

**SHIFTING BOUNDARIES OF THE SELF :
REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE FICTION OF
PATRICK WHITE AND MARGARET LAURENCE**

V. BHARATHI



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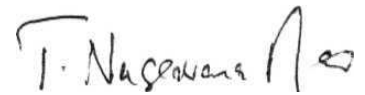
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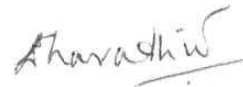
T. Nageswara Rao
Reader in English

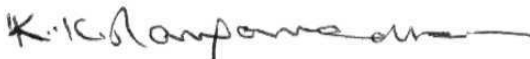
V. Bharathi,
Department of English,
University of Hyderabad,
Hyderabad.

This is to certify that I, V. Bharathi, have carried out the research embodied in the present thesis for the full period prescribed under Ph.D. ordinances of the University.

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5/4/93
Head of the Department


5.4.93
(V. Bharathi)


Dean of the School
DEAN
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES,
University of Hyderabad,
Hyderabad-500 134.


Supervisor 5.4.93

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List of Abbreviations

AS	The <u>Aunt's Story</u>
<u>BH</u>	A <u>Bird in the House</u>
D	<u>The Diviners</u>
ES	<u>The Eye of the Storm</u>
FD	<u>The Fire-Dwellers</u>
FL	A <u>Fringe of Leaves</u>
<u>JG</u>	A <u>Jest of God</u>
<u>MMO</u>	<u>Memoirs of Many in One</u>
<u>RC</u>	<u>Riders in the Chariot</u>
<u>SA</u>	<u>The Stone Angel</u>
<u>TA</u>	<u>The Twvborn Affair</u>
V	Voss

Towards a Methodology for a Comparative Study

Introduction

... there is, ..., no general woman, no one typical woman. What they have in common I will say. But what strikes me is the infinite richness of their individual constitutions.

(Helene Cixous. "The Laugh of the Medusa")

As for woman, capital W, we got stuck with that for centuries. Eternal woman. But really, 'woman' is the sum total of women. It doesn't exist apart from that, except as an abstracted idea.

(Margaret Atwood. "Interview with Geoff Hancock")

Arguably, the **female** protagonists occupy an important position in the fiction of Patrick White (Australia) and Margaret Laurence (Canada). Though critics have examined this aspect individually in the two writers, there has been no attempt at a comparative study of the two writers. This offers an occasion for the present study which uses a comparative **cross-cultural** interdisciplinary approach. Before moving on to examine the choice of writers, of works and the plan of the chapters to follow, it is worthwhile to consider the basis for this kind of study.

In this study, comparison operates at two levels. On the one hand, the thesis attempts to compare two writers of different cultures, nations and sexes. On the other hand, the study will draw attention to the underlying preoccupations of the two writers and the parallels that can be found in disciplines as different as philosophy, psychology and religion. Quoting Frederic Jameson, Ian Read in his article "The Need for a Comparative Method" emphasises the need to develop "a differential mode of perception" whereby an author and his/her works may be gauged against a historical sequence. This type of literary analysis "involves a **to-and-fro** oscillation between text and context, between the formal product and the formation process" (34).

Comparative studies of writers within the Commonwealth context is not a new phenomenon. In their book, The Empire Writes Back. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin classify such studies under three broad categories:

These are comparisons between countries of **the White diaspora--....--comparisons** between areas of the Black diaspora, and thirdly, those which bridge these **groupings**, comparing, say, literatures of the West Indies; with that of Australia (17).

Such studies have been possible mainly by focussing on the shared traits such as: (i) the colonial past (mainly the imperial-colonial relations and quite recently the process of decolonisation), (ii) the adaptation of a common **tongue--English--to** express the varied experiences, (iii) the multicultural perceptions available to readers and writers alike, and (iv) the "ex-centric" (Linda Hutcheon's term) or the marginalised position occupied by the New Literatures in English in relation to the mainstream British, American and European literatures. For example, Australian-Canadian studies, both individual and comparative, have repeatedly focussed on concepts such as the **confrontation** with alien landscapes, '**colonial cringe**' (A.A. Phillips' term), '**garrison mentality**' (Northrop Frye's phrase), prison-paradise syndrome, two solitudes and mateship. Thus, the dominant critical trend is to use the above-mentioned factors as identity markers specific to a nation or culture and to emphasise the regional affinities of the writers. What is needed therefore, is to move beyond such commonly held critical opinions regarding cultures and provide "a broader base for investigating theoretical **questions**" (The Empire Writes Back 161) as also to develop "more comprehensive comparative models which argue for **features** such as hybridity and syncreticity as constitutive elements of all post-colonial literatures" (The Empire Writes Back 15). In his article "Reading for Resistance in the Post-colonial

Literatures," Stephen Slemon comments on the advantage of the above-mentioned method by citing Diana Brydon's work on English-Canadian rewritings of The Tempest as example and to quote him:

... [In Brydon's study] Canadian literature texts are assumed to be capable of reflecting a specific lived experience, and yet they are seen to do so through a cross-cultural and comparative framework that registers their difference not only from the imperial pre-text but also from their reiteration in another post-colonial culture (in A Shaping of Connections 105).

My study follows the aforesaid method. Thus, Patrick White and Margaret Laurence are not merely studied for their respective Australianness or Canadianness but how such identities influence their portrayal of certain concerns which they share.

The representativeness of both the writers aside, there have been considerable critical debates about the differences in the cultural, socio-political and literary developments of the two countries. As Diana Brydon rightly remarks, while precise documentation and examination of parallels and analogies may be a futile exercise, "by defining them one against the other," we may examine "what they share and where they diverge" ("Australian Literature and the Canadian Comparison" 155). For instance, though both the countries have been products of the colonial experience, they have worked out different solutions. This idea may be illustrated by comparing the evolution of the two societies. As Claude Bissell remarks, "Australians were conscious of themselves as Australians belonging to a distinctive society at a time when Canadians were only venturing to speculate about the emergence of a national feeling" ("A Common Ancestry:

Literature in Australia and **Canada**" 138). However, as **Bissell** points out, such contrasts may be seen as a case **similar** to Samuel Butler's Erewhon where the hero notices that "all things were generically the same as [at home], the differences being of species only" (133).

In spite of the shared colonial experience, formulating a cogent comparative criticism for the post-colonial literatures seems a formidable task, for there are numerous "variations between and within cultures." Syd Harrex and Guy **Amirthanayagam** ("Introduction: Notes Towards a Comparative Cross-Cultural Criticism") are of the view that "the lesson of India, with its happy or unhappy knack ... of embracing contradiction, perhaps offers one avenue of approach to the comparative critic" (22). In her essay, "Australian Literature and the Canadian Comparison," Diana Brydon considers it worthwhile to "study what has been written, and its critical reception, from within an interdisciplinary framework" (155). Affirming the same idea, Nick Wilkinson ("A Methodology for the Comparative Study of Commonwealth Literature") calls for a development of "critical tools which embrace the enormous diversity of background" and "capable of transcending the limitations of culture and race" (33).

Thus, the first task before the comparative critic is the need to openly discuss the similarities and differences alike of the writers and works concerned. Gillian Beer highlights the need for such an "inquisitorial" study (69) of women in the works of male and female writers in her article "Representing Women: Representing the Past." She points out how the differential reading enables readers to "specify" differences as also "to challenge

any notion of a sustained arc of progress in representing women; it will challenge also the notion of a stable archetypal order" and prevent any "internalisation of gender **constructions**" (65) . Another consideration seems to be the avoidance of the hegemony of Western critical theories. One way of doing this is by adapting the concepts in accordance with the situations (in this case, literary texts). Thus, no one critical stance is all-encompassing. As Helen Tiffin rightly remarks, "much contemporary theory, whatever its origin, offers us very useful insights if we seize them and make them over; interrogate their assumptions and biases before we employ **them**" (in A Shaping of Connections 125). Feminist and post-colonialist theories have to be re-defined in the context of different cultures even within the post-colonial situation. For instance, Patrick White and Margaret Laurence depict their characters within male-dominated societies. Though the female protagonists undertake quests for identities beyond those defined by familial or social roles, the fundamental thrust is not on "power politics" but on the spiritual/psychological quests to identify the self for oneself. Thus, an in toto application of the Images of Woman criticism (or any one feminist model) will not reveal the varied nuances of the texts and characters. **Stating** a similar idea, Diana Brydon concludes thus: "I'm not saying we must 'forget **Foucault**' (if such a thing were possible), but I am saying that Foucault cannot be applied to the new literatures in English like a bandage to a wounded **Empire**" (in A Shaping of **Connections** 90) . **Arguably**, the use of interdisciplinary models **may** also entail a similar hegemony. An

eclectic and open approach to the texts and models alike may be of help in avoiding this trap. Brydon identifies two methods to approach various theories. One method "starts with experience and works outward to understand the ideological underpinnings of that experience" (in A Shaping of Connections 96) and the other "stresses certain basic similarities in order to understand differences" (in A Shaping of Connections 97). Both methods have their advantages and limitations. Thus, "the challenge is to negotiate the path between the excessive fragmentation of a narrowly specialised focus and the 'grand synthesis' of theories that effectively silence further questionings" (in A Shaping of Connections 98). In this thesis, I have combined both the methods mentioned above. Thus, the focus is mainly on the text and the implications that arise from the text. Where a particular model has been adapted, it is to reinforce the ideas found in the texts and to use the model as a common base to explore the differences between the texts and the writers. For instance, the Chapter on Self-Realisation uses some concepts underlying Vedanta and Existentialism. The Vedantic concepts highlight the active participation of the reader (an Indian) within the text and offer fresh interpretation. But, here, the use of existentialist ideas does not include the attendant nihilism that is central to this philosophical thought. Further, the link between Vedanta and Existentialism is brought out by using some of the ideas of the philosopher, J. **Krishnamurti**. Similarly, the Chapter on Individuation of Women uses some of the concepts of Carl Jung. While feminist studies of women focus on Freudian theories, here, an attempt is made to show the suitability of the Jungian theory.

Further, Jung's concepts have been used not merely as psychoanalytic tools for a thematic study, but to examine the underlying structure of the quest shared by the protagonists and which can be discerned in the Jungian theory.

Let us now consider the choice of writers in some detail. There is a wide range of critical readings on the works of White and Laurence individually. Therefore, this thesis is not so much an attempt to identify new themes or techniques in the works (though, this has been done to a certain extent in Chapters Three, Four and Five), but to examine how the two writers share some common preoccupations. However, the differences in perceptions and presentations have to be borne in mind. Before discussing the preoccupations underlying the fictional matrix of the two writers which justify my choice and which forms the main body of this thesis, it is worthwhile to examine the shared position of the two writers within the post-colonial context and in relation to feminism.

The emergence of post-colonial literatures is broadly marked by three stages: (i) colonial (imitation), (ii) nationalist (rebellion) and (iii) post-colonial (assimilation). By virtue of their life span, years spent abroad and their views on writing, White and Laurence fit into the third category, thus assimilating what is available outside their own cultures. Patrick White (1912-1990) has the European tradition open to him through his education in England and his travels to France, Germany and Greece. Margaret Laurence (1928-1987) has the advantage of staying in England and travelling to Somaliland and Ghana. The

African years have given her a first hand experience of what it means to be a go-between in the colonial situation. Also, educationally, their common background is English and European literatures. (In fact, Laurence has commented on her literary background and states how the only Canadian novel she read was Sinclair Ross' *As For Me and My House*). Arguably, both White and Laurence are writing in response and resistance to English literary genres and conventions.

Further, in their approaches to writing, both White and Laurence avoid the extremes of viewing the post-colonial text either as a "'natural' reflection of post-colonial social reality" or as a "reactive mechanism" to colonial discourse (Stephen Slemon in *A Shaping of Connections* 107). In their fiction, both writers are engaged in the creation of a new reality which is in complementary (not contradictory) relation to both the colonial resistance and post-colonial ex-centricity and which is beyond the basic binaries--self/other, black/white, centre/periphery etc.--inherent in the other two categories. The reality underlying the novels and the vision embraced by the artists afford a comfortable coexistence of past and present, history and fiction, indigene and settler in their fiction. Such an attitude enables the two writers to move beyond the constraints of national, cultural and sexual identities. Thus, the national (regional) markers are used to present a larger scheme of things. This idea will be elaborated in the concluding Chapter where an overview of this idea in relation to **the** entire fictional range of the two writers will be examined.

Since this thesis is a study of **women** in the fiction of **White** and Laurence, a brief account of the **feminist** affiliations of the two writers is appropriate. Both White and Laurence **seem** to emphasise the idea which is described by Robin Matthews as "the liberation of women [which] is not a liberation into '**free**' rejection of men, community, and nation, but into a state of increased equality and harmony with men and a humanized and liberated participation in community and nation" (Canadian Literature: Surrender or Revolution 139). In his essay, "Politics and A Jest of God." Kenneth James Hughes remarks that "Laurence is a **liberationist**, not simply a women's liberationist" (46). This remark finds its echo in White's defense against the charge that he is a misogynist in his autobiography, Flaws in the Glass:

In life I have known far more admirable women than admirable men. Those who have read my novels attentively, not just glanced through one or two of the more controversial at a time when they were conversational fodder for dinner parties, must surely have seen this. Of course, my women are flawed because they are also human beings ... (252).

These remarks are pertinent to my study because the metaphysical and spiritual aspects of the quests do not involve the battle of sexes. The point I wish to make is that at the precise moment of self-realisation (in the metaphysical sense), sex and gender distinctions cease to exist. **This** assertion can be tested in the similar quality of the moments of illumination experienced by the male protagonists in White's novels. The quest for self-realisation involves the paring away of the superficial layers of existence (including sex and gender roles) by both men and women alike. The implications of this break away movement are very well

captured in the following statement of Laurence quoted in Margaret **Atwood's** essay "Face to Face":

I am 90% in agreement with Women's Lib. But I think we have to be careful here ... for **instance**, I don't think enough attention has been paid to the problems **men** have and are going to have increasingly because of the changes taking place in women. Men have to be reeducated with the minimum of damage to them. These are our husbands, our sons, our lovers ... we can't live without them, and we can't go to war against them. The change must liberate them as well (in George Woodcock ed. A Place to Stand On 23).

Commenting on the strong women and weak men characters in his novels, White concludes that "women are certainly more interesting" even without the shrillness of radical feminism (Flaws in the Glass 130) .

However, White and Laurence may be termed feminists in the creation of women who are not stereotypical images like Angel in the House, She-Devil, devoted spouse, beautiful temptress, healing Madonna or seductive siren-like destroyer. Thus, we come across positive portrayals of women who are spinsters, intellectuals and artists. Both White and Laurence dramatise "how a woman finds the fullest possible expression of her personality by transcending the conventional barriers of sex." Their fiction, in P.P. **Sharma's** words, explicates "the distinction between what women are and what they are made to look like" ("From Stereotype to Authentic Selfhood: Changing Images of Women" 3). The interest of the two writers in sexual politics is limited to viewing it as "the dialectical struggle between the two sides of the self [which] is the fundamental rhythm of human existence" (Veronica Brady in Who is She? Images of Woman in Australian Fiction 180) .

While Laurence insists on a proper understanding of the other half of humanity, White constantly strives to present an androgynous vision. In Patrick White, the culmination of the androgynous ideal can be found in the figure of the transvestite E.Twyborn in The Twyborn Affair. In his autobiography, Flaws in the Glass, White states that the best personality emerges "from the masculine principle in . . . women, the feminine in . . . men (155). However, there is a notable difference in emphasis. Whereas White stresses the ideal combination of the masculine and feminine, Laurence focusses on women and the feminine even while emphasizing the need to understand men and the masculine principle. Though White and Laurence break down barriers of sex and gender by using different methods, they attempt to present "the whole of experience" which is described by David Malouf as "the mystery of what we have not yet become" (qtd. in S.A. Ramsey's "'The Twyborn Affair': 'the beginning in an end' or 'the end of a beginning'" 89). White and Laurence refer to the condition Malouf talks of as "pureness of being" and "mystery at the core of life" respectively and this is the goal towards which the quests of the female protagonists are directed.

There are certain other preoccupations/themes which contribute to the quest for self-realisation and which also form the basis of comparison of the two writers. Let us examine these ideas in some detail. To begin with, almost all the protagonists are portrayed as "ordinary" women with a potential to assert their individuality. This idea subscribes to White's statement in "The Prodigal Son" about his attempts "to discover the extra-

ordinary behind the **ordinary**" (Patrick White Speaks 15) . Echoing this idea is Clara **Thomas'** statement about Laurence's **characteri-**sation where '**an** "ordinary" person is revealed as extraordinary by the power and **imaginative** range of [the] inner life' (in George Woodcock's A Place to Stand On 100).

The novels are testimonies of the struggles faced by women to define their individual selves within male-dominated cultures. Both White and Laurence at times use subversive methods to question the prevalent myths which are "male oriented." However, there is a slight difference in presentation. In White's fiction, the movement away from society is glaring whereas in Laurence's fiction, women seem to work within social restrictions. The quests for individual identity are marked by the conflict between the inner and the outer selves (true and false selves) of the protagonists. From this initial conflict arises dualities which are neatly summed up by John **Colmer** as those between freedom and conformity, "mind and body, matter and spirit, male and female, the individual and society, time and eternity, the Word and the Flesh, the wisdom of silence and the folly of speech" (Ron Shepherd and K. Singh ed. Patrick White: A Critical Symposium 71). While the dichotomy between outer and inner selves has received considerable critical attention, it is interesting to study the forging of synthesis between the two aspects by the two writers. According to Carol Christ, "women's quest seeks a wholeness that unites the dualisms ... which have plagued Western consciousness" (Diving Deep and Surfacing 8). Such a stance offers fresh insights. For instance, a visionary in White and Laurence is presented almost always as an outcast or an outsider.

Such withdrawals **mark** the alienation of the individual from society which entails a certain existential anguish of isolation as also a breakdown of **communication**. Both the writers present their characters as adopting values which are different from those of the society they live in and as rejecting the commonly accepted social values. White emphasises the aspect of alienation forcefully, thus inviting the comment that he is a misanthropist (cited in John Beston's "**The** Effect of Alienation on the Themes and Characters of Patrick White and Janet Frame" 133). Laurence stresses the breakdown of communication even while calling for the need to reach out to other individuals. (She comments on this aspect of Chinua **Achebe's** novels in her book, Long Drums and Canons) . While it is true that almost all the protagonists withdraw from society, their rebellion against social conventions is not a negative phenomenon because it serves as an occasion for the protagonists to understand themselves. [For instance, the visionary moments of Laurence's protagonists (Eg. Rachel's speaking in tongues in A Jest of God and Stacey's apocalyptic visions in The Fire-Dwellers) are normalised in the narratives.] Such a reading enables one to defend the statement that White is a misanthropist (for example) as also study the attempts **made** by the writers to forge a synthesis between the binaries. A direct consequence of this is the acceptance and return of some of the protagonists to their roles within society. While **almost** all the heroines in Laurence's fiction reach this stage of acceptance, in White such reconciliation is evident from Riders in the Chariot and The Eye of the Storm onwards. Thus, the "inner" quest is not

so much an alternative to existing reality which entails a certain break or **schism from** the outer reality. **The** quest provides an extra-dimension to existing reality and offers **scope** for continual additions to the available experiences. Echoing a similar idea in her book, Diving Deep and Surfacing, Carol Christ points out that women's quest offers suggestions for social change and "looks forward to the realization of spiritual insight in social reality--the integration of spiritual and social quests" (14).

The quest for self-realisation is marked by the protagonists' urge to be free. In the fictional context of the two writers, 'freedom' does not imply political freedom but has a broader implication which encompasses the metaphysical dimension as well. Citing "Godman's Master" (The Tomorrow-Tamer collection), Laurence remarks that freedom means "the individual coming to terms with his own past and with himself, accepting his limitations and going on from there, however terrified he may be... . This kind of inner freedom has been a continuing theme" (in Donald Cameron ed. Conversations with Canadian Novelists 98). Thus, freedom is not merely the escape from assigned roles but a kind of inner freedom which is spiritual and psychological. The quest to be free and to realise the self necessitates the need to make a choice and take the responsibility for it. Along with these existential thoughts, White and Laurence stress on the need for "humility, simplicity and suffering" as the essential conditions for self-realisation. These ideas will be elaborated in the Chapter on **Self-Realisation**.

The quests undertaken by **almost** all the protagonists reveal one characteristic trait shared by them i.e., their instinct for survival. As Laurence puts it, survival does not mean "just physical survival, but the preservation of some human dignity and in the end some human warmth and ability to reach out and touch **others**" (in A Place to Stand On 18). It was A.D. Hope who derogatorily portrayed Australians as '**the** last men whose boast is not of living but **surviving.**' But a deeper thinking reveals the triumph involved in surviving the odds posed by the alien environment and restrictive society. The struggle for survival itself seems to enhance the quality of living.

The quest for self-realisation is marked by certain shared traits of the protagonists viz., their questioning of accepted social values, withdrawal from society, urge to be free and the instinct for survival. Almost all these concerns can be discerned in the entire fictional range of the two writers. However, only some of the novels will be taken up for detailed analysis in the thesis. They are: The **Aunt's** Story (1948), Voss (1957), Riders in the Chariot (1961), The Eye of the Storm (**1973**), A Fringe of Leaves (**1976**), The Twyborn Affair (1979) and Memoirs of Many in One (1986) by Patrick White and The Stone Angel (1964), A Jest of God (1966), The Fire-Dwellers (1969), The Diviners (1974) and the short story collection A Bird in the House (1970) (which will be treated as a unified whole) by Margaret Laurence. The reasons for this selection are as follows:

(i) This selection focusses on fiction with female protagonists and where women share the lead roles with men as in Voss and Riders **in** the Chariot. This focus excludes: (a) novels with **male**

protagonists (Eg., The Tree of Man and The Vivisector) though there are some powerful and **well-delineated** female characters in these works and (b) novels which focus on the feminine element in men. For instance, Arthur Brown in The Solid Mandala is presented as the feminine counterpart of Waldo.

(ii) The texts where other concerns dominate have been left out. Laurence's African fiction (This Side Jordan and The Tomorrow-Tamer and Other Stories) also deals with themes such as freedom and survival but their focus is limited to the colonial predicament. Though this aspect has not been developed in the thesis, the roles played by the natives in the lives and quests of the protagonists will be examined. Where these works echo the later works, **cross-references** will be made. In the analysis of White's works, a detailed account of the male visionaries will not be included. However, comparisons and contrasts will be made at appropriate points.

(iii) The gallery of women in the works of both the writers is exceedingly large. The minor characters have been included only as points of comparison or contrast. For instance, the socially successful women will be discussed as providing foils to **the** protagonists (Eg., Belle Bonner to Laura, Fanny to Theodora **and** Grace to **Rachel**). Some characters will be studied as juxtapositions or helpers of the protagonists. Examples include Rose Portion's role in Laura's quest and Calla's role in Rachel's life. Sometimes a group of minor characters come under **the** influence of the main characters. The influence of Elizabeth Hunter on Sister de Santis, Flora Manhood and Lotte **Lippmann may**

be cited as an example. This also includes the roles played by **men** in the lives of the protagonists. Thus, several men in **Morag's** life figure as animus images and diviners. They are Christie Logan, Jules Tonnerre, Brooke Skelton, Dan **McRaith** and Royland.

The plan of the thesis is as follows:

In the First Chapter "**Women in Familial Roles**," the protagonists will be analysed in terms of their roles within the family as daughters, lovers, wives and mothers. The main aim of the chapter will be to analyse the conflict arising out of the '**real**' selves of the protagonists as against their fixed roles in the family.

In order to break free of the familial restrictions, some of the protagonists take on roles as teachers and artists. The Second Chapter. "**Women in Social Roles**" will elaborate this idea. The **metafictional** possibilities arising out of the portrayal of characters as artists will also be examined. The focus of the chapter will be a study of the identity crisis arising out of the conflict between personal and social roles.

