his surrogate mother and why he cannot love Nance Lightfoot. The closest he comes to Alfreda Courtney is his tactile contact with her clothing. When he is older he understands that his stepmother pushed his head among her clothes to protect her exoteric self from his "third eye". Hurtle becomes Alfreda's psychopomp because she mistakenly believes she has been rejuvenated through him and that she has compensated for her female incapacity by adopting him. Bliss (1986 : 127) believes Alfreda's possessive behaviour is a deliberate attempt at seduction to secure the boy for herself as a "spiritual child" to compensate for her failings, not only as a mother, but also as a wife.

Hurtle is repeatedly reminded of his parents' betrayal when he sells his paintings, his children, to wealthy buyers who have no idea of the creative suffering involved in their production. White uses sexual terms to describe the "conception" of Hurtle's paintings; each completed after a difficult confinement. Hurtle's concern with the "child" he carries within his psyche "suggests the persistence of a sense of self, of some permanence of being, within the flux of experience" (Kiernan, 1980 : 108).

Hurtle is baffled by the enigma of the immortal soul, doomed to perdition or elevated to a state of grace, being created out of base human lust. When he is old he understands that man's desire to create a spiritual child is to have a continuation of his Real Self as well as a desire to emulate

God. Sex, as a fact of life, is not at all romantic to Hurtle's way of thinking. The "enslaving" result of sexual surrender as well as the sense of disillusion and dissatisfaction which follow, explain Hurtle's onanism when it comes to commitment and surrender to a member of the opposite sex. Baker (1979 : 215) blames Alfreda Courtney for Hurtle's onanistic behaviour so clearly revealed in his paintings.

Hurtle has two kinds of sexual experience. The first is with women who have some perversion and the second is with men who have abjured the company of women: "The logical culmination of this category is Duffield himself, who gives birth to his own androgyne, Kathy Volkov, a Shelleyan epipsyche carefully dissociated from organic parturition and projecting in concrete form Duffield's aesthetic and spiritual aspirations" (Baker, 1979 : 216).

Even as a young "larrikin" Hurtle Duffield involuntarily becomes an outsider in his own home. He has an unsettling effect on his brothers and sisters because he is different. His inquiring and vivisectioning mind comes into conflict with their credulous natures. The Duffields cannot answer his questions about life and living.

When Hurtle does eventually go to Sunningdale he adopts the role required by his new station in life. Entering the mansion via the octagonal chamber reserved for the Courtneys is analogous to a "rebirth" into a new, but less satisfactory, way of life. This singular room may be regarded as a mandala having been squared, which is, traditionally, the shape of a font.

Hurtle's transfer from one life to another supports the argument that he, throughout his life, finds himself at the junction of the conflicting systems that comprise White's

holistic approach. At Sunningdale he finds himself trapped between the worlds of poverty and wealth and, on a spiritual level, between the familiar world of his parental home and the loveless hypocrisy of the Courtneys. Rhoda Courtney, his hump-backed stepsister, repeatedly reminds him of his inferiority and rootlessness (pp.52 - 70).

The alcoholic Shewcroft, Hurtle and Rhoda's Latin teacher, is one of the first victims of Hurtle's "third eye" which Rhoda compares to a knife: " 'You, Hurtle - you were born with a knife in your hand. No,' she corrected herself, 'in your eye' " (p. 129). Shewcroft is a physically repulsive man who no longer cares about life or living. For example, when Hurtle asks him about the pragmatic use of Latin he replies "For that matter, what is the use of anything" (p. 96). He cannot bear the fact that, despite his learning, he has become a nonentity. Confronted by Hurtle's penetrating analysis of his psyche he becomes conscious of the loss of his esoteric self and consequently takes his own life. Hurtle has much the same effect on Nance Lightfoot. Both these outcasts from society feel that they have been vivisected by Hurtle whose name, often abbreviated to "Hurt", suggests pain.

Veronica Brady explains that Hurtle antagonises people because, as "the Eye", he reveals "our illusions which center upon the body beautiful and the happiness of all" (1974 : 137). Hurtle, on the one hand personifies the esoteric self's struggle against hypocrisy and, on the other, post-lapsarian man in a dark world without love or happiness. Brady, in support of Hurtle's role in life, writes that man must be solitary to be free, loneliness being his true condition.

The epigraph to The Vivisector discloses Hurtle's role as artist: "He becomes beyond all others the great Invalid, the Great Criminal, the great Accursed One - and the Supreme Knower. For he reaches the unknown." Morley (1971 : 408) explains that the apparently impossible gulf between man and God, or man and the infinite unknown, may be bridged by man's own storming of the gates of heaven: "The artist by his own efforts will penetrate the infinite. He will then communicate his vision, through art, to ordinary mortals, at the cost to himself of tremendous suffering and, quite possibly, damnation" (Morley, 1971 : 408).

Hurtle's artistic urge as a means of understanding life and the promptings of his esoteric self, is greater than his libido and illusive drive towards fulfilment through sex. White, in an attempt to illustrate the duality of the human psyche, casts Hurtle in different roles:

"as auto-erotic masturbator, as the producer of aesthetic excrement (the artist as anal erotic), as the impotent divinity who with a mixture of love and hatred shits on the innocent world from a great height (as the fowls let their droppings fall from the pepper tree in the moonlit backyard of his slum home, as at Sunningdale he spits on the larrikins from the branches of a tree overhanging the street, and as the moon, like a great seagull, defecates on the lovers and the masturbating grocer in his painting 'Lantana Lovers Under Moonfire', and most happily, perhaps as the man inspired and refreshed by love who creatively transfigures the world in his paintings" (Brissenden, 1974 : 322).

Brissenden makes the important observation that all of Hurtle's important relationships are adoptive paradigms of real family connections. His "marriage" is his sexual relationship with Nance Lightfoot and he has two sets of parents. In his relationship with Kathy Volkov he is both father and lover. His most enduring association is with Rhoda Courtney whom he unwillingly admits is his alter ego, the dark self he would rather not acknowledge. It is significant that each of these relationships is influenced by his isolation from society: "He does derive from each set a different surface personality, which together included larrikinism, middle-class manners, a certain grace of carriage and a distinguished appearance" (Docker, 1973 : 47).

Hurtle's isolation in the bush after his return from the War symbolises the post-lapsarian devolution of mankind. In spite of his "fallen state" Hurtle, most likely because of his war experiences, shares William Blake's view that everything that lives is holy. His point of view explains his endeavour to discover some spiritual illumination in inanimate things, for example in the black rocks of the gorge that figure so prominently in his early paintings: "Glutted finally with bread, light, sound, he returned to the attack on those giant rocks with which he was obsessed: to dissect on his drawing-board down the core, the nerves of matter; but pure truth, the crystal eye, avoided him" (p. 221).

White intentionally removes Hurtle from the equivocation of Sydney life. He places him in a relatively unspoilt area in order to let him begin his search for his Real Self and God uninfluenced by material norms. White wants Hurtle, like Voss and Stan Parker in The Tree of Man, to experience the pure essence of being first hand. Hurtle's return to Sydney after the death of Nance is yet another painful, evolutionary step in his career as an artist. The end of Hurtle's

adult naivete and illusions of grandeur, as symbolised by the chandelier in the Courtney mansion, comes when he throws away the Courtney signet ring, thereby breaking all his ties with the past:

"It was his worst perversion: to have hung onto a ring, long after the money was spent, the five hundred they sold him for. Or pretension: worse than anything Harry and Alfreda Courtney had tried to put across, blazing with brilliantine and diamonds under the chandelier" (p. 250).

Nance Lightfoot, as the reflection of Hurtle's dark self, reveals the cruel streak in his determination to discover truth, by accusing him of "perving" on people in order to reveal their hidden selves:

" 'That's the trouble, Hurtle,' she said slowly. ' That's what you aren't. You aren't a 'uman being.'

'I'm an artist.' It sounded a shifty claim.

'You're a kind of perv - perving on people - even on bloody rocks!' " (p. 224).

Hurtle does not spare Nance. He renders her almost inhuman to satisfy his urge to discover his Real Self; "the honest version of his dishonest self" (p. 218). In painting her he attempts "to participate in Nance's life as he hadn't before, although he had been her lover. He knew every possible movement of her ribs, every reflection of her skin. He had torn the hook out of her gills; he had even disembowelled her while still alive; he had watched her no less

cruel dissection by the knives of light" (p. 246). Hurtle realises that actually it is he who seduces Nance into "giving him, not money, not her actual body so much as its formal vessel, from which to pour his visions of life" (p. 203).

Hurtle and Nance could not have fused (p. 171) so intimately if they had not both been outsiders. They find themselves a part of the general state of flux. When they are naked and alone in the dark, they sense that they are poised between the worlds of shape and form on the one hand and the chaos of formlessness on the other. Although Peter Beatson (1976 : 58) believes that form can inversely be imprisonment and chaos freedom, Hurtle and Nance remain destitute and unrelated to their esoteric selves. Nance discovers, like Shewcroft, that her Real Self has dwindled into insignificance as a result of neglect. Her love, however unselfish, is sexual and can, according to White's canon, not lead to a state of grace. It is this realisation that causes her to take her own life after a bout of drunkenness.

Hurtle's honest, if crude need to destroy his exoteric self is disclosed when he smears his faeces over a self-portrait. Morley (1972 : 217) interprets his behaviour as an attempt to destroy "all that he repudiated in himself and the excrement is identified with his egotism and failure to love." After the trauma of Nance's death, his obsession with his dark self turns to a critical fixation with the milieu in which he finds himself. Having "vivisected" himself, it becomes part of his nature to do the same to others.

Cutbush, a homosexual to whom Hurtle feels himself drawn, explains that some people lose themselves in life "as a sort of consolation" (p. 258). Hurtle, filled with a sense of his own independence denies needing any form of consola-

tion: "I have what I know and what I can see. I have my work" (p. 258). He does, however, admit that he endures intense suffering while actively painting: "Not that it is as simple as that. Not always. Not when it is dragged out of you, in torment and anguish, but by a pair of forceps" (p. 259). Hurtle does not attempt to avoid suffering: "the life you lead - you don't lead it - it gets thrust on you, and carries you in a direction it is difficult to alter" (p. 292). He rather blames God, the "Divine Vivisector", for the anguish he has to endure.

On returning to Sydney after the death of Nance Lightfoot Hurtle buys an old house in Flint Street. The fact that Hurtle never really belongs in the building stresses his rootlessness and the duality of his being. The one side of the house faces the lower-class shacks and the other the wealthier suburbs. White sardonically suggests that Hurtle himself feels most at ease in the backyard "dunny" where he does much of his thinking.

Hurtle's own real and meaningful communication is with people who are as possessed by a demon as he is. Such moments of complete empathy become transcendental experiences. At one of Olivia Davenport's select gatherings, for example, an unmarried young woman suffers an epileptic fit. During the consternation she causes, Hurtle experiences such a unique moment of understanding and empathy with the young woman that for a moment they seem removed to another dimension of time and space. Hurtle's intuition causes him acute misery: "For an instant the possessed one glanced at the only other of her kind and they were swept up, and united by sheet lightning, as they could never have been on the accepted plane _ _ _ . She looked at him, and he saw past her

green-sickness and menstrual torments into the hazy future of a bungled marriage and a hushed-up attempt at suicide" (p. 299).

Hurtle's sordid affair with Hero Pavloussi, a bisexual Greek woman, is antithetical to his moments of insight and understanding. Hero's hedonism causes Hurtle, in his darker moods, to see the world as the inside of a "bag", with mankind struggling to get out into the light of day. His painting "Infinity of Cats" is an attempt to reveal the harshness of God and the desperate attempts of mankind to avoid damnation (p. 323). Hurtle himself manages to escape from the "bag" only when he has suffered a stroke and acknowledged his dependence on God.

Hero Pavloussi's psychotic state of extreme guilt, brought about by her adultery, bi-sexuality and loveless life, is intensified by her realisation that Hurtle too has failed her. Instead of giving her a sense of freedom and release from the demands of her sexual self, Hurtle reveals her self-deception, making her aware that she too cannot escape from the "bag" of her flesh. With Hurtle she visits a number of Mediterranean "holy" places in a vain attempt to regain the spiritual tranquillity she experienced once before she became involved with Hurtle Duffield. She is disillusioned when she finds that, like herself, the shrines and even the nuns have become commercialised. One shrine she and Hurtle visit is desecrated by human faeces deposited on the altar, thus suggesting the futility of her endeavour to achieve grace through sexuality. Hurtle's esoteric self is revolted by the absence of love and purity in the shrines: "Isn't love - more, shall we say - a matter of suffering and sacrifice?" (p. 403).

As Hurtle becomes older and labours under a burden of guilt for his supposed contribution to Hero's death, he becomes impassive and careless of his appearance. His house in Flint Street becomes his hermitage: "In his dated clothes, and corroded mask, he had reached a stage, when he was only at home with objects" (p. 413). His quest for truth is desultory until Kathy Volkov enters his life and, as a catalyst, awakens his need for a spiritual child as well as the reassurance that he has duplicated himself.

In his relationship with the young girl Hurtle adopts a passive, traditionally feminine attitude to sex, in keeping with his growing awareness of the influence of his animus. To his way of thinking such an attitude absolves him from blame or feelings of guilt for having sex with a "child" (p. 465). During their sexual encounters Hurtle becomes aware of a creative urge "to transfer his own passion to the primed board" (p. 471). Kathy becomes the "child" in himself to whom he must give birth: "She was digging into his maternal, his creative entrails" (p. 465). During their love-making they are consumed by the two elemental symbols of fire and water suggesting purification and rebirth.

In Kathy Volkov, Hurtle, for the first time in his life, discovers a woman as dedicated to her art as he is to his own. Kathy admits his relatively insignificant influence on her career as a pianist. Her attitude to Hurtle resembles his behaviour towards Alfreda Courtney. He, for example, also allowed his foster-mother certain liberties without surrendering his Real Self to her spiritual cannibalism. Up to the time of his death, Hurtle wrestles with the enigma that, unlike himself, a shiftless and apparently immoral Russian sailor could father such a talented daughter and so perpetuate himself on a higher level of being. Hurtle refuses to admit that his own sexuality is as fruitless as

Cutbush's homosexuality. He, unaware of his own selfish motives, persists in "perving" on people. The duality of his psyche is reflected in the drawing of the young boy who was Cutbush's lover. The youngster in his drawing has Kathy's shadow falling over him (p. 471). In this manner Hurtle attempts to reveal the inherent female traits present in all men as well as the futility of trying to understand the spiritual qualities of the esoteric self via sexuality.

Hurtle's adulation for Kathy makes him jealous of anyone with whom she associates. Shuard, the music critic, for example, becomes his enemy for life. Kathy's debut as pianist is one of the major stations on Hurtle's road to his personal Calvary. Her failure would mean the abortion and loss of his own spiritual child who, by her superior position during love-making, creates the impression that she rose from his loins. Hurtle's misunderstanding of his esoteric self is revealed in his belief that many of his paintings sprang from the same source: "to shoot at an enormous naked canvas a whole radiant chandelier waiting in his mind and balls" (p. 207).

Thelma Herring (1971 : 13), on writing about Hurtle's obsession with Kathy as his spiritual child, explains that Hurtle's painting of Kathy, "Kathy Mystagogue", is his last and saddest illusion of a spiritual child with a pure soul. He does not heed Rhoda's warning that his paintings "are gods which would fail you" (p. 518). Kathy indeed becomes his psychopomp. His thoughts of his spiritual child are clouded by his memories of "Kathy as a vulgar little schoolgirl-tart" (p. 494) for whom he had poured out his life-blood.

Carolyn Bliss (1986 : 128) points out that all the women in Hurtle's paintings embody the threat of and not the gentle fulfilment of love. This fact explains why Hurtle refuses to commit himself to any one woman. His taking Rhoda into his house is little more than an act of masochism to compensate for his disdainful neglect of the women in his life. Rhoda's "hump" symbolises his failings. Hurtle refuses to admit that she is the complement to his esoteric truth, his conscience as it were (p. 517).

Rhoda humbles Hurtle by ignoring his paintings, his raison d' être. His serving her meals reveals his need for communion and his wish to atone for slights inflicted on her in the past. His behaviour is an attempt to come to terms with his "hump", so strongly emphasised by Rhoda's presence.

During one of their frequent quarrels Rhoda accuses Hurtle of being blind to the suffering of others: "Aren't they other human beings? Almost everybody carries a hump, not always visible and not always of the same shape" (p. 469). She confronts him with the truth of his youth which he has ignored, preferring to remember wrongs to his ego: "You were a child, weren't you? I think, perhaps, in many ways, you are still; otherwise you wouldn't see the truth as you do: too large and too hectic" (p. 470). In a violent and drunken reaction to Rhoda's vivisection of his "hump" Hurtle goes into the yard and smashes an empty brandy bottle, repeating the event in the gorge at the time of Nance Lightfoot's death. His impulsive behaviour reveals his unconscious desire to forget the "chandelier" period of his life.

The duality of Hurtle's self at the "Rhoda - Kathy Volkov" stage of his life is disclosed by the duplicity of his public and private lives. Driven by his unadmitted love for

Rhoda Courtney and his guilty erotic lust for Kathy Volkov, Hurtle becomes even more of an anchorite. His seclusion is part of White's plan to lead him to an understanding of his Real Self and God. Although grace may stem from society it is never found in society. The apparent unfairness of God's vivisection of his life and being is difficult enough for him to bear without having to submit himself and his paintings to the inane remarks of an admiring but uncomprehending and insensitive public. As "artist-vivisector" in his own right and entrepreneur for truth he finds the essence of society, so aptly depicted in White's descriptions of Boo Hollingrake's parties and Kathy Volkov's musical concerts, abhorrent. Hurtle's brusque and condemning behaviour marks him as an outsider and eccentric. He becomes a neighbourhood curiosity, his fame as an artist, ironically, being an asset to property investors. The fact that his paintings, his "children", are bought as investments and not as keys to the mystery of being, angers him, making his opinion of society even more cynical. His private self, however restless, remains inviolate: "His actual life, or secret work, was magnificent, if terrifying. It was lived almost exclusively at night _ _ _" (p. 518).

In contrast to White's depiction of the grossness of society, for example Boo Hollingrake's social gatherings (p. 308), Hurtle's paintings are cataclysmic adding new and transcendent visions of being: "But there were the days when he himself was operated on, half-drunk sometimes, shitting himself with agony, when out of the tortures of knife and mind, he was suddenly carried, without choice, on the wings of his exhaustion, to the point of intellectual and - dare he begin to say it? - spiritual self-justification" (p. 470). White refers to his impulsive need to paint as "a

touch of the whip" (p. 529) and compares it to a "tiger" like the one inside the piano in the painting of Kathy Volkov named "Girl at Piano".

Rhoda Courtney, as the sound-board of his esoteric self, warns Hurtle about his egotism, which together with his painting, is a spiritually destructive force: "Your painting. And yourself. But those, too, are 'gods' which could fail you" (p. 518). Hurtle heeds her warning as "the worst truth of all" (p. 518). His fear of death aggravates his sense of spiritual damnation. Isolation and onanism become integral parts of his suffering and individuation.

In the last phase of his suffering Hurtle Duffield follows in the footsteps of Ulrich Voss. Both men emerge, chrysalis-like, from the crumbling coil of their mortality. Voss discards his few remaining possessions and Hurtle destroys much of his work as being "dreck" (p. 538). In this manner he frees his esoteric self from the sensual and materialistic influences of the past.

After having suffered a stroke, Hurtle's spiritual agony and need to express his intuitive knowledge increase his desire to discard his debilitated body. His pride, however, still prevents him from admitting his dependence on others: "He was reduced to this [a disabled man] where he had always got there by jumping out into darkness flying flying then landing on what his presence made believable and solid. After the first spitting and gnashing of teeth, they had believed in what he showed them. Would show them again, too. Ready for the jump. If the spirit would only move in him. But the spirit plopped and slucked like hot lazy mud" (p. 557).

Painting, the only medium he has to express his awareness of God and his Real Self, becomes an ordeal. Doing battle with his body is comparable to Voss's test of endurance in the Australian desert. The struggle of Hurtle's spiritual self to overcome the weakness of his body is an inversion of the dilemma of his youth, when his psyche had to contend with the procreative demands of his physical self.

Hurtle eventually surrenders his pride and independence when he accepts the help of Don Lethbridge. The young man's surname, "Lethe-bridge" suggests the final step before "crossing over" into the unknown. It is also significant that Lethbridge, "always the soul of stillness" (p. 607) resembles Hurtle as a young man. The scaffolding Lethbridge erects to enable Hurtle to work at his last painting becomes the old man's Calvary where he endures the "long trudge to the Elysian Fields" (p. 605) before he discovers God in "I_n_d_i_g_o".

It is important to understand that in Hurtle's final painting, "The Whole of Life", "essential being is recognised as being within time and becoming, not beyond in some absolute or transcendent state, and the meaning of the individual life lies in its totality, in the continued struggle to discover permanence within the flow of experience" (Kiernan, 1980 : 109).

The Real Self Hurtle Duffield eventually merges with is androgynous: the "linking of dreams and facts suggests the fusion of the two" (Chellappan, 1983 : p. 29).

9.2 NANCE LIGHTFOOT

Nance Lightfoot is a tender-hearted, generous Sydney whore.

Patricia Morley (1972 : 215), in her evaluation of The Vivisector, writes that the "Nance chapter poses the question of how far art is dependent on sexuality, and offers a matchless demonstration of sexuality as the source of humour in art."

Nance, although regarded as an outcast by the self-righteous members of her society, is an ironic paradox, epitomising the complex duality of the female psyche. She reveals a multifaceted personality, compounded of several contradictory character traits. She is vulgar and yet compassionate (like all the whores in White's novels), sexually aggressive as well as coy. Her behaviour and thoughts reveal that the real meaning of sexual intercourse can only be discovered in love which arises from suffering and sacrifice: "Nance is a completely unsentimentalised version of the archetypal whore with a heart of gold. It is White's vision of unity, of the ultimate oneness of Dreck and light, which makes possible the creation of such a character" (Morley, 1976 : 216).