The Third Chapter. "Women and the Quest for Self-Realisation" is divided into two major sections. The first Section "Against Religion" will discuss the various reactions of the protagonists (from acceptance to total disregard) to conventional religion (Christianity). This Section has been included to emphasise the distinction between religiosity and spirituality, made by the writers and characters. The second Section on self-realisation will study the spiritual and religious **implications**

of the quests. The set of frames used in the chapter include **some** aspects of **Vedānta** and **Existentialism**.

The Fourth Chapter "**Individuation** of Women in Patrick White and Margaret Laurence" will explore the **self-awareness** of the protagonists in the Jungian sense. Apart from tracing the use of Jungian ideas by the two writers, a common structure found in the quests will also be analysed. This analysis easily lends itself to a study of the mythical and archetypal patterns inscribed in the quests.

Though themes and techniques are neatly dovetailed in the fiction of the two writers, the Fifth Chapter will be devoted to the study of hitherto unexplored techniques. This Chapter will analyse two techniques which have been identified for this purpose and which highlight the themes explored in the rest of the thesis. The concepts are Doubling and **Time**. (i) Doubling and fragmentation include techniques like multiple narrators, use of masks, guises and disguises and mirror **images**. (ii) The circular nature of Time and the co-existence of past, present and future in the novels will be discussed in terms of Nicholas Berdyaev's categories, the aboriginal notion of Alcheringa and Patricia **Tobin's** concept of time as a genealogical imperative. The techniques explored will include memory as a mode, flashback and flashforward devices and the prologue-like opening chapters of some of the novels.

Chapter I

Displacing Fixed Gender Identities- Women in Familial Roles

this we were, ... ,
and these are the forces **they had** ranged against us,
and these are the forces **we had ranged within us,**
within us **and** against us, **against us and within us.**

(Adrienne Rich. "Twenty-One Love Poems")

Introduction

This Chapter attempts to study women protagonists in the fiction of Patrick White and Margaret Laurence in the context of their roles within the family. For the sake of **convenience**, this chapter has been divided into four sections dealing with different roles of women as daughters, lovers, wives and **mothers**. This is done to facilitate easy comparison between the characters and the writers. This sort of a division resembles the "Images of Women" approach, the most fertile branch of feminist criticism. Quoting Cheri Register, **Toril** Moi defines the "images of women" approach as "the study of female stereotypes" and criticises the "creation of '**unreal**' female characters" by writers of both the sexes (Sexual/Textual Politics 42-3). Such a study enables critical analysis of the prevalent myths about women in society and, what **Rosemarie** Tong calls, the "socialization of woman into passive, or feminine, roles" (Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction 206). However, this approach is used here to study "independent, odd, often difficult women who had defied the expectations of **their** society as to what a woman's role should be" (Phyllis Edelson. "The Hatching Process" 229). The female protagonists in White and Laurence are "outstanding in intellect and spirit" and "defy, the boundaries of their assigned ... roles" (Edelson 229). The norm breaking is a way by which these women discover their individual selves. By accepting responsibility and by taking charge of their lives, these women approach the ideal of "**self-actualizing**"

(Toril Moi 47).¹ Let **us** now consider the various roles played by the **women** protagonists.

As Daughters

The mother-daughter relationship assumes great importance in the fiction of the two writers. In the absence of strong '**father**' figures (with notable exceptions like Jason Currie and Grandfather Connor), there is a direct confrontation or **reconciliation** between the daughters and mothers. More often than not, the socially well-adapted and successful children (who are physically attractive and who make good marriages) are favoured by their mothers. Hence, the protagonists when they assume the roles of daughters, often move away from their mothers. This study will examine their roles as daughters in terms of the **differentiation** made between the sisters, **confrontation** with the parent and the successful understanding gained by some of the **protagonists**.

There are two sets of **sister-figures** that can be taken up for study. Theodora and Fanny are the two daughters in The Aunt's Story. Mrs. Goodman, the mother, repeatedly points out the differences between the sisters. Instances of this abound in the **novel**.

Once there were the new dresses that were put on for Mother's sake. 'Oh,' she cried, '**Fanny**, my roses, my roses, you are very pretty.' Because Fanny was as pink and white as roses in the new dress. '**And** Theo,' she said, '**all** dressed up. Well, well. 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' (AS 27).

Such a razor-sharp criticism is constantly voiced by Mrs. Goodman. Comparisons extend to all spheres. For instance, 'The piano is not for **Theodora**, ' Mother **sighed**, 'Fanny is the musical one' (AS 28) and while introducing the two girls to Mr. Huntly Clarkson:

'Oh, and this is my daughter **Theodora**,' Mrs. Goodman had said. 'Of course, you will know my younger girl, Fanny Parrott. At her **mother-in-law's**. Fanny is a great favourite. With **everyone**' (AS 99) .

Considering Fanny has married Frank Parrott, Theodora's ex-suitor and considering Huntly Clarkson is Theodora's present suitor, this is too harsh a comment on one's own daughter. This also proves that Mrs. Goodman is not able to see beneath the skin of **superficialities**. Patrick White emphasises the difference in their spiritual selves. Fanny catches the colour of the rose externally in her skin but Theodora is able to take into account the pale grub at the heart of the rose as part of the garden whereas Fanny hates it as '**horrid and beastly**' (AS 22). White here places Theodora at the core of existence by associating her with the pale grub whereas people like Fanny remain at its fringes. When the children grow up, Fanny is conventionally married to Frank Parrott and remains frozen at the age of eighteen like Belle Bonner in Voss. In spite of the differentiation, it is Theodora who nurses her mother while Fanny stays at a safe distance writing polite letters.

In his article, "Love and Sex in a Staid Spinster: 'The Aunt's Story'," John Beston makes an interesting comment that Mrs. Goodman's constant criticisms of Theodora deny "her any feminine grace." Further, her father's comment **that** '**Theo should**

have been a **boy'** prevents her from "attaining a clear sexual identity" (24). Theodora's rebellion against her mother takes the form of consciously rejecting the two suitors, Frank Parrott and Huntly Clarkson. The incidents which effect this will be dealt with in the section on women as lovers. Her stance against her mother also becomes evident when Theodora contemplates to kill her mother with a silver paper knife.

Similarly, in Margaret Laurence's A Jest of God. May Cameron constantly compares Rachel with her sister Stacey, well-married and a mother of four kids. Stacey, like Fanny in The Aunt's Story, stays at a distance from her mother and only writes polite letters. The only difference is that Laurence makes it a point to show the difficulties faced by Stacey in The Fire-Dwellers. Rachel and Stacey maintain a mutual admiration for each other and the distance between them aids this. Rachel, confused about taking a decision about her suspected pregnancy, feels that Stacey would know what to do in Rachel's position. Stacey, on the other hand, faced by all sorts of familial problems, feels that Rachel is clever in avoiding all these entanglements.

Mrs. Cameron, Rachel's mother, is bound by her vanities in costume, appearance and bridge **parties**. She is also a hypochondriac who cites her weak heart in order to gain Rachel's sympathy and attention. As Clara Thomas rightly points out,

These and the dependence and servitude of her daughter are all she has, and to them she clings with every ploy that cunning, born of self-indulgence and a real and desperate need ... (The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence 78).

For instance, on one night of the bridge party, when Rachel decides to go out with Nick, she tries her best to stop Rachel

from going:

'Well, dear, you do what you think best. I'd never suggest you shouldn't go. Only, on a bridge night--well, never mind we'll just have to stop playing while I do the serving, that's **all**' (JG 100).

Unlike Theodora and Fanny, Stacey and Rachel maintain a **remarkable** understanding. This is evident in their descriptions of their mother. While Rachel pictures her mother as "a simpering puce-mouthed madonna," Stacey recalls her mother's "whining eyes" and the "long suffering" attitude "that never tired of saying how others ought to be."

If Theodora and Rachel are in perpetual confrontations with their mothers, Mary Hare in Riders in the Chariot has problems with her father. He despises her ugliness. But he hates her more for her insight into things: "he [Mary's father] had forgiven her for the crime of being, it was doubtful whether he would ever forgive her for that of seeing" (RC 36) . She understands the mystery of nature though she cannot express it in words. As she herself puts it succinctly,

'**But** the truth is what I understand. Not in words. I have not the gift for words. But know.' The abstractions made her shiver. If she could have touched something-moss, for **instance--or smelled** the smell of burning wood (RC 36. emphasis added).

Her mother understands Mary's position and tries her best to ease the situation. Her efforts to bring together her cousin Eustace Cleugh and Mary is one such attempt. Mary's father understands her, as in the instance when he asks her about '**the** riders in the chariot.' But even here, he despises her for not telling him and thus refusing to share her secret with him.

If Theodora is guilty of **contemplating murder**, Mary is guilty of murder, though not in a direct way. This occurs, in the novel, when Mary cannot bring herself to save her father who is drowning in the pond. The only explanation that can be given is that her relationship with nature is based more on understanding than her relationship with human beings. As Mary Hare puts it:

' ... I believe in what I see, and what I cannot see. I believe in a thunderstorm, and wet grass, and patches of light, and stillness. There is such a variety of good. On earth. And everywhere' (RC 58).

This passage about her relationship with nature is transcendental. The only persons with whom she strikes a harmonious relationship are Mordecai Himmelfarb and Mrs. Godbold.

In Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel, Hagar is the only daughter of Jason Currie. As a sister, her targets of contempt are her two brothers, Matt and Dan. She inherits her pride, stubbornness and tough-mindedness from her father whereas her brothers are frail like her dead mother. Hagar thus shares her father's sentiments though she rebels against them and is in direct confrontation with her father. Expanding this idea, Cathy N. Davidson observes that 'Jason Currie could not respect his "sensitive" sons and lamented that Hagar, the "son" he should have had, was born a girl' ("Past and Perspective in Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel" 64).² She concludes by pointing out that the love-hate relationship that Hagar has with her father and the "adult ambivalence is a natural outcome of a childhood during which Hagar was praised for her 'masculine' qualities but condemned for not being a boy" (Cathy N. Davidson 69). Thus,

Hagar shares the **ambivalence** of gender roles with **Theodora**.

Hagar goes to the Toronto Academy for young ladies in order to acquire all feminine attributes like "**embroidery**, and French, and menu-planning for a five-course **meal**, and **poetry**, ... and the most becoming way of dressing [her] hair" (SA 42-3). Her father plans all this to make her a good hostess and a good upper-class wife. She rebels against this first by wanting to become a teacher and later by marrying **Bram** and thus marrying beneath her status.

That these feminine qualities are only superficial becomes evident through another incident early in the **novel**. When Dan is delirious with fever and dying, Matt wants Hagar to put on their mother's shawl and make death less painful for Dan. Matt asks her to pretend as their comforting mother who is long dead when Dan was only four years old. Hagar refuses by saying,

But all I could think of was that meek woman I'd never seen, the woman Dan was said to resemble so much and from whom he'd inherited a frailty I could not help but detest, however much a part of me wanted to sympathize. To play at being **her--it** was beyond me... . I was unable to do it, unable to bend enough (SA 25).

This refusal may be interpreted in two ways: (i) her pride does not allow her (a strong person) to stoop to the level of her feeble mother who died in childbirth; (ii) like her father and most people of his generation, death to her, is a subject which should not be spoken of or confronted directly. Following this, she wishes to maintain a safe distance. Also, she does not want to show openly her mark of weakness (sorrow and tears) and her fear of death. This attitude marks her reactions to the deaths of **Bram** and **John** later in the novel. This is also evident in her

reactions to the scene at the dump when Lottie Drieser kills the new-born chicks in an effort to reduce their suffering and the scene where Lottie establishes her strength by touching the dead child at the mortuary. These two instances show Hagar's vulnerability as also her weakness against a mightier power in the person of Lottie Drieser.

In *A Bird in the House*, Vanessa's confrontation is not with her parents but with her maternal grandfather. Vanessa rebels against his authoritarianism. Instances for this will be taken up in the subsequent sections. Let us consider briefly the kind of model presented to the young Vanessa by the other women in the text. Helen M. Buss comprehensively sums up and to quote her:

While Beth and Edna represent two potentially positive but imprisoned versions of womanhood, the two grand-mother figures can be seen as the two traditional modes by which women adapt and hide their true selves (Mother and Daughter Relationships in the Manawaka Works of Margaret Laurence 57).

The four older women also pass on to Vanessa a "double message" of the female/feminine as beautiful and as strong. Where the former is acceptable, the latter is criticised (Helen Buss 56). Such varying models bring about the conflict in Vanessa's relationships. Inversely, this factor helps in channelising her perceptions into writing. This aspect will be examined in greater detail in the Second Chapter.

Unlike Theodora, Mary Hare, Hagar, or Rachel who face discords in their relationships with their parents, some of the protagonists come to an understanding like Vanessa or some maintain a good relationship with their parents like Ellen in White's *A Fringe of Leaves* and Morag Gunn in Laurence's *The*

piviners.

Though Vanessa does not oppose her mother as she does her grandfather, the **moment** of understanding occurs in the story "Jericho's Brick Battlements." When Vanessa protests against her mother selling the MacLeod silver to get her to college, Beth says:

"When I was your age," ... , "I got the highest marks in the province in my last year high school. I guess I never told you that. I wanted to go to college. Your grandfather didn't believe in education for women, then" (BH 203).

Beth hopes to pave a future for Vanessa different from her own. Vanessa understands that not she, but her mother has been the victim of Grandfather Connor's **authoritarianism**. Commenting on this passage, Helen Buss detects the "**tigress**" in Beth that "**the moment of truth**" has revealed (55). "Beth has been able to do for her daughter what she was never able to do for herself: stand up to her own father" (Mother and Daughter Relationships in the Manawaka Works of Margaret Laurence 62) .

Vanessa perpetuates the sentiments of her mother by repeating to her children "the cliches of **affection** ... inherited from her mother." "**It's** a. poor family can't afford one lady. Many hands make light work. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (BH 207). Similarly, Vanessa realises that though she "had feared and fought the old man [her Grandfather], yet he proclaimed himself in my veins" (BH 207). Commenting on the fact that Vanessa does not visit her Grandfather's grave on her later visit to Manawaka, Kent Thompson in his "Review of '**A Bird in the House**'¹ makes this perceptive observation that the emphasis "is

not on what he stands for, his ideas, or least of all, his monument. The emphasis is on Grandfather Connor" (in *A Place to Stand On* 235).

Ellen Roxburgh in *A Fringe of Leaves* does not face any conflict with her parents even though she is forced to do hard physical labour in order to help the family because her mother is ill and her father takes to drinks. Instead of her parents helping and supporting her, she takes on the role of a protector. This individual, independent spirit extends to her relationship with Austin.

Despite the tough life Ellen leads on the farm (which later helps Ellen in her sojourn with the aborigines), she never hates her mother or father. As is evident in the narrator's comment,

it (the farm) was all she knew. (Then she must surely have loved her parents who, with herself, were inseparable from it, the three of them living at such close quarters you could hear one another's coughs, groans, dreams almost anywhere inside the echoing house.) (*FL* 42).

Such reliance on the physical intimacy almost takes on an incestuous tone. Ellen relates how when she was a young girl, her father would stroke her cheeks "as though to learn the secrets of her skin." On one occasion when she reprimands him he sulks. But her own reaction is more important. " ... shame told her she was as much excited as disgusted" (*FL* 56). This reaction explains Ellen's reliance on and perfect adaptation of the purely physical existence with her brother-in-law Garnet, Jack Chance, the convict and the aboriginal community. Patrick White makes a clear **differentiation** between Ellen's personality as a daughter and as a **wife--i.e.**, Gluyas and Roxburgh personalities. **It** is

the Gluyas personality (daughter) with its **romantic imagination** which enables Ellen to endure life in the aboriginal tribe. It is the combination of the two personalities which later helps her successful re-entry into civilisation.

Another feature of Ellen's personality becomes evident in her role as a **daughter--i.e.**, her highly imaginative mind and its fantasies. Ellen is fascinated by the castle of Tintagel and of a prince who will come to marry her. The dream is only partially fulfilled when Austin offers to marry her and is completed during Garnet's seduction and later during her near idyllic life with Jack Chance.

In The Diviners, Morag's life with her parents, Louise and Colin Gunn, is recreated in the novel through six Snapshots. This technique is used by Margaret Laurence to recall the past, which is done through Morag's thoughts about each photograph, about her parents and of herself when she was a child. These Snapshots are included in the first section of the novel entitled "River of Now and Then." As the older Morag says, the Snapshots are "totems, or contain a portion of my spirit I keep the snapshots not for what they show but for what is hidden in them" (D 6) . The Snapshots serve two purposes. One is to re-create the near Edenic existence of Morag with her parents. Second, they show her capacity to imagine and create things, which helps her as an artist. Though the period covered by the Snapshots is very brief, it shows the only time in her life when she has lived within the confining limits of society. The other time, of course, is during her life as Brooke **Skelton's** wife. In the

period of the Snapshots, she is the only child of **respectable** parents, her father being a farmer. All other details regarding her father's pleasant and **ever-smiling** face and her **mother's** understanding in allowing her to sleep with the dog seem no more real than her creations Rosa Picardy, Peony, Blue-sky Mother or Old Forty-Nine. In her own words:

They [her parents] remain shadows. Two sepia shadows on an old snapshot, two barely moving shadows in my head, shadows whose few remaining words and acts I have invented. Perhaps I only want their forgiveness for having forgotten them. X remember their deaths, but not their lives. Yet they're inside me, flowing unknown in my blood and moving unrecognized in my skull (D 18-9).

The end of **Morag's** life on the farm and the beginning of her life with Logans is conveyed through the first **Memorybank** movie entitled "Once Upon a Time There Was... ." We learn that both Gunns are dead with infantile paralysis. Christie Logan, because of his friendship with Colin Gunn during the war, offers to adopt **Morag**. Her **parents'** death shatters her innocent idyllic world and also alters her notions of God as is evident in the narrator's statement: "Morag is talking in her head to God. Telling Him it was all his fault and this is why she is so mad at him. Because He is no good, is why." (D 17).

Along with making the Logans outcasts, Laurence also makes them physically grotesque. Prin, short for Princess, is fat and lazy, eating jelly doughnuts. Christie with his sandy hair, Adam's apple and **missing** front tooth is the joker for the children of the town. But he also teaches Morag, the advantages of the divining insight. He is, in fact, the first diviner in the **novel**.

"By their garbage shall ye know them," Christie yells, like a preacher, a clowny preacher... . They think **muck's** dirty. It's no **more** dirty than what's in their heads. Or mine (D 39) .

Commenting on this passage, Clara Thomas compares Christie and Prin to Archipelago and Doree in "The Perfumed Sea" and **Godman** Pira in "**Godman's** Master." Thomas observes that Laurence's exaggeration "is a way of demonstrating that all flesh, young or old, ugly or beautiful, is essentially incongruous to the potential of the spirit within" (The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence 140) .

Initially Morag rejects and opposes everything Christie stands for. But it is only by accepting Christie as her father that Morag is able to recognise herself. In a way, **Morag's** writing of her novel Jonah aids this recognition. This aspect will be treated in the next chapter. At Christie's deathbed, Morag tells him: "Christie--I used to fight a lot with you, Christie, but you've been my father to me" (D 396). Christie's reply that he is '**blessed**' is interesting because it is Morag who has been granted the blessing of looking into her own past. Her insistence on the piper playing "The Flowers of the Forest" at Christie's burial is her way of paying homage to him. (This resembles Vanessa's funeral service for her Grandmother Connor in the presence of the canary). Morag's acceptance of the Logan heritage is also evident in her reply to Dan McRaith that Christie's country is her country and his myths her reality.

As Lovers

Women playing the role of lovers in the fiction of White and Laurence can be classified under three **categories**. (i) Women, whose love affairs enhance their own understanding like Vanessa **McLeod** and Rachel Cameron, (ii) Women for whom love exists only in a spiritual level like Theodora Goodman, Laura Trevelyan and E.Twyborn and, (iii) Women, whose love affairs are adulterous extensions of their married lives as in the case of Elizabeth Hunter, Ellen Roxburgh, Stacey **MacAindra** and **Morag** Gunn. These categories open up interesting possibilities. Whereas for the first group, love aids in bringing together the body and mind, for the second group, love is supraphysical arising out of fantasy. For the third group, affair helps in distinguishing love from lust. Let us now consider these categories in detail.

In A Bird in the House, there are two instances of Vanessa's love affairs. More than the events themselves, their significance in aiding Vanessa's understanding becomes more important. The first of these affairs occurs in the story "A Bird in the House." Here, her love for an airman when she is seventeen during the World War II parallels her father's love of a French **middle-class** girl during the War of 1919. Her realisation points out her anxiety to get out of Manawaka which only points out her father's anxiety when he was of her age. Vanessa burns the letter and the photograph of her father's lover in order to prevent any tarnishing of his image.

The second love affair is between Vanessa and Michael, a member of the R.C.A.F. training camp. Her grandfather treats

Michael with the same contempt with which he treated Aunt Edna's suitors earlier. However, it turns out that Michael is married.

I hated my grandfather as I had never hated him before. What I could not forgive was that he had been right, unwittingly right, for I did not believe for one moment that he had really thought Michael was married (BH 202).

Yet, this also marks her understanding of her mother and **grand-**father whose advice, if not anything, comes from their experience of the world.

In A Jest of God. Rachel's affair with Nick Kazlick serves to bring about a turn of events in the novel. Before the affair, Rachel is bound by the morals of Manawaka society represented by her mother, with her repetitions about "a **woman's** most precious **possession**" (JG 89-90). For the most part, Rachel mainly lives inside herself and breaks the social conventions only in her dreams which are masturbatory in nature. For instance, in the opening chapter of the novel, Rachel dreams of making love to a handsome prince. The setting is either a distant forest or a beach. The different features of the shadow prince are blurred.

She sees only his body distinctly, his shoulders and arms deeply tanned, his belly flat and hard. He is wearing only **tight-fitting** jeans and his swelling sex shows (JG 18).

Rachel **immediately** checks herself by questioning whether she is unbalanced or laughable.

Touch and trust in the physical existence becomes possible to Rachel only during and after her relationship with Nick. As Ronald Labonte perceives, it is only during and after her affair that she "rediscovers body and mind as being one and the same" (in John Sorfleet ed. The Work of Margaret Laurence 167). For

instance, when she thinks she knows nothing about **Nick**, her inner voice sounds her true position: "Yet I've touched him, touched his face and his mouth. That's all I know of him, his face, the bones of his shoulders. That's not knowing very much" (JG 85) . George Bowering's comments are perceptive on this point.

But she [Rachel] has to learn that touch can come before and lead towards knowing and even that touch touches both ways, both people at once, so that knowing yourself happens from the skin inward ("That Fool of a **Fear**" in A Place to Stand On 221).

This initial touch kindles in her the desire to know more. "Then I want my hands to know everything about him, the way the hair grows in his armpits, the curve of his bones at the hips, the tight muscles of his belly ... " (JG 104).

Bowering further observes that after her relationship with Nick, her obscure sex-fantasies are replaced by dreams of herself in bed with Nick. She overcomes her initial problem of communication by talking freely to Nick about their families. It is this optimism, according to Clara Thomas, that makes Rachel

in a burst of **self-confidence** that follows her first experience of physical release in love, she voices her need for a child--his child (The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence 84) .

However, CM. McLay views Rachel's plea as her desire to "escape out of herself" and "replace loneliness" ("Every Man Is An Island" 60-1). Nick replies by saying "I'm not God. I can't solve anything" (JG 148). Further, he purposely deludes her by showing a photograph. Though Rachel is hurt beyond reason, at this point, she liberates herself from all possible constraints by accepting the suspected pregnancy and the tumour as jests of God to make fools of human beings. She also understands the confines

within which Nick is operating. **Commenting** on **the** whole incident, Bowering traces the growth of Rachel. At first, Rachel longs for the **comforting** presence of Nick. But later she cultivates an intimacy with **Calla** and decides to break away from the control of her mother. "There is confiding and confidence, outside and inside" (George Bowering in A Place to Stand On 222) .

Unlike Vanessa and Rachel, E.Twyborn's attempts to understand the self through love in White's The Twvborn Affair are complicated by his/her sexual ambiguity. Eddie's description of himself as a "**pseudo-man-cum-crypto-woman**" (TA 298) neatly defines the gender confusion in the novel. However, it also helps E. to try out different roles. In the first section, the reader encounters Eudoxia as the '**hetaira**' of Angelos Vatatzes, the last survivor of the Byzantine heritage. Angelos fully creates "the aesthetic version" of Eudoxia, that she reflects after Joanie Golson's entry into their world that "nothing of me is mine, not even the body I was given to inhabit, nor the disguises chosen for it--... . The real E. has not yet been discovered, and perhaps never will be" (TA 79) .

E.'s adoption of the masculine form in Part II of the novel adds to the complication. Eddie's affair with **Marcia** Lushington only brings him memories of his unusual relationship with his mother. On the other hand, Don Prowse's rape, threatens his heterosexual identity. E.'s avatar as Eadith Trist, the brothel owner is a "novelette she enjoyed living" (**TA** 310). Eadith manages quite successfully in creating a facade of an abbey out

of her brothel. This is threatened by Lord Gravenor's love for her. She fears that Gravenor **"might** have wrecked the structure of life by overstepping the limits set by fantasy" (TA 322) .

Eadith's disillusionment that "the reality of love, which is the core of reality itself, had eluded her" (TA 336) and her resignation that "she was fated never to enter the lives of others, except vicariously. To enter, or to be entered: that surely was the question in most lives" (TA 374) clearly explicates the homo- and hetero- sexual ambiguities in her life. To a certain extent, this ambiguity is resolved by Lord Gravenor who offers to accept her in whatever form she appears. His statement that "[m]en and women are not the sole members of the human hierarchy" (TA 426) questions the restriction posed by society. On the other hand, Gravenor's **remark--"‘Love’** is an exhausted word, and God has been expelled by those who know better, but I offer you the one as proof that the other still exists" (TA 426)--equates love with God and is affirmative of the success in future. This, in turn, brings us to what Ingmar Bjorksten rightly identifies as White's preference for "charitable **love--agape**" over "physical **love--eros**" (Patrick White: A General Introduction 54) which will be explored in the following pages.

The compassionate love is best expressed in the brief relationship between Mary Hare and her cousin, Eustace Cleugh in Riders in the Chariot. Mrs. Hare tries to make the best use of her cousin's visit by arranging a ball. Mary dresses in silvery white and wears her **mother's** jewels and a bunch of "frail fuchsia, and rank geranium, and pinks, and **camomile**" (RC 29) .

Before looking into the effect of such an event it is worthwhile to compare a **similar** dress worn by Belle Bonner in Voss which is described as highlighting her golden flesh. But here, though Mary is "dressed to kill, as one young fellow remarked, only it was Mary who was killed" (RC 28) . She becomes aware of her own grotesqueness which is further highlighted by the splendid appearance and dance of Miss. Antill. Though discarded and ignored by everyone, one moment in the entire ball becomes significant for Mary and that is when she is the only one to detect that Eustace hates to dance with Miss. Antill. Her complete understanding of his position is evident in the narrator's statement: "He began to tremble. If she had not pitied, she might have been shocked. But there had been moments when she had absolved even her father from being a man" (RC 32). Further, she also considers him more as an individual and a human being like any other creation of God. So, she responds to him as an individual and not as a woman.

Then she touched the back of his hand, and he did not withdraw. Of course her skin told her immediately that she could have been a **doe**, but she was grateful to be accepted if only in that form. In fact, she would not have thought of expecting more, and mercifully it had never yet occurred to her to think of herself as a **woman** (RC 32. emphasis added).

This submissive attitude is important because it characterises her as a person since she adopts this '**humility and simplicity**' in her surrender to nature also.

In The **Aunt's** Story, the four lover figures present various possibilities. Whereas Frank Parrott and Huntly **Clarkson** represent the eros aspect, Gen. Sokolnikov and **Moraïtis** represent

the agape aspect. Theodora rejects the **former** and embraces **the** latter and finds a meaningful union with Holstius. Though Mrs. Goodman praises Fanny for her artistic talents and makes out Theodora to be dull, she has insights which are unsurpassed. Theodora's father encourages this aspect of her character as also her ability to shoot straight with a rifle. However, they prevent the possibilities of her marriage to Frank Parrott and Huntly Clarkson. The incident of shooting the hawk begins when Theodora protests against the shooting itself. But Frank fires and misses. Aiming at the hawk as if it was 'her own red eye' she shoots and kills the hawk. On one level, this incident proves Theodora's superiority which seeks to submerge the masculine presence into nullity. On another level, Theodora identifies with the hawk and by killing it she begins the process of destroying herself. " ... I shall continue to destroy myself, right down to the last of my several **lives**" (AS 71) . John McLaren rightly considers Theo's killing of the hawk as her assertion of "the freedom of spirit denied her by her bondage to her mother and convention. By killing the bird, she asserts her right to its **freedom**" (Australian Literature: An Historical Introduction 177).

The incident with Huntly Clarkson begins in the shooting gallery. When offered, other women refuse to take aim. Theodora aims '**at** the clay heads of the jerking **ducks.**' To Theodora, this marks her movement away from the world of Huntly Clarkson and shooting of each duck shatters a secret life. While Theodora experiences the whole incident with a heightened intensity, for the **on-lookers**, it is '**something** mysterious, shameful and **grotes-**

que' (AS 119) . As far as Huntly is concerned, with each **aim** and shot of Theodora's, he moves away from Theodora or that '**she** was separated from them forever by something that their smooth minds would not grope towards, preferring sofas to a hard **bench**' (AS 120). While Theodora views the whole incident as a **confrontation** with the evil in her, for Mrs. Goodman, she (Theodora) has disgraced the prestige of the family in public as well as deliberately spoiled her chances of matrimony: ' ... You, Theodora, will experience a double hell, because you have rejected life' (AS 121).

The third lover figure in the novel is **Moraïtis**, the musician. Like Laura's experience of the physical realities of childbirth during Rose's pregnancy, Theodora experiences the pangs of childbirth during the birth of her niece Lou. Mora'itis' music invokes the physical sensations of love and Lou is the symbolic gift of such a union. The description of the evening of Theodora in **Moraïtis**' concert is full of sexual overtones.

She watched him take the 'cello between his knees and wring from its body a more apparent, a thwarted, a passionate music... . 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. She felt the heavy eyelids on her eyes (AS 111).

What begins as an individual to individual reaction soon gains a cosmic **significance**.

And the music which Mora'itis had played was more tactile than the hot words of lovers spoken on a wild nasturtium bed, the violins has [sic] arms. This thing which had happened between **Moraïtis** and herself she held close, like a, woman holding her belly (AS 112. emphasis added).

Although, she is neither a **musician** who could reply **him** in his own medium nor a mother to give birth to a product of such union, "her contentment filled the morning, the heavy, round, golden morning, sounding its red hibiscus note. She had waited **sometimes** for something to happen. Now existence justified itself" (AS 112. emphasis added). The blissful existence of Theodora as a result of this meeting is shown in her contentment in the morning. Her existence is placed within the '**round, golden morning**' which emphasises the **mandalic** symbol. The emphasis on the colour '**red**' here and in the incident of the shooting of the hawk brings in connotations of carnal, physical existence.

The fourth lover figure is Sokolnikov of the Jardin Exotique section. What begins as the physical with Frank and Huntly and reaches an indirect yet physical symbolism with **Moraïtis** reaches a culmination of the fantastic in Sokolnikov. As J.F. Burrows points out,

The essential vitality of Sokolnikov, ... , lies in his unique blending of worldly disillusionment with a continuing dependence upon the illusory, of a mostly tolerant scepticism with an irrepressible joy in life ("Jardin Exotique: The Central Phase of The Aunt's Story" 97) .

Apart from addressing Theodora as his mate **Ludmilla**, Sokolnikov builds a strong relationship with her by talking to her incessantly to the point of boredom. One thing that this relationship stresses is that "[t]hey were, in fact, that complementary curse and blessing, a relationship" (AS. 199). Such a statement, however, can be extended to almost all the figures of the Jardin Exotique section: " ... the faces, whether Katina Pavlov, or Sokolnikov, or Mrs. **Rapallo**, or Wetherby, only

slightly different aspects of the **same** state" (AS 179-80). **The** fire at the hotel destroys all the images Theodora has of herself but **Sokolnikov** is the only exception: "Sokolnikov was **deathless**" (AS 250). In this respect, the lover-beloved relationship extends beyond the Jardin Exotique section to the final section of the novel. Holstius **completes** Theodora's vision of various selves. Holstius is the first person with whom Theodora has a physical contact '**but** the cloth on the legs of Holstius had the familiar texture of **childhood**' (AS 277-8). The **emphasis** on the importance of physical existence is stressed in the following paragraph:

Resistance had gone out of her as she **lay**, her head against the knees of Holstius, receiving peace, whether it was from his words, and she was not altogether sure that he spoke, or from his hands. His hands touched the bones of her head under the damp hair (AS 278. *emphasis added*).

John Beston points out how Holstius puts an end to Theo's "wrestlings with her problems of love." Beston perceives Holstius as "a recreation of [her] father" "endowed with the articulateness of the Man Who Was Given His Dinner" ("Love and Sex in a Staid Spinster" 27).

The relationship between Voss and Laura is different from the rest of the relationships between lovers. The love relationship between Laura and Voss in White's Voss also presents a combination of eros and agape with a stronger emphasis on the latter. Voss and Laura meet only for four times but the bond they establish between themselves is remarkably strong. The communication between them which is carried through **letters**, dream sequences and telepathic communication seems stronger than actual words spoken between them. This aspect of their relationship will

be dealt in the section on '**Women as Wives.**' The **first meeting** between Laura and Voss occurs when the latter comes to **meet** Mr. Bonner, the financier of the expedition. Since the Bonnors are away at Church, Laura is obliged to entertain their guest. However, what **seems** a very superficial conversation between them, reveals peculiar insights in Laura's later conversation with the Bonners over dinner. For instance, she acts as **Voss'** defence and tells Mr. Bonner and Tom **Radcliffe**: "'He does not intend to make a fortune out of this country, like other men. He is not all money **talk**'" (V 28). By stating that Voss is not afraid of the country and that he is possessed of understanding, she places him above the level of the Sydney society. By further pointing out that the country "is his [Voss'] by right of his vision" (V 29), Laura foretells the future and the rest of the novel is but an explication of this.

During the second meeting at a picnic, they move a little closer. Laura loves '**the shape of his [Voss'] words**' (V 63). But as between any true lovers they had '**departed** from that natural **level.**' However, there is a secrecy in their silent understanding of love and a physical dimension also: "Air joining air experiences a voluptuousness no less intense because imperceptible" (V 63). Having begun their secret life "[b]oth the man and the woman were lulled into living inwardly, without shame, or need for protection" (V 69). There is a mutual understanding and participation by Laura and Voss. Such an understanding and the emphasis on eros and agape alike **differentiates** the Laura-Voss relationship from being blatantly sexual and physical like the relationship between Rose Portion and Jack Slipper. Another

important feature about the relationship is that they, '**the man** and the woman were of equal **stature**' (V 69). It is this equality that makes them question each other's validity instead of blindly following one's opinion. **Belle-Radcliffe** relationship belongs to the latter category. It is this quality that makes Laura describe Voss' expedition as '**pure will**': "**you** are not going to allow your will to destroy you,' she said rather than asked. Now she was very strong" (V 69. emphasis added).

The third meeting between Laura and Voss takes place when the Bonners give a party to the members of the expedition. This meeting forms the climax since this is the meeting when there is actual physical touch (though very minimal), understanding of one another (not through silence but through speech) and discussions regarding various subjects including God. They run into each other when they go to the garden for some fresh air. Voss is curious to know about the lives of the domesticated women and Laura describes their high imaginative capacity: '**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**' (V 86) . Answering his query as to what she thinks of him, she reads his character with a high degree of accuracy.

'**You** are so vast and ugly,' '**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 than that, exalted... . But most flattering, I think, when you experience it, is the hatred, or even the mere irritation of weaker **characters**' (V 87-8. emphasis added).

She is also sincere and true to accept her fascination for him

and says: 'You are my desert!' (V 88). This metaphor of the desert is important since it points to the simultaneous journey of Voss across the landscape and of Laura into her mindscape.

Talking about God, Voss reiterates his hatred for the God of humility. This brings to mind the statement of the Moravian priest that Voss hates God because He is not in Voss' image. However, Voss' pride awakens Laura's compassion and she shifts from her original atheistic position to saying that she will pray for him. In a way, this is a turning point since Laura resumes her faith in God.

The fourth and the last meeting occurs on the morning the expedition leaves from Sydney. They do not speak to each other but there is a wordless communication. "For an instant their minds were again wrestling together, and he experienced the melancholy pleasure of rejecting her offered prayers" (V 112. emphasis added). There are two important things to be noticed in this passage. The term 'melancholy pleasure' hints at a subtle, ~~may~~ be unconscious shift in Voss' position from his original pride. It is this 'offering of prayers' by which Laura teaches Voss the value of Christian humility.

The domination of eros is seen in the adulterous affairs of Elizabeth Hunter, Ellen Roxburgh, Stacey Cameron and Morag Gunn. In White's The Eye of the Storm, a number of sexual infidelities are attributed to Elizabeth Hunter, but only two of them are mentioned. One is Elizabeth's lifelong attraction to Arnold Wyburd and the other is her triumph over her daughter, Dorothy, in capturing the attention of the Norwegian scientist Edvard Pehl. But more important than the affairs themselves is

Elizabeth's realisation about her polygamous nature. **Also**, the incident with **Pehl** on the Brumby Island during the eye of the storm offers Elizabeth her moment of illumination which will be examined in the Third Chapter.

During her stay at Van **Dieman's** Land, Ellen Roxburgh (*A Fringe of Leaves*) is seduced by her brother-in-law, Garnet Roxburgh. Though she openly accuses Garnet, Ellen's reaction is of a deeply sensual nature.

... she felt remotely related to Ellen Roxburgh, or even Ellen Gluyas; she was probably closer to the being her glass could not reveal, nor her powers of perception grasp, but whom she suspected must exist nonetheless (FL 82).

Once, riding rashly on the spur of the moment, Ellen, predictably is seduced by Garnet. She realises to her shame that she is the least affected, for she has taken part in "an experience of sensuality she must have awaited all her life, however inadmissible the circumstances in which she had encouraged it" (FL 103). The description of the entire seduction scene is full of sexual overtones:

She was again this great green, only partially disabled, obscene bird, on whose breast he was feeding, gross hands parting the sweeping folds of her tormented and tormenting plumage; until in opening and **closing**, she might have been rather, the green, fathomless sea, tossing, threatening to swallow down the humanly manned ship which had ventured on her (FL 102-3).

This passage clearly reveals the blurring line of demarcation between the **victimiser** and the victim. This increases her sense of guilt.

Ellen's relationship with Jack Chance assumes near idyllic happiness. In her article, "Escape with a Convict: Patrick

White's A Fringe of Leaves," Elizabeth Perkins sees Ellen's relationship with Jack as "an acceptance and an expiation of adultery with **Garnet**" (267). However, the expiation is over during her harrowing experiences with the aborigines. With Jack Chance, she starts life afresh. Ellen experiences sensual depths in her relationship with Jack. They live **more** by instincts than by reason. As Jack says, "two bodies that trust can't do hurt to each other" (FL 268). Jack helps in rejuvenating Ellen's spirits and inculcates a sense of renewal in her.

She **raised her arms**. It was love, whether selfless or sensual, which had restored the youthful skin to her breasts, the hollow in a smooth, leaf-patterned flank; the tendrils of her hair singed off ritually by her black mentors were again stirring in the armpits. Her face she was unable to see, unless she turned it towards him, and it became reflected in his (FL 284).

In the last days of their **relationship**, Jack, her saviour, becomes Ellen's child. He is not only racked by the memory of the cruel penal laws and punishments but also begs her forgiveness for committing the murder of his wife, **Mab**, for her infidelity. Apart from comforting him, she actually experiences the role of Mab.

In a discussion of the role of Jack Chance in the novel, Manfred Mackenzie compares him to **Dimmersdale** in Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter.

Hawthorne's New England heritage dictated that it should be a pastor who should complete the old puritan errand into the wilderness. By contrast, in A Fringe of Leaves, tradition is imperial, penal, scarcely theological at all. It is appropriate, then, that its georgic taking possession of a continent should be completed in its heroine's relationship with a miscreant and convict, Jack Chance ("Tradition and White's Individual **Talent**" 165).

Further, Jack's role serves to point this difference from Ellen.

His is an initiation away from society whereas Ellen is initiated into society.

In Margaret Laurence's The Fire-Dwellers, Stacey's affair with Luke Venturi takes the form of a brief affirmation of physical existence in an otherwise tedious routine as wife and mother. The already existing misunderstanding between Stacey and Mac is widened by Buckle Fennick's lie about taking Stacey to bed. Buckle, as the reader understands, is concerned about arousing his own sexuality and not in sharing it. But Stacey is not able to make Mac understand this. Buckle's homosexual tendencies become evident to both only after his death. This unfair accusation of Mac offers an excuse for Stacey's affair with Luke who appears youthful and fresh and a welcome change to her after Mac. Her inquisitiveness is expressed much earlier in the novel: "I want some other man, someone I've never been with. Only Mac for sixteen years. What are other men like?" (FD 15).

The affair with Luke is just an answer to this. She knows that she has not been deprived sexually, but Luke is "like the rain in a dry year" (FD 174). More importantly, and as Clara Thomas points out, Luke sees Stacey "exclusively as a woman" and so, she is momentarily "freed of the kaleidoscopic wife-mother-housekeeper roles" (The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence 123). In her own words, her intercourse with Luke is uncomplicated and uncontaminated by the din of everyday life.

I'd like to start again, everything, all of life, start again with someone like you--with you--with everything simpler and clearer. No lies. No recriminations. No unmerry-go-round of pointless words. Just everything plain and good, like today, and making love and not worrying about unimportant things, and not trying to change each other (FD 176).

Stacey's affair with Luke also serves as a substitute for her reminiscences about her love-life as a young girl in Manawaka. This affair also helps her to gain a foothold and re-enter her marriage with a newfound freshness. Above all, Stacey learns "through her brief affair with Luke that he is no less complicated than Mac is and that he offers no magical solutions to life's problems as she had hoped he might" (Miriam Packer in John Sorfleet ed. The Work of Margaret Laurence 129).

In The Diviners, "roles and selves converge in the Laurentian cosmology, as personal identity which is directly a function of gender... . Morag uses sexual behaviour to manipulate sexual identity" (John Moss. Sex and Violence in the Canadian Novel 76) . There are four men in Morag's life apart from her husband Brooke Skelton. Among these, two assume importance through what they contribute to Morag's self-awareness. Jules Tonnerre, through his songs of the Metis past, contributes to the acceptance of a distinctly Canadian heritage and past to Morag. Dan McRaith helps in inculcating the sense of family in Morag,

In the first place, Jules offers Morag the freedom to walk out of her sterile marriage with Brooke. She is also free to have the child she earlier wanted and to contribute more time to her creative writing. Morag's acquaintance with Jules dates back to their schooldays. She shares her virginity with him in Grade Eleven. Their first intercourse takes place in the Tonnerre shack. "They smile, then, at each other. Like strangers who have now met. Like conspirators" (D 138). This sort of a relationship continues between them till the death of Jules.

Morag's relationship with Harold, a sad man in love with his former wife and **Chas**, a bully, are brief and temporary. Clara Thomas describes these figures as "two-dimensional" portraits and adds that "neither in fact nor in her memory did Hank **Masterson**, Harold or Chas have any depth-quality to **Morag**, though Chas is closer to a presentiment of evil **personified**" (The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence 158). Through these encounters, Morag learns about her own latent powerful sexual drives.

Morag's relationship with Dan McRaith, an **artist**, serves to show the importance of her Canadian past and the sense of family. A forty-seven year old man with **seven** children and a wife, Dan is essentially a 'homebody' who would never be hers. He also points out the importance of the sense of place.

"It's not big enough," ... "but it's my place. You might not think anyone could work here. How is it I can't work anywhere else? It's the place that's important to me. The surrounding **circumstances--well**, they have happened and they are here" (D 388. emphasis added).

In a way, such a thinking influences Morag's ideas about her past. She tells McRaith that she does not intend to go to Sutherland which she earlier imagines to be her ancestral place.

Through all their love affairs, Elizabeth Hunter, Ellen Roxburgh, Stacey MacAindra and Morag Gunn come to a **common realisation**. This is very well expressed by Amy Parker in White's The Tree of Man after her adultery with Leo, the wandering salesman. "**Lives**, she realized, can only touch, they do not join."

As **Wives**

Very few successful **marriages** are portrayed in the fiction of White and Laurence. White credits the marriage **of** the mind and spirit as in the case of Laura and Voss. On the other hand, Laurence offers only partial success. This section attempts to examine the roles of women as wives in the descending order of success.

The symbolic marriage of Laura and Voss in White's Voss offers a good example of a successful marriage. The four meetings between Laura and Voss have already been discussed. However, in this section, a note on the sexual nature of these meetings will be discussed. For example, during their second meeting at Point Piper, the entire sexual union is expressed through the archetypal images of wind, fire and water.

The gay day of wind and sharp sunlight had pierced the surface of her sombre green. It had begun to glow. She was for ever flickering and escaping from a cage of black twigs, but unconscious of any transformation that might have taken place. This ignorance of her riches gave to her face a tenderness that it did not normally possess There was now distinctly the sound of sea (V 59).

The gleaming quality of the day makes the radical change in Laura take place in a smooth manner. The image of the sun piercing the sombre green vividly suggests the secret spiritual union of the two as well as the cosmic nature of such a union.

The first step towards their union occurs when Voss writes to Laura proposing to marry her. She writes to him saying that only on the condition that he accepts to "pray together for salvation" (V 186), can their alliance be **effected**. By a clever semantic twist of the word Zusammen (together) to Samen (seeds),

Voss creates an **emblematic** association.

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 (V 187) .

This brilliant passage marks an elemental link between Laura and Voss and hints at a kind of **consummation**. That she has an upper hand in their relationship is seen in her making him accept her conditions as also in her emphasis on the inherent superiority of a woman: "you are in no position to accept. It is the woman who unmakes men, to make saints" (V 188) .

Voss' second letter to Laura addresses Laura as '**dearest wife.**' Throughout Voss' journey, the happy marital bliss and **mutual** care and understanding continue. The culmination of all this is the birth of Mercy. However, there is a reference to some sort of a union, which is spiritual. This is when Voss diagnoses Laura's illness as '**celibate paralysis**' and the remedy suggested is that he will "administer this small white pill, which will grow inside you to gigantic proportions" (V 2 69) . However, Voss immediately feels nauseous about the '**flesh proportions.**' He considers himself as '**One**' who cannot be divided and he throws the pill on the ground. "But she continued to smile her inexorable smile, which signified they had been married an eternity" (V 269) . Voss expresses this sentiment to Laura in his last letter where he states that theirs "is the true **marriage.**"

Their marital relationship continues and Voss begins to enjoy the rewards of the symbolic wedlock. For instance, when he

feels guilty of killing his dog, she comforts **him**. "Until **the** continuous lovers felt for each other's **hand**, to hear the **rings** chatter together. Truly, they were **married**" (V 267). She also acts as his guarding spirit when Voss goes to the caves: "The man in the cave should have felt wet, and aching, and cold, but the woman's smooth, instinctive soul caressed his stubborn, struggling spirit" (V 275). In one of his dreams, Voss realises Laura's superiority and his need of her company.