Nance, in her Weltanschauung, reveals what has happened to a conservative society as a result of unbanisation and war. The "needful" relationship between Nance and her clients, in which she frequently plays the part of confessor, reveals the lovelessness of society and the waning influence of institutionalised religion. Dressed in black, Nance symbolises "the corrupted goddess of earth and fire and hearth" (Brissenden, 1974 : 321).

White's frank depiction of Nance Lightfoot not only dispels the romantic mystery surrounding womanhood, it also draws a grim comparison between the role of the artist and the whore: "That Nance is a prostitute merely spells out in its most blatant form the love-money relationship by which the artist is connected to the society which sustains him" (Brissenden, 1974 : 321). Nance, in her own unique way regards herself as an artist: "Because I do it good _ _ _ . It's my ART - ha, ha!" (p. 197).

Baker (1979 : 218) stresses the role of Nance in his evaluation of external influences on Hurtle's aesthetic and psychic development. Fleeing from the city in an attempt to heal the psychic bruises caused by the War, Hurtle intends drawing on nature to understand the problems of life and his intuition of transcendence. Initially Hurtle finds his union with Nance revitalising because he is drawn to the animal in her psyche, but prolonged association stifles his creative, spiritual self as well as his intuitive desire to transcend mundane, physical reality. The effect of the antagonism between his sexual drive and esoteric need to satisfy his aesthetic-creative sense is evident in his series of paintings, "Animal Rock Forms" and, as the climax to his uneasy relationship with Nance, in her shattered corpse Baker (1979 : 218) believes the last hectic disagreement between Hurtle and Nance forms the epicentre of the novel, "revealing in sharply polarized terms Duffield's essential dilemma, his allegiance to an increasingly autonomous aesthetic that, while it permits him to endow individual objects with life, forces him to destroy the life of a woman he presumably loves by withdrawing from her in order to preserve his own emotional and creative autonomy."

Hurtle breaks his emotional-sexual tie with Nance in a shocking manner when he paints and then mutilates an androgynous self-portrait - "the honest version of his dishonest self" (p. 241) - so erasing from his life any influence Nance may have had on his self and his mind: "The self-portrait, however, marks the first stage of Duffield's systematic exploration of autogenesis and the possibility of creating a world distinct from nature and time" (Baker, 1979 : 219). With the defacement of his self-portrait which Nance regards as an expression of his self-love ("There _ _ _ That's Duffield. Not bad. True. Lovun' 'imself" p. 248) Hurtle begins his growth away from Dreck symbolised by Nance and his own faeces.

Nance does not experience any apparent spiritual growth in her association with Duffield. Her personal tragedy is rooted in her sex which, in the context of the times, leaves her with few occupational alternatives. The questionable morality of her life, together with her intuition that she is lost in a spiritual maze causes Nance to lose her embuliance which she uses as a pretext to hide the fact that she is an aging whore with no future. The knowledge of what might have been makes her desperate:

"He heard himself, like the worst captions at the flicks:

'We still have each other, Nance.'

'Like shit we have!' " (p. 248).

Nance's need for love and to love is pathetically evident in her belated confession to Hurtle: "I love you. You've gotter love somebody, haven't yer?" (p. 202). The only way in which she can reveal her love for Hurtle (a sardonic comment on his prostitution) is by supporting him financially. Offering him her body, the best oblation she has, is a

sacrifice to his vanity: "All you men are in love with yourselves. That's what it amounts to. When a man feels real good about 'imself, he has to have a woman, and its called love" (p. 238). Hurtle accepts her sacrifice to further his art and understanding of his own anima.

Nance Lightfoot's life becomes increasingly amorphous and desperate - "Nance looked thinner than usual, leathery too: her arms were in seamy, oiled leather, as she stood pulling at her eye" (p. 242) - as she feels, perhaps because of hypercritical public opinion, she is fated never to discover her Real Self or be united with God, ironically, in the light of her profession, the Source of her being. She experiences the enveloping darkness and formlessness associated with a loss of spiritual grace in the same way Cutbush does when he witnesses the sterility of the Lantana lovers (p. 262) and Laura Traveyan in Voss does when she finds her sexual self drawn to "the hot, black smell of rotting" (Voss, p. 71) in the bamboo bush. Nance Lightfoot's spiritual depression is increased by the misuse of alcohol and the depressing belief that as victim of her body, she can do nothing about her fate.¹⁰

Nance both hates and fears the massive solidity and permanence of the rocks Hurtle persists in painting (p. 226). They represent everything she does not understand as well as her cruel, loveless life. Having come face to face with the ineffable, Nance finds she can no longer jokingly refer to herself as a "pross" nor regard her sinful way of life as a trade. In retrospect she confesses to Hurtle Duffield that

10. The whores depicted in The Twyborn Affair share her disillusion and at the lowest point of their depression, when the euphoria of youth and sexuality has worn off, take their own lives.

"it is what you never find that keeps you at it" (p. 227). Her unspoken longing for a "big, dark house, full of furniture and clothes" (p. 205) vanishes when, through Duffield, she has to face up to reality: "Nothin' is ever what you expect" (p. 247).

Hurtle's throwing away the Courtney signet-ring in a bout of drunken pique is a form of rebirth for Nance Lightfoot and himself. Hurtle experiences a sense of freedom from his past and Nance is forced to admit her illusion. The only reality left to her is death. In accepting this fact and her past as Dreck, she inadvertently penetrates to the essence of Christian religious teaching. The loss of the ring, symbol of continuity and wholeness, has archetypal and universal significance for Nance: "_ _ _ she began moaning for all the abominations ever committed by man or woman: sometimes she blamed herself, sometimes him" (p. 250).

Nance Lightfoot and Hurtle Duffield's life and death relationship comes to an end amid the "stench" of their bodies (p. 249). White carries his portrayal of human putrefaction to extremes in order to render the contrast between spiritual growth and degradation even more remarkable.

William Walsh (1977 : 104) believes Nance kills herself because she cannot bear the thought of being second in Hurtle's life. Veronica Brady's (1983 : 188) evaluation of Nance's death is closer to the truth. She regards Nance's suicide as a sacrifice which by its nature suggests absolution and reconciliation. This hypothesis is born out by the description of her dead body: "He couldn't look at her face: the sun had gilded it with too savage a brilliance" (p. 252).

9.3 RHODA COURTNEY

"Rhoda's name puns on beauty and Dreck whose paradoxical unity is explored in the novel. She is the apocalyptic rose (the Greek root of her name) who is also a rodent (Rhod-ent" (Morley, 1972 : 227).

Rhoda, as symbol of human psychic and physical suffering, becomes the metaphor for all mankind. We all carry our hump, "not always visible, and not always of the same shape" (Morley, 1972 : 214). Rhoda is referred to as "the Pytho-ness" because we all share her affliction.

Rhoda, like all White's clowns, "emphasizes the pathetic incongruity of inner and outer" (Beatson, 1976 : 87). In the light of her affliction and her parents' distaste, her attempts at normality verge on the comic. Although forced to play an asexual role, her desire for a normal heterosexual life is revealed in the passionate, yet chaste kiss she gives Hurtle (p. 119). Being forced to deny her natural inclinations causes her great anguish, and makes her avoid company at all times. She manages to compensate for her isolation by developing the perceptiveness of her mind. Her discerning evaluation of Hurtle's paintings reveals a "vivisecting" mind of her own.

In spite of her ostensible acceptance of a solitary existence, Rhoda craves a companion and confidant. Her youthful and tentative overtures of friendship are rebuffed because of her appearance: "I'd like to be like other people. _ _ _ They like you better" (p. 86). Her parents regard her as a "mistake" that disrupts their spiritual and social equanimity. Her mother especially considers her to be a reminder of her inability to bear a healthy child, a short-coming that widens the conjugal rift between herself and her

husband. "I made Rhoda. I botched Rhoda. Like everything. Perhaps if I'd carried you [Hurtle] inside me, a strong and beautiful child, Harry wouldn't blame me now. Harry can never forgive me Rhoda" (p. 166). Even the servants scorn Rhoda and vent their grievances against their employer on her. Rhoda develops a mean and spiteful nature to defend herself against her tormentors. Wolfe (1983 : 158) is convinced that Rhoda has suffered so long and so intensely that she has learnt to live without compassion for humans. Hurtle Duffield's painting, "Pythoress", which figures Rhoda standing naked beside a bidet (p. 131), reveals Rhoda's private agony and is one of the reasons why she renounces Hurtle's merciless endeavour "to plumb the depths" (p. 444) of being, for the sake of truth.

Boo Hollingrake, who is Rhoda's only "friend", reveals a morbid interest in Rhoda as a manifestation of her own "hump", her bi-sexuality. Boo's feeling for Rhoda has clear sexual undertones: "When she had looked, Boo closed her eyes; she began to sway her head; she began to moan convulsively, and with an uncharacteristic lack of restraint. He [Hurtle] was reminded of Nance on those occasions when she had reached a true orgasm. So, now, Boo Hollingrake sounded both appeased and shattered" (p. 292).

Whereas Boo Hollingrake and the other female characters fear old age and the loss of their physical charms, Rhoda seems to remain "ageless". Hurtle, as artist and close observer, admits as much.

Rhoda reveals a mature wisdom and empathy born out of suffering in her friendship with Mrs Volkov, Kathy's mother. As an old "child", Rhoda manages to maintain an effortless friendship with Kathy: "Rhoda had been drawn into the circle of Kathy's radiance. Whether two children, or two

women, Rhoda and Kathy were equals, it appeared, not to say familiars" (p. 462). Rhoda appears to be reincarnated in the perfection of Kathy who becomes her and Hurtle's spiritual child, a spiritual way of consummating her love for him.

In the end Rhoda understands that her suffering has not been in vain and that, like all White's elect, it has given her the "strength _ _ _ to recognise the order, and peace, and beauty in nothingness" (p. 518). "Rhoda, the suffering freak, thus emerges as a Hercules-cum-Christ figure, carrying a broken world" (Morley, 1972 : 214). Her wisdom teaches her that there is "very little that is necessary, beyond a crust of bread and a hole to curl up in" (p. 440).

9.4 HERO PAVLOUSI

Before the outbreak of World War II, Hero was a member of a wealthy and aristocratic Greek family. Having been left destitute by the ravages of war she attempts to regain her status by prostituting herself in marriage to a millionaire who was once a peasant. His background awes his wife, because he seems to have all the attributes for happiness lacking in herself and her heritage. Hero's marriage to Cosma (his name suggests the world) fails because he, despite his rugged breeding, cannot cope with or endure her sexual appetite. (Sexual incompatibility between husband and wife, arising from disparate sexual appetites is a familiar theme in White's novels.) Hero's dilemma is aggravated by the duality of her feelings for Cosma whom she not only regards as her god, but as a husband she has betrayed.

Hero's excessive sexuality, in itself a disastrous attempt to find reason for being, destroys the promptings of her esoteric self. Her desperation, together with the transcendent influence of Hurtle's paintings, turns her thoughts to the "holy" (?) sanctuaries on the Greek island of Periolos where she had, once before, found a measure of mental composure.

Her abortive pilgrimage to Periolos in the company of Hurtle Duffield is associated with human ignominy and once again reiterates White's belief that the real search for meaning in life takes place in the country of the mind. Hero, because of her destructive lust, dependence on material things and insensitive treatment of others, for example, her callous treatment of Soso, the Aborigine girl whom she discards after having adopted her, fails White's test for spiritual grace as outlined by Peter Beatson: "It is strongly suggested in all his [White's] books that man may achieve union with the One, but this is only reached through encounters with a series of Moment Gods, between which encounters vast tracts of desert must be crossed" (1976 : 10 : my addition).

Hero's evil demon, suggested by the cancer that destroys her body, prevents her from achieving grace and union with God. The realisation of her fate nudges her into a torrid lesbian affair with Boo Hollingrake. It is tragic that Hero, who is aware of her damnation, should experience a form of "negative" epiphany in her understanding of man and his ambience as Dreck.

Hurtle Duffield learns that Hero has used him as "an instrument of self torture _ _ _ . She was the most depraved woman I've ever met. It seemed she had to degrade herself for being unworthy of her husband - God" (p. 402). When Hero

sees Hurtle's painting of the two of them together (p. 361) she is overwhelmed by the truth of her death-wish: "the figure of the woman was deliberately aiming the blow at her own heart" (p. 361). Like Nance Lightfoot she has no alternative to death.

9.5 THE COURTNEYS

Harry and Alfreda Courtney deserve brief mention as examples of those unhappy, lost souls who, as the "dead", live on the verge of a spiritual wasteland.

They have only one child, the ugly, hump-back girl ironically named Rhoda. They attempt to compensate for their unhappiness by "purchasing" Hurtle, thereby attempting, unsuccessfully, to complete the traditional Whitean family of four. There is no motivational difference between their "buying" Hurtle and Cosma Pavloussi "adopting" the Aboriginal girl Soso. Both children remain outsiders in their new environment. Hurtle, for example, does not even change his surname. White makes it quite clear that, in his opinion, no one can exchange his heritage for another.

The relationship between Alfreda Courtney and Hurtle Duffield (as mother and son) is ironically similar to the association between Hurtle and Kathy Volkov - yet again a mother and son relationship, because Hurtle regards Kathy as his animus springing from his loins and she has a boyish figure. In each case the older person is the dependent with the younger being used to compensate for age and disillusion. Hurtle becomes a substitute for Alfreda's husband who prefers to spend his time with his farmhands.

Alfreda's "incestuous" passion for her "son" is tempered by her fear of his eyes and his ability to "vivisect" her facade, thereby revealing her insecure, loveless inner self. Alfreda's disillusion with herself and her way of life form the "grub" that destroys her as surely as Hero's cancer does her. Rhoda, in retrospect, believes her mother died because she felt life "wasn't worth living without the essentials" (p. 446).

Alfreda Courtney's attitude to her husband and children is manifestly critical. Although she abhors the vivisection of animals, she forces her daughter to be strapped to a back-board in an attempt to straighten her spine. Her admission that "no animal suffers worse than a human being" (p. 37) does not apply to her treatment of her daughter.

Alfreda and Harry Courtney never experience a "final vision" (Beatson, 1976 : 51) because they deny life and refuse compassion. Their lives never have any really meaningful levels. Alfreda Courtney, for example, spends her life pampering her exoteric self and failing body. They inhabit a twilight world, never experiencing the black night of the soul, a prerequisite for union with God.

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Hurtle's black night of the soul is reflected in his last painting, a pitch-black one. In White's next novel, The Eye of the Storm, Elizabeth Hunter reaches the turning point of her spiritual life in a cyclone. Unlike Hurtle, Elizabeth Hunter does not have an artistic creative urge. Her nature is destructive and devolutionary. She is the Dreck from which others grow. Whereas Hurtle creates paintings which he regards as his children, Elizabeth Hunter is a "spider"

that destroys her "children". Elizabeth Hunter's being "saved" despite her cruel nature, is one of the problems with which White wrestles in The Eye of the Storm.

10.0 THE EYE OF THE STORM

The Eye of the Storm is the most unambiguous of Patrick White's novels up to this stage of his career as a novelist. His premise has moved towards a reconciliation (no longer a spiritually destructive conflict) between sensuality and the needs of the spirit, the esoteric self. A tentative union between these two extremes is achieved in A Fringe of Leaves.

The Eye of the Storm is, however, still firmly based on the conviction that suffering is essential for achieving union with the One. Björkstén singles out Dr Treweek, Alfred Hunter's doctor and intimate, as an example of someone, who through suffering, has achieved a better understanding of the human psyche. It is also true, as Leonie Kramer (1974 : 65) points out, that The Eye of the Storm is free of the quasi - religious reverberations that have been so characteristic of White's novels from The Tree of Man onwards. The reason for this divorce from religious undercurrents seems to lie in White's own disillusion with religion and growing worry about the loss of virility with age.

Dorothy Green (1973 : 396) believes the unifying theme of The Eye of the Storm is founded on "the sheer perversity of human love", in itself a form of suffering that precludes human beatitude. Elizabeth Hunter, also a "pythoness" in the sense that she keeps her children and retainers bound to her will, proclaims that "the worst thing about love between human beings [is that] _ _ _ when you're prepared to love them they don't want it: when they do, it's you who can't bear the idea" (p. 11). Mary de Santis venerates Elizabeth Hunter as a deity (she cannot live without one), but does

not love her. Lotte Lippmann, cook and masochist, satisfies her own spiritual craving for atonement and abnegation of her self through suffering by serving Elizabeth Hunter.

It is significant that The Eye of the Storm reveals White's continued use of Paul Eluard's hypothesis of there being another world within this one. (White first used Eluard's philosophy in The Solid Mandala.) Brian Kiernan (1980 : 120) writes that "what is clear from 'The Eye of the Storm' is that life is not a progress towards some state of pure being beyond itself _ _ _ but a constant rediscovery of joy within life." Eluard and Kiernan's insights are born out by Flora Manhood's eventual acceptance of life as a suburban housewife and Mary de Santis's sense of beatitude on the morning after Elizabeth Hunter's death.

Elizabeth Hunter's bedroom as the "eye" of her household, is a demonic inversion of the calm experienced in the eye of the cyclone. The old woman's influence on her children and attendants is malignant. As the only resolute character she relishes the weaknesses of others. Her son, the actor Basil Hunter, attempts to appease his deity by presenting an appearance of hilarity and bonhomie. Dorothy, his sister, at first has no sense of being beyond the latitude granted by her mother. She has disturbing dreams of matricide, but is too afraid to declare her hatred until after the old crone's death. Her staying away from her mother's funeral is a meaningless and spiteful gesture. Even Wyburd, family lawyer and friend labours under a load of guilt for having allowed Elizabeth Hunter to seduce him in his youth. Elizabeth gains malicious joy from intimating to Wyburd that Basil could be his son.

White's careful portrayal of Elizabeth Hunter's old age reveals his own changing attitude to life. He is more concerned with death and how this inevitable phenomenon influences human thought and behaviour. Veronica Brady (1973 : 60), for example, writes that in The Eye of the Storm White has "spoken a definite word about life and death and about the 'silence, simplicity and humility' that can be achieved in the face of death." White is emphatic in his belief that the condition of helpless dependence as revealed in The Cockatoos cannot endure; the only way out of the existential maze being a renewed spiritual awareness of the essence of being, followed by a complete surrender to God. Unfortunately the opposite is also true, some surrender their esoteric selves to a belated upsurge of lust. Mary de Santis, by way of illustration, almost loses her "sanctity" when her exoteric self responds to Sir Basil Hunter's hedonistic way of life, so far removed from her own monastic existence.

Yet another existential problem White deals with is the apparent paradox of a divine soul being forced by birth to inhabit rank flesh. This seeming anomaly explains the duality of human behaviour and thought. Steiner (1974 : 109) selects a key phrase in the novel to illustrate White's concern with this dichotomy of life. The phrase in question is "_ _ _ souls have an anus they are never allowed to forget it" (p. 194). Using this premise, Steiner attempts to explain why people behave in a manner contradictory to their spiritual nature, when they, for example, pass wind at erotic or intimate moments: "Love has pitched its mansion in the place of excrement, but so has spirit" (Steiner, 1974 : 109). Although Steiner accuses White of being an archivist in his narrative functions, for example, by describing the smell of semen on Flora Manhood's finger, it must be remembered that much of White's concern with bodily func-

tions, human weaknesses and the process of aging is motivated by a desire to show that the spirit is meanly housed.

10.1 ELIZABETH HUNTER

Elizabeth Hunter, as protagonist and skiapod, is the catalyst for the emotional admissions and outbursts that follow after the emotionally fricative meetings she has with her children, lawyer and retainers. The lesser characters in The Eye of the Storm react to Elizabeth Hunter's domineering personality by confessing their hidden secrets to her. Having confided in her, they discover that she has become an evil part of their lives, directing their thoughts and behaviour. Flora Manhood, for example, not only fears Elizabeth's intuitive knowledge of her thoughts but also her unwillingness to subject her inner self to male dominance.

Dorothy and Sir Basil Hunter, who would rather not have been born, remain dependent on their mother's generosity to maintain a certain standard of living. Elizabeth Hunter's harsh attitude to her children is a front to hide, from herself and others, her guilt for having given them life. She regards man as the negative expression of the perfection of the universe and not of much significance.

Elizabeth Hunter's biography reveals how the human spirit is able to survive despite convolutions and financial hardships. Her spiritual power and determined quest for a state of grace form the central concerns of the novel. Only she is aware of her psychic power and ability to sway others to her will. The other characters prefer to ignore their esoteric selves because they fear what they do not understand. Society and societal norms form a bulwark against

their fear of death: "Solitariness and despair did not go with what they understood as a beautiful face and a life of outward brilliance and material success" (p. 102).

Having once experienced the unique serenity of the "eye", Elizabeth Hunter's life becomes a prolonged quest for a permanent state of grace, that is, union with God, of which her first experience of grace is an illustration. In the "eye" she experiences the archetypal core of being within the psyche: "_ _ _ this spiritual experience is called Illumination, Cosmic Consciousness or Christ Consciousness; in the New Testament, it is spoken of as being 'born again' or 'rebirth' " (Goldsmith, 1983 : 10). The confined locality of the storm suggests that it was intended for her only. This phenomenon is in keeping with White's belief that suffering takes place in solitude, in the country of the mind where, on the one hand it cannot be shared and where, on the other, help is not available.

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Incidents in Elizabeth's youth explain much of her apparently heartless adult behaviour. As Elizabeth Salkeld she grew up in rural surroundings. Even as a child she felt herself confined by her surroundings and humiliated by her father's average means (p. 161). She once threw Kate Nutley's dolls into the river in a fit of jealous anger because she herself had only two. Adultery with Arnold Wyburd and Athol Schreve are calculated acts of revenge on her father for having given her life. Her affairs, even in later life, are never more than a tour de force to exhibit her power over men - as well as, of course their brutishness.