He was, after all, a man of great frailty, both physical and moral,... . She, however, was quite strong and admirable in her thick, man's boots... . Yet, her face had retained the expression he remembered it to have worn when she accepted him in spite of his composite nature (V 285).

As a truly understanding wife, Laura gives all possible help to Voss. Even though Voss knows he is beaten, he tries to put up a fight. Laura tries to persuade him against the fight: 'I will think of a way to convince you,' she said, after a time, 'to convince you that all is possible. If I can make the sacrifice' (V 367). As an ultimate sacrifice, she is even ready to part with Mercy. It is at this stage that their bond becomes so strong that it cannot be broken for years to come.

... their understanding of each other had begun to grow... . Leaves were in her lips, that he bit off, and from her breasts the full, silky, milky buds... . So they were growing together, and loving (V 383).

Later, Voss is truly **humbled** and the routine of matrimony sets in, with Voss explaining to her the scientific wonders all along the way. With his death, she realises that her ordeal and suffering are over. As well as pointing out the "unnecessary literalisation" of the fruit of the marriage, David Tacey, in his article "Patrick White's Voss: The Teller and the Tale," points

out how the symbolic union between Laura and Voss highlights "the tremendous gulf between sexuality and love in White's world" (257).

In Riders in the Chariot, Mrs. Godbold's roles as mother and Mother archetype are more important than her role as wife. One significant feature, however, is her caring for her husband who is a drunkard. She tends him when he is helpless and bears the burden of daily chores uncomplainingly.

'Oh, the husband comes and goes. On several occasions he has, hit her, and once he loosened several of her teeth... .' 'Why doesn't she leave this husband?' 'She considers it her duty to stay with him. Besides, she loves him' (RC 68).

This idea of doing one's duty as a wife unmindful of the worthiness of the husband has its echo in the Laws of Manu. "Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure elsewhere, or devoid of good qualities... . If a wife obeys her husband, she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven" (quoted in Ananda Coomaraswamy's The Dance of Siva 82) .

In spite of the surfacing differences, Elizabeth Hunter, Ellen Roxburgh and Stacey MacAindra maintain partially successful relationships with their husbands.

In The Eye of the Storm, Elizabeth Hunter's relationship with her husband is not dealt with in detail. Her roles as a domineering mother and an affluent lady assume more importance. However, there are certain things which require attention. Even though she chooses to live away from her husband, she goes back to him on receiving the news about his illness and nurses him till his **death**. Her first reaction **on receiving the letter is**

anger, "because the charming filigree of her **life** had been hammered without warning into an ugly, patternless **entanglement**" (ES 187). However, as she realises "her ill-natured **dismissal** of some of his more tender advances" (ES 187), she begins to nurse him out of the guilt that she "had failed to recognise this gentleman, her husband" (**ES** 188). She stays at Kudjeri, nurses **Alf**, learns to give him injections, reads Stendhal with him, plays the game of 'Do you like ... ?' with him. This creates an affectionate tenderness between them and is almost like a "sere honeymoon of the hopeful spirit" (**ES** 192). Each of them wants to comfort the other. As Alf grows weaker, Elizabeth's love changes to pity and Alf becomes her child. She feels a maternal as well as 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" (ES 195).

These acts of Elizabeth serve to balance her character as a whole. Pity, which is the ruling emotion when she tends Alf shows her to be human and not the fierce rival of her daughter Dorothy in capturing the attention of Edvard **Pehl** in the Brumby Island, For once she moves beyond the physical expectations and shares a spiritual bond with Alf.

She began to realise that the brief, exquisite phase when she had been able to speak to her husband in words which conveyed their meanings was practically **past**; from now on, they must communicate through their skins and with their eyes. It was a climax of trustfulness; but of course they had nothing left to lose (ES 197).

Another fact to be taken note of is her realisation of herself as an individual. Though the realisation here is brief and is developed only in her experience of the eye of the storm, it is

significant because it saves her from being an unfaithful wife. At his death, she realises that "[s]he was involved in a mystery so immense and so rarely experienced, she functioned, ... by reverence, in particular for this only in a sense, feebly fluttering soul, her initiator" (ES 198). It is unfair to describe her as having no affection for Alf because she accepts her guilt and works to expiate it:

For the time being she was neither widow, nor wife, not even a woman. . . . 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' (ES 198) .

This is the point when she first steps into her path of self-awareness. She also understands and accepts her own sensuality. Against such textual evidences, A.P.Riemer's criticism, that Elizabeth nurses Alf out of 'intensive pride than through any pity she might have for him' seems incorrect ("The Eye of the Needle: Patrick White's Recent Novels" 259). However, Veronica Brady, in her article "The Eve of the Storm," clearly perceives Elizabeth's position as one in which she becomes aware of "her inadequacies and failures as a wife of a man whose gentleness made him so terribly vulnerable" (64).

In A Fringe of Leaves, there are four men in Ellen's life. They are Austin Roxburgh, her husband, Garnet, Austin's brother who seduces her, Jack Chance, her convict lover who helps her escape from the aborigines and Mr. Jevons who proposes to her at the end of the novel. Her relationships with them vary from conventional love to coarse sensuality, to spontaneous blissful love, to an acceptance of the social norms with an open eye.

Austin Roxburgh, who comes to the Zennor farm in order to

recuperate decides to marry Ellen. As a bride, her mother-in-law takes it as her duty to mould Ellen. She is asked to maintain a firm hand with the servants, to maintain a journal and the like. Ellen dutifully obeys them:

To please and protect became Ellen Roxburgh's constant aim; to be accepted by her husband's friends and thus earn his approbation; to show the Roxburghs her gratitude in undemonstrative and **undemeaning** ways, because anything else embarrassed them (FL 67).

She keeps up social norms and so keeps quiet in strange houses unless spoken to "for fear of what may jump out of [her] mouth" (FL 65). However, one journal entry shows that Ellen is the stronger one and her later experiences with the aborigines are but tests to prove this strength:

... I would like to see my husband as perfect. I will not have him hurt. I am better able to endure wounds, and **wld** [sic] take them upon myself instead. Women on the whole are stronger because more knowing than men, for all the knowledge men lay claim to. We also learn to numb ourselves against suffering, whether of the body, or the mind... (FL 67).

However, she is unable to prevent Austin's death which is unexpected and full of action for a person who considers death as a "literary conceit." In his effort to save Purdew, Austin gets speared **and** killed. Ellen's grief over Austin's death is heightened by her guilt about her seduction by Garnet.

At the end of the novel, the reader encounters Ellen on the verge of accepting Mr. Jevon's proposal. However, this does **not imply** Ellen's failure to sustain her illumination (as Phyllis Fahrie Edelson **and** other critics **make** it out to be). It points to Ellen's state of understanding and human compassion. **In the last** scene, Jevons who **tries** to serve tea for **Ellen tumbles and falls**

down and White describes him as a croaking '**bull-frog**' (**FL** 365) . This description serves as an inversion of the popular myth of the Prince Charming in the guise of a frog. Here, Mr. Jevons is no fantasy prince but an ordinary fallible human being. It also marks the distance travelled by Ellen from her original position of waiting for a dream prince from Tintagel.

When we first encounter **Stacey** and Mac in Laurence's **The Fire-Dwellers**, they are in the sixteenth year of their marriage. Their relationship takes the form of changeless routine. Even love-making is a swift, ritualistic act of necessity. In his article "Wise and Gentle," Phyllis Grosskurth vividly sums up **Stacey's** condition:

Mac seems to have something to say to her [Stacey] only when he reproaches her for spoiling the children. He seems to notice her only when he reminds her to get her hair done before an office party (in A Place to Stand On 228).

If Laurence had described just this aspect of their relationship, the novel will not hold so many connotations or sustain so much of the reader's interest. By providing an insight into **Stacey's** mental processes, Laurence enriches the whole narrative. For instance, Stacey is in an age group which is not as old as her parent's generation nor as young as her daughter's. But she understands very well the bluntness that results from any relationship held for a long time. When they argue over some problem concerning Mac's official career, Mac says, by way of ending the argument: "You do, eh? You really think you do?" (**FD** 37) Stacey is immediately reminded of her own parents in a similar situation. When her mother tries to stop her father from drinking too much, he uses the same words as Mac. There are times when she

even thinks of walking out of the marriage. Her reaction expresses the first questions about women's liberation and economic independence.

How could you walk out on him,... ? You couldn't, sweetheart, and don't you forget it. You haven't got a nickel of your own. This is what they mean by emancipation (FD 104. emphasis added).

However, some of Stacey's arguments show her to be mentally liberated. For example, she questions the validity of Mac's accusation about her alleged sexual encounter with Buckle Fennick. She further questions the one-sidedness of the whole argument by pointing out Mac's relationship with his secretary, a young girl. "We go on this way and the needle jabs become razor strokes and the razors become hunting knives and the knives become swords and how do we stop?" (FD 139).

This is the reality which she faces in her day-to-day life. In order to escape the daily grind of life, she tries to have fantastic dreams or a brief affair. But in the end, through the turn of various events, she realises that she has to face reality with all its restraints and limitations.

Two relationships which break down beyond repair are those of Hagar and Bram Shipley in The Stone Angel and of Morag and Brooke Skelton in The Diviners.

The Stone Angel:

Whatever anyone said of him, no one could deny he [Bram] was a good-looking man. It's not every man who can wear a beard. His suited him. He was a big-built man, and he carried himself so well if only he'd never opened his mouth (SA 69-70).

The predominant emotion in the Hagar-Bram relationship is physical passion. As Hagar puts it: " . . . we'd each married **for**

those qualities we later found we couldn't bear, he for my manners and speech, I for his flouting of them" (SA 79-80). Whereas Bram accepts his physical existence entirely, Hagar refuses to do so. Initially, she tries to gloss over it through some fantastic ideas as to "how Brampton Shipley prospered, gentled, learned cravats and grammar" (SA 50). Bram matches her stubbornness and remains, if not worsens into a further degenerate state (one such is the act of relieving himself on the steps of the Currie store).

From the beginning, Hagar is the only one who sees something admirable in him.

I reveled in his fingernails with crescents of ingrown earth that never met a file. I fancied I heard in his laughter the bravery of battalions. I thought he looked a bearded Indian, so brown and beaked a face. The black hair thrusting from his chin was rough as thistles. The next instant, though, I imagined him rigged out in a suit of gray soft as a dove's breast-feathers (SA 45).

Both Lottie Drieser and Hagar's father endorse the view that Bram is "common as dirt" (SA 47). It is sad that Hagar, in order to escape her father's authoritarianism falls a prey to another form of oppression. The main point to be noted about Hagar as wife is that, in a puritan fashion she tries to negate the physical pleasures on which Bram lays so much importance. "His [Bram's] banner over me was only his skin, . . . " (SA 81). As Linda Hutcheon remarks in her essay "Pride and Puritan Passion": "Hagar fails to connect her innate sensuality with her sexuality, either in the past or in the present" (58). Yet, years later, when she sees him bedridden, her only reaction is the difference in Bram's outward appearance.

How had he [Bram] grown so **small**? The broadness of **him** was gone. His shoulders were **stooped**, and his wide spade-beard had become only a tufted fringe along his face... . And I, ... was doubly shamed recalling how I'd thought of him at night these past years (SA 171-2) .

Later, Hagar describes Bram "as an ancient child" (SA 183) . These descriptions resemble the descriptions of **Alf** by Elizabeth Hunter in The Eye of the Storm. Both Bram and Alf are no longer husbands with equal or more power over their women, but helpless children to their wives. Where this moves Elizabeth into compassion and realisation, it fails to make any impact on Hagar. The only thing she thinks of doing, on his death, is to bury him beside the Currie plot and thus bringing her two heritages together. Though Hagar walks out of her marriage, towards the very end of her life, she realises the dire consequences of her pride and calls out to Bram from her hospital bed. This marks the beginning of Hagar's self-understanding.

However, in The Diviners, **Morag's** relationship with Brooke Skelton is the least successful. She loses both ways: by not being allowed to have his child and by not being able to improve her creative talents. In a way, her success as a writer marks the failure of her **marriage** which eventually breaks. How her life with Brooke is allegorised in her novels, will be examined in detail in the section "Women as Artists" in the Second Chapter.

Brooke's picture in the newspaper and the news about his promotion as President of the University sets **Morag** thinking and the readers are acquainted with her first meeting of Brooke as her professor, her life with him and their subsequent divorce in the fifth chapter of the section "Halls of Sion." From the

beginning, the reader realises that the relationship between Brooke and Morag is one where both are acting out each other's fantasies. Morag's "'mysterious nonexistent past,' 'her genuine innocence'" (D 195-6) are the things which attract her to Brooke. Morag desperately tries to tell him that it is not her true side. "She wants to tell him she is not like that, either. She also has lived too long for that. The state of original grace ended a long time" (D 196). He wants her to be a blank sheet on which he can work out his own fantasies. In the sexual sphere, this is one reason for his assumption about her virginity. On the other hand, for Morag, Brooke offers an escape into a world of freedom away from Manawaka and from all the heritage she gets from Christie and Prin.

This fantasy soon wears out and she quickly gets bored and frustrated about the role-playing that goes on between them. In the same way as Nora in Ibsen's A Doll's House, Morag resents Brooke calling her 'child' or 'little one.' Brooke refuses to allow her the freedom necessary to grow as an individual. This is reflected in his attitude to sex. He considers himself as the giver and Morag as the passive recipient. "'Have you been a good girl, love?' Brooke asks. It has become his game, his jest, before going into her, and indeed before permitting his arousal or hers" (D 245). Morag begins by taking it as a joke but ends up resenting this whole game of rewards and punishments. In this respect, her relationship with Jules offers her more freedom. That Brooke always avoids or postpones any talk about having a child is another area of tension in their marriage. The reasons

he gives range from nonsensical ones like the small space in the flat to non-committal ones like asking her to consider if the world is the right place for bringing forth children. Her growing frustration and resentment find the last straw in his open insult of Jules.

As Mothers

The theorization of the theme of motherhood has generated several shifts even within feminist thought. On the one hand, radical and socialist feminists including Simone de Beauvoir, Shulamith Firestone and Juliet Mitchell "foreground the oppressive aspects of motherhood" (Paulina Palmer. Contemporary Women's Fiction: Narrative Practice and Feminist Theory 95). On the other hand, theorists like Nancy Chodorow and Dorothy Dinnerstein focus on the pre-Oedipal bond between mothers and children and treat "motherhood as a source of pleasure and ambiguous power" (Paulina Palmer 96). Emphasizing the pre-Oedipal bond, Helene Cixous links the "écriture feminine" to the mother's voice and Julia Kristeva detects in "maternal jouissance," the potential for disrupting phallocracy (Discussed in Toril Moi's Sexual/Textual Politics 113-9; 167-8). Using the pre-Oedipal bond, Adrienne Rich makes a distinction between motherhood as an institution and as an experience. While the former "highlights the control which patriarchy exerts on women's reproductive capacities," the latter affirms "the potential for pleasure and self-fulfilment" offered by motherhood (Paulina Palmer 97).

In their roles as mothers, the protagonists meet with partial and complete success as also total failure. It is interesting to note that Adrienne Rich's categories are used by the writers to distinguish between Good and Bad Mothers: Mothers who selflessly support their children and those for whom "[m]otherhood is more a biological than an emotional fact" (Ingmar Bjorksten. Patrick White: A General Introduction 36).

Patrick White has captured varying nuances of motherhood in his portrayal of mother figures in his novels. In an interesting article entitled "'Mother, I won't never go drovin'; Motherhood in Australian Narrative," Delys Bird points out the concept of the Good and Evil Mother in Riders in the Chariot. Mrs. Godbold refers to the former and Mrs. Flack and Jolley stand in "oppositional textual relation" to her (43). But a closer examination of the novels reveals numerous variations of these concepts. Mrs. Goodman, along with Alex Gray becomes the dissatisfied mother, while Amy is the possessive one. Laura's concept of motherhood is more mental and psycho-spiritual than real. Mrs. Godbold is the ideal mother. Where Elizabeth Hunter holds a rival relationship with her daughter, Eadie Twyborn proceeds from a distressing position to an understanding of the sexual ambivalence of her son/daughter. Only the roles of Mrs. Godbold, Elizabeth Hunter and Eadie Twyborn are taken up for detailed analysis. One reason is their centrality in the respective novels. Even though Alex is a central character, her trial with her various selves is more important in the novel.

In Margaret Laurence's fiction, the mother figures are distinctive and different from one another. Hagar's

discrimination between her two sons resembles Mrs. Goodman's in The Aunt's Story between Theodora and Fanny and Amy Parker's in The Tree of Man between Ray and **Thelma**. Rachel does not go through the various experiences of motherhood, but realises what it means to take on the role and responsibilities of a mother. Stacey, like Mrs. Godbold in Riders in the Chariot, is a good mother who cares for and worries about her children. But unlike Mrs. Godbold, she is a modern housewife who has **problems** of coming to terms with her own sexuality and with external reality. Further, there is no symbol like the chariot in Riders in the Chariot towards which her realisation can be directed. **Morag's** relation with her daughter, Pique, is an ideal relationship, well-understood by both mother and daughter.

Let us now examine the roles of the protagonists as mothers in the descending order of success.

Mrs. Godbold in White's Riders in the Chariot and Morag Gunn in Laurence's The Diviners are good examples of successful mothers. In Riders in the Chariot, Mrs. Godbold is described as being "[s]trangled by the arms of a weaned child, she was seldom it seemed without a second baby greedy at her breast, and a third **impatient** in her body" (RC 66). This being the real picture of Mrs. Godbold, her "life sentence of love and labour" continues, in her nursing of the other riders. Mrs. Godbold does her work uncomplainingly. But as **Delys Bird** puts it:

She exemplifies the sanctity and **sanctification** of motherhood.... As the portrayal of Mrs. Godbold lapses into sentimentality, its overblown sanctity encourages the intervention of a reading suspicious of the **clichéd** use of the ideal of motherhood (44).

At the end of the novel, she becomes the timeless figure of the Earth Mother who is compassionate and gives freely. This is seen in the care with which she nurses Mary Hare when the latter is down with pneumonia, Alf Dubbo when he vomits at Khalil's brothel and Mordecai Himmelfarb after his mock-crucifixion. Mrs. Godbold also provides a contrast to Mrs. Flack and Jolley. For instance, Mrs. Jolley relates her identity to her motherhood.

With her impossibly white teeth and her corsets, her baking of pink cakes and her sentimentally superficial Christianity, above all in her wincingly ladylike manner, Mrs. Jolley parodies middleclass Australian motherhood (Delys Bird 43).

Mrs. Jolley along with Mrs. Hare, Mrs. Flack and Mrs. Rosetree are figures who reinforce White's satiric comments on the suburban values of the Sarsaparilla society.

In The Diviners, Pique is the daughter of Morag and Jules Tonnerre. Morag, as a true and concerned mother, constantly worries about her daughter. In fact, the novel opens with Pique's disappearance from home and Morag worrying about this. Morag is also concerned about the kind of heritage Pique will receive from her.

Would Pique's life be better or worse than Morag's? Mine hasn't been so bad. Been? Time running out. Is that what is really going on, with me, now, with her? Pique, harbinger of my death, continuer of life (D 290).

However, like Stacey, she admires the openness and simplicity she sees in the sexual relations among Pique's generation and especially Pique's relation to Gord and Dan and the swiftness and clear-headedness with which she changes or abandons her lovers without any qualms. Like Stacey, she stands in a two-way relation to the world--parent and child. Even though as a woman of

independent spirit she walks out of her **marriage** with Brooke, **she** nevertheless **commits** herself totally to the task of bringing up Pique. Jules aids her by imparting knowledge of the past inherited by her through him. Like Jules, Pique takes up singing and recreating the old myths of the Metis as her career. In its own way, the family consisting of Morag, Jules and Pique is an idyllic, well-knit family bound by understanding and freedom.

In spite of all this help, Pique feels insecure and unsettled. For instance, in one of the meetings of their family with their neighbours,

Pique picked up her guitar and began to sing. Around her, there was an area of silence, as though all of them, all in this room, here, now, wanted to touch and hold her, and could not, did not dare tamper with her aloneness (D 411).

Jules helps her out of this during his final visit. As Clara Thomas rightly observes, "[h]e also points Pique towards his brother Jacques and the place on Galloping Mountain as a kind of area of security and hope out of all the drifting and loss of his family" (164). This kind of passing over of heritage culminates in bringing together of the plaid pin and hunting knife. The final stroke of understanding in the mother-daughter relationship is the decision of Pique to go to her uncle's place in the Metis prairie. Morag accepts that "Pique's journey, although at this point it might feel to her unique, was not unique" (D 441). Thus, Pique's song about Jules is one way by which, she repays and affirms the importance of the Metis heritage. Another point has to be stressed in this relationship. Pique's response to Morag wishing her well is that she is not good at explanations.

This response proves that Pique has avoided getting into the trap of words. While Morag provides Pique, through her (Morag's) own experience, the insight into things, Pique in turn provides a new perspective on Morag's attitude to life and reality. Thus, the relationships which have been dominated by single individuals, here, culminates in the mutual understanding of both, which is essential for leading better lives.

The second group consists of mother figures like Eadie Twyborn and Stacey MacAindra who, with some success, try to cement their relationships with their children. In The Twyborn Affair, Eadie Twyborn's character assumes significance only in relation to her multipersonality child. Eadie and her changeling Eudoxia-Eddie-Eadith have an emotional bond and it is the acceptance of this bond by both, that forms the crux of the novel. Just as Eadie's acceptance of her son/daughter is important, two different factors become necessary to the understanding of her character. One is her possessiveness over her child: "Father never wanted his child hanging round, or was in some way afraid. Eadie wanted one constantly. Eadie: Don't you love me, darling? Then why are you avoiding me?" (TA 123) . Again, Eadie's relationship with Eddie is one that is devouring.

'Shouldn't we embrace?' The gruff warning in her voice at once established her as his mother; and as they advanced upon each other, still the victims of their diffidence, he saw that it was she who was beginning to take the initiative, while he, the passive object of her intentions, . . . (TA 148).

Another factor is Eadie's lesbian relationship with Joanie Golson.

She [Eadie] was dressed in a pair of check pants and a coat which could have belonged to my [Eddie's] father. Certainly the waistcoat of crumpled points was his, chugging along in the rear was Joanie Golson, her bosom expiring in palest blue charmeuse (TA 38).

This incident is repeated to emphasise the ambivalence and problems involved in sexual transformation. Two incidents help retrieve Eadie's position as mother in the novel. First, is her explanation in her reply to Marcia Lushington's letter in the second section.

What I would like to convey to you is that losing a child in death, is so much better than losing a grown . . . reasoning child, to life... . He is swallowed up. Whether in death or life, it is the same. We should not have aspired to possess a human being (TA 301-2).

This understanding further develops and at the end of the third section both Eadie and E. are mutually self-realised. She openly admits her longing for a daughter and foresees their future as sitting in the garden drying their hair and talking matters concerning women. Such an attitude characterises her near pathetic waiting for Eadith: "Eadie said I must not fail Eadith now that I have found her Eadith Eddie no matter which this fragment of my self which I lost is now returned where it belongs" (TA 431-2). Commenting on the 'ambiguous triumph' of this scene, Jean Pierre-Durix states that "[w]hen the mother herself accepts her son's transsexualism a strange kind of peace sets in, but this temporary balance can only lead to a refuge in dream-like visions which may well end up in death" ("Masks and Travesties: The Twyborn Affair by Patrick White" 46) .

In Laurence's The Fire-Dwellers, the readers encounter Stacey as a mother of four children forever worrying about their

welfare, about what she supposes to be her husband's lack of affection for their son, Duncan. Through Katie, her daughter, she recalls her own past and the middle position she occupies as both mother and child.

That Stacey's identity is marked in her roles as housewife and mother is evident in her remark early in the novel.

I can't go anywhere as myself. Only as Mac's wife or the kids' mother. And yet I'm getting now so that I actually prefer to have either Mac or one of the kids along. Even to the hairdresser, I'd rather take Jen. It's easier to face the world with one of them along. Then I know who I'm supposed to be (FD 81. emphasis added).

In her essay "Identity in The Fire-Dwellers," Nancy Bailey states that in the above passage, Stacey is worried about "the real self which underlies the diverse personae" (in Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Margaret Laurence 111). It is the changing masks that she resents in the long run, but she understands the need to work out her realisation within the confines of a family.

As a mother, she worries about many things. As Clara Thomas points out, Stacey resents her inability to prevent "Katie's vulnerability, at fourteen; Ian's stiff, withdrawn pride, Mac's misunderstandings of Duncan; and Jen's **inability--or unwillingness--to** talk" (120). Her fears can be broadly summed up under two heads for the sake of convenience: (i) generally concerning all her children and (ii) especially her relationship with her daughter, Katie, which parallels her relationship with her mother.

Stacey's concern for her kids as a group is evident in one of her interior **monologues**. Even though Mac points out and she

herself realises that her fears are irrational, she is not able to **overcome them**.

I fuss. Mother-hen type. All a load of nonsense. **All unnecessary.** Another nervous tic. How can I break habits I've acquired so gradually I'm not even aware of them until I see they drive Mac out of his mind? (**FD 30**).

Also, she is seen fervently praying to God. "-Please. Let them be okay, all their **lives**, all four of them. Let me die before they do. Only not before they grow up, or what would happen to them?" (FD 65). There are numerous instances, when she gets frantic about Jen's inability or unwillingness to talk. Similarly, she feels her own inadequacy to shape Duncan in the proper way. Mac feels she is spoiling Duncan with too much indulgence. During one of his tiffs with Ian and his father, Duncan says that he is unable to do anything right. Stacey's pondering over his words is very intense:

-What words? I haven't got any. It isn't mine he wants anyway. It's Mac's and **Ian's**, and those he won't get. I'm far from him, too. Far even from Duncan. How did it happen like this? (FD 101).

This reflection may be taken to represent the gulf that separates the masculine and feminine experiences as also the difference in the languages of the discourses of a male and a female.

But even in the exclusively female world of herself and her daughter, she feels her inability to help much. For instance, Katie rebels against Stacey for not allowing her to go to an adults-only movie just as Stacey herself rebelled against her **mother** to go for a public dance. There are also other ways in which the discrepancies between Katie and herself become explicit. One such instance is when Stacey, in a fit of youthful

energy dresses up in an **outmoded** fashion and dances by herself when the kids are asleep. This is followed by a stark contrast when Katie executes an elegant dance.

Katie is dancing... . Her auburn hair, long and straight, touches her shoulders and sways a little when she moves. She wears no makeup. Her bones and flesh are thin, plain-moving, unfrenetic, knowing their idiom (FP 117) .

This passage is immediately followed by a description of Stacey:

Stacey **MacAindra**, thirty-nine, hips ass and face heavier than once, shamrock velvet pants, petunia- purple blouse, cheap guilt sandals high-heeled, prancing squirming jiggling (FD 117).

However, in spite of all these problems, Stacey ultimately strikes a harmonious relationship with her children. This comes through three incidents: Jen's sudden burst of words, Mac's caring for Duncan who gets drowned in the beach and Katie confiding in Stacey, when Tess Fogler forces Jen is forced to see the big fish eating its small one. Katie blames herself for merely snatching Jen and running away from the scene. She tells Stacey: " ... you **would've** known what to say. You always do. I never do" (FD 179). Helen Buss rightly considers this instance as establishing a sense of equality, a position "where mother and daughter are equals, recognizing their **commonality**, being able to speak of themselves as '**we**'." (Mother and Daughter Relationships in the Manawaka Works of Margaret Laurence 48) .

In their attempts to **differentiate** between their children and outrival their daughters, some women fail in their roles as mothers. Both Elizabeth Hunter and Hagar Shipley favour one child over the other. They also resemble in their attempts to scuttle the plans of their children to admit them at the home for the

aged. Similarly, Elizabeth Hunter and Alex Gray outrival their daughters in their attempts to capture the attention of Edvard Pehl and Patrick White respectively.

At the end of The Eye of the Storm, Dorothy's thought process is given as a statement: "... the worst mothers in the flesh do not necessarily destroy the touching concept of motherhood" (ES 568). Two categories of motherhood emerge here: "motherhood as experience and motherhood as institution" (Delys Bird 41). In her quest for self-realisation, pride and rivalry with her daughter, Elizabeth loses her position as mother of the flesh but retains the institution of motherhood in her lifelong domination over her children. Instead of love, she nurtures hatred towards her children. Just as families can eat mothers, mothers can swallow children (Delys Bird 46). One explanation of Elizabeth's failure is that her sexuality is combined with motherhood. In the Brumby Island, Elizabeth tries to capture Pehl's attention to herself: "She was sitting sideways at the table ... exposing her slender, miraculously unspoilt feet from beneath the white, raw-silk hem" (ES 385).

Elizabeth cooks for Pehl and plays him music. The last straw is when she openly bitches about Dorothy saying that the latter is going through a difficult time and that hence she bears grudges. Dorothy's reaction is a life-long hatred and resentment for her mother. Further, she dismisses Elizabeth's realisation: "But could anything of a transcendental nature have illuminated a mind so sensual, mendacious, materialistic, superficial as Elizabeth Hunter?" (ES 570). Further, Elizabeth makes an undue differentiation between her son and daughter. She puts down

defiantly their plans of putting her in a home for **the** aged. However, the redeeming factor is her acceptance of guilt and rivalry and her timely, motherly nursing of **Alf**.

In The Stone Angel, the pride and inability to open up which mars Hagar's relationship with **Bram**, continues in her relationship with her sons. By an irrational belief, she holds that **Marvin**, her eldest son is a Shipley whereas John, her favourite son is a Currie. It turns out to be just the reverse. As John once puts it succinctly, "You always bet on the wrong horse" ... "**Marv** was your boy, but you never saw that... " (SA 237). Linda Hutcheon provides a psychological reading to the whole issue:

In preferring John to Marvin, Hagar had revealed her double allegiance to the passionate flesh and the repressive will her motherly devotion to her Shipley son was an acceptable social sublimation of her denied passion for Bram. Similarly, her secret despising of the hardworking, prosaic, but **Currie-like** Marvin is an unconscious rejection of her father's **values-and** his inhibitions ("Pride and Puritan Passion" 59).

In fact, John with his coarse ways and manners, resembles Bram more than Marvin. Hagar presumes that John will hold high the Currie heritage and gives him the plaid-pin. But he trades it for the Tonnerre knife and which, in turn, he trades for a pack of cigarettes. John, like Bram, has intimate relationships with the half-breed Metis and resents Hagar's possessiveness. However, he also cares for Bram during the latter's last days: "John had washed and fed him [Bram], helped him to die-to what extent, only John knew, and whether he'd done the right thing or not and in what spirit, only God knew" (SA 184) .

In one sense, Hagar resents the mutual understanding that exists between John and Arlene and the perfect marriage between

Marvin and Doris. For instance, she once tries to advise Arlene against **marrying** John by saying that Arlene cannot **change** him a bit. Arlene's reply shows her maturity and her difference from Hagar:

"It's not me," she [Arlene] said. "I'm by **him**, that's all. If I could do more, I would, but I can't, nor he for me." I [Hagar] didn't see what she was driving at, but her calm and almost withdrawn air infuriated me (SA 202).

Similarly, John has a better understanding of the importance of the individual rather than the abstract familial pride which Hagar holds. When Hagar rejects Arlene by saying that she is No-Name Lottie Drieser's daughter, his reply is a cryptic questioning of all her values: "This may come as a shock to you," John said. "But it's not her grandfather I'm going around with, nor she with mine" (SA 204).

The perfect understanding that exists between John and Arlene is evident in their clear thinking and frank discussions about their marriage and their future. When direct confrontations with John and Arlene prove futile, Hagar tries to break the relationship by joining hands with Lottie. This results in their plan to send away Arlene to the East. This, in turn, results in the ghastly deaths of John and Arlene. Margaret Gail Osachoff, in "Moral Vision in The Stone Angel," points out the interesting feature that Hagar remembers **the** childhood episode of killing the chicks in the dump, while Lottie forgets the whole incident. One reason is that Hagar is "imaginative and sensitive" while Lottie is "cold and callous" (151). Further, Lottie has **accomplished** the task, while Hagar is not able to do it. The third possibility

is that Lottie is **more** villainous and therefore, lies to Hagar. However, Hagar who turns into stone, unable to weep is released **from** the bondage when she cries for John's death before Murray Lees, the surrogate son, who brings to light the fact that tragedy is **universal**.

The facts about John are conveyed to the reader **mainly** through **Hagar's** recollections. But her relationship with Marvin happens in the present. We find Marvin and Doris, themselves in their sixties, struggling with an impossibly stubborn woman, Hagar. Even though Hagar accepts Doris as a good cook and takes care of her, she is sarcastic about their natural fears and verbally torments them about their idea of putting her in an old-age home. Meeting Murray Lees and her night at the cannery brings about her realisation, for, in the hospital, she is able to say, "You've not been cranky, Marvin. You've been good to me, always. A better son than John" (SA 304). With this, "she accepts the evidence of love she has always wanted" (Clara Thomas 72).

Conclusion

While examining the female protagonists within the purview of their roles in the family, certain similarities and differences emerge. Though this was considered in the course of the chapter, an overview of them at this stage may be of help in studying the similarities and differences in the perceptions of Patrick White and Margaret Laurence. This may also help in assessing the use of concepts like family and the distinction made between sex and gender by the two writers.

Despite the individual differences, certain common features are found with respect to the familial roles played by women in the works of the two writers. As daughters, protagonists are in perpetual conflict with their parents (usually, dominant mothers) and are often unfavourably compared with their socially successful sisters. As wives, some of the protagonists are portrayed as committing adultery. Elizabeth Hunter, Ellen Roxburgh, Stacey Mac Aindra and Morag Gunn may be cited as examples. On the one hand, the adulterous affairs emphasise the loveless and incompatible marriages made by the women. On the other hand, it can be argued that the portrayal of adultery is a form of questioning and rebelling against the social norms which insist on chastity for women. On a psychological level, the adulterous affairs are ways by which the 'real selves' of the protagonists are revealed. This aspect will be considered in detail in Chapter Four. As mothers, we find protagonists grouping under three categories: successful, partially successful and total failures. Favouring of one child over the other is a trait shared by some of the protagonists with the other mother figures who are not protagonists. For instance, Elizabeth Hunter's favouring of Basil over Dorothy may be compared to Any Parker's differentiation between Ray and Thelma in *The Tree of Man* or Mrs. Goodman's differentiation between Theodora and Fanny in *The Aunt's Story*. Similarly, Hagar's favouring of John over Marvin may be compared to May Cameron's differentiation between Stacey and Rachel. Further, for women like Elizabeth Hunter and Hagar Shipley, motherhood is a biological fact. It is interesting to find women like Theodora,

Laura and Rachel who do not experience biological motherhood but have an intense experience of motherhood as something emotional. Let us now consider the differences.

In portraying the daughter figures, White seems to insist *on* the physical ugliness of the protagonists. For instance, Theodora is manly with a prominent 'black moustache.' Laura is a 'plain' headmistress. Mary is a 'red girl' and 'ugly as foetus' in Norbert's terms. They are constantly compared with socially successful women like Fanny Parrott and Belle Bonner. Peter Beatson is of the opinion that White tries to establish the fact that "like success, beauty is an end in itself; ugliness, like failures, points to a higher end" (The Eve in the Mandala 48) and also "the dichotomy of aspiring soul and earth bound body" (109). It can also be established as White's way of subverting the social norms of feminine beauty and womanly attributes.

Laurence also insists on such subversions in that none of her daughter figures are extraordinarily beautiful by social standards. However, Laurence establishes the passing away of beauty with age and the acceptance of it with grace as marking the growth in maturity. For instance, Stacey is well aware of her beauty as a young girl in Manawaka. But she realises her physical bulkiness in the present which provides a striking contrast to her daughter Katie's natural beauty. Thus, her final words in the novel are a plea to "mutate into a matriarch." Similarly, Morag who begins by being conscious of her long beautiful legs and who takes beauty treatments, grows into maturity in accepting Pique's natural grace and agility. In spite of her pride in her good tastes, Hagar is conscious of her grotesque bulk in the present.

In the case of Rachel, her **self-criticism** about her '**scarecrow**' appearance and ungainly **movements** grows into an acceptance of the very same factors at the end of the novel.

The concept of time as the healer results in the cementing of bonds in Laurence's fiction. Thus, Vanessa reaches an understanding with her mother and grandfather and Morag with Christie. The same may be said of Stacey and Mac in the man-woman relationship. As mothers, Morag and Stacey strike an understanding with Pique and Katie. What Nancy Bailey posits for Stacey may be applied with equal validity to the others *i.e.*, their capacity to break "the cycle of women's lives '**lived** too long in both depression and fantasy while our active energies have been trained and absorbed into caring for others'" (in Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Margaret Laurence 117). In the Whitean canon, the only examples of such understanding are those formed between Elizabeth Hunter and Alf and Eadie and E. Twyborn. Otherwise, the deviation from what is considered normal is quite glaring. Most of them are social outcasts either due to their ugliness (Theodora or Mary) or the oddity of their minds (Laura). Beatson points out that "though some kind of dislocation **from** socially defined normality helps activate the core of being, it is not necessary" (126). It can be argued that a shift in White's stance can be noticed from The Eye of the Storm onwards. Thus, Elizabeth Hunter, Ellen Roxburgh, Eadie Twyborn and Alex Gray maintain a veneer of socially accepted appearances.

Another area of difference between White and Laurence lies in their treatments of sex in their fiction. For instance, in

White's fiction, direct reference to the sexual act is very rare. Physical union is seen as an act of necessity for procreation and as a disease. This is seen in the juxtaposing of **images** of rotten vegetation while describing physical union as in Voss. **Thus**, Laura finds Rose's physicality repulsive, to cite an example. The descriptions provided by Elizabeth Hunter and Alex Gray about love-making are full of grotesque images. In an interview with Jim Sharman, White considers his books to be "very sexual."

They don't flaunt it. Oh, they do more in the later ones, because people now do flaunt sex. But in the earlier ones you didn't, because people didn't. And they also believed more in love than in sex. Now people believe less in love ("A Very Literary Luncheon" 30).

In the above passage, White distinguishes between love and lust. But his insistence on agape over eros is quite evident in the relationships between Voss and Laura, Theodora and Sokolnikov, Mary and Eustace. Ingmar Björkstén's observation is perceptive in this regard. Björkstén argues that in White's fiction love is considered as

a feeling and as a concept, as an experience and as a presentiment; as that mystery which the intellect can never grasp but which can be comprehended by the intuition of a sensitive being or by the inspiration of an "elected" being (Patrick White: A General Introduction 27) .

Such an argument accounts for the motherly care with which Elizabeth Hunter nurses her husband during his last days. This can also be seen in the acceptance and affection of the "spirit children" in White. Theodora's love for her niece Lou, and Laura's love for Mercy can be classified under this category.

Another reason for the difference found in White's portrayal of sex is provided by his essentially 'androgynous' vision. Manly

Johnson states that White presents sexual encounters "as struggles for unity--two lacks driven to seek completion" ("Patrick White: The Eye of the Language" 344). In this regard, White's statement in *Flaws in the Glass* is insightful: "In fact sexuality refreshes and strengthens through its ambivalence. . . . the masculine principle in . . . women, the feminine in . . . men" (154-5. emphasis added). While echoing Virginia Woolf's statement regarding androgyny, the passage also accounts for the recurring hermaphrodites in White's fiction. Theodora described as a bloke in skirts and Mary Hare's animal compassion for her father and cousin are good examples. Carolyn Bliss is of the view that White uses androgyny "as a means of recalling a prelapsarian unity and of entering a realm in which all dualities are encompassed" (Patrick White's Fiction: The Paradox of Fortunate Failure 47). While androgyny may be a way of achieving mandalic wholeness, White's statement (quoted above) seems to emphasise the acceptance of the sexual ambiguity rather than its resolution. E.'s sexual transformations in The Twyborn Affair stress this aspect.

Unlike White, who seems to believe more in the marriage of the minds, Laurence tackles the sexual encounters with ease. There are constant references to the sexual act as a confirmation and a reassurance of communication and understanding between individuals. As Ronald Labonte points out, though Laurence differentiates between love and lust, "[s]exual touching is the sine qua non in human contact because it alone pierces the appearances, the abstract images of ourselves which we project for the world to marvel at" (in The Work of Margaret Laurence

173). Though Hagar believes that love should be "tender at, lavender sachets," it is the acceptance of her sexual arousal to Bram that finally leads to her self-knowledge. Similarly, Morag encounters a patriarchal 'giver' in Brooke, lust in Harold and Chas, comfort in Dan MacRaith and perfect understanding in her love-making with Jules. Commenting on Laurence's ability to integrate sex and sexuality, John Moss observes that "[u]niversal problems of human experience are seen and rendered in terms of the sexual roles of her characters" ("The Presbyterian Legacy: Laurence and The Diviners" 70). On the one hand, such descriptions mark the insider's view Laurence has in writing about the intimate experiences of her characters. On the other hand, the sexual behaviour of Laurence's women "is inseparable from their total experience of themselves" (John Moss. "The Presbyterian Legacy" 71). What they rebel against is the role-playing and gendering by society. Thus, Morag who walks out of her sterile marriage with Brooke and is permissive in her love-affairs, takes it on herself to be a good mother to Pique.

This chapter is an attempt to study what David Jeffrey calls, "the search for a relational or interpersonal understanding of the self" whose persistent aspect is the "obsession with the family" ("Biblical Hermeneutic and Family History in Contemporary Canadian Fiction: Weibe and Laurence" 87). While Jeffrey connects Laurence's family units to the archetypal family structures derived from the Bible, Peter Beatson divides White's family units into the 'external,' 'internal' and 'mythical.' These two readings may be taken to

affirm the varied nuances and connotations of the individual within the family provided by the two writers. The existing range from the particular to the universal also portrays "the structures of the existing forms of so-called reality" which "prove too narrow and repressive for . . . women who attempt to discover where the cause of their bondage lies" (Angelika Maeser in John Sorfleet ed. The Work of Margaret Laurence 151). Though some attempts at norm breaking were evident in the roles of women within the family, more such attempts will be examined in women's professional roles as artists and teachers in the following Chapter.

Chapter II

Deconstructing Social Reality Through Professional and Artistic Expressions--

Women in Social Roles

At a very early period she had apprehended instinctively the dual life--that outward existence which **conforms**, the inward life which questions... . There was with her a feeling of having descended in the social scale, with a corresponding sense of having risen in the spiritual. Every step which she took toward relieving herself from obligations added to her strength and expansion as an individual.

(Kate Chopin. The Awakening)

In the last Chapter, I examined the different roles taken by women within the family. Only very few women were able to reconcile the restrictions posed by the family, and their urge to move out of these roles in order to find alternate identities for themselves. Some such attempts include their roles in society as professional women and as artists. This chapter has been divided into two sections where the protagonists in the fiction of Margaret Laurence and Patrick White are studied in their roles as teachers and artists.

Women as Teachers

In this section, an attempt is made to study women in relation to their professions. The professional roles add an extra social dimension to other familial and personal relationships. Both Rachel Cameron in Margaret Laurence's A Jest of God and Laura Trevelyan in Patrick White's Voss are portrayed as school teachers. This section attempts to examine how teaching, the normally accepted profession for women, is used for different purposes by the two writers. Through the intellectual pursuit of these two characters, the common factor which both the writers have managed to establish is to make the characters resist the social norms of getting married and leading stereotyped lives as housewives. Both Rachel and Laura are middle-aged spinsters. However, behind this common factor, there are also differences between Rachel and Laura in terms of their attitude towards other people (i.e., their relationships) and their roles as teachers.

Being a teacher adds an extra dimension to Rachel's roles *as* obedient daughter and lover. Fear, which is the most apparent and ~~common~~ reaction of Rachel, is established in ~~this~~ sphere also. Rachel's fear is best exemplified in Carol Christ's description from Doris Lessing's The Four-Gated City. Christ describes "fear as the primary obstacle to transcendence" and classifies it under three heads: "fear of what other people might think; fear of being different; fear of being isolated" (Diving Deep and Surfacing 67). She fears the authoritarianism of Willard Siddley, the principal of her school just as she fears displeasing her mother in the familial relationship. She fears transgression of normal limits in her relationship with James Doherty, her favourite pupil. Also, she fears becoming a stereotyped spinster school teacher. The conflict and unnecessary tensions created in this sphere is due to her fear and dependency in relationships. Though this ~~may~~ be said of her familial relationships also, this becomes more pronounced because there is a social dimension involved in these relationships. In this section, a detailed study of these relationships is ~~made~~ as also comparisons with other teacher figures in Margaret Laurence, namely Nick Kazlick in A Jest of God and Nathaniel Amegbe in This Side Jordan (1960).

Relationship with Willard

Though Rachel revolts in her mind against social norms, these conventions are internalised in her. For instance, in an interview with Willard she becomes self-conscious that she is taller than him **and** consequently thinks: "I know I must not stand

up now, not until he's [Willard] gone. I **am** exceptionally **tall** for a woman, and Willard is shorter than I" (JG 7) . **This** sort of dependency leads to her submission to all his decisions. One such instance is the strapping of James Doherty for being **seen** in the woods when he has taken leave from school on the excuse of being sick. Even though Rachel feels strongly that strapping will not do any good and that it is an unfair punishment, she does not say so and also justifies Willard's stand by accepting to send James to him. "'I'll send him in, then' ... Willard has won. Maybe he is even right. He has two of his own. Could I be expected to know what is **best**?" (JG 25). At this point, she badly wants to leave the job and the school but this materialises only after she undergoes the operation for tumour and has confronted the fear of the imagined pregnancy. **It** is only at **this** point that she is able to clearly understand her relationship with Willard.

What am I to say, though? Sometimes I was happy here, and sometimes not, and often I was afraid of **him** [Willard], and still am, although I see now this was as unnecessary as my mother's fear of fate. What good would it do to say that? I couldn't explain, nor he accept (JG 197).

Thus, Rachel's relationship with Willard takes the form of the oppressor-oppressed relationship in the colonial situation. A parallel to this is found in the relationship between Nathaniel Amegbe and his principal, Jacob Mensah in This Side Jordan. This sort of a situation arises because of the failure of communication. Whereas **Calla**, Rachel's colleague manages situations by asking Willard not to make a mountain out of a molehill, Rachel does not say this in order to avoid scenes and thus is put in

tricky situations. The same is true of **Amegbe**.

Relationship with James

At one level, James is Rachel's favourite pupil with **whom** she desires to hold a mother-son relationship. At another level, James is a substitute figure for Nick. Like him, James breaks the conventions of **Manawaka** society. Just as Nick moves out of **Manawaka** society and becomes a teacher instead of taking up his father's business, James' revolt is seen in his unique choice of drawing a spaceship unlike his classmates. Again, Grace Doherty, James' mother provides a foil to all Manawaka mothers and Rachel by allowing her son enough freedom to wander about in the woods when he is recovering from an illness instead of forcing him to attend school. In trying to hide her affection for James, Rachel behaves rudely to him. As George Bowering rightly points out in his essay "That Fool of a Fear: Notes on A Jest of God":

She [Rachel] has a rather strong fear of becoming James' enemy. So she **becomes** his tormentor, because she also knows that if she shows her liking and admiration of him, he will be made to suffer by his **classmates**, who have been taught by their community to detest and ridicule tender human touch (in George Woodcock ed. A Place to Stand On 215).