Elizabeth Hunter's Brumby Island "romance" with Eduard Pehl is merely an exercise to show her "pythoness" power over irrational male lust. Her "lovers" are inferior beings with whom she wrestles in an attempt to understand the human libido as a procreative force: "For a moment or two she dipped her toes in hell, and made herself remember the bodies of men she had dragged to her bed, to wrestle with: her 'lovers' " (p. 205). She marvels at the weakness of men once they have satisfied their lust. Her negative attitude to men and sex is transferred to her daughter whom she prostitutes to a French nobleman for the sake of the added status it may afford her.

When she does not feel herself sexually threatened Elizabeth Hunter can be gentle and even self-sacrificing as, for example, when she nurses her ailing husband. Carolyn Bliss (1986 : 136) explains that during the Hunters' "sere honeymoon" (p. 199) Elizabeth attempts to undo the hurt she inflicted on her husband. She cares for him much as she would for a child: "_ _ _ where she had loved, now she pitied. It was not pity in the ordinary sense, but an emotional need to merge herself with this child who might have sprung in the beginning from her body, by performing for him all the more sordid menial acts: tenderly wiping, whether faeces, or the liquid foods he mostly vomited back" (p. 201 : my emphasis).

Elizabeth Hunter's ironically possessive nature disapproves of her husband's friendship with Dr Treweek because she suspects they share some secret bond she is unaware of. (In all White's novels friendship between men is regarded with suspicion by women because they either suspect homosexuality or fear that they have lost their sex appeal.) Marriage inevitably fails because of disillusion after romantic fantasy and diametrically opposed expectations not being met.

Even as a young woman Elizabeth Hunter is intuitively aware of another, a more spiritual state of being. Unlike White's other elected characters she is actually granted participation in a state of grace without having suffered or having shed her exoteric self. Whereas the other elected characters in White's novels experience grace and understanding as a reward for having persevered with their quest until the end, Elizabeth Hunter's early knowledge of grace is, ironically, the very substance of her suffering. She has no past to sustain her and her future has been made meaningless by her prior knowledge of grace. Richard Wilson (1978 : 63) writes that what Elizabeth Hunter "transcends during the island experience is not so much selfhood as the imperfections of the one she had hitherto known."

Domesticity confines her esoteric self. White calls such invisible fetters "strait-jackets" (p. 29) for a restless psyche: "Lal Wyburd [synonymous to domestic boredom] would naturally have interpreted as selfishness every floundering attempt anybody made to break out of the straitjacket and recover a sanity which must have been theirs in the beginning, and might be theirs again in the end. That left the long stretch of the responsible years, when you were lunging in your madness after love, money, position, possessions, while an inkling persisted, sometimes even a certainty ascended: of a calm in which the self had been stripped, if painfully, of its human imperfections" (p. 29).

The apogee of Elizabeth Hunter's life is her unreal experience of another, exalted state of being characterised by perfect amity among all living things. Up to the time she goes to Brumby Island her life is characterised by "egotism,

aimlessness and restlessness craving for attention and connection that has always characterized her" (Wilson, 1978 : 64).

Their uncomfortable journey from the landing-strip on Brumby Island through the darkness of the forest into the light of the holiday home has allegoric and symbolic meaning. Elizabeth Hunter is left alone on the island when the Warwicks are recalled to Sydney and Dorothy leaves in a huff believing her mother has, out of spite, seduced Pehl with whom she had hoped to develop a relationship. Pehl, somewhat surprisingly leaves the island without informing Elizabeth.

When the violent storm breaks, Elizabeth finds shelter in an old bunker. Her entombment, comparable to a descent into purgatory, constitutes a major part of her physical suffering, eventual rebirth and individuation, all experiences which, like death, cannot be shared.

The cyclone, although a contrived event, is the most dramatic experience White has thus far used to manipulate the transcendence of any one of his characters. Elizabeth's elected predecessors, in contrast, transcend mundane reality via prolonged and increased suffering. Their "eye" is the fulfilment of a long period of anticipating a fourth dimension of being in which God is to be found.

The "eye", Elizabeth Hunter experiences is, metaphorically, the equivalent of a state of grace, a condition of being White has so far only hinted at. When she emerges from the bunker after the initial violence of the cyclone, she is "no longer a body, least of all a woman [hinting at a sexless, hermaphroditic, existence]: the myth of her womanhood [has] been exploded by the storm. She [is] instead a being, or

more likely a flaw at the centre of this jewel of light: the jewel itself, blinking and tremulous at the same time, existed, flaw and all, only by grace _ _ _ she could not contemplate the storm for this dream of glistening peace through which she _ _ _ moved" (p. 424 : my additions).

Having experienced a different, elevated plane of being, the ordinary norms of feminine propriety are no longer important to Elizabeth Hunter. Her partial nudity, a result of the storm, does not concern either Elizabeth or the men who come to rescue her. For a time after the storm has passed Elizabeth Hunter is an androgynous figure: "Her physical suffering and her reduction to a helpless half-naked creature, confront her with her own being as part of the natural order, subject to the same forces as birds at the mercy of the storm and privileged to share with them 'this lustrous moment' made visible in the eye of the storm" (Kramer, 1974 : 66).

The eye of the cyclone, acting as a watershed, separates Elizabeth Hunter from the exoteric influences of her former life. Her experience of another world within the familiar one dominates her thoughts for the remainder of her life. (Ironically it does not moderate her sardonic attitude to people.) Time is no longer of importance to her. Death promises release to an even more glorious state of grace. Elizabeth Hunter's future, as suggested by the black swans (p. 425), symbols of hermaphroditism (Cirlot, 1971 : 322), is as unknown as the origin of her psyche. Elizabeth Hunter's transcendence is unique in White's canon as his other elected few enter a state of grace at the time of death or, in ironic inversion, as in the case of Theodora Goodman (The Aunt's Story), when they are removed to institutions for the insane. At such turning points in their lives the elect have the dual perception of grace and damna-

tion. It is important to understand that what Elizabeth Hunter "transcends during the island experience is not so much selfhood as the imperfections of the one she had hitherto known" (Wilson, 1978 : 63). The difference in values as apprehended by the elect and non-elect is clearly illustrated by the belief that what the elect regard as grace is held to be madness by the non-elect.

Elizabeth Hunter manages to sublimate her physical being in "a dream of glistening peace" (p. 242). She knows that in order to achieve a final union with God she must reconcile the demands of her exoteric and esoteric selves: "She only positively believed in what she saw and was and what she was too real too diverse composed of everyone she had known and loved and not always altogether loved it is better than nothing and given birth to and for God's sake" (p. 424). The chaos of wind and water, on a metaphorical and solipsistic level, represents the dissolution of natural being, but with the promise of growth towards cosmic consciousness. The gull impaled on the branch of a tree (p. 425) serves to remind her of the necessity of suffering. The Biblical and allegorical intimations are evident.

Elizabeth Hunter's stoic attitude to her ordeal changes her unhappiness into a triumph of spiritual over material values. Her courage in the face of elemental forces lies between the intellectual and sensual elements in man (Tillich, 1984 : 15). Wisdom follows her ordeal and is added to her inherent courage. Having momentarily experienced a joyous sense of freedom from her exoteric self as well as unity with the cosmic sphere of being, she now understands her aversion to being possessed by either husband or children.

Elizabeth Hunter's island suffering is not merely an experience of the "selflessness of the saints but a truer self, the kind she had glimpsed with as much fear as fascination in Odilon Redon's skiapod that was not her own actual face, but the spiritual semblance which will sometimes float out of the looking-glass of unconsciousness" (Wilson, 1978 : 63). It is the anticipation of this loss of grace that causes man's greatest suffering because it parallels the loss not only of his Edenic state but also the favour of God.

Whereas Elizabeth Hunter grows spiritually after her island experience, her children degenerate, especially in their attitude to her: "In the event the swan's love-death is parodied to perfection by her brood's suicidal act of incest" (Mackenzie, 1972 : 276). Her children, instead of growing out of the past as she does, attempt to destroy it and so negate their own existence.

Elizabeth Hunter's return to Sydney society from Brumby Island causes her intense suffering because "social estrangement is not sufficient to generate inner Grace. There are many characters in White who cannot conform to their social environment, are deformed, afflicted or beyond the social pale, who are destroyed or degraded, not uplifted, by their experience" (Beatson, 1976 : 127). It is important to take note of Beatson's warning that merely being different is not the only requisite to produce the "Unique One". The elected person must have the necessary relationship between himself and the outer periphery of the mandala that is life. Beatson believes such a relationship is analogous to that between the self and the body.

After Alfred Hunter's death, Elizabeth, like so many elected characters before her, finds a measure of comfort in movement. She moves about the house at Kudjeri as if it were a labyrinth, a medieval symbolic substitute for a pilgrimage: "Motion saved her. Often in the past she had wondered how she might behave as a widow, and enjoyed in her imagination comfortable and respected status. For the time being she was neither widow, nor wife, not even a woman" (p. 205).

Elizabeth Hunter wills her own death to escape the humiliation of being sent to a home for the aged. Cotter (1978 : 25) writes that her "deliberate assessment of experience conceives of her innermost self as analogous to the eye of the storm, and correspondingly, of her outer self as the flux, the threatening chaos, which contains her inner self." The garish make-up she has Flora Manhood apply to her face is her own sardonic comment on the world, not only as chaos but as a stage filled with lost souls, each one playing his own part. (Her sitting on a commode at the time of her death reiterates the concept that "souls have an anus they are never allowed to forget it" (p. 194). The absurd posture of her bedecked body on the commode stresses the futility of man's endeavour to achieve material success in life.

It is clear, from Elizabeth Hunter's intransigent behaviour, that she regards man as the negative expression of the perfection of the universe and of little significance in the entire scheme of things. Although White's outsiders live solitary lives, Elizabeth Hunter reveals an excessive degree of animositas in her relationship with others, especially those she can dominate. As skiapod she lacks the generositas of Doll Quigley in The Tree of Man.

The eye of the cyclone as microcosm becomes the macrocosm of God's universe at the time of her death. She admits her insignificance in the face of death and surrenders her independence when she calls upon her husband in loving terms: "Alfred my dearest you are the one to whom I look for help however I failed" (p. 550). Her will to live and dominate is replaced by a will to die in case the "eye" should pass her by: "There was the question of how much time she would have before the eye must concentrate on other, greater contingencies, leaving her to chaos" (p. 550). The threatening chaos is suggested by the changing night sky on the other side of the muslin curtain, itself suggesting the flimsy veil between life and death.

In The Tree of Man White writes, as a conclusion to the novel, that "in the end, there was no end" (p. 480). In The Eye of the Storm he repeats his belief in the immortality of man: "Till I am no longer filling the void with mock substance: myself is this endlessness" (p. 551).

10.2 SIR BASIL HUNTER

Sir Basil Hunter is like a man lost in a hall of mirrors reflecting a multitude of distorted images of his fragmented self. It is the tragedy of his life that there is no way in which his inferiority can be changed into superiority or his sense of damnation be transformed into the spiritual release of salvation. His sense of loss causes a gnawing consciousness of insignificance which is why he prefers to play the parts of characters who have achieved a meaningful role in life. Veronica Brady (1973 : 60) describes Sir Basil as "the hollow man of artifice whose life is a tissue of insincerities and lies and whose main concern is to escape form the truth of himself."

Sir Basil Hunter's public life is a charade. His insincere conduct is rooted in the insecurity caused by his Oedipal and onanistic love for his mother. In a radio interview held on December 9, 1973, Patrick White explained that at the start of the novel Basil finds himself in an artistic menopause and unable to escape from his mother's influence alive or dead. He can only turn to drink to afford himself a temporary state of forgetfulness, a "synthetic" eye in the storm of his life.

Because of his onanism Sir Basil cannot come to terms with his sexual opposite. Women threaten his dependence on and love for his mother. His relationship with other women, as proved by his unsuccessful marriages, does not develop beyond the mother - child stage. After his seduction by Flora Manhood, who is temporarily deceived by his bravado and fame, he becomes her child and not her lover: "So that, from being at first only her patient, he became her baby. He could have been wanting that. He did in fact nuzzle at those breasts overflowing with kindness" (p. 322).

Wilson (1978 : 68) is convinced that Sir Basil is unconsciously aware of his fear to acknowledge the truth about himself, that is, his "nothingness". He prefers to avoid the solitary and self-destroying via dolorosa to individuation and grace by reverting to his childhood. His vanity refuses to admit that it is safer to play the role of King Lear than his own life-story, the "Unplayable I", an act of suicide in itself: "_ _ _ an actor tends to ignore the part which fits him best his life Lear the old unplayable is in the end a safer bet than the unplayed I _ _ _" (p. 246). Playing Lear would also place him in a hopelessly irreversible situation because it would reveal both his inadequacy

as a man and his failure as an actor. He does not have the spiritual courage to challenge the ever-deepening mysteries that follow upon a discovery of the Real Self.

Mitty Jacka, the night woman - "Night is for the elect" (p. 242) - who represents Sir Basil's unconscious death-wish or longing for non-existence, senses his fatal union with his mother. In the unreal atmosphere of her house in London she suggests that he should, in succession, act each of his "several potential lives" (p. 248) and so, having sloughed them off, liberate his self from all restraining influences: "A man develops only one of his several potential lives. There's no reason why he shouldn't live them all - or at least act them out, if he can liberate himself. This is what I'd like for you: this nightly liberation instead of the cast-iron figures dragging themselves from one prescribed attitude to another" (p. 248). Basil knows this can never be because being himself - "this slightly rotten fruit" (p. 591) - would mean "professional suicide" (p. 595) and the end of his being.

One of the reasons why Sir Basil Hunter returns to Australia, ostensibly to get money from his mother to produce his own "death play", is to "renew himself" (p. 249) and "recall _ _ _ his childhood, from which Macbeth, Hamlet, Lear, together with other paler apparitions, had sprung, out of the least likely drought-stricken gullies, brown, brooding pools, and austere forms of wind - tattered trees" (p. 240).

His decision to return to Kudjeri, the farm where he grew up as a child, is as much to "recall" his childhood as a desire to escape from the awful truth of the "nothingness" of his self and to be "saved" as he was once before saved from hurt by his father: "He could feel the hand at his shoulder-

blades: to prevent young Basil falling off. Hating at the time this indignity of protective hands, you would have had them back long after shrugging them off for ever: strong but submissive, insensitive, while abrasively solicitous" (pp. 504 - 505).

His driving to Kudjeri with Dorothy is a metaphor for his life and career as an actor: "His mechanical self drove off by jerks in the tinny car. Because he never felt at home in one, he knew he would be sitting upright, his shoulders narrowed" (p. 356). His driving in heavy traffic (real life) is "cautious" (p. 464) and reflects his fear of truth. The "bumpiness" of his return to Kudjeri is an analogy for his equally traumatic return to his youth.

It is a negation of Sir Basil's Real Self that his return to the past should be more real than his future. He does not realise the irony of his casual remark that his mother has no "world" beyond her sick-room. He does not have the promise of an "open window" like the one through which Elizabeth Hunter "escapes" from life into cosmic consciousness and union with God. Basil's reality does not extend beyond the theatre of his imagination. Newspaper clippings about his stage successes are all he has to boost his failing ego.

The Hunter children arrive at Kudjeri at night. In this way White suggests the end of one life and ironically, an inverse rebirth into a second childhood and spiritual devolution. Basil can no longer reproduce his sonorous acting. His language usage involuntarily becomes "boyish". His stage mannerisms are amateurish, making no impression on anyone, least of all on the masculine Rory Macrory whose very presence causes Basil to stutter as he did when he was

a child. White explains that as Basil grew up "the limp [symbol of his psychic flaws] came to replace the stutter" (p. 505 : my addition).

After his initial dejection caused by the unfulfilled expectations of his return to Kudjeri, Basil wonders, like so many "characters" before him at what stage of his career he took the wrong turn (p. 479). On the farm he is so far removed from the artificial life of the theatre and his adulthood that he cannot remember a single role to contain his spiritual bewilderment.

While out driving with Rory Macrory, Basil asks to be taken to a dam he remembers from his youth. He hopes to sublimate his adult confusion by recapturing the sensuous joy he experienced as a child when he paddled in the water and felt the mud squelching between his toes. The memory of this youthful, innocent pleasure is coupled to the imagined reassuring presence of his father. The tree he remembers is still by the dam, though it is now much bigger.

The panorama of the almost dry dam, the enduring tree and the aging "man-boy" is rich in symbolism, at the same time emphasising man's mortality and the regretted security of youth. In contrast to the tree's sturdy growth the man's immortal soul has withered. The muddy water remaining in the dam suggests his spiritual devolution and fading strength. It should be remembered that water and purity are two of the outstanding traits of Elizabeth Hunter's experience in the eye of the storm.

While wading in the mud, Basil cuts his foot on some hidden object. The resulting flow of blood, instead of being a symbol of atonement and reconciliation with the past, has a negative connotation because the wound turns septic, in this

way indicating the futility of Basil's venture into the past. It also suggests a reason for the limp he cultivates in his adult life. Brian Kiernan (1980 : 122) proposes that when Basil cuts his foot he experiences a sudden and unexpected relapse into the ordinary, everyday world, far removed from the illusion of his dream world. His suffering during these moments of pain and spiritual desolation centres on his feeling of loss and waste: "Suddenly he would have liked to feel certain that he had already loved somebody, that he had not been only acting it" (p. 491). His predicament leaves him "stranded in his own egotism and ineptitude" (p. 494). The tree (God), the muddy dam (his sterile and unreal life) as well as his spiritual malaise form the three phases of his being, standing in sharp contrast to the "triangle of man" mentioned by Laura Trevelyan in Voss (p. 386).

While recovering from his wound, Basil, acting on a childish impulse, ventures into an old garage in which many unused implements, including his father's derelict motor car, are stored. His opening the heavy door - "The great door creaked and staggered wide open once the wooden arm which held it had been withdrawn" (p. 504) - is comparable to a breaching of his unconscious mind. The physical and ghostly experience is so affective that he once again becomes aware of his father's reassuring presence. The old, tough boot he draws onto his foot suggests his masochistic desire to endure the full spectrum of his confining and unhappy youth.

For a brief, magic moment Basil becomes a child again, exchanging his adult suffering for the lesser problems of his youth.

Dorothy Hunter, who discovers Basil in the garage, senses the spiritually destructive power of the boot and is filled with fear at being once again confronted by the unhappiness of her youth. Unlike Basil she has found her return to Kudjeri rewarding. The siblings' struggle to free Basil's foot from the confining boot symbolises their mutual and desperate struggle to escape from the spiritually destructive parental influences of their childhood: "She had got down on her stockinged knees, on the dust and slivers of bark, and had started wrenching at the filthy boot. 'If we can't between us - we're - not - much', her teeth bit the rest of it off; her long fragile nails ran skittering over the surface of the mildewed leather; as the Hunter children fought for their self-justification and freedom from awfulness" (p. 509). The knife Basil proposes they use to cut the boot off recalls their decision to "murder" their mother by sending her to a home. Struggling with the boot and her fear removes Dorothy's appearance of respectability and reveals her as a very ordinary Australian girl (p. 509).

Basil reaches the lowest level of his existence in the arms of his sister in the bed where they were conceived. His retrogression from "adulthood" to conception is complete. In re-examination he acknowledges that his life has been a dream, divorced from the reality of his self: "If dreams were reality you mightn't have done a murder, slept with your sister, or contemplated what amounts to professional suicide" (p. 595).

Unlike his mother, Basil never receives anything that could suggest a token of the Eucharist. Skeen (1962 : 56) explains that the sacrament of the Eucharist has two sides: "it is both a sacrifice and a sacrament _ _ _." It is generally accepted that sacrifice should precede a sacra-

ment. The blood from Basil's foot is not a sacrifice. The Eucharist, as an act of love, symbolic of Christ's love for sinners, emphasises Basil's inability to love.

Sir Basil Hunter's return to England and Mitty Jacka is an act of psychic suicide and a voluntary surrender to the Earth Mother.

10.3 DOROTHY DE LASCABANES (née HUNTER)

Dorothy de Lascabanes is a "horse-faced version of Elizabeth Hunter" (p. 51). She is tall, thin and sexually unattractive. Her French accent and foreign mannerisms are vain attempts to conceal her Australian heritage: "Dorothy Hunter's misfortune was to feel at her most French in Australia, her most Australian in France. Sometimes she wished she had been born a Finn" (p. 49). Her chic, but never modern or ostentatiously new dresses are unconscious attempts to avoid being conspicuous. Her unadmitted fear of poverty and people forces her into a nebulous existence devoid of any individuality and patriotism.

According to Wilson (1978 : 66) it is White's aim to portray Dorothy as an uprooted being. She attempts to compensate for her feeling of lovelessness by extravagant spending: "How she would occupy herself in her state of spiritual (and economic) emancipation [after the death of her mother] was more to the point. For a start, she thought, she would go through her cupboards and drawers, but ruthlessly. She would make inventories. She would restock with only the very best quality, necessary clothes, preferably in black though she looked well in green" (p. 587 : my addition). She is naive enough to believe that by "restocking" her material world she can also "change her spiritual preceptor" (p. 588). Dorothy's exoterically inclined escapism is also

her way of hiding her fear of death and damnation: "What she dreaded was the moment when the soul tears free, no bland Catholic balloon automatically patted on its way, but a kind of shrivelled leather satchel, as she saw her original Protestant soul, stuffed with doubts, self-esteem, bloodymindedness, which Catholic hands, however skilled, might not have succeeded in detaching from her" (p. 589).

Wilson (1978 : 66) pinpoints Dorothy's jealousy of her brother's love for their mother, her own feelings of guilt for loving him, the non-relation with her mother as paradoxes and conflicts in her psyche and Weltanschauung "Dorothy's perpetual efforts to escape self counterpoint her mother's perpetual quest to discover the significance of it" (Wilson, 1978 : 66).

Dorothy's natural timidity is affected by her having been left at the mercy of her mother who did not even want her as a baby. It is also increased by having to prepare a front of heartlessness to check her moments of compassion. She repulses the sincere friendliness of the Dutch sea-captain on the flight to Australia by attributing ulterior motives to his gesture of affability. She alienates the three nurses who care for her mother and the housekeeper, Lotte Lippmann, by refusing to stay in the same house as her mother. Much of her unhappiness is rooted in the relationships she is forced to endure, especially her marriage to a foreigner. The fundamental reason for Dorothy's unhappiness is that "her mother gave birth to the only male figure she could have been interested in" (Green, 1973 : 397). Green believes Basil is Dorothy's mirror image. This hypothesis complements the conviction of the twins, Waldo and Arthur Brown in The Solid Mandala, that they cannot exist without each other. Dorothy is the ultimate solipsist.