She hits him with a ruler and speaks rudely to him for drawing instead of doing sums. However, she immediately feels guilty about it: "It's so often James I speak to like this, fearing to be too much the other way with him" (JG 3). Fear of being different and indulgent towards James, prevents her from apologising to him. Though Bowering also points out Rachel's unconscious sexual attraction towards James, there is no textual

evidence to substantiate this argument.

Apart **from** the fear of committing any blunder in her relationship with people, another type of fear which grips **Rachel** very strongly is the fear of becoming a stereotyped school teacher. One such instance occurs at the beginning of the novel, when Rachel asks her students to come back to class.

'Come along, Grade Twos. Line up quietly **now**.'
Am I beginning to talk in that simper tone, the one so many grade school teachers pick up without realizing? At first they only talk to the children like that, but it takes root and soon they can't speak any other way to anyone (JG 2).

It is this sort of a fear which arises out of modelling herself like a teacher, that shatters Rachel about her imagined pregnancy. She feels the shame is more because she is a teacher.

In the novel, the students function as links to Rachel's past. They are, what she was. The songs they sing when they skip is the same that Rachel had sung twentyseven years ago. Also in a way, these '**children**' of Rachel teach her important lessons in life. She realises that her inability to possess her '**children**' (pupils) permanently, is a trait she shares with all mothers. In the end, with the move to Vancouver, there is a hope that in future, her **relationships** will be more objective and less possessive. In short, Rachel (very much like Martha Quest in **Lessing's** The Four-Gated City) has learnt the most important lesson in life, that is, "that one simply had to go on, take one step after another: this process itself held the keys" (Carol Christ 69) .

Unlike Rachel, who appears tentative in all her relationships and especially in her relationship with her pupils,

Laura Trevelyan in Patrick White's *Voss* is portrayed as a spokeswoman of Voss' legend and a charismatic figure capable of inspiring the young female scholars under her tutelage. As Phyllis Fahrie Edelson emphatically states in her article "The Hatching Process: The Female's Struggle for Identity in Four Novels by Patrick White," Laura "assumes the leadership of those who would contribute to the cultural and spiritual growth of Australia, [especially Mercy, Topp and Pringle] counselling a path to social regeneration through the work by the creative imagination" (232) .

In the novel, Laura's introduction as a headmistress marks the passage of time after Voss' death. It also shows Laura's superiority over other women of the Sydney society. She holds the power of authority in two ways. She holds a special intellectual status as the head of the institution and also the position of knowing the truth about Voss. With this knowledge, Laura attempts to wipe out "the grey of mediocrity, the blue of frustration" (V 447) that Pringle talks of in reference to the Sydney society.

In becoming a teacher, Laura is performing two different tasks. One is to impart some intellectual knowledge to the future young women of Sydney. Thus, she is trying to give back something to society. In a way, this is a continuation of Voss' task. Just as Voss tries to widen the physical limits of the land, Laura tries to widen the intellectual horizons of an otherwise materialistic society. Laura's other task is to teach the moral and truth of Voss' legend to the Sydney society. She prevents society from weaving fabrications around the figure of Voss, **thus** making him a legendary character. She induces life and

blood to his figure. Laura's comment about **Voss** is perceptive on this point: "'**Voss** could have been the **Devil**,' ... 'if at the same time he had not resembled a most unfortunate human **being**'" (V 414). Through this statement Laura emphatically **states** that Voss was neither a heroic adventurer nor a devil incarnate as he is made out to be, but an ordinary human being with a vision in life.

Laura fully understands the disparity between what Voss really was and what others make him out to be. Witness, her reaction to the statue unveiling ceremony:

The schoolmistress was glad of some assistance towards the illusion of complacency. Thus, she had never thirsted, never, nor felt her flesh shrivel in crossing the deserts of conscience. No official personage has experienced the inferno of love (V 440. *emphasis added*).

In a matured way she allows false notions to exist where they cannot be helped. For instance, she allows **Judd's** description of the death of Voss. Judd confuses Palfreyman's death with a spear on his neck with **Voss's** death. To Colonel **Hebden's** question whether Voss has been canonized in this way, Laura says that all truths are particoloured and is at rest because she is "' ... convinced that Voss had in him a little of Christ, like other men. If he was composed of evil along with the good, he struggled with that evil. And **failed**'" (V 445).

Laura's statement emphasises her knowledge of Voss' life which cannot be tainted by other views. More importantly, Laura insists that individual views have to be accommodated alongside the facts she states. Quoting this passage, Veronica Brady makes **two valuable insights in her article "In My End is My Beginning:**

Laura as Heroine of Voss." Brady points out how Laura **offers** the hope that the inherent mediocrity "is not a final and irrevocable state," unlike **Voss**, who originally compelled Le **Mesurier**, **Palfreyman** and Harry "Py the sheer force of his **personality**" (28). Brady states that in giving the final word of the novel to Laura, White suggests "that hers is the true concept of the future" and "that the true concept of progress will not tolerate possessiveness of any kind," which is one of **Voss'** greatest weaknesses (29) .

Laura also questions the type of quest which Col. Hebden undertakes. Addressing Col. Hebden, Willie Pringle, the painter and Topp, the music master, she states the ultimate truth about **Voss'** life and legend.

\ Knowledge was never a matter of geography. Quite the reverse, it overflows all maps that exist. Perhaps true knowledge only comes of death by torture in the country of the mind' (V 446).

Thus, she restates the need to undergo suffering in order to gain both the knowledge of the self and of the land. In a sense, Laura is repeating **Voss'** boast to Mr. Bonner at the beginning of the novel that he will create a map of Australia. However, the pride of Voss is here mingled with the knowledge and experience of Laura. Commenting on this passage, Veronica Brady makes an interesting observation which emphasises Laura's role as a teacher.

The cosmic order, not the individual will, prevails. Laura lives to commit herself to the celebration of this order and passes on this commission to the young people gathered about her. Their task, she tells them, is not rebellion but one of consolidation. They must "express what we others have experienced by living" ... ("The Novelist and The New World" 175-6) .

This accounts for Laura's acceptance of the society she once rejected and the knowledge and wisdom which she has gained through the desert journey, enables her to live "in the **midst of ordinary life**" (Brady 175) albeit on her own terms.

Another important function that Laura's role as headmistress serves is to set her apart from other women and also to facilitate her questioning of the social norms. For instance, it sets her apart from Belle Bonner and Una Pringle who have totally lost their individuality in return to marital bliss. Again, unlike Rachel, who is concerned about her appearance, Laura gives no importance to it. To cite an example, she comes to Belle's party in a black dress "of a kind worn by some women merely as a covering" (V 436). As the women comment: '.... As if it were not enough to have become a school mistress, to arrive late at Belle's party in that truly hideous dress!' (V 437. emphasis added). However, Laura is untouched by these criticisms.

To conclude, one can point out the most important difference between Rachel and Laura. Whereas Rachel is ashamed and afraid of the social consequences of her pregnancy, Laura boldly adopts Mercy and lets no gossip spoil her relationship with the latter. She does not unnecessarily try to explain the relationship, because she knows that it is difficult for society to accept Mercy as a child born out of her symbolic union with Voss. To the members of the Sydney society, she remains as enigmatic a figure as Voss. However, in combining understanding and love in all her relationships, as in maintaining a stern control over irrelevant gossip, she comes out as a more mature figure than Rachel. In a

sense, she directs the way to be followed by Rachel in all her relationships.

Women as Artists

The portrayal of artists as protagonists has enormous popularity in the fiction of the present century. Feminist and post-colonial theorists read such portrayals as subverting patriarchal and imperialist norms respectively. Helene Cixous' view ("The Laugh of the Medusa") that 'feminine writing' affords a clearer perception of their own sex and self to ~~women~~ and the various post-colonial reappropriations of Shakespeare's play, The Tempest are some instances of breaking of norms. The fiction exploring the development of writers open up metafictional possibilities. In this case, there is an exploration of the possibilities and limitations of the form itself. These are some of the commonly used theoretical aspects of the portrayal of artists in fiction. Let us consider why Margaret Laurence and Patrick White create 'artist figures' in their fiction. Four different answers are evident from a study of the artists. (i) To portray the growth into maturity of individuals (Bildungsroman) by portraying their development as artists (Kunstlerroman); (ii) to enable the ~~women~~ to articulate their experiences. The female artists in both the writers probe and accept the limitations of language; (iii) Some of the ~~women~~ gain their moments of insight through their artistic capabilities; and, (iv) the writers themselves evaluate their artistic progress through their artist figures. Vanessa MacLeod in A Bird in the House and Morag Gunn in The Diviners are the

female artists in Laurence's novels. Alex Gray (Memoirs of Many in One) is the only female artist-protagonist in the Patrick White canon. This section **attempts** to examine the development of these '**artist characters**' through the four stages mentioned above.

Exploration of self is the lasting aim of the protagonists. In creating them as writers, the two writers have doubled the quest, i.e., the quest for the knowledge of the self and the quest for evolving as a writer. Laurence's statement in Heart of a Stranger (1976) is perceptive in this regard.

For a writer, one way of discovering oneself, of changing from the patterns of childhood and adolescence to those of adulthood, lies through the exploration inherent in the writing itself ... this exploration involves an attempt to understand one's background and one's past ... (13).

A Bird in the House is a semi-autobiographical collection of eight short stories. The stories are complete in themselves and are also interrelated. Unlike Morag, Vanessa is not an established writer. However, the stories explicate the seeds of artistic talent in the younger Vanessa. This is communicated to the reader through the older Vanessa as narrator. The writing talents of Vanessa can be seen in the different stories she writes as a young girl as also in her descriptions of the other family members, of nature and her attitudes towards religion, love and death. As George Woodcock rightly perceives,

Margaret Laurence has shown the lives and emotions of older people through a child's eye, until in the end the child moves into the age when those emotions become identical with hers, and the perceiver becomes the perceived (in A Place to Stand On 231) .

The difference between the impressions of Vanessa as a child and

the varied impressions of the same event or person **marks** her growth both as a writer and as a person.

The following subsections are divided into religion, death, love and human relationships. Within each of them, an **attempt** is made to show the evolution of mature thought in Vanessa.

Religion

That imagination dominated Vanessa more than anything else can be seen in her replies to Grandmother Connor's questions as to what she learnt in the Sunday school. Since she had read large portions of the Bible by herself, she has no trouble in providing herself with a verse. However, she rarely listens in the Sunday school because she finds it "more entertaining to compose in [her] head stories of spectacular heroism in which [she] figured as central character" (BH 7). Such an imagination enables her to find material even in concepts like Baptism. For instance, she creates a story

in which an infant was baptised by Total Immersion and swept away by the river which happened to be flooding The child was dressed in a christening robe of white lace, and the last the mother saw of her was a scrap of white being swirled away towards the Deep Hole near the Wachakwa bend, where there were blood-suckers (BH 18).

At about the same age, she rejects Noreen's conceptions of Heaven and Hell in a sceptical manner. Such an unconventional imagination leads the older Vanessa to hold the funeral service for her grandmother "in the presence only of the canary" (BH 83).

Death

Till the death of her father, Vanessa has no direct experience of death. However, she romanticises the notion of death and spins stories. For instance, answering Grandfather Connor in a rude manner, she says that her father has gone to attend on a patient who being affected by pneumonia is vomitting blood. She questions herself "Did people spit blood with pneumonia?" She does not wait for an answer but creates a fictional situation almost instantly. "Sick to death in the freezing log cabin, with only the beautiful halfbreed lady (no, woman) to look after him, Old Jebb suddenly clutched his throat" (BH 16). Similarly, as a child, the death of her grandfather only shatters her vision of him as immortal. However, twenty years later when she travels from Winnipeg to Manawaka, she realises the tough pioneering life which has hardened his authoritarianism. She realises now the immortality of Grandfather Connor for "I had feared and fought the old man, yet he proclaimed himself in my veins" (BH 207) .

Love

Even though she is too young to understand the connotations of love, Vanessa creates romanticised versions of love stories from the Bible. One such is the story she takes from Song of Solomon about a "barbaric queen, beautiful and terrible" in love with a gifted carver. The antagonist of this story is a cruel pharaoh who sends the lover to the desert in order to carve a giant sphinx.² This childish view of love changes into a **mature** understanding as she grows **up**. That is why she understands the

unrequited early love of her father and burns the girl's picture. She does this in order to preserve an untarnished image of her father. Her own unrequited love with an airman at the age of seventeen enables such a growth in understanding.

Human relationships

Such a mature understanding of Vanessa pervades through all the spheres of human relationships. At an early age, Vanessa is bewildered by the sadistic behaviour of Harvey, the aloofness of Piquette and the authoritarianism of Grandfather Connor. For instance, when Harvey deliberately hurts Nanuk, Vanessa's dog, she imagines Harvey in dire trouble and places herself and Nanuk in a position of strength and plans revenge. After her father's death and Piquette's death, she is able to understand Piquette's refusal to come and listen to the song of the loons. She sees Piquette's refusal in a new light. Vanessa sees Piquette as the only one who had understood the crying of the loons for survival. Similarly, it is only when she is much older does Vanessa understand the true nature of Grandfather Connor.

Vanessa's growth into understanding is three-fold. As Arnold Davidson rightly points out, "[t]he child endures Manawaka; the adolescent . . . looks with some magnanimity . . . ; the older adult narrator can more fully review Manawaka"¹¹ ("Cages and Escapes in Margaret Laurence's *A Bird in the House*" 99). Thus, the realisation of the constriction of relationships, imagining fantastic escapes **and** the later return to the place, the memories of persons and events are guidelines in the path to Vanessa's personal liberation. In a paradoxical sense, the child who

rebels against conventions is freer than the older writer because the latter is trapped by the **memory** and acceptance of those very conventions on which she relies to create fiction out of life.

In The Diviners, the reader first meets **Morag** Gunn as an established writer with four novels to her credit. She is in the process of writing the fifth. Though she constantly worries about convincingly creating a world out of words, she remains more like any other woman and mother concerned about Pique, her daughter.

Unlike writers ... who write for a living, Morag never changes publishers, feels her agent is neglecting her, worries about the size of other writers' advances, or has any truck with universities (qtd. in Nancy Bailey's "Fiction and the New Androgyne" 13) .

Though this criticism is absolutely valid, the importance of the contexts of **Morag's** novels lie in their symbolic value. In this regard, Nancy Bailey's defence is convincing.

The context revealed by the titles of **Morag's** novels is ... a symbolic progression of the inner self from the light of "Spear of Innocence" and "Prospero's Child" through the darkness of "Jonah" back to the light of "Shadow of Eden" and "The Diviners" (13).

Though Morag's early literary talents are signalled through her write-ups in Manawaka Banner and the short story, published in the college magazine, literarily, her present is more **important** in terms of creativity. The past is important for its literary value only when it is invoked in the works.

Morag's first novel Spear of Innocence is about the heroine Lilac. The parallel to this character can be found in Morag's childhood friend, Eva **Winkler**, both of whom undergo painful abortions. In her article "Consolation and Articulation in Margaret Laurence's The Diviners" (Colin Nicholson 145), Lynette

Hunter points out how Fan Brady, Morag's landlady, is a mirror image of Lilac. In the novel, Morag asks 'Does fiction prophecy life?' Here is an instance when it does.

It is important to note that the writing of the novel serves at that point of Morag's life as a substitute of the child she cannot have by Brooke Skelton. The initial tension in their marriage begins with the publication of the novel. In Prospero's Child, the heroine Mira, is an obvious reference to Miranda. The story evolves around the growth of Mira from a childlike state to that of a mental maturity when she rejects all barriers. The parallels to Morag's life are very clear. Brooke, like Prospero, is the father figure and coloniser. Morag, like Miranda, initially submits to the tutoring but after attaining maturity resents the cage and escapes from it. The third novel Jonah brings in Biblical associations of being swallowed by a whale and passing through a dark labyrinth and coming out alive through the grace of God. This novel fictionalises Morag's relationship with Christie Logan, the garbage collector. Like Morag, Carol, the heroine resents the fact that her old man is an outcast in society. In a symbolic reading, the novel is a study of the heroine's acquaintance with the dark forces of the self before an ascent into realisation.

Shadows of Eden re-creates the tales of Piper Gunn which Christie imparts to Morag. It is a re-creation not only of Morag's ancestral past but that of the mythical past of the country itself. This novel shows the novelist's understanding of the universal truths of life. The fifth novel which is obviously The Diviners brings Morag's present, Her life after divorce

from Brooke and after having a child by Jules is brought into **focus**.

The five novels of **Morag** are important in many ways. They not only establish Morag as a writer but also further her development in life in which she plays more than one role: as an orphan at the age of five, adopted daughter of **Christie**, wife of Brooke, lover of Jules, mistress of Dan and mother of Pique. The titles of the novels assume a lot of **significance**. In them, Morag begins in a state of innocence, and moves on progressively to being tutored by Brooke, to break away and become an outcast, to having a glimpse of the Eden of the past which comes alive through the Piper Gunn stories to a final state of viewing writing as divining. At this point, the creator and the created **merge**. Like the symbolic river that flows both ways and which is evoked at the beginning and the end of the novel, Morag divines into the past and the future in order to understand herself. "Look ahead into the **past**, and back into the **future**, until the **silence**" (D 453). It is this silent moment in which she achieves a state of grace that she returns once again "to write the remaining private and fictional words" (D 453).³

Just as Morag **fictionalises** her past experiences as also re-assess them, Alex Gray in Patrick White's Memoirs of Many in One attempts to revisit her past by writing her memoirs. The lexicon defines memoirs as "record of events set down from personal knowledge and intended as material for history or **biography**." It is important to take note of the words "history" and "biography" in the definition, for Alex's search traverses from the personal

to the impersonal or universal. For instance, Alex begins the search to find out "what I [she] need[s]?" (MMO 18). In order to assess her present need, she goes back to the past to "find out whether the lives I have lived amount to anything" (MMO 35). Alex also thinks that writing offers a possibility "to pause indefinitely to absorb the beauty of life instead of **escape** from its ugliness" (MMO 40). At the same time, she considers writing to be her refuge to escape the custody and prove her innocence (MMO 59). This statement implies Alex's past and present at a stroke. In the present, it is Hilda's custody which she resents. It is also the custodial binding by her past misdeeds. From this state of the personal, Alex moves on "to discover--by writing out--acting out my life--the reason for my presence on earth" (MMO 157). Unable to find peace in family (in relationships) or religion, Alex uses writing as a weapon to find the frame that fits her (MMO 49).

One way by which she tries, though unsuccessfully, to pin down her identity is through her outback tour as an actress. There is an ambiguity regarding the authenticity of Alex's theatrical tour. The reader wonders whether the tour is real or a figment of Alex's imagination. Hilda remarks that even if the tour took place in Alex's mind, "it should have got theatre out of her system" (MMO 141) but the editor, Patrick White is not so sure. In spite of the ambiguous nature of the tour itself, Alex's stint as an actress serves an important purpose in the memoirs. At this point, it is crucial to compare Alex with another actor in White's **fiction**--Basil Hunter in The Eye of the Storm. Unlike Basil, who is unable to perform the role of King Lear, Alex

performs the role of Cleopatra with **much** ease, or at **least** she makes it out to be. But more than the performance, the reader wonders about the old woman for whom the theatre roles are mere manifestations of her own life. This, for instance, is evident in Alex's revelling in Cleopatra's voluptuousness as a way of countering her "**Demirjian mother-in-law**" (MMO 134). Similarly, she sees her own production "Dolly Formosa and the Happy Few" as a means to battle "**with art and life**" (MMO 136). It is also Alex's way of coupling sexuality with life and art. Thus, she believes that her production is a way of countering the boring performances of Shakespeare. Even though the production is a flop, it can be seen as a substitution of imperial culture by the indigenous. Arguably, this is a form of post-colonial subversion of artistic norms.

Another aspect of writing which both fascinates and baffles the artist figures is language (especially, words). Interestingly enough, Morag, Vanessa and Alex are all language-conscious protagonists who desperately try to merge the word and the world in spite of knowing the limitations of language. Over the earlier preference for silence and distrust of words to express experience, in these novels (A Bird in the House, The Diviners and Memoirs of Many in One), the artist **figures** attempt a direct confrontation with words.⁴ This tendency marks a shift from the earlier novels which is made possible because Morag, Vanessa and Alex are writers. However, the tussle with words take on different forms in these three novels. For instance, Morag gives importance to names because they define an identity. Thus, her

daughter's **name**, Pique, is not only an act of **recognition** of Jules' dead sister Piquette but also placing the name within a heritage. Also, naming gives **Morag**, what Theo **Quayle** Dombrowski calls the "Adam-like **power**" of naming God's creation for the first time ("Word and Fact: Laurence and the Problem of Language" 59). Like Vanessa's childish pleasure in creating a name for her Grandfather, Morag fantasizes the power involved in naming: "Imagine naming flowers which have never been named before. Like the Garden of Eden. **Power!** Ecstasy!" (D 170).⁵ Vanessa and Morag also seek to go beyond the intended meaning of a word. Theo Quayle Dombrowski classifies this as an attempt to "create their own reality" (59). The inability to grasp the existing meanings of words is seen in a series of questions asked by Vanessa and Morag as children beginning with "What means?" The explanations sought for, include words like depression, drought, cord, scavenger and recess. At a later stage, the phrases "Great Bear Lake," "Rest beyond the river" and "Slowly, slowly horses of the night" achieve "another, a different relevance" for Vanessa. Similarly, **Prin's** word '**moonier**' means "something else" for Morag. For Alex, God is the "Almighty Poulterer" who plucks at human "**goose-flesh**" (MMO 114).⁶ In Alex's case such alternate descriptions are instances of, what Veronica Brady terms, the '**unnaming**' and '**violations** of language' ("Glabrous Shaman or Centennial Park's Very Own Saint? Patrick White's **Apocalypse**" 77). With such '**unnaming**' comes the acceptance of the limitations of language.

Morag realises her power as the diviner of words which can do magic or sorcery only occasionally. "He was divining for

water what in hell was she divining for?" In these lines, Morag questions the value of fiction and equates it to magical activities like divining. Morag also realises the limitations of language to conjure the exact image or situation. As she herself puts it:

The swallows dipped and spun over the water, a streaking of blue-black wings and bright breast-feathers. How could that colour be caught in words? A sort of rosy peach colour, but that sounded corny and was also inaccurate. I used to think words could do anything. Magic. Sorcery. Even miracle. But no. only occasionally (D 4).

At the beginning of the novel, Morag wonders that "things remained mysterious, his [Royland's] work, her own, the generations, the river" (D 4). Her works and her life are quests to know the meanings of those things which remain hidden. The Snapshots and Memorybank Movies are ways by which Morag tries to chronologically re-create her past and find out what is hidden in them. Through writing, Morag tries to demarcate clearly the difference between reality and fiction. She questions herself at a certain point in the novel whether the word "liquid bronze" would be enough to depict the colour of the river. She continues:

Probably no one could catch the river's colour even with paints, much less words. A daft profession. Wordsmith. Liar, more likely. Weaving fabrications. Yet, with typical ambiguity, convinced that fiction was more true than fact or that fact was in fact fiction (D 25).

It is the acceptance of the blurred line of demarcation between fact and fiction that leads to realisation. In her book, The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence, Clara Thomas refers to Morag as a watcher in terms of her life and profession. What is more

important is that **Morag** "is far from calm, but she is becalmed. She is not powerless to act, but at this point in her life the opportunities for dynamic action do not exist in her relationships with others. They only exist when her work is going well, in the act of writing her **fiction**" (135).