Dorothy is so disgusted by her mother's overt sexuality that she wills herself into believing that lust does not play a part in her life. Despite suppressing her libido she involuntarily responds to the sexual stimulus of a couple copulating in Sydney's Botanic Gardens: "_ _ _ she too was writhing, upright and alone on her bench, in almost perfect time with the united prostate bodies" (p. 271). Hounded by guilt she never experiences the fulfilment of orgasm, the archetypal moment of "death", to be followed by a sense of rebirth through pregnancy.

Ironically, however, Dorothy de Lascabanes finds a measure of happiness in the company of older men who do not pose a sexual threat to her brittle exoteric self: "She had, too, the gift for entertaining aged men, which most young girls fail to discover in themselves, and prettier, more assured women do not think of squandering. Mainly listening and applying an invisible ointment, she revived in her ancients an illusion of youth" (p. 56). Her need for the company of such older men stems from her longing for paternal love. She is attracted to the family lawyer, Arnold Wyburd, as she would have been to a father. Whereas Basil "loves" his mother, Dorothy, influenced by her suppressed sexuality, dreams of Wyburd's "transparent testicles" (p. 216). She could have taken a lover but is unwilling to sacrifice her French title which she fondly believes compensates for the void of lovelessness in her self. Dorothy's romantic nature, as evidenced by her admiration for Stendahl's The Charterhouse of Parma deludes her into believing in a fairy-tale existence.

To her lasting sorrow Dorothy discovers that instead of having married a Prince she has bound herself to a demon: "It was her delicacy in sexual matters rather than his [her husband's] perversities which had ripped the ribbons off

their marriage" (p. 219 : my addition). Elizabeth Hunter explains her daughter's misalliance, and that of many other women, by telling her that for "most women, I think, sexual pleasure is largely imagination. They imagine lovers while their husbands are having their way with them, but in their lovers' arms they regret what they remember of the husband's humdrum virtues" (p. 77).

Dorothy's guilt and unwillingness to allow for the urgent promptings of her esoteric self, defeat her attempts to live a normal life. She even becomes afraid of the telephone "going off". Unlike her brother she cannot play the single, supporting role assigned to her with any degree of confidence. Her nihilism is revealed in her adopting a foetus-like position when she sleeps (p. 215).

Instead of trying to understand her mother and arrive at some form of reconciliation with her, Dorothy resorts to subversive tactics to prove her mother's senility and inability to manage her own affairs. She becomes the secret inspector of refuse bins at Moreton Drive to determine if anything has been wasted. The irony of the analogy to her own life is lost on her: "To rootle was the real reason for her descent to the kitchen, the princess herself almost had to admit. To create a stink. Which she now managed _ _ _" (p. 228).

Like her brother, Dorothy intuits that she will find the solution to her unhappiness in a state of non-being. Her moments of epiphany have a sense of darkness and excommunication. She experiences a phantasmagoric death-wish as she and her mother are driven through the dense bush on Brumby Island towards the Warming home. The mental strain, the movement of the car as well as the rapid changes in setting transform the forest into something primeval. She en-

dures a moment of spiritual vertigo: "Ten minutes later, as they sprang into the open and down a grass-stitched slope, she might have prayed, if her prayers had been more successful in the past, that their car should continue charging into the immensity of light and water, as far as the ocean would support its wheels. Better blinded by green glass, ear drums burst by a black roar, infinity pouring into the choked funnel of your throat, than the paroxysms and alternating apathy of a lopsided existence" (p. 375). The sensation of vertigo compounds her inherent fear of losing her identity. Extinction, in time, becomes her only form of defence against a hostile world: "There is the primary guilt of having no right to life in the first place, and hence of being entitled at most only to a dead life. Secondly, it is probably the most extreme defensive posture that can be adopted. One no longer fears being crushed, engulfed, overwhelmed by realness and aliveness (whether they arise in other people, in 'inner' feelings or emotions, etc.), since one is already dead. Being dead, one cannot die, and one cannot kill" (Laing, 1965 : 176).

The unequal contest in seductive guile between Elizabeth and her daughter on Brumby Island for the attentions of Eduard Pehl forms a watershed in their already strained relationship. Dorothy relates her failure to win Pehl as a lover to her unhappiness as a child. She is upset when her mother reveals a childhood dream, in which she is a skiapod, to Eduard Pehl in an attempt to discredit her (p. 403). This image, in so far as it represents a quest for "something it would probably never find" (p. 404) mirrors the aimlessness of Dorothy's life. The irony of Elizabeth's revelation is that it is more applicable to herself than to her daughter: "A characteristic of some deep-sea fish is the enormous mouth. It makes it possible for them to swallow [Elizabeth's emasculating behaviour] prey much larger than

themselves [Dorothy and her suitors]" (p. 404 : my additions). Having been dominated since birth, Dorothy does not challenge her mother for Pehl's attentions.

Elizabeth Hunter's continuous, unmotherly domination of her daughter brings Dorothy to the verge of a nervous breakdown. Her threatening "insanity" manifests itself as a throbbing in her head as well as an anxiety that she may succumb to it: "The throbbing had begun again. For some unreasonable reason directionless fears were shooting through her. However seductive the moss at the roots of the deformed cypresses, she must not give in, nor to the increasing ejaculations of her head" (p. 390).

Dorothy's feeling of stress is increased by her fear of death and the destruction of her Real Self. She prefers the shadowy existence of the familiar world to the illusive promise of grace. She cannot find release from tension as Basil does: "If only the lid could be lifted from her head to let out the bursting rockets of thoughts alternating with evil smog, she might see more clearly; but clear vision, she suspected, is something you shed with childhood and do not regain unless death is a miracle of light, which she doubted" (p. 298).

Dorothy and Basil's decision to send their mother to a home for the aged is an act of revenge cloaked as concern for her welfare. Basil is unwilling to accept the onus for eliminating the woman he secretly loves. Dorothy is excited that Basil, the sibling she loves as her alter ego, is essentially a weak man and that for once she has thwarted her mother: "Dorothy de Lascabanes had never before scented the opportunity of underpinning a weak man: the prospect, though alarming, was exhilarating: to react to the tremors, taste the tears, of someone ostensibly stronger than your-

self" (p. 430). Her awareness of unexpected strength awakens in her an inherent streak of cruelty that is revealed in the manner she wipes her mother's nose. Her cruelty compensates for her humiliation through the years and is paradoxically the only time of "grace" she experiences apart from her stay at Kudjeri.

Dorothy is unwilling to visit Kudjeri because she is afraid to return to the "source" of her unhappiness and being. Kudjeri means abandoning the security offered by her title, meaningless as it is, in the Australian bush. For much the same reason she refuses to acknowledge the statue erected in her father's honour because, in doing so, she would concede his ability and no longer be able to blame him for her birth. The word "father", referring to her biological parent, disturbs her more than the appellation "Father" in her prayers.

The two Hunter children arrive at Kudjeri after dark. They shed their adulthood as they enter the old homestead: "The Hunter children were holding hands, by whose choice they would not have known, prepared to face a music which was bursting on them, agonizingly clear, but discordant" (p. 473).

It is remarkable that whereas Basil devolves into a second childhood, Dorothy, once free of her mother's influence, assumes a commanding role in the Kudjeri household. Anne Macrory willingly assumes the lesser role of a daughter. They develop a loving relationship, so very different to the one between Elizabeth Hunter and her daughter. A surprisingly mature Dorothy reveals her mother's charm and even wins the Macrory children's favour. Anne Macrory on the one hand

regards her as an emissary from the world she forsook for Rory Macrory and the children enjoy the excitement she brings into their lives on the other.

The Macrory couple are sensually vibrant and earthy people. Rory's sexuality has an animal quality that involuntarily attracts Dorothy and promises an awakening of the vitality she needs to supersede her sexual apathy. Despite her sexual response to Rory, she cannot overcome her aversion to a physical display of affection. Her timid animus cannot accommodate his brashness. Her fearfulness makes her an outsider on a farm where procreation is a way of life.

The room, where Dorothy and Anne spend much of their time sewing, is dominated by Elizabeth Hunter's long-abandoned dress form. Dorothy herself has only memories of it: "In a corner of the room Dorothy Hunter used to hate for what she was submitted to, both blandishment and slaps, Mother's form had stood through the years _ _ _ " (p. 510).

Dorothy's psychic suffering as a child is reflected in the behaviour of Janet and echoed by the feeble-minded Mog. The memory of her suffering as a girl causes Dorothy to impulsively stab the dress-form with a pair of scissors, in this way committing a symbolic murder as an act of revenge: "At the last word, she stuck the scissors into the dummy, and a smell of must came out. It was disappointing. Possibly she had hoped for something better, like worms, or blood. She stabbed again, deeper - but nothing" (p. 513). Manfred Mackenzie (1977 : 276) assumes her assault is an attempt to stab to death a parental relic in her mother's dress form.

Dorothy and Basil's desire to leave the familiar world to be "reborn" and start life anew comes to a climacteric when they, on the night of their mother's death, commit incest, a

symbolic gesture of individuation. Dorothy not only wins the only man she really loves, she also gains a measure of revenge on her mother by seducing her secret love. Mackenzie (1977 : 277) believes Dorothy's incest amounts to a fantastic matricide-cum-suicide. He believes the siblings' behaviour could well be a kind of "proleptic grief". Their abnormal behaviour reveals an unconscious fear that their mother may die before they have been "mothered" and loved. They are drawn together by a mutual sense of loss and the realisation that their lives have been meaningless.

Dorothy's idyll at Kudjeri cannot last. She cannot remain with the Macrory family, mainly because of her psychic inability to cope with her awaking lust. Her mother's death not only brings her a new sense of freedom that breaks all ties with the past, it offers her an excuse for leaving Kudjeri. She makes the wrong choice when she reassumes her title and old way of life, fondly believing that financial independence will bring her the happiness she craved when her mother was still alive. She ignores the spiritual values suggested by her esoteric self together with her intuitive awareness of her Real Self and God.

The irony of her existence is that she does not achieve a state of grace because of her own fault. In this respect she may be regarded as victim of her father's lust and her mother's prostitution for the sake of convenience.

10.4 FLORA MANHOOD

Flora Manhood is one of the nurses who cares for Elizabeth Hunter. Her Christian name suggests the brevity of living beauty and her surname, a combination of manhood and womanhood, includes all of mankind. The nature of her suffering is contained in her query, "What am I living for?" (p. 87).

She wants more from life than the role of wife and childbearer allotted to women. Her spiritual dilemma is increased by her awareness of her sensuality and the inability of her exoteric self to resist Col Pardoe's advances. She joins the ranks of those characters in White's novels who, through suffering, come to accept the fact that life is full of alternatives but offers no choice.

Flora attempts to avoid male sexual domination of her esoteric self by considering a meaningful relationship with another woman, in this instance her relative Snow Tunks. Her hopes and illusions are shattered by the latter's drunken lechery with another woman (p. 184).

When she has endured the pangs of guilt and shame of her sordid affair with Sir Basil Hunter and has been "shriven" by the unexpected onset of her menstrual blood - "Her lovely blessed BLOOD oh God o Lord who she didn't believe in but would give her closer attention to as soon as she had the time and as far as she was capable" (p. 548) - Flora Manhood manages to strike a reasonable balance between her sexual and spiritual impulses. She no longer fears the male libido as some "club" to beat her into submission.

Flora Manhood's having to care for Elizabeth Hunter's aged and incontinent body increases her disgust with the body's spiritual and physical duality. In evaluating Flora Manhood's behaviour, White attempts to expose the lie that women intuitively desire to arouse men sexually. It is clear that Flora Manhood's sexually motivated behaviour is rooted in her desire to gain ontological security. The intrinsic duality of being which Flora Manhood experiences and observes foreshadows, in increasing intensity, the fate of the transvestite Eddie Twyborn in The Twyborn Affair.

Flora Manhood's ill-considered decision to seduce Sir Basil Hunter and become pregnant by him is the result of her awareness that she as a woman seems to have no right or freedom of choice. She believes that her decision to have a child by Sir Basil Hunter is proof of her independence and freedom of choice. Her philanthropic ideals are supported by the naive belief that she will be able to give the child everything it needs. She still has to learn that she may not defy public morality and her esoteric self.

A severe bout of depression follows her sexual misalliance. In her melancholy she shares the fate of the unborn child because "she herself would not have wished to be born" (p. 321). With the onset of remorse her thoughts turn from the framework of her self to the memories of a nebulous and unheeded Deity. Her immediate reaction is to escape from her surroundings. Like White's other elect she must first endure some crisis before she can experience some form of grace and atonement. This moment comes when she begins to menstruate. The blood, an integral part of communion with God and sacrifice intimates forgiveness and a new beginning, ironically coinciding with Elizabeth Hunter's "new beginning" through death.

Flora's tender and loving preparation of Elizabeth Hunter's corpse shows how her attitude to life and death has changed. She becomes devotional in her attitude. The change in Flora Manhood is underscored by Mary de Santis calling her by her Christian name for the first time, thereby admitting her into the fellowship of the "sanctified".

Profoundly affected by the death of Elizabeth Hunter, Flora Manhood flees from "death" through the frightening nightscape of Sydney. Her flight assumes the shape of an allegorical journey through the valley of death to an eventual haven of safety, in this instance, the apartment of her lover Col Pardoe. Flora's rejection of Snow Tunks' plea for aid (p. 569) is not so much the rejection of a fallen-woman as the abandonment of a way of life.

When Flora reaches Col's apartment she feels that she has "come home" in more ways than one. She experiences a feeling of peace and willingness (her "eye" of the storm) to accept her feminine and maternal role in life. Col no longer seems sexually aggressive; indeed, he pays homage to her femininity by kissing her thighs.

Veronica Brady's (1973 : 62) evaluation of the novel as a whole could as well be applied to Flora Manhood in particular: "The truth is to be found _ _ _ as we revalue our experience, accepting even what is apparently destructive as part of the realization that the final shape and implication of any human life is beyond human comprehension."

10.5 MARY DE SANTIS

Mary de Santis is Elizabeth Hunter's psychotic night-nurse. Her apparent piety, her "secret faith" (p. 10), separates her from her more worldly colleagues. Her conscious life is characterised by its rigour and austerity. Wilson (1978 : 75), who regards her as a normal human being, writes that White, in his portrayal of this "nun-like nurse _ _ _ achieves a credible balance between her sensitive questing spirit and her human fragility, her spasmodic lust, her sense of guilt." In her ministrations of Elizabeth Hunter, she acts as a "hairshirt" to her aged patient's own sense of guilt.

Mary de Santis's guilt lies in the schism between her self-enforced devotion to duty and solemnity on the one hand and her suppressed sexuality on the other. Her clothing, her apartment and even her movements are those of a nun. Leonie Kramer (1974 : 67) points out that Mary's whole life has religious overtones. Her caring for Elizabeth Hunter is a "solemn and saintly exercise in self-denial" (Kramer, 1974 : 67), which she manages to maintain until she is morally seduced by Sir Basil Hunter in the waterfront restaurant they visit. Even though Dorothy Green (1973 : 60) regards Mary de Santis to be one of White's illuminati, it becomes clear that her religious facade is a flimsy barrier against the world Flora Manhood, for example, knows so well.

It is true, as Veronica Brady (1973 : 61) points out, that although Mary de Santis has an obvious and sincere concern for human suffering, she cannot relate to men. In Elizabeth Hunter she has a commanding and demanding "deity" with whom she can "flagellate" her exoteric self: "She wanted a belief, which perhaps this aging, though still beautiful woman could give her" (p. 160).

De Santis prefers the night shift because then the elect experience a sense of freedom and weightlessness (p. 16). Her choice is influenced by the snide comments on her appearance and behaviour by her colleagues. She, unconsciously, hopes to share in the moment of Elizabeth Hunter's death as a part of the mystery of transition in which she has an abiding interest. She wants to repeat the schizophrenic pleasure she experienced when she "eased" her parents out of life because she had been excluded from their love for each other. It is reasonable to believe that her apparent sanctity is a form of religiously inspired insanity.

The conflicting duality of Mary de Santis's psyche is further illustrated by her sexual self being aroused by the compulsive desire to touch the "whorl of hair close-clipped against the neck" (p. 173) of Col Pardoe. Her erotic thoughts are fuelled by the knowledge that Col and Flora are lovers. Her fevered imagination conjures up the sexual symbol of a lily swaying hypnotically, thereafter initiating a dream sequence in which Col Pardoe "bent her backwards with the smoothest, the most practised motion, her mind rooted through, her mouth lapped at, every detail in the catalogue: she drank through the pores of his just faintly bristling skin, dragged at the creases in tight clothes; inhaled the scents of brilliantine and stale tobacco" (p. 174).¹¹ She bares her opulent breasts as an offer to sexuality in a quasi-heathen - hedonistic rite. Her breasts seem to blame

11. Waldo Brown in The Solid Mandala also exposes himself before a mirror, revealing his inner, Real Self. His compulsive act leads to his death in a fit of anger.

her for the sexual sterility of her life: "Though dimpled under pressure, and arum white, their snouts pointed upward to accuse the parent sow" (p. 175).

Her compulsive "self-exposure" (p. 175) causes her to beg for the recovery of her sanctity at the foot of Elizabeth Hunter's bed: "To fall on her knees at the foot of the bed. If not to recover what had passed for sanctity. She found herself pressing the palms of her hands together, in an arrowhead, as she begged (she had not been taught to pray) for grace" (p. 175).

Mary de Santis's cloistered life is changed dramatically by the debonair Sir Basil Hunter. He introduces her to the sensually heady world of flirtation and seduction. Her laudable intention of trying to convince Basil not to dispatch his mother to a home for the aged fails when she succumbs to his flattery and the temptations of upper-class social life. Her accidentally falling to her knees when she gets out of the car suggests her own fall from grace as well as her need for forgiveness.

The "inner sanctuary" of Elizabeth Hunter's bedroom is the only place Mary de Santis gains relief from her libidinous inclinations. She atones for her sexual fantasies by being devout and, for example, scrubbing the kitchen floor in an act of masochistic penance.

On the morning after Elizabeth Hunter's death, Mary de Santis goes out into the garden of Moreton Drive to cut a rose for her next patient. In the garden, "a failed or sterile paradise" (Beatson, 1976 : 138), she becomes obsessed by her vice of roses. (p. 209) which in White's canon is "linked with sexuality that is part of the seduction of the soul into the body" (Beatson, 1976 : 138). Although Beat-

son describes her behaviour as a "beautiful prose hymn", it is doubtful whether she will ever successfully individuate from her exoteric self and discover her Real Self.

X X X

A Fringe of Leaves continues the search for the Real Self. Ellen Roxburgh, in an allegoric manner, devolves from upper-class society to primeval conditions before she commences, through suffering, to evolve to a sombre understanding of man's inability to save himself from the destructive influences of his exoteric self.

11.0 A FRINGE OF LEAVES

Up to the publication of this novel, Patrick White has explored the conscious and unconscious worlds of a single being placed in familiar and unfamiliar circumstances and made more affective by suffering. He uses the same technique in A Fringe of Leaves, with the added complication of two widely differing cultures converging to influence the psyche of a single character. In this manner he reveals the influence of man's archetypal heritage on his present circumstances and behaviour.

White uses the real-life history of a certain Mrs Frazer as the background to A Fringe of Leaves. Mrs Frazer survived a wreck off the Queensland coast and lived among the Aborigines for some time. Her personal experiences show a marked similarity to the fortunes of White's protagonist, Ellen Roxburgh.

The title of the novel acts as leitmotif suggesting the duality of apparently unequivocal matters. White reveals the delicate balance, the "fringe", between direct opposites, the most significant being that between apparent civilization and instinctive, fundamental emotion: "the novel as a whole portrays civilization as only a narrow fringe that distinguishes natural, more elemental forces beneath" (Colmer, 1984 : 76). Particularly significant is the "fringe" between man's spiritual salvation and damnation.

Veronica Brady (1977 : 132), commenting on the title of the novel, writes: "all we may have is a fringe of leaves to protect us from savagery, but this protection is necessary, even vital." The moral of the novel, according to Brady, is "education in the art of living with others" (1977 : 132).

Any attempt to live without love and in isolation harms not only the individual, but also those within his sphere of influence. It is essential to discover the balance between inner awareness and outer reality if life is to be at all meaningful.

White explores the full range of human suffering in A Fringe of Leaves. He even focuses his attention on the "mutual bedevilment of men and animals" (Johnson, 1979 : 326), effectively illustrated in his use of comparisons. Austin Roxburgh, at the moment of his death, is, for example, compared to a "gaunt-ribbed gelding". Ellen, too, is made to act as a beast of burden to the black women into whose merciless custody she is delivered. Human insensitivity to the suffering of animals is evidenced in the calf-killing episode. Man's inhumanity to man is extended to include the brutal treatment of the prisoners in the penal colony at Van Dieman's Land. White successfully maintains the hierarchy of God, man and animal in which God chastens man and man in turn punishes his fellow human beings and animals.

Many critics have noticed the absence of religion in A Fringe of Leaves. Veronica Brady, for example, states that in A Fringe of Leaves God "keeps silent" (1977 : 128). The reason for the absence of religion is that White wishes to portray a return to primeval conditions, a "pre-Christian chaos". However, it is also true that it is not his intention to oppose spiritual and religious matters. The agnosticism of society is especially evident in the moral behaviour of the representatives of justice and the lives of social "leaders" (?) like Garnet Roxburgh. Leonie Kramer contends that White, in his portrayal of suffering, is retreating "more and more from the complexities of normal humanity _ _ _ [asserting] with increasing directness his conviction that it is only in the transcendental experience

of ordinary people that meaning can be found" (1973 : 8 : my addition and emphasis). Brady supports Kramer in the important observation that White no longer uses elected characters to appeal away from social forms and ordinary people. Instead he offers full value to the ways of sense and the desire for possessions and security, suggesting that "in the house of the self there are many mansions, some fair, some foul, but all related to and dependent upon one another" (Brady, 1977 : 127). Ellen Roxburgh, for example, turns to and finds her future in society.

Schumann (1981 : 54) believes Ellen Roxburgh's return to civilization, in contrast to the asocial inclinations of White's other elect, for example Voss, points to her having betrayed the "chariot" mentioned in Riders in the Chariot. The question arises whether White has also changed his vision of a lasting, metaphysical union of nature, humanity and God. This seems to be the case, not only in this novel, but especially in his last novel, The Twyborn Affair. Schumann believes that by Ellen's return to society Austin's God of the Hosts has overcome Pilcher's God of Love, symbolised by the rude little church.

Not one of the characters in A Fringe of Leaves escapes the touch of the "lash", a contextual analogue for the vicissitudes of life, despite the toughest fringe between the self and the realities of life. The "scars" on Ellen's body and psyche are comparable to the wounds on Jack Chance's back. The major difference between the two, as regards their suffering, is that whereas Ellen manages to come to terms with her ordeals and life, Chance cannot, and subsequently returns to the bush, in context the symbol of man's unconscious mind which harbours his fears and obsessions.

Manly Johnson moves that A Fringe of Leaves has King Lear qualities in that the author "avoids the impression of certainty, provides alternatives and encourages indecision" (1978 : 94). White invites commitment on the part of his characters in spite of a sense of indecision and morally unacceptable, if instinctive, alternatives. Ellen Roxburgh, for example, has to choose between her marriage vows and a spiritually stifling life on the one hand and a sexually active, but morally corrupt life as Garnet's mistress on the other. Pilcher's cannibalism and Austin's homosexual inclinations fall into the same conundrum of human behaviour.

The characters in A Fringe of Leaves, in the face of hardship and guilt, are kept physically and spiritually alive by the dream of some future happiness or a change of fortune. Each character has a "Tintagel" (a promised land) that, in the philosophy of Viktor Frankl, makes the present suffering bearable and supports the instinctive desire to remain alive. Ellen Roxburgh intends undertaking a pilgrimage to Tintagel, "the Sangreal of her quest, a Cornish (and obviously phallic) Zion" (Morley, 1982 : 304), but never goes there despite it being near her parental home. By not doing so, she keeps her hopes of another, personal Xanadu alive. Her youthful and mythic vision of Tintagel is, in time, transposed to a future state of grace and fulfilment she hopes to realise once she has gained her freedom from her spiritually debilitating exotic self and her parasitic husband. Kirpal Singh (1979 : 121) writes that White's answer to the riddle of existence "seems to be an inverted one: not that the universe is meaningless because there is no God to sanction it, but that man is meaningless until he can transcend his geometric co-ordinates and behold the mystery of the universe."

The evolution of White's elect from a desultory level of existence to a higher level of being is paralleled in their progress from the known to the unknown as, for example, in Voss. The movement to the unknown in A Fringe of Leaves is successfully portrayed in the voyage of the survivors of the wreck of the Bristol Maid into the comparative darkness of the Aborigine milieu.

The mystery to which some humans are drawn is their spiritual desire to know their Real Selves and God. Brady affirms that "human beings are limited and governed by necessities of all kinds, above all that of death, because it is a paradoxical truth, that man is not God, but is drawn irresistibly to the impossible prospect of knowing Him" (1978 : 115). Singh postulates that White's religious stance is essentially Manichean: "God made the world, but the devil rules it. Good and evil, right and wrong, co-exist, not in co-operation but in competition" (1978 : 122).

White's use of the Queensland bush country as the setting for Ellen's cultural devolution suggests the darkness and primeval energy of her unconscious mind and exoteric self, filled with the legends and myths of her native Cornwall: "A silent girl, she had inherited his [her father's] brooding temper. As she now recognised, rocks had been her altars and spring water her sacrament, a realization which did but increase heartache in a country designed for human torment, where even beauty flaunted a hostile radiance, and the spirits of place were not hers to conjure up" (p. 248 : my addition).

Initiation, in the sense of learning through pain and displacement, is an integral part of the suffering the characters in the novel endure. Ellen Roxburgh's initiation into

the ranks of the Aborigines is evolutionary in the sense that it progressively enriches her knowledge of her Real Self and being. Austin Roxburgh fails the first test of his manhood when he surrenders his wife to his brother Garnet. Apart from Ellen's birth, a fateful initiation into being, there is her marriage and introduction to life at Birdlip Hall; her first experience of lust; her proemial suffering among the blacks and her eventual re-entry into a society that is not spiritually able to accept the tale of her trauma because she has violated its traditional norms. John Colmer (1982 : 96) argues along the same lines when he explains that the human being in White's canon can only achieve an understanding of good after an immersion in evil. Colmer's argument is in line with White's hypothesis in The Vivisector that dreck is the beginning of rebirth.

Many of the events in A Fringe of Leaves are prevented from becoming hedonistic by an immediate contrast to the results of such behaviour on the spiritual well-being of the perpetrator. White's technique in this regard prevents the novel from deviating from its primary concern which is man's "quest for a renewal of identity" (Johnson, 1979 : 226) through suffering. The sensual pleasures and comforts of Birdlip Hall are offset by Ellen's Cornish ancestry and her inability to play the role of a woman of gentle birth. The unspoilt natural beauty of Van Dieman's Land is eclipsed by Ellen's involuntary feelings of lust and guilt as well as Garnet's licentious behaviour. The joy of maternal fulfilment Ellen would normally have experienced nursing her own child is neutralised by the Aborigine child's sores, filth and her own empty, flaccid breasts. The fierce, sacramental and communal spiritual pleasure she experiences when she chews the human thigh bone is invalidated by the knowledge that she, as a traditional Christian believer, is taking part in an act of cannibalism.

Hunger is a great social equaliser. In A Fringe of Leaves eating is a humble dedication to the mere fact of living. In some instances, as for example when Jack Chance and Ellen Roxburgh devour the emu, eating is a sacrament. In contrast to this solemn meal, White, to the dismay of his readers, describes the uncivilised and disgusting culinary habits of some characters. The manner in which the survivors of the shipwreck gorge the putrefying Kangaroo meat - "Roasting somewhat quenched the stink of putrefying flesh, and in those who waited, greed quickened into ecstasy" (p. 234) - is similar to the gluttonous feast of the blacks (p. 248), with the major difference that they are supposedly uncivilised and that the meat is fresh.

Hunting food in almost any form is a major preoccupation with the blacks. Ellen suffers a major psychic reversal when food is no longer freely available or her right. She shares rejected scraps of food with the dogs. An empty stomach and having to beg, humble her as much as her nakedness does. She becomes so emaciated that her own body becomes repellent to her. In this manner White once again illustrates his credo that the growth of the spirit parallels, inversely, the deterioration of the body.

Within the cannibalistic infrastructure of the novel the prestige of the group depends on the rank of the persons who are eaten. As a rite and a form of suffering, cannibalism becomes a means of transmutation and of conserving the esteem in which the group is held. The thigh bone as a phallic symbol is particularly significant in that it suggests Ellen's surrender to an instinctive way of life, unhampered by the constrictive, hypocritical norms of her former society. Cannibalism by the other survivors of the wreck is, however, a form of sacrilege because it is nothing more

than a means of satisfying their hunger. Even Austin Roxburgh, gentleman and man of leisure, is not exempt from such nauseating thoughts. He, for example, regards his unusual, low-class friend, Spurgeon, as an appetising morsel (p. 231).

A Fringe of Leaves is also concerned with one of the paradoxes of human suffering, namely that loss brings about spiritual gain. Ward (1978 : 405) points out that the Roxburghs' loss of possessions during the wreck is the first in a series that in time prove to be gain. Carolyn Bliss, in her work on White's novels, calls it the paradox of fortunate failure (1986 : 8). The death of Ellen's father, for example, initiates her gaining a husband, regardless of his suitability. The loss of her freedom and individuality after her marriage to Austin Roxburgh brings her the doubtful gain of a "genteel" way of life. The death of Austin at the hands of the Aborigines ends the first cycle of losses and gains in Ellen's life. Subsequent losses through suffering lead to spiritual growth as well as to an understanding of human nature.

11.1 ELLEN ROXBURGH

Ellen Roxburgh's biography is a long, complicated and traumatic process of individuation, incorporating a balance between past and present.

Individuation is never easy because it involves the individual in a conflict with obligations and claims made on him by outside forces and also includes an understanding of his unconscious mind, the so-called "counter will". Moreno defines the process of individuation as "a heroic and sometimes tragic task comparable to the torture of initiation; not merely a punishment, however, but the indispensable

means which leads man to his destiny. Hence it involves suffering, and every step forward along the path of individuation is achieved only at the cost of intense spiritual suffering, a passion of the ego for the violence done to it by the self" (1970 : 32).

Ellen Roxburgh, while still bound to her parental home in Cornwall and to a father whom she both fears and loathes, intuitively rebels against a destiny confined by her background. She desires to achieve a fuller revelation and understanding of her esoteric self. It is ironic, and yet characteristic of White's philosophy of life, that she should eventually arrive at an understanding of being, as a result of her life with the Aborigines and the convicted murderer Jack Chance, rather than as a result of her contact with organised religion and genteel society. Veronica Brady (1978 : 127) points out that Ellen's suffering leads her to an appraisal of society and not exclusively of her Real Self and God. Ellen's experience reveals a new stance in White's attitude to a state of grace. Up to this stage of his career as a novelist his elect's rejection of society has been essential for the acquisition of grace.

Much of Ellen Roxburgh's life consists of contrasts between the romantic (Johnson [1979 : 231] calls it the paradisal) and the real. As an outsider by birth and perspective, Ellen seems fated to make the wrong impression on people. Miss Schrimshaw, for example, regards Ellen's loneliness as haughtiness; Garnet Roxburgh, a libertine, believes she will make a passionate mistress whereas she is actually a puritan at heart; the sailors on board the Bristol Maid believe she is conceited when she is actually shy and, worst of all, the settlers at the penal colony, instead of treating her with understanding after her ordeal in the bush, imagine her defecating and having sex with a convict. In this

manner White not only reveals man's blindness to his own hypocrisy, but also his depraved inclination to judge and condemn others.

Ellen Roxburgh, even as one of White's elected characters, has a deep-seated psychic flaw namely her sexuality that remains latent until she is confronted by a situation or a person who not only reveals the weakness but activates it, in this way causing her to experience suffering of some kind.

Ellen's unsuspected sexuality is aroused when she meets Garnet Roxburgh. The interaction between the two is revealed in terms of contrasts and setting that highlight the spiritual flaws in Ellen herself and in her relationship with Garnet. Despite her aversion to him - "He had about him something which she, the farmer's daughter and spurious lady, recognized as course and sensual. Perhaps this was what she resented, and that a Roxburgh should both embody and remind her of it" (p. 83) - she involuntarily responds to his male sexuality, suggested by his big, hairy wrists, the major phallic symbol in White's prose. To Ellen's dismay her esoteric self is overwhelmed by her lust: "Mrs Roxburgh could only bitterly admit that she had failed in her resolve, and that the moral strength for which she prayed constantly eluded her" (p. 33).

Ellen's destructive sense of guilt, even before she allows Garnet to seduce her, is fused with a sense of justifiable anger aimed at her husband for having failed her, not only sexually. The climacteric moment of sexual union between Ellen Roxburgh and Garnet has the format of a religious rite with Ellen as the willing sacrifice: "She was again this great green, only partially disabled, obscure bird, on whose breast he was feeding, gross hands parting the sweeping

folds of her tormented and tormenting plumage _ _ _" (p. 116). Ellen's religious heritage, in the context of the times, convinces her that she is not only breaking her marriage vows, but is committing her Real Self to perdition as well.

Ellen, at the lowest point of her existence, having succumbed to her own and Garnet's sexuality, is in a chastened frame of mind when she returns to her husband to discover, to her horror, she has to submit to his sexuality which has been aroused by his instinctive awareness of his wife's adultery with his brother whom he secretly and incestuously loves. Ellen, ironically for her own sake, is forced to prostitute her self to her husband to conceal her guilt and allay any suspicion should Garnet have made her pregnant.

Ellen's limp, caused by a fall from the mare Garnet placed at her disposal, acts as a constant reminder of her transgression.¹² She attempts to find the reason for her duality and weakness by examining her reflection in a mirror at Dulcet. She does the same in the Oakes' home after her return to society from the darkness of the bush where she lived with the Aborigines, but with the significant difference that her physical self is no longer of any significance then. Having grown spiritually as a result of suffering, she has a more compassionate and objective view of her exoteric self.

Like Macbeth, Ellen, after her tryst with Garnet and the violation of her spiritual self by her husband finds herself much in need of prayer. She is, however, still too self-

12. White uses a similar technique in The Solid Mandala and The Eye of the Storm to suggest a character's psychic aberration or deep-seated feeling of guilt.

centred and dominated by her exoteric self to submit herself entirely to God: "Young Mrs Roxburgh kneeled beside the improvised bed, but her knees were too pointed, it seemed, or the carpet might have been strewn with glass, or in worst moments, upholstered like a mattress of rotting leaves" (p. 123). Her awareness of her guilt is clearly revealed in the reference to "rotting leaves".

Ellen Roxburgh is greatly upset by the death of the mare Garnet has put down after she supposedly staked herself. The fate of the mare is related to her own sexual transgression as well as to her refusal to become Garnet's mistress. Garnet's behaviour reveals his cruel, even murderous attitude to life and the women with whom he has had his way.

Filled with remorse Ellen attempts to atone for her adultery by adopting an attitude of slavish devotion to her husband. In her penitence she reveals an unconscious identification with the prisoners on the island. The voyage in the Bristol Maid together with the period of physical and spiritual suffering in the life-boat are, to Ellen, what the desert is to Voss, namely, a time of expurgating the spiritually stunning influences of the past and another way of life.

The dense fog into which the Bristol Maid sails introduces a new and devolutionary phase in Ellen's life. White writes that the fog creates the impression of "general amorphousness" (p. 166) which suggests, somewhat ambiguously, a lesser creation. The results of sailing blindly in the fog, symbolic of a journey into the "heart of darkness", are dramatic and disastrous in that the survivors' real, hidden selves are revealed, weighed and found wanting.

The Roxburghs' emergence from their cabin after the ship has gone aground on a coral reef, suggests an involuntary rebirth into a world in a state of flux where husband and wife, as mere mortals, are aliens and very much afraid. Jill Ward (1978 : 404) points out the symbolic meaning of the ship's tilted deck when she explains that the Roxburghs and the crew no longer behave, move or think like normal human beings because their ordered universe has been destroyed. The wreck itself may be regarded as a microcosmic version of the spiritual dissolution of man in the "fog" of life.

In the disorder following the wreck, Ellen assumes command over her husband, a reversal he does not oppose, except when he goes to fetch his prized copy of Virgil's works. Ellen experiences an exhilarating sense of freedom once she understands that she is no longer bound to her parasitic husband: "When he had left her, and she had sighed out her formal disapproval, and tidied up some of the physical ravages, Mrs Roxburgh was secretly glad. It was the greatest luxury to be sitting alone, to give up the many - faceted role she had been playing, it now seemed, with mounting intensity in recent months - of loyal wife, tireless nurse, courageous woman, and more real than any of the superficial, taken for granted components of this character - expectant mother" (p. 175). Ellen's vomiting adds to the impression that she has discarded her old, familiar way of life.

White uses the panic among the sailors at the time of the disaster as a metaphor for Ellen's own anguish: "She would have liked to pray, but found the vocabulary and the necessary frame of mind for prayer, wrecked inside her. Mentally she was still too exhausted to sort out the wreckage, and

recoiled moreover, from the possibility that she might never restore order to a spiritual cupboard which had not been kept as neat as it looked" (p. 173).

Once Ellen is in the lifeboat she withdraws into the recesses of her consciousness to insulate her self from schism. Her mental preoccupation with her guilt, her doubts about her husband's love for her, as well as her pregnancy, add to her feeling of displacement. Had she been unable to shut out her desperate state of affairs from her mind, she could not have endured her miscarriage in the presence of the sailors, a traumatic and shaming event White only mentions briefly.

The precious, self-sustaining and spontaneous love-tie between Ellen Roxburgh and the cabin-boy, Oswald Dingham, must also be broken for Ellen to enter the new phase of her life, unattached to the past. Her yearning for a child of her own causes her to respond to the needs of the lonely and effeminate youngster. Oswald answers Ellen's longing by devoting himself to her. During their brief respite on an uninhabited island Oswald brings Ellen an offering of shellfish which she accepts despite her nausea. It is remarkable that the foetus in her womb should move in response to Oswald's gesture. In this way, White suggests a supernatural empathy between the living and the unborn and, incidentally, reveals his own belief that the unborn already have souls that respond to external impulses. It is thus possible to regard Oswald as a symbol of the "supreme realization of mystic identification with 'the god within us' and with the eternal" (Cirlot, 1971 : 46). The boy's death by drowning presages Ellen's own miscarriage. The loss of the foetus thus breaks her link with the "god" within herself.

Overwhelmed by her own mental and physical suffering, Ellen willingly, even thankfully grants her stillborn child its freedom: "As for the creature which had begun to persecute her in its increasingly demonstrative form undulating out of time with her own somewhere in the folds of her petticoats bunting nibbling at her numb legs this slippery fish was pushing in the direction of freedom to which she had never yet attained" (p. 227). Manly Johnson (1978 : 91) considers Ellen's miscarriage to be her own "birth" journey: "This obstetrical image predicts her own eventual rebirth when she comes back from the wilderness into the world naked, passes through a greatly compressed infancy, adolescence and maturation." Whereas White's other elect experience an awareness of their Real Selves after having suffered, Ellen, like Arthur Brown in The Solid Mandala and Doll Quigley in The Tree of Man, finds herself further removed from individuation and grace after the death of Oswald and the loss of her child. Even her marriage ends with an overpowering sense of failure and waste: "She hung her head, and wept for the one she had failed in the end to protect" (p. 242).

Ellen Roxburgh's clothing, reminders and remnants of a now far-distant culture restrain her in her changed circumstances. Her continued exposé precipitates her desire to be free of her soiled clothing and the tyranny they represent. The Aborigine women remove the remaining tatters out of curiosity and in an attempt to make her one of them, in this way completing her transition into a lesser, uncivilised culture: "She was finally unhooked. Then the shift, and she was entirely free" (p. 244). Her sense of freedom suggests that she at first finds her changed state of affairs better than her old way of life. The rings on her

fingers, symbols of far different and distant values, become blackened by dirt and grease, thereby losing the meaning they once had.

The next, and certainly most traumatic phase of Ellen Roxburgh's suffering commences with her being led away, naked, into the bush to be initiated into a new, foreign community. She begins her life among the blacks as a slave to the women. At first she attempts to preserve her inbred modesty by hiding behind her long hair, traditionally associated with spiritual energy. The loss of her hair, cruelly and painfully hacked from her scalp with sharpened shells, leaves her entire being defenceless.

Apparently believing that Ellen, because of her white skin, might have magical powers, the Aborigine women give her an ailing black child to nurse. The creature is physically repugnant, a caricature of her own illusions: "she noticed the child's snouted face and tumid body covered with pustular sores" (p. 246). When the child discovers that Ellen is unable to breast-feed it, it spitefully bites her nipple, a painful reminder of her own barrenness. Ellen's inability to cure or feed the brat causes the black women to beat her. It is a revelation of the quality and alliance of her Real Self that Ellen is still able to feel compassion for the child despite her own abject circumstances.

Ellen's self-esteem is humbled when she is refused shelter, food and fellowship. Hunger does not allow her to be fastidious: "She snatched them [the scraps of food] up out of the dirt and started sucking at the glutinous membrane, risked her mouth on the barbed fin for the sake of a shred of flesh she imagined she saw adhering to the base, ran her tongue round her lips and teeth, licked her deliciously rank fingers - and whimpered once or twice to herself" (p. 248).

Her painfully acquired humility is symbolised by the manner in which she is forced to leave and enter the shelter she shares with her owners: "She fell upon her knees, and crawled instead on all fours towards the entrance, like any sow shaking off the night and lumbering out of a foetid sty" (p. 255).

The unexpected sense of belonging Ellen experiences while potato-picking with the black women, calls to mind her agrarian background. She even becomes proud of her ability to hunt possums, the result of her robust life on the farm in Cornwall. Ellen "develops" along existential lines, her only contact with her former life being her wedding-ring which she keeps hidden in her skirt made of vines. Her obsession with food and survival acts as a balm to her psyche, because she is no longer plagued by thoughts of guilt.

In her youth in Cornwall Ellen often attempted to understand her intuition of a Real Self by examining her reflection in a mirror. Her desire to discover the truth about herself is, however, clouded by her admiration of her own physical beauty. The importance of her physical self dwindles when the Aborigine women cover her body with grease and charcoal, after cutting off her hair, to make her resemble themselves. In this way they reduce her vanity to naught. Having been made into a new being, Ellen gradually becomes aware of the three selves she can be: " 'a lost soul, a woman or a rational being' [p. 253] and it is the third she chooses" (Brady, 1977 : 135). Her choice determines why she has no qualms to eat a roasted snake. Wolfe (1983 : 205) holds that this act is a journey into herself, the snake being a symbol of evil and original sin in the Christian world. Having already absorbed so much of the Aborigine culture and instinctive religion, Ellen is as enthralled as the blacks are when they perform the ritualistic snake dance: "During

a ritual snake dance she [Ellen] gets so carried away that her clapping, thumping and moaning heightens the frenzy of her black neighbours" (Wolfe, 1983 : 205).

Ellen, who can at this stage of her life no longer be shackled to the implied cultural heritage of her surname, experiences a unique initiation into the religious secrets of "her" tribe when she comes upon a group of women who have just completed a religious ceremony (communion) during which they skinned, cooked and ate a female member of the tribe killed in a fight over a man. Ellen's "new", rational self, is revealed by her sense of transcendence and participation in the rite, the sensory effect of which is enhanced by the atmosphere of gentleness, rightness and beauty in nature (p. 270). She does not form an opinion of the women's conduct until she succumbs to the dark impulse within her self and also eats of the flesh (p. 272).