In the case of Alex, the acceptance takes the form of rejecting art as a reference point. For instance, on the opening night of the performance of "Dolly Formosa and the Happy Few" Alex senses that:

I am waiting to perform some act expected of me in the context of a play, dream, my own life whichever ... I reach a point where I believe the cue will never be forthcoming. I must act of my own free will (MMO 167-8).

Acting on her "own free will" results in her rejecting her given dialogue "I am the spirit of the land, past, present, and future" (MMO 150) and voicing out "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (MMO 151). Veronica Brady suggests that this mistake is not a mere bungling of dialogues but marks a turn against her creator-protector (Patrick White) and the "riff-raff audience" i.e., "the parasite students and academics who eat out your liver and lights your heart" ("Glabrous Shaman" 73).

Vanessa, Morag and Alex try to create fiction out of their own lives and try to understand their lives through their fiction. This two-way process has its own advantages and disadvantages. **Morag's** development as an **artist**, (tragically and) inevitably breaks her marriage. On the other hand, the tragic circumstances of life kindle the understanding and creative talents in Vanessa. Alex's artistic attempts lead her through

mazes as different as religion and sexuality. On a final analysis, what matters more is their reliance and understanding of their own selves. As a young child, Vanessa reports: "I could not really comprehend these things, but I sensed their strangeness, their disarray. I felt that whatever God might love in this world, it was certainly not order" (BH 59). It takes a lot of time and considerable experience for them to realise the chaos of the world and the hidden order amongst the apparent chaos. This understanding gives them their identity which is strengthened by their artistic experience.

Though the progress as an artist itself serves as a means for coming to terms with the self, there are also certain heightened moments of grace enhancing the insights of the protagonists. One such instance is Morag's spotting of the flight of a "Great Blue Heron."

Once populous in this part of the country. Now rarely seen.

Then it spotted the boat, and took to flight. A slow unhurried takeoff, the vast wings spreading, the slender elongated legs gracefully folding up under the creature's body. Like a pterodactyl, like an angel, like something out of the world's dawn. The soaring and measured certainty of its flight. Ancient-seeming, unaware of the planet's rocketing changes ... unknowing that it was speeding not only towards individual death but probably towards the death of its kind (D 357).

This vision makes Morag realise that 'her quest for islands' had ended and that Pique's has begun, simultaneously with Morag's own attempt "to write the remaining private and fictional words" (D 453). Like the heron, Pique's Tonnerre heritage also faces extinction. However, there is a hope kindled in Pique's journey to Galloping mountains just as there is a "measured certainty" in

the flight of the bird. J.A. Wainwright considers the passage as Laurence's conviction that "the artist must investigate the relationship between her art and her life" ("You Have To Go **Home** Again: Art and Life in The Diviners" 293). Wainwright makes an apt comparison between Morag's vision and the contrast between Harry's delusion and the leopard mentioned in the epigraph of Hemingway's "The Snows of Kilimanjaro."

If Hemingway only implicitly equates artist and leopard, Laurence weaves the image of the artist's quest and task into her novel by linking Morag's creative thoughts and accomplishments to the **beauty**, integrity, and mortality of the heron's flight (293).

Alex's moment of grace takes place during her outback tour as Dolly Formosa when she sees a vision of light.

I walk on into the plain beyond, a carpet of dust, almost a mattress. A few ghost trees console the revenant I have become. Small birds skitter across the desert, larger ones rise by grace of a stately basket work of wings... . I cannot see his face, because it is gilded by the sun's glare, but sense that it is smiling, and know that it must be as dark as the smooth dark kneeling thighs. I can feel the stream of understanding which flows from this miraculous Being, bathing my shattered body, revitalising my devastated mind (MMO 138-9) .

The contrast made between the small and larger birds goes back to Alex's search for a derelict mystic and not the Almighty God as also her acting of Dolly Formosa and not the immortal Shakespearean creations. Veronica Brady considers the vision as a rebellion against "false notions of goodness, against the lassitude which imposes limits, the so-called morality which is merely the instinct for **self-protection**" ("Glabrous Shaman" 75). Further, the protean nature of Alex's roles and the flexibility they offer is well brought out in her statement that her "naked body conjures up the archetypes of birds, serpents, insects, many

of them fiendish in their savage beauty, all hatched out of Dolly Formosa's teeming brain" (MMD 137). Commenting on a similar statement by Atwood's protagonist in Surfacing, Carol Christ makes a perceptive observation and to quote her:

The protagonist recognizes her body as both revelation and incarnation of the great powers of life and death... . The female experience of the transformation of ... body ... is perhaps the most complete human incarnation of the great powers. The protagonist's vision of the universal transformative energy ... is reflected in her characteristic perception of the fluidity of the boundaries between objects, animals, plants, humans (Diving Deep and Surfacing 47-8).

Such experiences pave the way for the quest for authentic selfhood.

So far, we examined how writing (art) enables the protagonists to come to terms with their pasts and to realise the limitations of words to express their experiences. In fact, these are some of the concerns shared by any metafictional narrative, which "self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (Patricia Waugh. Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction 2). Patricia Waugh points out how metafiction flaunts and exaggerates the instabilities of the real world and language, which, in turn, question and relativize each other. She likens the relativization process to Bakhtin's concept of "dialogisation" (5). Both Laurence and White have displayed their worksheets to the readers through The Diviners and Memoirs of Mary in One. Michel Fabre draws attention to the title The Diviners which is emblematic "in a meta-fictional sense, since it sums up the reading of the novel

as process" ("Text, Mini-Text and Micro-Text" 171). This reading includes not only the fictional works of Morag but also other works such as Clans and Tartans of Scotland, 60th Canadian Field Artillery Battery Book, Ossian's Poems and The Canadian Settlers' Guide. There are also some instances of meta-metafictional elements. One such instance is Laurence's account of Morag's novel Prospero's Child. Ildiko de Papp Carrington sums it up as the writing of "a novelist separated from her husband writing about a novelist separated from her husband who has written about a woman separating from her husband" ("Tales in the Telling" 158).

Patrick White's Memoirs of Many in One is a self-reflexive narrative. But it is a metanarrative with a difference, for White is writing against writing. The important question which the novel raises is regarding the reader and writer of the novel. Within the novel, Alex is the writer and White, the reader. For the Memoirs itself, White is the writer and we are the readers. Thus, the boundaries separating the editor and author are often collapsed. Veronica Brady terms such a collapsing of narrative boundaries as "the game" or "the dance" which

goes on of its own accord, the to-and-fro movement between Patrick and Alex, dream and matter-of-fact, absurdity and frivolity, life and death, writer and reader. It has no goal beyond itself to bring it to an end but goes on renewing itself, generating its life from the interplay of opposites ("Glabrous Shaman" 75-6).

Such an interplay, allows interpretations like Axel Clark's reading of Gray as "half White" ("Patrick White: A Whiter Shade of Gray" 4) and Ron Shepherd's review of the novel as a "self-parody of a scholar manque" in an "attempt at self-objectifica-

tion" ("Editor or Author" 43).

Having ascertained the convergence of the writer and character who is a writer, it is worthwhile to consider how Laurence and White use such conventions (or breaking of conventions) for different purposes. With The Diviners. Margaret Laurence **seems** to have reached an affirmative acceptance of art and its limitations. The novel also marks the culminating point for both Morag and Laurence. Morag sets down the title and begins the novel which the readers and Laurence have just finished. In her article "Margaret Laurence's The Diviners: The Uses of the Past," Gayle Greene compares The Diviners to Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook in that they are "**self-begetting**" novels which end in the beginning (in Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Margaret Laurence 180). This is seen in the novel opening and closing with Morag's contemplation of the river which flows both ways. Thus, what began as the merging of the perceiver and the perceived in A Bird in the House leads to the merging of the creator and the created in The Diviners. Such a merging of Patrick White and Alex Gray is found in Memoirs also as is evident in White's remarks within the text. Alex "might have created me, and I her" (MMO 180). Towards the end of the Memoirs, White remarks that

While I I --the great creative ego--had possessed myself of Alex Gray's life when she was still an innocent girl and created from it the many **images** I needed to develop my own obsessions, both literary and real.

If she had become my victim in those endless scribbings which I was faced at last with sorting out, I was hers through her authoritarian bigot of a daughter.

We were quits, oh yes, but never quit of each other (MMO 192).

Thus, White, the creator goes on living while Alex, his creation is dead or is **only** living through the memoirs. However, White has been stripped of his powerful authority as Creator and Protector by his creation. Witness, Alex's dismissal of Patrick, the self-appointed "spirit guide":

Now that I am free to write, shall I ever dare begin to sort out my disordered thoughts? It is a frightening prospect... . If Patrick were here he could guide me. No, I must do it myself. Patrick guide! Patrick cannot guide himself, that's why he's taken to carrying a walking stick (MMO 174).

By referring to him variously as "Born Mother Superior," "failed artist" and "Old Patrick," Alex includes and dismisses him at her will. As Veronica Brady aptly summarises,

She [Alex] writes him into the memoirs, summoning him when she wants him and then dismissing him, and relegating him to a very minor part in her world, even closing her door on him and turning the key... . He waits for her, and thus waits for himself, and is ultimately, if not the master, at least the survivor ("Glabrous Shaman" 73).

Thus, both the power of art and the potential of the artist are questioned. Unlike the other artist figures, Alf Dubbo (Riders in the Chariot) and Hurtle Duffield (The Vivisector), who attain their respective visions through their art, Alex's memoirs keeps the choice of realisation open to herself and her creator. This, perhaps, is an excellent example of the reversal of roles of the 'subject' and 'object' in a narrative. Further, the Memoirs also questions the validity of the solutions offered to life and reality through love, art and religion in the earlier novels. For Alex, love, art and religion are additions to her existing roles in life. Thus, the goals of the texts are "dispossession,"

"unrealisation" and "a negation of reference" ("Glabrous Shaman" 72-3).

Identifying such goals leads us to a common reference point towards which both The Diviners and Memoirs move, namely, the renunciation of magic involved in art. This is done through reference to Prospero's renunciation of his magical powers in Shakespeare's The Tempest. Morag initially questions whether Prospero can actually renounce his powers but realises later through Royland's loss of divining power that "the gift was a gift in the first place, not an inalienable possession" (Margaret Atwood in A Place to Stand On 27). However, Alex's shooting at the audience and her death signals White's exposure of the theatricality of our lives or as Brady puts it,

the duality, even duplicity, which is the basis not only of art but of life itself and which makes us uneasy and often unwitting accomplices of the truth of illusion and illusion of truth ... suggesting that after all; " ... we are such stuff/As dreams are made on, and our little life/Is rounded with a sleep" ("Glabrous Shaman" 74).

Though The Diviners and Memoirs are works of metafiction, there is a difference in attitude and treatment by Morag and Laurence and White and Alex respectively. This difference can be accounted for by applying Linda Hutcheon's distinction between modernist and postmodernist metafiction. Though The Diviners uses postmodernist techniques such as fragmentation and parody, it reveals "a modernist search for order in the face of moral and social chaos" whereas Memoirs reveals "a postmodern urge to trouble, to question, to make both problematic and provisional any such desire for order or truth through the powers of human imagination" (The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction 2).

Chapter III

Discovering the Self-- Women and the Spiritual Quest

The inner freedom from the practical desire,
The release from action and suffering, release from the
inner
And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving,
... , concentration
without elimination, both a new world
And the old made explicit, ...

(T.S. Eliot. Four Quartets)

In the earlier chapters, we examined the attempts made by women at self-actualisation within the familial and social spheres. We found that very few women succeeded in their attempts. The quest for self-knowledge by the protagonists and their urge to know the self in itself devoid of typecast roles or social trappings take on psychological and spiritual dimensions in the works of the two writers. The psychological aspect will be examined in Chapter Four. The present Chapter attempts to explore the spiritual aspects of the quest for self-realisation. It is important to note that even while stressing the spiritual aspects in their novels, both Patrick White and Margaret Laurence are sceptical about religiosity. That they are against institutionalised religion (Christianity) is seen in their critical questioning of its empty rituals. Despite the religious frameworks which entail religious interpretations, emphasis is laid on the need for freedom and the question of choice and responsibility which reveals the existential rather than dogmatic approach of White and Laurence to spirituality in their works. The novels offer varied meanings and interpretations. In this study, some of the concepts found in the novels, are interpreted according to the Vedāntic principles. Another aspect which becomes relevant is the underlying structure of the quest. This aspect will be examined in the next Chapter along with the psychological connotations of the quest. This Chapter consists of two sections. The first section will analyse the attitude of the protagonists towards orthodox religions. The second section will explore the possible Biblical interpretations of the novels as

well as the various frames (Existential or Vedantic) that enable an assessment of the process of self-realisation.

Against religion

Religion. Yes, that's behind all my books. What I am interested in is the relationship between the blundering human being and God. I belong to no Church, but I have a religious faith, In my books I have lifted bits from various religions in trying to come to a better understanding; I've made use of religious themes and symbols (Patrick White. "In the Making" in Patrick White Speaks 19) .

I don't have a traditional religion, but I believe there's a mystery at the core of life (Margaret Laurence quoted in Valerie Miner's "The Matriarch of Manawaka" 18).

I don't have any feeling, . . . , of loyalty to the traditional Christian religions, . . . but I do not really believe that God is totally dead in our universe... . A lot of my characters, like myself, inhabit a world in which they no longer believe in the teachings of the traditional church, but where these things have enormous emotional impact... . [The Bible] seems to express certain symbolic truths about the human dilemma and about mankind (Laurence in Donald Cameron ed. Conversations with Canadian Novelists 111- 2).

The statements quoted above vividly express the attitudes of the two writers and their protagonists to traditional religion. White's statement also highlights the confluence of various religious ideas in his novels. The statements further reveal the use of religious frames by the two writers to explicate the ultimate reality or what Laurence calls "the mystery at the core of life." It is the same mystery that impels the protagonists to move beyond the cocoon of their existence in an attempt at self-realisation.

Let us now consider the varying attitudes of the protagonists towards orthodox religion. It ranges from an acceptance of Christian grace and humility in the case of Laura Trevelyan in *Voss* and Mrs. Godbold in *Riders in the Chariot* to Hagar's open defiance in *The Stone Angel*. While Rachel Cameron (*A Jest of God*) and Vanessa MacLeod (*A Bird in the House*) display a certain amount of scepticism, Mary Hare (*Riders in the Chariot*), Theodora Goodman (*The Aunt's Story*) and Ellen Roxburgh (*A Fringe of Leaves*) seek alternate means to counter the fetters of traditional religion. What begins as parodies of faith by Stacey MacAindra (*The Fire-Dwellers*) and Alex Gray (*Memoirs of Mary in One*) results in a total absence of religious faith in Morag Gunn (*The Diviners*) and Elizabeth Hunter (*The Eye of the Storm*). The following sections will examine the protagonists range of reactions to conventional religion viz., acceptance, scepticism, parodying, seeking alternate means, open defiance and total rejection.

Despite their questioning of the narrow limits of traditional Christianity, Laura Trevelyan in *Voss* and Mrs. Godbold in *Riders in the Chariot* accept the tenets of Christianity in spirit. The first glimpse of Laura, in the opening scene of *Voss*, shows her as sceptical, having rejected the conventional religion of the Bonners. She is seen as a rationalist questioning the shallow conventions.

... she had been softly sceptical, perhaps out of boredom; she was suffocated by the fuzz of faith. She did believe, however, most palpably, in wood, with the reflections in it, and in clear daylight, and in water (V 9).

Such an attitude challenges, for instance, Mr. Bonner's idea of a

boring God whose Divine Will **approximated** Bonner's will (Y 349). At this juncture, Voss mistakes her for an atheist and tells her that atheism is self-murder because the atheists usually are incapable of conceiving the magnificence of the Divine Power (Y 89). However, **Voss'** later comment in the same chapter is perceptive of Laura's true position. "You are an Apostle **of** Love **masquerading** as an atheist for some inquisitorial purpose of your own..." (V 90). Though she rejects the outward trappings of religion like Church attendance, she follows Christianity in its true spirit. For instance, her emotional state during the birth of Mercy is comparable to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother. Earlier in the text, there is a reference to this. In a paragraph full of sexual overtones, when Voss prescribes a white pill for her ailment, he warns that it will entail great suffering. "If I have suffered the Father, she smiled, then I can suffer the Son" (V 269). In fact, it is her doctrine of the three stages of man's spiritual progression that constitutes the central theme of the book. "How important it is to understand the three stages. Of God into man. Man. And ~~man~~ returning into God..." (V 386). John and Rose Marie Beston in "The Theme of Spiritual Progression in Voss," show how the doctrine is explicated in Le Mesurier's poem 'Childhood.' Through such a doctrine, she stresses the need for humility and understanding, and as Veronica Brady further points out " [Laura] is an oracle whose message is of hope and of human acceptance" ("In My End is My Beginning: Laura as Heroine of Voss" 19). By taking such a stand, Laura "not merely resists the ideology of the Bonners but even the absolute claims Voss makes upon her" (Brady 23). That

she is honest about her feelings is her virtue. She speaks out openly: "**Ah**, God, ... , I do have faith, if it is not all the **time**" (V 330). Such an openness enables her to accept the need for sacrifice.

'**I** cannot [sacrifice] **enough**, that is obvious, but **something** of a personal nature that will convince a wavering mind. If it is only human sacrifice that will convince man that he is not **God**' (V 370) .

The same holds true for her understanding of human suffering. Her suffering during her fever and Voss' last days in the interior re-enacts the passion of Christ: '**Dear Christ**, now at last I understand your suffering' (V 386). This scene in the novel is comparable to the enactment of Christ's Passion by the nun in Hopkins' poem "**The Wreck of the Deutschland**."

Describing Mrs. Godbold, the narrator of Riders in the Chariot comments: "For was not the simplest act explicit, unalterable, even glorious in the light of Him?" (RC 270). This explains Mrs. Godbold's attitude to religion and life alike. In her article "The Edge of Error," Dorothy Green quotes the last verses of Matthew 25 ('**Inasmuch** as ye did it unto one of these the least of my brethern, ye did it unto me') and states that "Mrs. Godbold is a living example" of this (41) . Her duty to God is inseparable from her duties as wife and mother. That is why, Leonie Kramer's question in her article "Patrick White's **Götterdämmerung**," "Is her '**almost** vegetable existence' compatible with illumination?" (18), comes as a misreading of the whole novel. Mrs. Godbold's conception of the chariot is realistic rather than abstract.

Mrs. Godbold remained a seated statue. The **massive** rumps of her horses waited, swishing their tails through eternity. The wheels of her chariot were solid gold, well-axled, as might have been expected (**RC** 67).

She is seen doing household work alongside praising the Lord through hymns (**RC** 229). In this way, she combines the temporal and the eternal.

Her attitude to religion is closely knit with her attitude to life as a mother.

Faith is not less persuasive for its **fluctuations**. Rather, it becomes a living thing, like a child fluttering in the womb. So Mrs. Godbold's faith would stir and increase inside the grey, gelatinous envelope of morning, until, at last, it was delivered, new-born, with all the glory and confidence of fire (RC 231).

Such an attitude enables her to be accommodative when Himmelfarb questions her about his being a Jew.

'I do not know Jews, except what we are told, and of course the Bible; there is **that**' 'But I know people,' she said, '**and** there is no difference between them, excepting there is good and **bad**' (RC 219).

By this belief, she provides maternal service to Himmelfarb after his **mock-crucifixion**. This, perhaps, is the reason why the sheets she launders become the sheets to receive the body of Himmelfarb. Her attitude towards the question of good and evil contrasts her from Harry Rosetree, who Judas-like betrays his faith and Himmelfarb. In all, she emerges as an individual "**completely** free of theories about faith, or belief, or revelation, from all discussions of which she shies away" (Dorothy Green 41).

Both Rachel Cameron in A Jest of God and Vanessa MacLeod in A Bird in the House are sceptical of the religious teachings offered to them, though they never openly express their defiance. At the beginning of A Jest of God, Rachel views God as a Cosmic

Comedian taunting people for His perverted sport. This position leads her to reject both her mother's Church which is too plain and Calla's Tabernacle which has "too much gaudiness and zeal" (JG 41). From this position, she moves to an understanding which follows St. Paul's dictum. "If any man among you thinketh himself to be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (JG 135). This enables her to take her final position of understanding. She is even able to say in a jocular tone: "God's mercy on reluctant jesters. God's grace on fools. God's pity on God" (JG 202). Her new found wisdom accommodates compassion not only for men but also for God. While Hagar's attitude is one of outright irony, Rachel at least puts up with it outwardly for fear of displeasing others.

I didn't say God hadn't died recently, within the last few years, but a long time ago, longer than I could remember, for I could not actually recall a time when He was alive. No use to say that (JG 39).

In her mind, she rejects the synthetic smoothness that exists in her mother's Church which,

shows a pretty and clean-cut Jesus expiring gently and with absolutely no inconvenience, no gore, no pain, just this nice and slightly effeminate insurance salesman who, somewhat incongruously, happens to be clad in a toga, holding his arms languidly upto something which might in other circumstances have been a cross (JG 41).

Though sceptical, Rachel never takes an atheistic position like her dead father. She condemns the superficiality of Calla's Tabernacle in a similar fashion.

How can anyone bear to make a public spectacle of themselves? How could anyone display so openly? I will not look. I will not listen. People should keep themselves to themselves--that's the only decent way (JG 35).

This is her reaction to the jazziness of hymn singing and people's speaking in tongues. Her unconscious speaking in tongues is a **mockery**, for she never experiences the peace of mind that accompanies such an event. In his article "Politics and **A Jest of God**," Kenneth James Hughes points out the possible Greek **comparison**. The two Churches refer to the polar opposites i.e., the prototypes of Apollo and Dionysus. Rachel rejects both the tight control over emotion and the excessive outward display of it. Thus, even when she turns to God in her hour of need, she cries for a secular relationship with God.

My God, I know how suspect You are. I know how suspect I am. If You have spoken, I am not aware of having heard. If You have a voice, it is not comprehensible to me. No omens. No burning bush, no pillar of sand by day or pillar of flame by night (JG 171).

Towards the end of the novel, Rachel rejects both the Old Testament God of Anger and Punishment and the New Testament God of Redemption and opts for a God who "would be a human-type being who could be reached by tears or bribed with words" (Kenneth James Hughes 41).

Like Rachel, Vanessa MacLeod in A Bird in the House, is faced with different religious sects: the Mitigated Baptism of her maternal Grandparents, the United Church of her parents and the Pentecostal religion of Noreen, their housemaid. The Biblical stories kindle the creative spirit in her. This has been examined in the previous Chapter. There is a mild irony in her response to her Grandmother's reaction, when she says that in the Sunday School they taught her about "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle."

I was not astonished that my grandmother thought the bloody death of Jonathan was very nice, for this was her unvarying response, whatever the verse. And in fact it was not strange, for to her everything in the Bible was as gentle as she herself (**BH** 7) .

Initially, she is fascinated by Noreen's abundant knowledge of Heaven and Hell and her communications with spirits through the **Ouija** board. When Noreen's statement that "[a] bird in the house means a death in the **house**" comes true with her father's death, Vanessa bitterly hates the religion represented by Noreen as a prison from which she battles to get out (BH 109) . When Noreen comforts her by saying that her father will be in Heaven with God, she retorts angrily against any comfort that religion has to offer. "He didn't need to be saved," "And he is not in Heaven, because there is no Heaven. And it doesn't matter, see? It doesn't matter!" (BH 110).

Stacey **MacAindra** in The **Fire-Dwellers** and Alex Gray in Memoirs of Many in One express their dissatisfaction of the rigid **norms** of Christianity through parody. However, an important difference between the two characters has to be noted. While Stacey's secularism arises out of her total submersion in her household roles, Alex's secularism is her way of combining her sexuality and spirituality.

The protagonist of The **Fire-Dwellers**, Stacey, is more liberal in her attitude to religion than all the other protagonists. For her, God is another individual or her own masked self with whom she can hold conversations in order to get out of the confusions of daily life.