The corroboree for which Ellen's tribe (significantly they seem inferior) joins the other Aborigines on the mainland is the moment of truth in Ellen's spiritual and cultural devolution. The dance, as a form of initiation, and the possibility of "marriage" to a black threaten to absorb Ellen into the Aborigine milieu permanently. She is rescued from the dance-induced trance by an epiphanic vision of her husband. The devolutionary effect of having lived among the Aborigines for so long is revealed in Ellen's inability to articulate her mother tongue: "Then lay weeping, 'Tchack! Tchack!' Now it was herself had to find her way back inside a language" (p. 259).

"Ulappi", the Aborigine name given to the escaped convict Jack Chance, fortunately rescues Ellen from being assimilated by the Aborigines¹³. He leads Ellen, to whom he is bound by skin colour and heritage back to her peers through

love and compassion. Chance in turn wants to know if she, as an individual and representative of the system that sentenced him to a literal hell on earth, could really love him. He trusts that her love can redeem him in the eyes of society and once again afford him a sense of belonging, self-respect and dignity. In spite of Ellen's naïve assurances that he will be pardoned, Chance cannot overcome his painfully ingrained distrust of justice.

Chance's revolting appearance would, under normal circumstances, have made it impossible for any woman to love him. Ellen's loneliness, gratitude and desire to compensate for the wrongs inflicted on Chance overcome her abhorrence and allow her to accept his sexual advances: "But she did genuinely pity the convict, and would have liked to heal those innermost wounds of which she had received glimpses. Could she love him? She believed she could; she had not fully realized how much she had desired to love without reserve and for her love to be unconditionally accepted" (p. 302 : my emphasis). By answering Chance's need for love without any selfish motives of her own, Ellen adds a new dimension of meaning to her esoteric self. She gains a renewed, and purer sense of spiritual values: "She wanted to be loved. She longed for the vast emptiness of darkness

13. Many of White's elect are rescued at a critical moment in their lives by the fortunate intervention of another being. Holstius saves Theodora (The Aunt's Story); Mrs Poulter rescues Arthur Brown (The Solid Mandala); Hurtle Duffield (The Vivisector) comes to an understanding of his hidden being during an incidental meeting with Mothersole and Alf Dubbo (Riders in the Chariot) is rescued by a whore.

to be filled as she encouraged him to enter her body" (p. 307). White describes their mutual need as "a shared hunger" (p. 298). There is no "Elzevir" between them as there had been between Ellen and Austin Roxburgh. The cohabitation of the two refugees (and not only from the wrath of the Aborigines) attains a degree of stability and harmony with the surroundings despite their bodily filth and the rank smell of "foxes" (p. 290). Their togetherness stands in stark contrast to the appearance of respectability adopted, for example, by the Roxburgh brothers, at the same time giving a deeper, more spiritual meaning to sexual intercourse.

Ellen's allowing Chance to remove her "fringe" of vines has a significance beyond the mere act itself. In this way she surrenders her esoteric self to him in absolute trust (a new experience for Chance) and without guilt or a false show of modesty. She is now no longer bound to Austin or his outdated norms for female respectability¹⁴. Ellen has learnt to live with and even appreciate human frailty: " 'No one is ever,' she heard herself imagining the words though they had been pebbles, 'is ever wholly to blame' " (p. 292).

The removal of her skirt of vines, together with her wedding ring she kept hidden in it, leaves her as naked as she was born and emphasises her renaissance into a new state of understanding in which she acknowledges the importance of love and compassion for all human beings. In this manner

14. Ellen Roxburgh is the first of White's female characters to achieve liberation from subservience to male domination through sexual intercourse. Amy Parker (The Tree of Man) attempts to do so but fails and sinks deeper into her depression and feeling of guilt.

she consolidates her oneness with the living world. She makes a new skirt (p. 300) as a symbolic gesture to a renewed sense of living.

Ellen is once again naked when she leaves the dark "womb" of the forest to re-enter society via the Oakes' homestead. She is avoided by an uncomprehending public because her nudity, regardless of the reason for it, is regarded as being indecent. (They do not regard whipping a man to the point of death as "indecent".) White reveals his own bitter view of life and society when he describes Ellen's "rebirth" as taking place among the "cowpats" : "She lay with her head in the dirt because she could not raise it; the flies were busy settling, partly on blood, partly on the moist cow dung with which her arms were smeared" (p. 334).

Ellen's solipsistic return to the society of Moreton Bay via the Oakes' home is characterised by her lapse into a state of mental instability. She first has to come to terms with her recent past before she can resume the role of a civilised woman. She vacillates between the very different roles of Ellen Gluyas, Mrs Ellen Roxburgh, "black" Ellen and Ellen the masochistic mistress of a convicted murderer. According to White's credo a new self must emanate from such a state of spiritual flux for the elected character to qualify for a state of grace.

The people who come to view Ellen regard her as a curiosity and enigma. To the discomfort of some, for example the young medical officer, whom Ellen senses has not experienced passion, she sees too clearly, even beyond the bone (p. 341). Ellen is "crucified" by their morbid curiosity: "she must remain in the eyes of all who would view her, worse than stripped, sharing a bark-and-leaf humpy with a miscreant" (p. 357). Even though Ellen is as helpless as a

baby and is treated as such, she has a mature, even archetypal wisdom that recognises the hypocrisy behind the front of consensus respectability. Though not yet a state of grace, her spiritual maturation places her in a separate esoteric parameter of existence: "She would remain their glimpse of a never quite ponderable mystery, something more than a woman who had crawled naked out of the scrub into their regular, real lives" (p. 352). The behaviour of the other characters, in comparison to that of Ellen Roxburgh, seems naive and without meaning. Ellen's heightened awareness of man's hypocrisy and injustice causes her more pain than it would have before her venture into "the heart of darkness".

Brady (1982 : 63) suggests that Ellen's stay with the Aborigines represents the return of her suppressed self, always a painful and sometimes even violent experience. In time she is able to remember her misfortunes with a measure of thankfulness. What she sees reflected in the Oakes' bedroom mirror is her own creation and not that of her husband or the Aborigine women. She no longer wants to be a social figure as Miss Schrimshaw does. She now accepts that she will never have the opportunity to visit Tintagel (p. 346) and that her youthful, romantic dreams have come to nothing.

Ellen Roxburgh's uncertainty about her future role in society is reflected in her indecision as to which of the two donated dresses she should wear: the fashionable, "smouldering and glowing" (p. 349) creation that symbolises a way of life she now abhors, or the unattractive, black one that gives "her skin a yellow tinge" (p. 349), but which suits her frame of mind and represents a state of being in which pretence is no longer important.

The friendship between Ellen Roxburgh and Mrs Oakes is of particular interest in that it reveals an added dimension of White's philosophy as regards the relationship between two mature people of the same sex: "The two women sat together a while on the verandah. They were so attached to each other, and trusting, it was natural that they should hold hands" (p. 352). Their love for each other is devoid of passion, the one being the twin of the other as regards their Weltanschauung. (In a sense they are both pioneers, Ellen in "the country of the mind" and Mrs Oakes in a new agrarian settlement.) White suggests that the union of kindred souls is more meaningful than the union of heterosexuals who have procreation as their only common bond.

Ellen's kinship with the young Kate Oakes is yet another example of the marginal contact of two of White's elect. The child mourns the death of a chicken in much the same way Ellen mourns the death of her children who were never really hers. Kate runs from Ellen because in her grief and abstraction she too feels "naked". She has not yet found a shawl or fringe to hide her Real Self from invasion by presumptuous people. Patricia Morley (1982 : 309) regards this incident with the dead chicken as an omen that Ellen will not be saved by her as yet unborn children on whom she pins her hopes for a meaningful future.

It is inevitable that Ellen and Pilcher, the only survivors of the wreck of the Bristol Maid should meet. Ellen approaches their arranged meeting bravely, if with some trepidation, because she remembers his antagonism and selfish desertion of the one group of survivors in their hour of need. Having assessed human values she now understands how valueless the ring he took from her by force is. Her ornamental- and wedding-ring, were once symbolic ties to a

consentaneity of behaviouristic norms she no longer regards as essential to a discovery of her Real Self, or a meaningful existence.

Pilcher, a much self-chastened man, has come to understand the futility of his anger at his lowly, deprived birth and, having suffered the revelation of his base instincts for survival through cannibalism, wishes to atone for his moral crimes, not only against Ellen Roxburgh but against all fundamentally decent human values.

Their confrontation develops into an unspoken pact to remain silent about their personal traumas which nobody at the settlement would understand. It becomes apparent that Ellen, in contrast to Pilcher, has managed to escape from the existential prison "to which she had been sentenced, a lifer from birth to please others. Unconsciously, she has acquired a more expansive and real freedom in that she has superseded her ego, a state of equipoise between "the right self-love and the right love of others" (Tillich, 1984 : 32).

Pilcher is an example of the inexplicable rift between the elect who achieve a state of grace, and the non-elect who labour under the realisation of their inevitable damnation. Up to the time of his meeting with Ellen he has not individuated to any significant degree from his load of guilt and sense of inferiority: "He was so thin as to look transparent in places, and even more deeply lined than before. She [Ellen] was not sure, but he might have suffered a seizure" (p. 375). He has, however, learnt that neither he nor Ellen can change the existing order of things of which they are a part by birth. Brady (1977 : 132) presumes that both survivors decide to throw away the ring

because they realise that nothing external or material can be a substitute for genuine values which are created by living in integrity and truthfulness.

Pilcher knows he has been the active agent and not the victim of existential darkness. Ellen responds to the need of Pilcher's exoteric self for love and forgiveness by not condemning him: " 'So,' she said, after she had turned, 'I hope we can accept each other's shortcomings, since none of us always dares speak the truth. Then we might remain friends" (p. 378). Pilcher comes closest to absolution of his crimes, when he speaks to Ellen and returns the ring that has been an albatross about his neck for so long.

Ellen Roxburgh's impulsive pilgrimage to Pilcher's church is the end of her long and traumatic quest for an understanding of her Real Self. She discovers that Austin Roxburgh's God of the Hosts and Pilcher's God are the same deity despite the crudeness of the humble edifice. Ellen is in a sombre mood when she enters the church, because she has just heard the screams of a prisoner being flogged. She acts the part of an emissary from an "inhuman" world to plead to God, not only for her own self, but for all mankind.

The church has no glass in the apertures left for windows. This stylistic technique can be related to the piece of red glass Amy Parker in The Tree of Man received from the founding boy after the Willunya floods. Looking through the piece of glass affords Amy the illusion of an unreal world. Her preoccupation with the artifact reveals her longing for a Tintagel of her own.

Pilcher's church has no glass windows because there is no deceit or illusion involved. Johnson (1978 : 91) supposes Ellen is renewed by the meeting of man and nature as il-

lustrated by the behaviour of the birds: "Birds flew, first one, then a second, in at a window and out the opposite. There was little to obstruct, whether flight, thought or vision" (p. 390). The reader gains the impression that Ellen not only shares Pilcher's spiritual suffering, but also his intense desire to atone for his core of evil, the "grub" in his inner self. Ellen experiences a feeling of equanimity akin to a return to God in which she acknowledges her own weaknesses and dependence. She learns the true meaning of suffering discipleship as well as the acceptance of her own mortality.

Brady (1979 : 34) judges that Ellen Roxburgh really begins to discover her true humanity when she faces up to her own vulnerability. Acknowledgment of weaknesses, both spiritual and physical, is the avenue White uses to bring characters to essential understanding of God and the Real Self. Weakness, according to Brady, is the sign of the exodus which leads Ellen to God, for "salvation does not simply mean a state, it is an endless path which has been thrown open to us, a path which is ceaselessly characterized by a forgetting of that which lies behind and a straining forward to that which lies ahead" (1979 : 34).

White is the merciless vivisector in his portrayal of Cottle's visit to Ellen Roxburgh. The depiction of their meeting has all the elements of comedy and satire as well as being a scathing inditement of a political system, social inequality and an ineffective "white-wash" religion used as an accomplice to the purposes of the government in power. Cottle does not bring the true message of the Gospel. By his presence and hypocrisy he sanctions the bestial behaviour of the people who opt to play the role of God in deciding the fate of creatures often less guilty of cruelty than themselves. It is ironical that Cottle, in believing

that he is saving souls from hell, is in fact damning himself and his superiors who, in the final instance, bear full responsibility for the punishment inflicted on those in their care. In the light of her own suffering and the cruelty inflicted on Jack Chance, Ellen cannot accept the religion Cottle offers her.

While Ellen and Cottle pray together she again hears the screams of a prisoner being flogged. Ellen's startled and passionate cry, " 'What - yes, it is! Don't let them, for God's sake! They'll flog the skin off 'is back. They'll beat the soul out of 'n - and that's worse, a thousand times, than killing a man!" (p. 387), is the only voice raised in protest in an immured and unconcerned society that cannot develop beyond the illusive safety of its own self-righteousness. Ellen's compassion for the suffering of the unfortunate victims of justice inspires her to plan unsanctioned meetings with gangs of prisoners who, paradoxically, deride her attempts to understand their plight and help them as she would have helped Jack Chance.

Brady (1977 : 126) thinks Ellen's achievement, in the final instance, "derives not from her eccentricity but her ability to cope with the common destiny [of man], coping with it being sufficient here for the spirit's demands for greatness. And where White's other protagonists can achieve this greatness only at the point of death or in some excess of suffering and isolation, Ellen manages it by surviving, even by what a romantic might regard as surrender."

Manly Johnson (1979 : 92) observes that at the end of the novel Ellen Roxburgh is flanked, on the one hand by Mrs Lovell who represents motherhood and Miss Schrimshaw who represents the hope for an ordered universe on the other. The implication is that Ellen has found a "golden middle-

way". Her own name means "illumination" and this strengthens the argument that she does achieve a state of grace in the end. It is, however, imperative for her continued happiness that she maintain a balance between nature and civilization, because this state implies a sense of balance and synthesis between her "darker self" and her Real Self.

11.2 AUSTIN ROXBURGH

Austin is about fifty when he marries Ellen Gluyas. Being "delicate" not only becomes a part of his persona, it also ensures his grateful wife's attention and obedience. His inborn femininity, revealed in his fastidious behaviour and sexuality, could well have devolved into transvestism had he been given the same circumstances as Waldo Brown in The Solid Mandala or Eddie Twyborn in The Twyborn Affair. Austin, however, manages to sublimate his abnormal inclinations by studying the works of Virgil.

One reason why Austin marries Ellen is "to have dominion over a divinity" (p. 40). His moral black mail of Ellen's being, reveals a selfish and cruel nature. His negative character traits not only cause him to act spitefully, he also avoids the company of men, as, for example, the surveyor Stafford Merivale. There is evidence of selfishness in his relationship with people. Before his marriage, for instance, he was never on better terms with any living being than with his cat.

Up to the time of his marriage the highlights of Austin's life were aimless "walks" suggestive of the spiritual maze in which he finds himself. His maya is extremely limited.

The main reason for his irresolute behaviour is the direct influence of his doting mother, the early death of his father and his unadmitted homosexual love for his brother.

The Oedipal love Austin has for his mother is transferred to his wife. When he lies asleep in his wife's arms during their voyage from Van Dieman's Land, he nuzzles at her breast as a baby would (p. 161). Had he been less effeminate, delicate and dependent, his mother would not have sanctioned his marriage to a woman of Ellen's class and background. Mrs Roxburgh is, however, fully aware of his psychic aberrations caused by herself and is consequently willing to accept and train Ellen to be her son's mother-cum-maid. She knows that Ellen's gratitude for having been rescued from penury will fuse her being to that of her son.

In The Eye of the Storm Rory Macrory, a masculine Australian farmer, brings a new vitality to the spiritually and sexually anaemic Dorothy de Lascabanes. White creates a contrasting situation in A Fringe of Leaves in that Ellen becomes the host of her parasitic husband who taps her spiritual and physical well-being; so much so that in time she becomes a shadow of the vigorous farm girl she once was.

Austin's inferiority, selfishness and vanity as a husband are revealed in his endeavour to play the role of Pygmalion, Ellen being Gaitea. In a moment of self-induced euphoria he reveals the quality of his regard for his wife; he sees her "as the brittle work of art he was creating, the glaze of which might crack were she to become aware of her creator's flaws and transgressions" (p. 203). His narcissism leads him to believe that his destruction of an individual is actually a creative activity. The small ration of rum issued to the survivors of the wreck, makes him drunk enough to show his true feelings about Ellen when he

degrades her before the sailors. He does not understand that he belittles himself in the eyes of those who hold him in esteem for his rank as gentleman.

Austin's femininity negates his normal male aspiration to procreate. It also makes him aware of his wife's need to mate with his brother Garnet. During their stay at Dulcet he repeatedly urges Ellen to go out "riding" with Garnet. In this perverse manner he "shares" his brother's ardour through his wife and satisfies his incestuous craving for his brother's love (p. 198).

Austin Roxburgh's life as a scholar of the classics is greatly, if negatively, influenced by the philosophy of Virgil. Jill Ward (1978 : 406) argues that Austin's copy of Virgil's works "is used symbolically as a means of clarifying the danger of life lived primarily through the intellect, for Austin throughout the work has substituted culture for sensuality, intellect for instinct." It is thus inevitable that Austin as the feeble torchbearer of the light of ancient cultures will be overwhelmed by the dynamic savagery of the Aborigine people. Thus White strikes a prophetic note as regards the future of Western civilizations.

The survivors of the wreck of the Bristol Maid spend a short time on an uninhabited coral island. This sojourn is a watershed in Austin Roxburgh's life. He exposes himself fully to the elements and in this way manages to rid his esoteric self of facile trappings: "In advancing to the land's end he felt the trappings of wealth and station, the pride in ethical and intellectual aspirations, stripped from him with a ruthlessness reserved for those who accept their importance or who have remained unaware of their pretentiousness. Now he even suspected, not without a horrid

qualm, that his devoted wife was dispensable, and their unborn child no more than a footnote on nonentity" (p. 208). His awareness assumes a transcendental significance. White refers to it as "the final stages of his martyrdom" (p. 208).

Austin's enervated esoteric self reveals unexpected compassion for Spurgeon, a common sailor, who suffers terribly from boils. Austin uncharacteristically assumes responsibility for the welfare of another being: "Faced with this human derelict, Austin Roxburgh realized afresh that his experience of life, like his attitude to death, had been of a predominantly literary nature; in spite of which, it was required of him to exert himself as a member of the ruling class, for so he must still remain to the others in spite of his recent enlightenment" (p. 209).

Johnson (1979 : 230) is of the opinion that Austin redeems "his life in an act of humble service shortly before he is killed, when he bathes the open sores of Spurgeon, the ship's steward. This redemption is a 'sort of resurrection.' "

Austin Roxburgh's death even though in vain, has a dignity and forcefulness he lacked in life. Like Palfreyman in Voss he dies without having been of any real use.

11.3 JACK CHANCE

It would be simplistic to regard the life-story of Jack Chance as a mere narration or as a foil to the suffering of Ellen Roxburgh. Chance is no mere criminal and his suffering is not just a macabre tale of deserved hardship.

On the one hand Chance is the archetypal loser who by some apparently spiteful act of predestination seems to have no hope of saving his soul. His life, as an exercise in existentialism, is shrouded in darkness and surrounded by violent, unnatural death. It would be difficult to imagine an existence more hopeless and damned than that of the sewer scavengers of whom he becomes one. To such people death is a release. Chance prefers the "darkness" of the forest to the light of civilisation that has brought him so much pain and suffering. He does not fear the triangle as much as he fears the prospect of living an alien existence with Ellen, should such a life have been possible.

In spite of her noble aspirations Ellen battens on his strength and masculinity. In time he appears to be emasculated, caught between two worlds, both intent on destroying him. His death in obscurity is his only release from life.

X X X

Eddie Twyborn, in The Twyborn Affair attempts to conceal his Real Self, his femininity, by wearing female clothing, his fringe of leaves between what is real and what is apparent. Like Ellen Roxburgh he attempts to find the meaning of his existence in society. His suffering is a nightmare peopled by maladjusted sexual perverts. His death suggests that life as a transvestite is not only morally unacceptable, but impossible and that, in the end, there is no gateway to happiness for the sexually maladjusted being.

12.0 THE TWYBORN AFFAIR

It is strange that Patrick White should regard two such widely different novels as The Aunt's Story and The Twyborn Affair as of his best work. The probable link lies in White's adult illusion that grace can be found in spiritual equanimity and his aged disillusion with life as well as his waning physical ability. In this regard it is significant that some critics believe The Twyborn Affair to be more self-revealing than White's autobiography, Flaws in the Glass.

It is probable that one of White's underlying aims in The Twyborn Affair is to shock a conservative cross-section of his reading public, not only by the sordid subject matter, but by the revelation of himself as a man of "many parts". A critic of the calibre of John Beston, who has written extensively on the work of Patrick White, levels relevant criticism at the repulsive aspects of the novel, especially at the frequent use of coarse language. Manly Johnson, on the other hand, defends such grossness by stating that on "reading White, as in reading Dante, we have to go through hell before we can come out on the other side" (1981 : 163). Johnson adds that White does not offer paradise, only infernos and purgatories. The unnecessary references to sex and bodily functions, however, cannot be condoned because in Voss, for example, White achieves success without having to resort to a masochistic display of depraved lust. Eadith Trist, in Part Three of the novel, not only experiences perverse pleasure in "fondling" the naked bodies of the whores whose affairs she manages, she even has peepholes made in bedroom doors to satisfy her sexual fantasies.

The Twyborn Affair, as regards its sexuality, is firmly rooted in White's own dilemma as a homosexual: "the whole tragicomedy of sex" (Flaws in the Glass : 85).

Manly Johnson, who like so many of White's critics, believes The Twyborn Affair is based on White's own experiences, explains that Angelos Vatatzes, in Part One, refers to Eudoxia as a "scribbler" and "some kind of life-mystic". These oblique references point to White himself as well as to the tormented psyche within the envelope of flesh. Johnson makes an interesting point when he states that "White's real life, after 1940, is an extrapolation of Eddie's fictional life which ends in 1940" (1981 : 60).

Veronica Brady, writing from a Christian point of view, regards The Twyborn Affair to be a personal unmasking that includes acts of shamelessness: "The self-consciousness which has always plagued the novels now appears what it has always been, a tactic to defend himself [White] against the fate of Narcissus, falling into the pool of self and drowning there" (1982 : 38).

Whereas A Fringe of Leaves refers to the Virgilian idyll, The Twyborn Affair reveals a Dantean-like inferno for which the reader has been prepared as far back as The Living and the Dead. White, on writing about unhappiness and the lack of real meaning in life states that "your own hell is what Hell always boils down to" (p. 320). White's pronouncement refers to the brothel, his vision of hell, filled with lost souls tormented and dominated by perverted and soul-destroying lust. This "hell" stands in direct contrast to the state of spiritual grace achieved by some of his elect, for example, Stan Parker in The Tree of Man. It is also significant that whereas hell and grace in the earlier novels are endured and achieved after suffering physically

and spiritually, Eddie Twyborn's purgatory, including his loss of grace, is, paradoxically, located amidst the trap-pings of luxury and wealth.

White's portrayal of the activities in a Second World War brothel is convincing if shocking. The whores themselves are overtly sexual and their behaviour is a condemnation of women's doubtful liberation from the strictures imposed on them by post-Victorian society. Part Three of the novel is a sardonic comment on upper-class morality in that "outside" women occasionally volunteer to exchange places with the whores for the mere fun of it. Riemer (1980 : 15) is correct when he writes that the novel highlights the absurdity of mankind and its endeavours.

A sense of sterility and waste pervades not only the lives of the individual characters, but society as well. The sanctity of marriage is an enigma which paradoxically enhances the loneliness and fragmentation of individuals, causing them to look for happiness elsewhere: "Behind the individual and particular forms of suffering lies the primordial root of all suffering and evil - the original separation of the part from the whole" (Beatson : 1976 : 112).

White makes repeated references to the enmity that characterises the relationship between men and women. The cruelty they perpetrate is manifested in the removal of the aura of respectability from a fellow being's way of life, thereby exposing the anxious psyche. These acts are founded in a feeling of inferiority as well as a sense of injustice for having been forced into life. Eddie Twyborn's attack on Marcia Lushington is rooted in his own sexual incompetence

and psychic duality. He cannot condone his own behaviour because he knows that real love may not be fragmented, debased or founded on selfishness. Bliss (1986 : 176) postulates that it is not love that evades Eddie Twyborn, but Eddie that avoids love.

Deeply concerned about the lack of love in life, White once again pursues the concept of inherent evil, the "grub in the rose" he first mentioned in The Aunt's Story. His aim is still to emphasise that appearances are deceptive. His point of view includes the natural setting which acts as a background to the characters' thoughts and behaviour. The element of discord (the grub) in the setting is usually the character himself. The natural surroundings of "Crimson Cottage" where Angelos and Eudoxia stay are spoilt by the "menace invariably concealed in landscape and time" (p. 17) and by the unnatural union of the lovers. The "sewerish air" dispels any romantic quality there might have been.

Maes-Jelinek (1984 : 170) makes an interesting observation about gardens in The Twyborn Affair. She regards the metaphor of the garden "as a nursery for human relationships that easily turns from a refuge into a prison." Eudoxia cultivates the garden of the "Crimson Cottage" in the same way she "cultivates" her brothel and whores. As with Eadith Trist, her last thoughts are about a garden, a lost Eden in this instance.

David Blamires (1980 : 79) believes Eddie Twyborn's quest is not only for something he believes he lost in his childhood. It includes "a quest for his mother, a determination to come to terms with an obscure controlling power, to throw off its mesmeric effects and become its equal." Veronica Brady adds that Eddie Twyborn spends all his time "searching for something which has been lost in childhood, or perhaps even at

birth, at the beginning of the physical existence which is so burdensome to the spirit" (1980 : 36). The "something" Brady refers to is Eddie's sexual self. Bliss (1986 : 168) believes "Eddie's search for a sexual self is confounded by a related but less conscious quest - the quest for his past" which is confounded by a lesbian mother and a father who cannot answer his son's love for him. His desire to establish a meaningful relationship with his parents explains why he prefers the company of older men and women. Eddie's affair with the virginal Philip Tring is an exception.

Eddie Twyborn is much the same as White's other elect in that he too leaves a loveless home to go in search of his Real Self. He feels he is "faced, as always, with an impersonation of reality [his feminine self]" (p. 172 : my addition). His spiritual suffering is caused by his attempt to be free of his deceitful physical body. The difference between Theodora Goodman (The Aunt's Story) and Eddie Twyborn is that whereas she ventures into the country of the mind, Eddie Twyborn embarks on an adventure into the realm of depraved sexuality. Although Theodora Goodman's "male" body is an encumbrance to transcendence, it does not handicap her psyche to the same degree Eddie Twyborn's body does his. Theodora's physical desires are sublimated and remain subdued except for brief moments when she experiences a form of rapture as, for example, when she dances with Frank Parrott. Ramsey (1980 : 91) points out that Eddie Twyborn encapsulates the fragments of "the other selves he has encountered or succeeded. In this sense, therefore, his person can be seen both to possess and to give new life to a whole cast of other characters. Like Theodora Goodman, his soul breaks up into the splinters of past lives and experiences perhaps even with the same intentions as Theodora's own - hoping that by truthful confrontation with the past [the

Jardin Exotique] and the mystery of personality he will both destroy and discover his true self in a final, triumphant rebirth" (my addition).

White casts Eddie Twyborn in the impossible role of King Lear who could not understand or reconcile the physical and spiritual duality of his being. Eddie's predicament is revealed in White's terse comment: "She was as invaluable a presence in a brothel as she would have been in a nunnery" (p. 394).

12.1 EDDIE TWYBORN

Christianity, in 1 Corinthians : 6, teaches that a man and woman who have sexual intercourse become "one body", in this manner sharing a sense of "oneness" followed by fulfilment. Such a fusion of two separate beings, together with the thoughts of procreation, is impossible for the hermaphroditic, Tiresian figure, who is both male and female. Such a "chaotic" condition is the essence of loneliness and alienation. The hermaphrodite may attempt to adopt either sexual role, but his attempt is doomed to failure because the psyche and the body are in a state of conflict.

Eddie Twyborn who is psychically a woman and physically a male finds himself in the critical situation of being a transsexual by the accident of his birth. Through him, White tentatively approaches, but does not solve the mystic problem of birth in which the immortal soul, comprising both animus and anima, may be cast in a body entirely foreign and unsuitable to its nature. Riemer supports this argument when he states that, in The Twyborn Affair Patrick White explores the dissimilarity between the soul and the created matter it is forced to inhabit. This matter, the human body, is paradoxically the vehicle and aid to an eventual

understanding of being and the attainment of grace through suffering by which the physical component is eroded. Some characters prefer to break away from the clutches of the flesh by committing suicide. Riemer (1980 : 19) believes there can be no resurrection for the dualist.

It is therefore no wonder that Eddie Twyborn seems to disintegrate, "to have less to offer at each stage, and her life as 'madam' in the final section is more of an evasion than a discovery of self" (McClaren, 1979 : 8). Macainsh (1983 : 146) supports the hypothesis of Eddie Twyborn's duality when he declares that his "ego is only an unending series of states of soul, which nothing binds together."

The rupture in communication between parents and children, which features so prominently in White's novels, is graphically illustrated in the portrayal of the Twyborn family. Peter Beatson reveals that the typical Whitean family "is composed of father, mother and two children" (1976 : 113). The Twyborn family, by a cruel quirk of fate, is no exception because Eddie, as a result of his bisexuality, is both son and daughter.

Eddie Twyborn's quest for his true identity brings him more knowledge and experience in life than anyone can be required to endure. Caught, through no fault of his own, in an impossible situation, he weeps for the past and future which both seem formless: "Turning a cheek against the hot pillow, Eudoxia Twyborn [the role Eddie assumes in Part One of the novel] wept inwardly for the past as well as a formless future" (p. 138 : my addition).

Eddie Twyborn, when not involved in escapist lust or attempts to avoid unwelcome attention, is adversely influenced by his reading of La Rochefoucauld, a particularly sombre

writer. La Rochefoucauld's influence explains the masochistic elements in Eddie's suffering. At times he believes he cannot exist without suffering: "he knew that his body and his mind craved the everlasting torments" (p. 272).

Eddie Twyborn's spiritual and emotional vacillation is revealed in his wish to have the same firm foundations and longevity as a living tree: "How enviable this alive tree encased in its cork armour, hardly a tremor in its gnarled arms; its downthrust roots firmly holding. To have such stability - or is oneself the strongest stanchion one can hope for? To realise this is perhaps to achieve stability" (p. 33).

PART ONE

(As Eddie Twyborn adopts a female role in this section of the novel the feminine will be used when referring to him.)

Eddie Twyborn, as Eudoxia (coming from the English word "doxy" meaning mistress) is not a convincing character despite critical acclaim. Her femininity depends on "flowing" movements and an inborn gracefulness despite her physical angularity. She uses her "pomegranate" shawl (sardonically related to the rise and fall myth of Ceres and Persephone) to conceal her male identity and keep intruders at bay.

A woman like Joanie Golson, having herself been involved in a lesbian affair, would not be fooled by such obviously masculine traits as large feet, knobbly toes and a flat, hairy chest. It is equally unlikely that she could fool a brothel full of experienced whores.

Up to the time of Joanie Golson's unwelcome intrusion into their privacy, Angelos Vatatzes' "love" for Eudoxia, his "hetaira", is sufficient to afford her an air of detachment and a feeling of serenity. The odd couple seem to enjoy an aura of happiness within a fragile bubble of time. The seclusion of the villa where they stay protects them from discovery and allows them to pursue their passion for each other with wantonness. The sensuality of their relationship is revealed in the piano duet they play: "the music was brought to its triumphant close in an upward flurry of unashamedly brazen notes. As they flung them from their fingers the two players teetered on their shared stool, shoulders hunched, torsos inclined backwards from the hips, before they turned, facing, laughing at each other _ _ _" (p. 18). There is a disgusting depravity in the way Angelos and Eudoxia kiss. It is an act of destruction (especially on the part of Eudoxia who reflects her passion for her father in her affair with Angelos), displaying the reckless abandon of a homosexual's realisation of imminent disaster and pain.

As most of the married couples in White's novels (the Sanderson couple in Voss is a notable exception) are unhappy and strangers to each other it is reasonable to deduce, from what one concludes in The Twyborn Affair, that White advocates a relationship like the one between Angelos and Eudoxia. White condones, even seems to bless their relationship by describing their kiss as a prelude to "perfect union" (p. 18). Eudoxia experiences their relationship as "Gentle perfection" (p. 22).

Eudoxia, like all White's elect, has an intelligent and "vivisecting" mind. She does not spare herself in her analyses of her spiritually sterile and solipsistic existence. Her unadmitted, intuitive awareness of the self-

destructive and unfulfilling nature of her relationship with Angelos and her father, Judge Twyborn, gives rise to intermittent feelings of hate for Angelos, the focal-point of her life in St Mayeul: "If I hate him at times it's because I hate myself" (p. 23). She does not as yet understand that her anger is directed at her father for having "caused" her birth and at Angelos, as her father's substitute, with whom she then commits "incest". Her vacillation between love and hate polarises and fragments her entire being.

After the arrival of Joanie Golson Eudoxia realises that she, like Theodora Goodman in The Aunt's Story must shed her present existence. Separation from Angelos implies a severance from her father to whom she is secretly, even sexually attracted: "I was brimming with love for this man I was privileged to call 'Father', while going through life avoiding calling him anything unless it was dragged out of me" (p. 34). The spiritual strictures imposed on Eudoxia by Angelos and her homosexual lust - "I am committed by fate and orgasm - never love" (p. 39) - can only be removed by death: "for the initiate is yet to learn the doctrine that the body possesses no will with which to direct the body to salvation" (Riemer, 1980 : 21).

Joanie Golson causes Eudoxia to remember her origins and the reality of her untenable condition: "I'm not ungrateful, only resentful of certain aspects of life which must remain withheld from me, though I try to persuade myself I can experience all by efforts of will or imagination" (p. 26). The unexpected realisation that she cannot break all ties with her past and create a new existence makes her life with Angelos suddenly restrictive. White uses the ball of discarded human hair (p. 79) as a metaphor for the futility and meaninglessness of their lives together. Eudoxia's sense of desolation is increased, during the storm, by the impression

that the Holy Ghost has deserted her, thereby ensuring her damnation. This realisation makes her continued life with Angelos an exercise in futility.

Eudoxia's impulsive decision to swim out to sea in the pre-dawn light reveals her desperation to escape from an impossible situation and to return to the "womb" of time and creation. The sea and the rising sun, images rich in symbolic meaning, change Eudoxia's intention to destroy herself and afford her a renewed purpose in life. Her emergence from the sea is clearly a form of rebirth. The death of Angelos follows soon after leaving Eudoxia free to adopt another role.

Monsieur Pelletier, a newspaper vendor, witnesses Eudoxia's agony and rebirth, "glittering with archetypal gold and silver, of light and water - life in fact" (p. 76). Pelletier's behaviour, in reaction to what he sees, is the same as that of another sexual pervert, Cec Cutbush in The Vivisector. Cutbush, in reaction to the meaninglessness of his own life as a homosexual, masturbates at the moon and hidden lovers. Both men betray their disillusion with life and man's puny attempts to play God. Eddie Twyborn himself, in anger because of what he is, masturbates when he has been rejected by Marcia Lushington. Pelletier's wasted semen, like the depraved fornication in Eadith Trist's brothel, once again underlines the sterility of the homosexual's life and his impotent anger because of what he has become.

PART TWO

Eddie Twyborn joins the army and takes part in the war (during which he wins medals for bravery) for the same reason he becomes a jackeroo, namely, in the vain hope that he may discover his Real Self in what is traditionally a man's world. The chaos caused by the War parallels the confusion in his own self.

Eddie Twyborn's voyage "home" to Australia after the War is marked by his aversion to the company of male and female passengers. At a dance on board the ship he avoids "a campaigning vulva" and "Colonel's crotch" (p. 141), because he does not want to betray his attempt at sexual non-alignment. His uncommitted attitude, however, brings him no relief.

Eddie Twyborn's growing conviction that he does not belong anywhere, even to his parents, is evident in his belief that he is merely a part of the jig-saw puzzle that is life: "He wondered what part he had played in their [his parents'] lives during his absence, perhaps no more than they in his own unwilling memory: a series of painful, washed-out flickers. Unless those who lead what are considered real lives see the past as an achieved composite of fragments, like a jig-saw from which only some of the details are missing, or cannot be fitted" (p. 146).

Neither Judge Twyborn nor his wife, Eadie, understands their son's need to communicate his anguish to them. This lack of empathy is, ironically, caused by his being a male. His mother unwillingly acknowledges him as her son although she would have preferred a daughter (p. 149). She knows that Eddie has become the "mirror image of herself" (p.149) with the significant difference that she is predominantly masculine and he feminine. The Twyborns' sexual dilemma is

complicated by the Judge who senses that this son is a transvestite, secretly in love with him, a man "himself in disguise" (p. 150). Eddie's tragedy thus lies in his parents' sexual aberrations: "Oh, God, but I feel for them, because I know exactly - they are what I am, and I am they - interchangeable" (p. 142).

Eddie becomes a jackeroo at Bogong, Fossiker's Flat. (Fossiking is an Australian term for aimless activity.) The change in ambience, both as regards natural setting and the type of people, is not only striking but influential as well. The dismal shack Eddie shares with Don Prowse the foreman, and Mrs Tyrrell a housekeeper resembles the Dreck from which he must be reborn in the same manner Ellen Roxburgh in A Fringe of Leaves is reborn out of the primeval darkness of the forest. Initially uncommitted, and not yet identified as a "queen", Eddie moves closer to reality and the core of being symbolised in Denny Allen.

The natural surroundings of "Bogong" are dismal, especially in winter (p. 175). In its own peculiar, harsh way the setting becomes Eddie's exercise in penitence as well as the barometer of his emotional and sex life. It is characteristic of White's credo that Eddie should believe, like so many of the elect before him, that he will find his true identity in nature: "He suspected that salvation most likely lay in the natural phenomenon surrounding those unable to rise to the spiritual heights of a religious faith" (p. 223). Lonely excursions into the countryside awaken Eddie's unconscious longing for a long-lost Eden: "As he continued thumping automatically at his wholly unresponsive mount, loss of faith in himself was replaced by an affinity with the landscape surrounding him. It happened very gradually,

in spite of a sadistic wind, the sour grass, deformed trees, rocks crouching like great animals petrified by time" (p. 194).

His hopes that he will at last come to terms with his self is an illusion: "Happiness was perhaps the reward of those who cultivate illusion or who, like Denny Allen, have it thrust upon them by some tutelary being, and then are granted sufficient innocent grace to sustain it" (p. 249). Eddie, like White, realises that a successful quest for meaning is founded on real love and not on any pretence of affection. Greg Lushington, as the "blind" commentator on life remarks: "I expect it's about love - that's where everything seems to lead - in some form or other. Unfulfilled love" (p. 232).

The sheep-herders' attitude to life, in contrast to that of Eddie Twyborn and Marcia Lushington, is essentially pragmatic. Dot's marriage to Denny Ellen while she expecting her father's child is an example. She would not have been able to survive on the flats without a husband to care for her. The rebellion of her female psyche against such immorality and prostitution is revealed in her vixenish behaviour towards her husband.

Eddie Twyborn's budding esoteric self is shattered when he is raped by Prowse whose sexuality involuntarily responds to Eddie's femininity. Prowse's loneliness, his "masochistic" reason for fornicating and abusing the use of alcohol, is entrenched in his wife's timely escape from the desolation of Bogong. Despite the sexual escapism Marcia Lushington affords Prowse, he is spiritually eroded by self-pity. He finds a sympathetic listener in Eddie whose role in their relationship is essentially feminine. Eddie, in spite of his decision to remain celibate, responds to his sexual

awareness of Prowse's masculinity: "If he had been a woman in body as well as in psyche, Eddie might have put out a tentative hand and touched an orange paw" (p. 188). Prowse's involuntary "courting" of Eddie takes the form of shared intimacies, secrets and an uncharacteristic willingness to share his liquor.

The focal point of Prowse's unhappiness shifts from his wife to Eddie. No wonder that when he does surrender to his homosexual tendencies, his "coming out" should be accompanied by sexual violence that is an admission of his shame and a surrender of his role as male. Having succumbed to his animus, Prowse reveals a refined and even gentlemanly behaviour. He seems grateful that he no longer has to maintain his show of masculinity.

White, most likely considering his own youth, points out that the mainspring of Prowse's homosexuality lies in his early youth when his mother treated him as if he were a girl: "Mum was holding a frocked moppet with abundant curls. Rather a pugnacious, scowling child. A miniature of herself in fact" (p. 259).

Being raped becomes a turning point in Eddie's life. His chagrin is increased by his guilty admission that he had wanted Prowse to "bugger" him. He is also forced to acknowledge that he was seduced by Marcia Lushington. Eddie admits the failure of his hopes to be a male (p. 282). His psychic suffering is greatly increased by the realisation that he will never experience a real, fulfilling life. Mortification of the flesh, as in Manichean systems, does not lead the spirit out of the physical maze into which it is born.

In White's statute Prowse suggests the male's need for a meaningful relationship with another man. Emasculation through marriage causes many of the husbands in White's novels to become pitiful shadows of their former, assertive selves. Lust becomes the "grub" in the relationship between Eddie and Don Prowse. Eddie's having sex with Prowse is a spiteful, meaningless act of revenge, not so much for what Prowse did to him, as for his own powerlessness to resist the demands of his physical self.

Eddie Twyborn's quarrel with Marcia Lushington (p. 293), during which he is uncharacteristically vindictive and crude, is not so much a difference of opinion or a revelation of their incompatibility. It is a violent confession of his aberrations and his inability to control them. Eddie, now bound to Prowse by a sexual affinity, cannot bear losing Prowse to Marcia Lushington. She humiliates Eddie by hinting at his homosexuality. It is a quirk of fate that Eddie, as a homosexual, should get Marcia pregnant. His sterility is, however, enforced by the death of the child.

Greg Lushington, a man among men, and Eddie's surrogate father, is a weakling in the hands of his wife. Her adultery could not possibly have escaped his attention. His casual and seemingly irrelevant use of the word "placebo" on the night Marcia seduces Eddie is an oblique reference to Eddie and the role he plays in Marcia's life. Some time later Lushington remarks, laconically, that he chose the wrong word. It should rather have been "purulence" (p. 283), again a direct reference to and a comment on the sordidness of the affair between Eddie and Marcia.

PART THREE

(Eddie Twyborn is again referred to in the feminine in this section of the novel.)

Part Three of The Twyborn Affair reveals White at his worst as a novelist, especially as regards his choice of subject matter and use of vulgar terms. Much of the narrative and dialogue is permeated by an "atmosphere of spent cigarettes, stale cigar, dried semen (and once again, human s___)" (p. 310). Even though Patrick White attempts to make Eddie Twyborn, now Eadith Trist, the genii of this section of the novel, he fails because she sets in motion emotional forces she cannot cope with.

London becomes Eddie Twyborn's "waste land", "a world of fragmentation and despair" (p. 420). Eddie fondly believes his past, which he refuses to acknowledge, will not intrude into such circumstances. White no longer concerns himself with the suffering of the individual only. He portrays society labouring under the illusion that God no longer exists. Custom, archetypal and generated, no longer acts as a moral norm. Anarchy and amorphism have come in its place. White implies that a state of grace is impossible in such circumstances.

Eadith Trist's brothel is a demonic version of Eden, and reflects man's longing to be free from the demanding and spiritually parasitic world he has created for himself out of conceit and a futile attempt to establish permanence in a state of flux. The men (and women) who frequent the brothel do so in an attempt to forget their present circumstances (and partners) by surrendering to their lust that becomes their demi-god. There can be no transcendence or any experience of spiritual revival in such a hedonistic way of

life. The brothel, having come in the place of the church, recalls Greg Lushington's use of the word "placebo". It is significant that Edith Twyborn, Eadith's mother, should turn to the church for support when she is no longer driven by her lust and lesbian inclinations.

As the "madam" of a brothel, Eadith Trist attempts to exorcise her demon bi-sexuality by satiating her self in an erotic ambience. Her love for Angelos and Gravenor is the only redeeming feature and island of hope in a sea of sordid images. The "love" Eadith and Gravenor have for each other is maintained at a platonic level because Eadith does not want to reveal her real physical self. In time their sexual drive wanes, and they experience a non-sexual union that is somewhat similar to the love Laura Trevelyan and Voss have for each other. The major difference is that Eadith Trist and Gravenor do not experience any form of transcendence.

It is meaningful, in the light of Eadith's hermaphroditism, and suggestive of her non-being, that she should choose the "between time" of dawn to move about in search of an understanding of her self: "She came to terms with reality between two dawns in the deserted park" (p. 310) where sex and sexuality are irrelevant.

The garish clothes and jewels Eadith wears are similar to the gaudiness of her brothel: "As she prospered her jewels had become increasingly elaborate, tortuous, inspiring amazed gasps rather than passive admiration. Like her clothes, they delighted those who enjoy a touch of the bizarre in the uniform present" (p. 337). The "bleeding heart" is kept well out of sight.

Although a mask is the equivalent of the chrysalis (Cirlot, 1971 : 205) there can be no rebirth or change for the better in Eadith's life. Her clothes and jewels are merely another kind of shawl to take the place of the pomegranate-patterned one she used in her youth to conceal her masculine appearance. In his portrayal of the aging Eadith Trist, White once again reveals his fear of and disgust with old age: "What the hell! She blew a fart of all the Ursulas at every spurious work of art. Herself included. In the glass a ravaged mess, a travesty no amount of lipstick and powder and posturing would ever disguise to her own satisfaction" (p. 351). The easy flow of her youth changes into sluggishness and monotony.

The tragedy of this stage of Eadith Trist's life is the knowledge that there is no way out of her situation and that death is fast approaching. It is this realization that makes her seduction of Philip Tring an act of vindictiveness. Up to this stage of his writing career, White has not allowed his elect to form meaningful and lasting relationships, loneliness being one of the conditions for grace. In The Twyborn Affair White fuses the relationship between Eadith Trist and Philip Tring on an intimate, sexual level - almost a marriage - thereby betraying his own concept of spiritual love as postulated in Voss. The degenerate affair is a devolution of, for example, Hurtle Duffield's longing for a spiritual child (The Vivisector).

It is true that Eadith Trist has nightmares of having a child of her own. In the light of her circumstances it is significant that she dreams when she is "physically exhausted _ _ _ [and] reduced to moral slag" (p. 352 : my addition). In her first dream she may examine the perfection of the child, but may not bath it. The mother becomes ugly and vicious when she attempts to do so: "She was

warned back, at first not overtly, but by implication, till finally the fleece on which both were kneeling turned to grit, stones, road-metal. Dishwater, sewage, putrid blood were gushing out of the faceless mother from the level at which her mouth should have been. The intruder was desolated by a rejection she should have expected" (p. 352). The faceless mother suggests Eadith's feminine self and the intruder her masculine self that changes the purity of the bond between mother and child into something evil. The mirror analogue to Eddie Twyborn's youth is obvious.

Eadith Trist has a similar transcendental experience in yet another dream which arises from her love for Gravenor and her longing for motherhood. In her second dream she finds herself in a windowless and almost unfurnished room. It is illuminated by a "flesh-coloured, infra-natural light" (p. 413). The room is comparable to her own non-existent womb. Once again her male body makes her dream impossible: "She understood by degrees that the children wanted out; the safe, windowless room (its walls even upholstered she noticed) was the cause of their distress and she the only one they held responsible for their unreasonable imprisonment" (p. 414). The children are comparable to her own animus clamouring for recognition.

It is at the lowest point of their physical and spiritual decline that White's elect reach the turning point from which they begin, however gradually, a process of bodily and physical change preparatory to a return to God on the last leg of man's existential triangle. The apogee takes place in unusual circumstances, for example in the "eye" of a storm or after having suffered a stroke as in The Vivisector. The crisis in Eadith Trist's life comes when she, as a non-believer, faces an empty church while waiting for her mother to appear. Instead of a sensation of grace and

atonement, Eadith experiences an "orchestration of foreboding" (p. 407). She refuses to accept the expiation offered by her mother and the church.

Mother and "daughter" meet at sunset, suggesting, symbolically, that their apparent reconciliation is either too late or will not bring happiness into their lives. When Edith asks if Eadith is her son Eddie, the latter angrily writes in the old woman's prayer-book that she is her "daughter". Admission and acceptance cauterise the suffering of many years and establish the longed for mother-daughter relationship. Influenced by the setting sun and relieved by her confession Eadith wonders about the source and course of her life: "She was both personal and remote; those blotched hands must have pressed on her own belly to help expel in blood and anguish the child struggling out of it" (p. 424). The blood that accompanied her birth is not a sign of the Covenant and redemption. It merely serves to emphasize the child's suffering.

The promise of reconciliation and happiness as a "daughter" hastens Eadith's decision to give the brothel to Ada, a far cry from the faithful family retainer of White's earlier novels. Still wearing her heavy make-up, Eadith leaves the brothel dressed in a cheap suit, creaking shoes and a too small shirt (p. 428). Her variegated appearance emphasises the duality of her psyche and the fact that her dilemma has not been resolved. Bliss believes Eddie is intent on remaking himself from the fragments: "He has reclaimed his original identity, while retaining remnants of the other" (1986 : 179).

History, in the holocaust of World War II, destroys Eadith Trist. Brady (1984 : 41) suggests that history is merely another name for contingency: "the ultimate antagonist not only of art, but of all attempts to find meaning and purpose."

The close of the novel leaves the reader with the impression of fiery judgment, damnation and no hope of a chariot to bring relief from suffering. Instead of the transience and rapture of Riders in the Chariot we are faced with White's ultimate vision, the fragmentation of the individual with no hope of returning to God.

Eadith Trist cannot be her true self in the charade that is life, where man can only be his sordid self in a brothel. Her role of "mother superior" (p. 394) reveals the fate of mankind: "Tears were falling for the past the present for all hallowed hell on earth" (p. 376). Nothing of lasting value can come from a brothel where life (pregnancy) is feared and conception aborted.

In The Tree of Man White concludes by writing "in the end, there was no end" (Tree, p. 480). The Twyborn Affair reveals his ultimate disillusion with life and his belief that there can be no grace or salvation in life - or in death. At the end of Eddie Twyborn's life his mandala is as limited as it ever was, despite the promise by his mother that she will accept her son as her daughter.

Eddie's life and death confirm that "an incapacity to achieve true integration signifies the end of all beginning, whether in the form of actual physical creation or simply the creation of new illusions" (Ramsey, 1980 : 90). Eddie admits that he is a freak, "a kind of mistake trying to correct itself" (p. 143).

Eddie Twyborn's Real Self is denied emergence from his physical self. The promise of fulfilment as his mother's "daughter" is as much of an illusion as each of his loves has been. He never manages to find love. His dying during a bomb attack in London fills him with an awareness of what he is losing. Although his life has been characterised by its meaninglessness and guilt he does not experience the anxiety of the unknown and death which he regards as a release from the confusion of his physical being.

Eddie is not only "twy" born. His adopting several sexual roles is his own attempt at rebirth. Each attempt fails. It seems evident, that his real "rebirth" only takes place at the time of his death when he is carried away on "the crimson current of his own ebbing blood" (p. 430). This blood is, by analogy, related to the blood associated with his own birth (p. 424).

Patrick White's literary work reveals his own genius in the first place and then the influence of world-renowned authors and thinkers. His novels, especially Riders in the Chariot, show his keen interest in the influential religions of the world, as well as in the dilemma of modern man direly in need of a renewed and sustaining belief in God. The impact of his academic training, wide reading and genuine love for the theatre and art is readily discernible and has, from the start influenced his style, thought, technique and the subject matter of his novels. I am convinced that Patrick White will, in time to come, be regarded as one of the masters of twentieth century literature, a pioneer in the literary investigation of the human psyche in relation to God and the post-lapsarian world with which, by its spiritual nature and origin, the psyche must be in a state of enmity.

In this study it has become apparent that in White's canon the soul is not distinct from the mind or the consciousness. It is within the act of consciousness that the soul is brought into existence: "it appears to us as a marvellous play of possibilities which, in a way, are presented to us as possibilities, not of certain things or of certain events, but of ourselves that is, of our soul, in as much as our soul is precisely the possibility which actualises itself" (Zurcher, 1969 : 124). It is incorrect to accept Laura Trevelyan's pronouncement about the "triangle of being" (Voss : p. 386) as pertaining to all White's novels. The Tree of Man, Riders in the Chariot and Voss suggest a definite return to God as the Source; A Fringe of Leaves and The Twyborn Affair, for example, do not.

White's philosophy implies that death is a "crossing over" (in itself a powerful Christian concept) into another world and a reunion with God which entails a cosmic consciousness of a fourth dimension of being. White does not attempt to describe this "fourth dimension" in any detail. In Voss, White describes life after death as a vast silence into which, for example, Frank Le Mesurier, "climbs" after having put an end to his own life: "Then, with his remaining strength, he was opening the hole wider, until he was able to climb out into the immense fields of silence" (p. 381 : my emphasis).

All White's characters intuit, in varying degrees of intensity and clarity, the promise of divine grace: "She could not visualize it. She only positively believed in what she saw and was and what she was was too real too diverse composed of everyone she had known and loved and not always altogether loved it is better than nothing and given birth to and for God's sake" (The Eye of the Storm : p. 424). Few, however, receive it: "Above her were stars she might not have noticed since - oh, too long - since 'Kudjeri'. If only the lid could be lifted from her head to let out the bursting rockets of thoughts alternating with evil smog, she might see more clearly; but clear vision, she suspected, is something you shed with childhood and do not regain unless death is a miracle of light; which she doubted" (The Eye of the Storm : p. 298). In the case of Mary Hare (Riders in the Chariot) there is the suggestion of rapture. Mary, like Enoch, does not die. She disappears and is never heard of again. It is thus clear that in White's canon death does not, as a matter of course mean that the person involved attains cosmic consciousness or a reunion with God. Experience of spacelessness (Voss) and timelessness (The Eye of the Storm) and the intuition of another world within this one (The Tree of Man and The Aunt's Story) implies a return

to a pre-lapsarian state and reunion with God. Amy Parker in The Tree of Man intuits that her husband, after his death, is in "the boundless garden" (p. 478).

The most perplexing aspect of White's philosophy is the involuntary types of suffering the elect have to endure. White does not deal with the metaphysics of birth and suffering because, as I see it, these aspects of life are mysteries no man fully understands. White suggests that the soul, as coming from God, is androgynous and throughout its physical state reveals an urgent if instinctive longing to return to its ineffable state of grace with God, the "One, and no other figure, [who] is the answer to all sums" (The Tree of Man : p. 477 : my addition). The soul's link with its Source is never completely severed because the elect, in life, experience moments of clarity that reaffirm their synthesis with a blessed state of being. Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews (11 : 13) calls people who are like White's elect "foreigners and refugees on earth".

The so-called "loonies" like Doll Quigley and her brother Bub (The Tree of Man) seem to have a more direct and intimate tie with "that other world" than the lesser characters, for example the Bonners in Voss, have: "But Stan Parker continued to think of Doll Quigley, her still, limpid presence that ignored the stronger, muddier currents of time. It was through ignorance perhaps. Or else the purposes of God are made clear to some old women, and nuns, and idiots" (The Tree of Man : p. 214). The "loonies'" behaviour suggests that they sense truth and the miracle of Creation in a more personal and intense manner and seem to regard nature as a form of communion with God.

The psyches of the non-elect, the "rest", intuit a desperate sense of "loss" and impending vacuousness and meaninglessness. In the awful knowledge that their quests are futile they resemble the fallen angels who have no hope of ever returning to God. There is a strong element of predestination in White's approach to the problem of what happens to the immortal soul. The reader is faced by the mystery (and apparent unfairness) of why characters like Voss and Elizabeth Hunter (The Eye of the Storm) who are not likable or "good" characters like Arthur Brown in The Solid Mandala, are included among those of White's elect who are released from the negative influence of their physical selves and confining circumstances: "As he stood waiting for the flesh to be loosened on him, he prayed for greater clarity, and it became obvious as a hand. It was clear that One, and no other figure, is the answer to all sums" (The Tree of Man : p. 477 : my emphasis).

A surprising paradox in White's philosophy is reflected in "good" people being sent to institutions for the mentally unstable, White's equivalent for hell, and a demonic microcosm of the world they lived and suffered in. As I have mentioned before in this study, this additional torment could possibly be a further purification of their beings.

One of the most difficult questions the reader of White's novels has to answer is who White's elect are and why they should be regarded as his elect.

A tentative answer requires a partial division of his characters into types or categories. There are the men and women who comprise "society", a class of people White detests because of their wholly pragmatic and materialistic approach to life. The Rosetree (Rosenbaum) family in Riders in the Chariot, who change their surname and religion to

conform to society and for material gain, is a relevant example. White is particularly antagonistic towards the women (Marion Neville and Elsa Boilean in The Aunt's Story) who fall into this category. The women are considered to be "murderers" as in the case of Mrs Jolley and Mrs Flack (Riders in the Chariot). Vic Moriarty (Happy Valley) first destroys her husband's self-esteem by her persistent nagging and then his masculinity by having an affair with Clem Hagan. Even an outsider like Theodora Goodman (The Aunt's Story) manages to "emasculate" Huntly Clarkson by besting him at shooting: "An abject and sorry deference had begun to make Huntly soft. He was all acceptance, like a big grey emasculated cat, waiting to accept the saucer of milk that would or would not be given" (p. 125). The appearance of the men and women who live in expensive mansions is patinated and cannot be penetrated without the whole brittle vessel being destroyed.

Whores, paradoxically, are not a part of the society White scorns. He reveals a tender, if unusual, understanding of their dilemma and the trauma of their eventual rejection by those who have used them. These women are not portrayed as evil or destructive. White's dictum is clear: grace cannot be achieved through lust. Domination of the Real Self by the sexual self leads to damnation and desolation. The whores' suffering comes with age: "Those old women, Alf, the ones with the straight, grey, greasy hair hangin' down to their shoulders, like girls. The old girls. With a couple of yeller teeth, but the rest all watery gums. You can see them with an old blue dog, and sometimes a parcel. Pushin' their bellies ahead of 'em. Gee, that is what frightens me! And the snaky veins crawlin' up their legs!" (Riders in the Chariot : p. 351).

Who then are White's elect? Unlike Camus and Colin Wilson's outsiders who are separated from society by their behaviour and circumstances White's elect are isolated from the other members of society by their acquired natures and predestined sense of grace. They are different because of their perplexing, bi-sexual physical traits; their intuition of a different and better state of being; their spiritual growth; their understanding of the reality of everyday items like articles of furniture; their growing understanding of Creation; their dependence on God despite youthful agnosticism, and finally because of their common antipathy towards their parents, whom they are inclined to reject, because they regard them as the source of their unrequested suffering. White's elect do not fear death because it is a form of release and the gateway to God. There is not all that much difference between White's elect and the persecution of the early Christians mentioned in Romans 5. Both groups were punished for being different. The Christians, however, have their belief in Christ to sustain them, whereas White's elect do not. It is significant that Christ as mediator does not figure in White's philosophy. There cannot be someone to suffer for his elect.

It is important to note, from a religious point of view, that for the elect there must be a moment or phase of rebirth before grace is within their grasp. The whole concept of rebirth and grace in White's canon should be related to the Greek Stoics' idea of "palengenesia" which in itself has a cosmological meaning. Grace, in this context, implies a unique ability to come to terms with both the physical and spiritual worlds.

A close reading of White's novels leaves the reader with the impression that the romantic transcendental mysticism of The Tree of Man and Voss makes way for the bitterness and disil-

lusion of The Twyborn Affair that seems to negate any hope of grace for the writer himself. In The Tree of Man White states his belief in the transcendental in the statement "In the end there is no end"; in The Vivisector Hurtle Duffield's last painting is a black nothingness: "the otherwise unnameable I-N-D-I-G-O" and finally, though sadly, Eddie Twyborn is destroyed in a fiery blast that suggests Armageddon and questions White's own belief that the only saving power in life is love. It becomes increasingly clear that happiness cannot be found, even in the country of the mind, until the psyche has been released from any earthly contact and influence. This state of being is described by the non-elect as madness: "When your life is most real to me you are mad" (Quotation from Olive Schreiner used as an epigraph to The Aunt's Story.)

Why and how do White's elect suffer? Suffering is often regarded, even among Christians as a form of divine punishment in a fallen and degenerate world. In White's fiction, suffering turns the sufferer's thoughts and desires away from his self and the material world towards his own psychic being and consciousness of God. His need for some form of meaningful communication is gradually transferred, and without anguish, from the ordinary world of people to thoughts of death. This is what happens to Theodora Goodman (The Aunt's Story) when Holstius, perhaps a product of her unconscious mind, comes to her and provides the answers to her quest for a meaningful existence.

The intuitive awareness of the elect who regard their suffering as a form of punishment, has its archetypal roots in their unconscious fear of punishment and the need for atonement. Ellen Roxburgh (A Fringe of Leaves) believes the wreck of the Bristol Maid and her subsequent suffering to be a form of punishment for having committed adultery with Gar-

net Roxburgh. The physical aspect of her suffering is adjunct to her psychic anxiety and this increases its intensity. The physical aspect of suffering decreases as the body loses its power and the psychic pain lessens and grows into cosmic consciousness as the character loosens the ties of his earthly interests. Only then does his personal mandala expand beyond the immediate.

White's achievement as novelist does not so much reside in his style as in his prophetic and sardonic portrayal of man's "modern" sinful state. In his role of vivisector, he attempts to reveal and then not from the sidelines, that man's lot is predestined. Only those who have been selected, in some way, or for some unknown reason, will achieve a state of grace and a release from their exoteric selves. The elect's psychic and existential dilemma is rooted in White's own Weltanschauung as revealed in his autobiography Flaws in the Glass. The anguish the elect suffer are the insults inflicted on White himself, especially in his youth.

White shares the elect's quest related to self and suffering. He is, after all, related to them by his own ordeal. Like his characters, for instance Eddie Twyborn and Theodora Goodman, he finds truth in landscapes and artefacts. His longing for the healing influence of nature explains why he returned to Australia from England. White's desire to love someone (Manoly Lascaris has been his mandala) is reflected in the need for love and meaningful communication found among his elect. His antagonism to life and people is rooted in his intense dislike of hypocrisy and the flawed principles he has been asked to live by.

"Cruelty has a Human Heart,
And Jealousy a Human Face;
Terror in the Human Form Divine,
And Secrecy the Human Dress.

The Human Dress is forged in Iron,
The Human Form a fiery Forge,
The Human Face a Furnace seal'd,
The Human Heart its hungry Gorge."

William Blake

(Epigraph to The Vivisector).

ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with an evaluation of the suffering and self of the elected characters in the novels of Patrick White. The suffering these elected characters endure, apart from the uncomprehending antagonism of society, takes place mainly in the country of the mind - "that solitary land of the individual experience, in which no fellow footfall is ever heard" (Epigraph to The Aunt's Story) - and is a form of catharsis in preparatory to a reunion with God as the Source of all Being. The suffering, whether of a psychic or physical nature - or both - is complicated by the duality between the esoteric and exoteric selves of the characters involved. The nature of the suffering is always solitary. The wisdom eventually gained from the suffering cannot be shared. Contact with fellow elect is brief and without consequence except for mutual recognition of "outsidership".

It is clear that the elected character has no apparent control of what happens to him in life. The reader gains the impression that the elected characters in White's novels are the involuntary victims of some "malign" life-force that, paradoxically, brings about a state of grace. White touches on, but wisely prefers not to examine, the problems of predestination and euthanasia.

The elected characters are all outsiders in the sense that they are, in some psychic or physical manner, different from the members of the society in which they find themselves. In the earlier novels the elected characters' alienism is characterised by their intuitive awareness of another, non-physical, transcendent plane of being - "There is another world, but it is in this one" (Epigraph to The Solid Mandala). Progressive reading of White's novels reveals

that his conception of suffering, despite disavowal, is in line with the Biblical concept of suffering as described in Paul's letter to the Romans.

The non-elected members of society with whom the elect come into conflict either do not understand or are unwilling to admit their intuitive awareness that there is another world within the familiar one, a concept White frequently refers to in his image of boxes and boxes within boxes. The secret knowledge the elect seem to have antagonises the other members of society because of the sense of loss they experience.

White's later novels reveal a concern with sexually aberrated suffering which is closely aligned to his own unhappiness. The sexual duality that is an essential aspect of Theodora Goodman's (The Aunt's Story) dilemma gains progressively more of White's attention and is eventually exposed in his biography of Eddie Twyborn (The Twyborn Affair).

White's concern with abnormal sexuality is related to his disquiet with the mystery of the soul being "housed" in a body not only unsuitable, but also contrary to the nature of the psyche which is either predominantly male or female. White is clearly angry that this mystery should be the profound result of momentary lust. Although so many of White's elect labour under spiritually destructive burdens of guilt, the parents who are considered the root cause of all suffering in a post-lapsarian state, feel little of any compunction because they are too concerned with their own suffering, real or imagined.

God as Source or God as the "One" is an all-pervading, if unacknowledged force in White's corpus and in the lives of his elect. The elect turn to God only when they have suffered and acknowledged their dependence on Him.

It is sad that White should, in the end not find himself in "the boundless garden" with Stan Parker (The Tree of Man). He seems to share the fates of Theodora Goodman (The Aunt's Story) and Arthur Brown (The Solid Mandala).

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