God knows why I chat to you, God--it's not that I believe in you. Or I do and I don't, like echoes in my head. It's somebody to talk to. Is that all? I don't know... . Sorry, God. But then you're not dependent upon me, or let's hope not (**FD 56**) .

She is so deeply immersed in her roles as wife and mother that she cannot get out of them to devote her time to religion. Even Matthew, Mac's father who talks about religion is seen only as a diversion and she frequently tries to protect her children from his awkward and delicate questions. She constantly pleads with God to safeguard the interests of her children and husband, in a similar fashion.

-Stacey, how dare you complain about even one single solitary thing? Listen, God, I didn't mean it. Just don't let anything terrible happen to any of them, will you? -Please. Let them be okay, all their lives... (FD 65).

Patricia Morley describes Stacey's conversations with God as a "silent dialogue with a God in whom she does and does not believe" (Margaret Laurence 104) . God, for her, is both an omnipotent figure and a helpless one like human beings. Her mock dialogue with God on the Day of Judgement reveals this. On the one hand, she feels God will condemn her to Hell for not being sure of herself and on the other hand, she feels He Himself will be uncertain about His Existence (FD 7) . Patricia Morley also points out that the entire episode of the Richalife propaganda "is a secular parody of the religious vision of the Promised Land: '**Both spirit and Flesh Altered**'" (103).

The parody extends from the obvious pun in the name to the evangelical testimonials at rallies by those who believe the pills have altered their lives. Thor is the prophet of this pseudo-religion, preaching the good news... (103).

Such a parody helps Stacey to realise the foolishness involved in man's ways towards God and religion, when once the identity of Thor is revealed. Stacey's reaction to this is yet another comic parody of the common Christian prayer. "Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways, as some goon once said. Reclothe us in our rightful mind" (FD 247). Further, as Elisabeth Potvin rightly points out, Stacey realises that Thor's offer of "secular religion is a cheap substitute for old-fashioned salvation" ('"A Mystery at the Core of Life": Margaret Laurence and Women's Spirituality' 33). More importantly, as Potvin states, "Laurence inverts the mundane and sacred: hairdressers become priestesses, supermarkets become temples and Stacey communing with the birds is described as a prophetess" (32).

In Memoirs of Mary in One, Alex Gray describes her search for an identity in the following terms:

Had I been a nun I could have told my beads. I could have meditated if I had been a Buddhist. I could have done almost anything if I had an identity, But I hadn't found the frame which fitted me (MO 49).

This search for an identity whets Alex Gray's desire to find a spiritual frame within which she can operate. Such a search operates on two levels: On a real plane, it takes on the force of finding a Saviour who would unravel to her the mysteries of life. That she ends up with an old derelict in the park, is part of the comedy and satire which White uses. The religious search is coupled with sexuality. Whereas she expects to find a break from her past sins, she ends up perpetuating her sexual license. For instance, the attitude of the Mystic from the park is sexual.

"... I am seized by the wrist, by a steely, yet **clammy**, male hand. The force of obsession brings us close together, breast to breast, mouth to mouth" (MMO 102). Instead of being taught **by** the mystic, she teaches him to **differentiate** between flesh and spirit. Similarly, with the Dog which she brings home to atone for the sin of killing her husband's dog, thus causing her husband's death:

He [the Dog] has landed on my bed, and lies there in the lion couchant position, fringed paws outstretched, the purple tongue waiting to savour the salt of human flesh, or do his real job of absolving sin (MMO 106).

On an imaginary plane, the search culminates in her roles as Cassiani, the nun and Sister Benedict. We see her as Cassiani, the nun, with unexpectedly blue eyes, sweeper of mouse droppings, lover of Onouphrios, the monk, who is rejected by the 'Christians' of Nisos, as an evil-eyed sorceress; as Sister Benedict, who on the Feast of the Kippers leads the frailest member of her order into the bush, there to learn the source of goodness. In both these instances, she ends up realising her own sensuality. "My own body is unbelievably strong and helpless" (MMO 115).

The amusing search does not end with all this, for Alex breaks conventionalities in an unconventional extreme. In one of her fleeting visits to the Church, she totally abuses the items of ritual. To scrub her lipstick out, she uses holy water from the stoup.

I dried myself on a pamphlet advertising a retreat, then I sat for a moment to give thanks to Whomsoever it is in this gloomy Irish sanctuary. From the glances of various custodians I realised the Holy Spirit would have wished me to move on (MMO 39).

Through all this, Alex untiringly tries to see her own contribution to the establishment of identity or as she puts it: "the continuity of being--though imposter--nun, sorceress, failed wife-mother, mere woman, in my various allotted lives" (MMO 80). Witness, Veronica Brady's comments on Alex's religious search. Brady is of the view that the novel,

canvasses the possibility of God, and of a God who shows himself, erupts into the here-and-now. This possibility would provide the "frame" Alex is looking for, but it is a frame which is not so much an order, scheme or structure but a frame in the original sense of the word, a movement or process ("Glabrous Shaman or Centennial Park's Very Own Saint? Patrick White's Apocalypse" 77).

While parody expresses dissatisfaction of existing religious norms, some of the Whitean protagonists choose alternate forms of religion. Thus, both Theodora Goodman (The Aunt's Story) and Mary Hare (Riders in the Chariot) are nature mystics and holy fools. While E.Twyborn in The Twyborn Affair embraces the Byzantine heritage and combines aspects of the physical and spiritual in her London brothel, Ellen Roxburgh replaces the Lord God of Hosts by the God of Love.

The roles played by Theodora and Mary Hare as nature mystics will be examined in the subsequent section dealing with the various aspects of their self-realisation. However, a brief note on their roles as holy fools is relevant here. Theodora and Mary, along with Bub Quigley (The Tree of Man), Harry Robarts (Voss) and Arthur Brown (The Solid Mandala), belong to the class of holy fools in White's novels. These so-called crazy persons possess a greater understanding of things around them and bring in a multidimensional view of the world that is beyond the bounds

of rationality and intellect. They seem to illustrate Blake's ideal: "To see a World in a Grain of Sand, / And Heaven in a Wild Flower, / Hold Infinity in the Palm of your hand / And Eternity in an **Hour**." In an article entitled "The Terrible Nostalgia of the Desert Landscape," Karin Hansson describes the simpletons as "explorers in their own right" who "by means of very elaborate symbolism are strongly connected to the landscape. Their voices, their skins, and even their words are often '**sandy**' ... to indicate their special **insight**" (31).

Tracing the etymology of the words "fool" and "simple," Patricia **Morley** concludes that these terms are not derogatory in White's usage but which characterise their nature as spiritual elects. According to Morley, White uses "the divine fool as a simple soul, nearer than the average man to God" (The Mystery of Unity 86). By equating '**simple**' to '**humble**' and '**pure**,' White offers his simpletons a purity of heart that ensures divine unity (Morley 87). Incidentally, humility, simplicity and pureness of being are the qualities that White considers the criteria for self-realisation. But these same qualities make them suspect in the eyes of the society they live in. For instance, Norbert Hare (Riders in the Chariot) accuses Mary of not sharing her intuitive knowledge of the chariot. Mrs. Hare's remarks about Mary in her journal also proves Mary's grasp of reality.

Her statements stop a person short. Will not deny that M's remarks usually contain the truth. But the world, I fear, will not tolerate the truth, at least in concentrated form (RC 166).

Similarly, George Goodman, The Man Who Was Given His Dinner, Miss. Spofforth and Holstius recognise Theodora's powerful

insight into reality. The Olive Schreiner epigraph to the third section of the novel and Holstius' plea to Theo to accept society's verdict of her madness, clearly reveal the relative nature of oppositions such as **sanity/madness** and appearance/reality. Their spiritual insight and mystical faith in nature prove true Melville's statement in Moby Dick that "man's insanity is heaven's sense."¹ According to Cynthia Vanden Driesen, the lives they lead, prompted only by instinct and intuition and not by **empty** convention, "dramatise the fact that these non-rational processes might in fact be more conducive to true clarity of vision" (in Ron Shepherd and K.Singh ed. Patrick White: A Critical Symposium 79) .

What begins as an experimentation of various religious thoughts in Riders in the Chariot, takes a turn to **differentiate** between conventional Christianity and the natural religion of the aborigines in A Fringe of Leaves. There is a sharp contrast made between the Church that holds the Lord God of Hosts and the chapel which propagates the idea of God as Love. A third strain comes through Ellen's acquaintance with the aboriginal religious thought. Describing the "negative mysticism" that operates in the novel, Veronica Brady, in her article "A Fringe of Leaves: Civilization by the Skin of Our Own Teeth," states that "if Ellen Roxburgh is an epic protagonist, then hers is an epic of a world without God or rather, one in which He remains silent" (128). The conventional religion followed by her husband and mother-in-law proclaims the Lord God of Hosts. Ellen realises its inadequacy even at the beginning of the novel. She thinks that

" it was her origins which **made** her believe **more** intently **in** the Devil than in the Deity" (EL 109) . She realises that right from her **Cornwall** childhood "rocks had been her altars and spring-Water her sacrament" (EL 222) . Hence, the novel lays stress on physical necessity and the perfect adaptation of the aboriginal ways. For Ellen, worshipping of the Roxburgh God has been by rote and merely a lip service to please others. Her move away from this conventional religion first occurs during the Christmas celebration in Van **Dieman's** Land.

There was little in this austere temple to provoke those who look upon decoration as an incitement to sin and Popery, nor inspire others of shy sensibility who need signposts before they can venture along the paths of private mysticism (FL 94) .

This celebration kindles her doubt and culminates in her confronting the dark side of her personality, thus accepting the flesh and natural things: " ... she had taken it for granted that her Christian faith insured her against evil, until on Christmas Day doubts came faltering into her mind, ..." (FL 98) . It also acquaints her with simplicity and necessity for survival. This helps her to see the cannibal episode as a sacrament she had partaken, in much the same spirit as the aborigines, that is to consume the strength of the individual who dies. As Veronica Brady remarks in her essay "A Properly Appointed Humanism,"

Cannibalism becomes a kind of "transubstantiation in reverse" as Ellen is taken up into the life according to nature, into the community of suffering, vulnerability and oppression represented by the aborigines. The power of this is signalled by the "single flute note endlessly **repeated**"--an image, ... , which recalls the story of the Carib devils who consumed a ritual morsel of the enemy god... (65-6) .

Ellen's reaction here is in perfect harmony with her earlier

rejection of the God of the winning side at the **Church**, for that institution justifies **human** cruelty. **It** is this, which later **makes** her reject completely what conventional religion has to offer. To Mr. **Cottle's** routine questions, her replies are full of **understanding**.

'I don't know what I any longer **believe**'

'I do not know, Mr. Cottle, whether I am true, leave alone Christian,'

'If I was given a soul, I think it is possibly lost,' she said... .

'Only my conscience, and that can be more terrifying than any unseen **criminal**' (FL 347-8).

Such an attitude enables her to attain a sense of realisation in the crude and primitive chapel built by Pilcher, since his chapel does not divorce knowledge and experience.

The interior was bare, except for a log bench and a rough attempt at what in an orthodox church would have been the communion table... . Above the altar a sky-blue riband painted on the wall provided a background to the legend GOD IS LOVE, in the wretchedest lettering, in dribbled ochre... .

She did not attempt to interpret a peace of mind which had descended on her (she would not have been able to attribute it to prayer or reason) but let the silence enclose her like a beatitude (FL 352-3).

In her article "A Fringe of Leaves: Civilization by the Skin of Our Own Teeth," Veronica Brady makes an interesting connection between **Pilcher's** chapel and the Dostoevsky epigraph to The Solid Mandala: "it was an old and rather poor church ... but such churches are the best for praying in" (133).

In The Twyborn Affair, the Hindu concept of rebirth and re-incarnation finds a secular parody. Through the successive avatars as **Eudoxia--Eddie--Eadith**, the protagonist tries to

understand the **mystery** of being and existence. Apart from this aspect, the novel also deals with the ideas put forward by the Bogomil sect. The **Bogomils** (Lovers of God or Beloved of God) flourished between the tenth and fourteenth centuries and were known to have practised all manner of sexual perversions (**A.P. Riemer**. "Eddie and the Bogomils--Some Observations on The Twyborn Affair" 12). The Bogomil concept of dualism, that is, the gulf that exists between the imperfect world and the perfection of God is twisted in this novel to refer to the intrinsic ambivalence of human nature and human experience. Furthermore, this religious concept is used by White to refer to the ambiguity that exists in the relation of the sexes and in marriage.

Tonight again we [Angelos and Eudoxia] have been over the Bogomil heresy without my coming any closer to what essentially it means. Perhaps it's that way with any heresy, more than most others those of sexuality (**TA** 77).

... the Holy Ghost presides, even in the souls of unbelievers, as he does over most marriages, A. to E., Boyd to Joanie Golson, Eadie Twyborn to Edward her Judge. Sometimes the Holy Ghost is a woman, but whether He, She or It, always there, holding the disintegrating structure together (or so we hope in our agnostic hearts) and will not, must not, withdraw (**TA** 78).

Thus, both sexuality of any sort, and marriage are suspect in the eyes of the protagonist. There is also a sceptical attitude towards traditional Christianity.

She [Eadith] continued obsessed by the image of her mother in a church pew, black gloves clamped to the **prayer-book**. She had heard of Italian peasant-women crawling as they licked the floor of the church commemorating their saint, and once in a half-sleep, Eadith visualised Eadie standing at the end of a platform in the underground, herself licking at the stretch of filth separating her from possible redemption (**TA** 403-4).

Eadie's appearance at a Church is hinted to be of no signifi-

cance. On the other hand, her acceptance of the sexual ambiguity of her child in itself leads to her redemption. Hena Maes-Jelinek in her article "Altering Boundaries," draws attention to the "deep sense of the mystery of both man and God" in the novel. Just as the various perspectives on E. (by Joanie Golson, M. Pelletier, Mme. Reboa and his/her diary) fail to reveal E.'s sexual identity, the nature of God "whether He, She or It" and His existence remain uncertain (171). On the one hand, such treatment reveals E.'s scepticism to religion (very similar to Stacey's in The Fire-Dwellers) and on the other, the human nature of the divine, encountered in A Fringe of Leaves. The coupling of sexuality and spirituality finds its natural culmination in Memoirs of Mary in One.

The sceptical questioning of the Gods of the Establishment in the other novels studied in the earlier sections, takes the form of open defiance combined with internalisation of the rejected values in Hagar Shipley in The Stone Angel. In terms of attitude to religion, the characters in this novel can be divided into conformists and nonconformists of Scot Presbyterianism. Jason Currie leads the list of conformists which also includes Doris and Marvin. The nonconformists include Bram and John. Hagar occupies a middle position, in that she sees religion as establishing order which she would like to adhere to in her actions, but against which she revolts unconsciously. The conformists are again superficial in their attitudes and thoughts about religion. Jason's teaching includes "the sense of divine calling to work, in other words the Protestant work ethic" (Andre

Dommergues. "Order and Chaos in The Stone Angel" 64). Jason believes that "[t]he devil finds work for idle hands. . . . God helps those who help themselves. Many hands **make** light work" (SA 8). Hence, Jason never squanders time or money. **Bram** occupies a **diametrically** opposite position and in a way, it is the unconscious revolt in her mind to Jason that attracts Bram to her. Nevertheless, Jason is superficial in attaching importance to status and prestige in Church matters. The minister thanks all those who have contributed generously to the building of the new Church and includes Jason's name first in the roll call. Jason's reaction explicitly reveals his attitude. '**Father** sat with modestly bowed head, but turned to me and whispered very low: "I and Luke McVite **must've** given the most, as he called our names the **first**"' (SA 16). Hagar's attitude to religion is one of amused scepticism, which at best, turns into **indifference**. Her scenes with Minister Troy are comical. For instance, her description of him runs as follows:

... minister is plump and pink, and if he met John the Baptist in tatters in the desert, stuffing dead locusts into that parched mouth for food, and blazing the New Kingdom out of those terrible eye sockets, he would faint (SA 38).

Unlike Doris or Marvin, Hagar has no use for religion. Justifying Hagar's rejection of heaven as "an ersatz goal," Elisabeth Potvin, in her essay "A Mystery at the Core of Life," states that "[j]ustice and love are irreconcilable according to the harsh Calvinist doctrine" (29) and matches Hagar in withholding mercy and compassion. "Ought I to appeal? **It's** the done thing. Our Father--no. I want no part of that. All I can think **is--Bless me or not, Lord, iust** as You please, for I'll not beg" (SA 307).

The pride, which dominates all her human relationships, extends to the Divine also. As she tells Mr. Troy, prayers have not wrought anything for her.

"I've never had much use for prayer, Mr. Troy. Nothing I prayed for ever came to anything If God's a crossword puzzle, or a secret code, it's hardly worth the bother, it seems to me" (SA 119) .

Hagar sees God as somebody unseen but who exercises power over human beings. Even in the cannery scene with Lees, she senses the omnipotence of God. "We sit quietly in this place, empty except for ourselves, and listen for the terrible laughter of God, but can hear only the rapid chuckling of the sea" (SA 234) . In his article "The Paradox of The Stone Angel," Claude Pollack sees this remark as capturing Hagar's paradoxical belief that "although God is absent, he is responsible, and he rarely misses a chance for a good laugh" (272) . As Sandra Djwa rightly perceives, "Laurence's version of a cruel God who sports with human misery . . . may be a fusion of the Jehovah of Canadian prairie fiction with her sense of the appallingly difficult existence of the Somali tribesman" ("False Gods and the True Covenant" 44-5). It also explicates man's inability to understand "the irony of human existence" from his "restricted vantage point" (Sandra Djwa 45) . However, the lesson she learns from Lees is that no individual or event is the cause, for life is determined by many causes. As Lees explains the causes of his child's death,

"I can't figure out whose fault it could have been," . . .

'My granddad's, for being a Bible puncher in the first place? Mother's for making me prefer hellfire to

lavender talcum? Lou's for insisting **nothing** could happen to him? **Mine**, for not saying right **out**, long **before**, that I might as well not go, for all the good it **was** doing **me**?" (SA 234).

This leads Hagar to believe that no individual or God was responsible for her son's death.

The culminating point of the sceptical attitude to religion is the total absence of any conventional religious thought in the lives of Elizabeth Hunter (The Eve of the Storm) and Morag Gunn (The Diviners). Though Mrs. Hunter does not adhere to any one **form** of religion, she does accept the supreme, overwhelming presence of the divine during her moment of illumination in the '**eye**' of the storm. This aspect will be explored in detail in the subsequent section of this Chapter. In the case of Morag, there is an initial questioning of God's mercy when she confronts the deaths of her parents. Later, there is a total overshadowing of the traditional '**God**' figure by several '**diviners**' who help her in probing the mystery that underlies life. That Christie, the garbage collector, **Royland**, the diviner, Catherine Parr Traill, the pioneer-settler and Jules, the Metis singer impart several important things about life, and that these help her as a creative artist, were examined in the Second Chapter. However, the important fact to be noticed is the emergence of a "personalised religion" which takes into account the myth and magic embodied in the ancestral heritage. Treating the '**diviners**' in the novel as '**shamans**,' Melanie Mortlock concludes that these figures grant Morag "unusual intuitive insight" to accept and willingly relinquish "life's many gifts (or, in mythic terms, God's grace)" as also "the rules of physical and psychological

survival" ("The Religion of Heritage: The Diviners as a Thematic Conclusion to the Manawaka Series" 138-9). Michel Fabre ("Words and the World") sums up this idea succinctly and to quote him:

Divining thus amounts, ... , to being able to read the meaning inscribed in the world, in nature, and in events by the hidden hand of God. It is the ability to discern a design or a "pattern," ... , calling to mind the Jamesian metaphor of "the figure in the carpet" [or] according to the metaphor in Carlyle's Sartor Resartus ... the visible manifestation of essence and being (253).

The range of reactions, that characterises the attitudes of the protagonists to religion, reveals explicitly their head-on confrontation with religious conventions. The scepticism expressed and the seeking of alternate forms of religion also reveal the "eclectic" and "non-dogmatic" religious approaches of White and Laurence (Peter Beatson 167). Further, such approaches may be viewed as attempts to re-define "religion and spirituality in a way that enables women to recognize the spiritual in all areas of their lives, not simply in relation to the institutional church" (Carol Christ xvii). Such approaches also reflect the questioning of "the good-evil, light-darkness dichotomy of Christian religion" and the Judaeo-Christian tradition which associates light with good and dark with evil thus "excluding a part of human nature as sinful in essence" (Helen Buss 26). Tracing Laurence's shift from "androcentric orthodox religion to 'gynolatric'" or "woman-reverencing," spirituality in the Manawaka novels, Elisabeth Potvin concludes that Laurence equates "spiritual freedom" not to "a question of either/or, but instead an acceptance of the possibilities of both/and" ("A Mystery at the Core of Life" 27). This statement holds good for White's

novels also.

Almost all the protagonists confront the traditional form of religions. The reason for this, arguably, is that both Laurence and White view religion as a factor that bind women to conformism in much the same way as other social conventions. Thus, going against orthodox religion is a necessary step for the move towards the liberation of the self. In both the writers, there is an evolution from conformism to orthodox religion to a secular and personal form of religion. Thus, whether the protagonist breaks away or conforms to religion, the final outcome is to gain a truer sense of one's identity. Describing the growth in identity as something akin to self-realisation, Sandra Djwa justifies "the rejection of false gods as enabling the individual to win through to the true spirit which can inform the flesh which the now lifeless convention has denied" ("False Gods and the True Covenant" 50). The gods in whom the women have belief is a mysterious god glimpsed through a secular path and by coming to terms with the dark side of one's personality. Thus, the novels neither moralise about good or evil nor present an abstract doctrine, but open to "the modern consciousness the neglected springs of life, the sources of a full and kindled consciousness, in separation from which the soul is crippled and incomplete" (William Walsh. Patrick White's Fiction 124). Laurence and White may be termed 'religious' only in their intentions to reveal 'the clarity of being' hidden from individuals (Walsh 125).²

Women and the Quest for Self-Realisation

Terms like **self**, self-realisation, illumination are value-laden and can take on various connotations. Hence, it becomes important to define them (though they defy any simple definition) in the sense in which they are used in this section.

Self may be defined as an individual, an 'I' with an urge to know itself.³ At the precise moment of awareness, the 'I' reflects itself as both the subject and the **object**. This brings us to the question of true and false selves, which may be differentiated as the idea of what one is according to oneself as opposed to the idea of one by society. In his book Existentialism, John Macquarrie refers to this distinction as the gap that exists "between existence and essence, or between facticity and possibility, or between the self one is and the self that is projected" (203). He further points out that it is this 'gap' which brings in a sense of alienation as also sets the process of self-realisation going.

Self-realisation may be defined as the moments when the self arrives at an unqualified intensity of thought and feeling. William Walsh defines these "moments of heightened existence" as **moments** when the individual "seemed about to break out into the world of otherness, or at least to be on the brink of being released from the cell of self" (Patrick White's Fiction 22). At such moments, the distinction between the observer and the observed ceases to exist. As J. Krishnamurti puts it, "Consciousness itself is the I." The distinction between the self and self-consciousness is no longer present.

[Being and consciousness have become one; the thinker and the thought have **merged**; all division, identification or contradiction have ceased. Nothing is lost, all has become one. Only the distinctions are abolished not reality (Luis S.R. Vas ed. The Mind of J. Krishnamurti 191-2).

This statement finds an echo in Dr. **Radhakrishnan's** definition of self-realisation as "the process, as well as the result, of balancing the different sides of our nature, body, mind, and spirit, the objective and the subjective, the individual and the social, the finite and the **infinite**" (Eastern Religions and Western Thought 36).

The moment of realisation is without any feeling of pride or greatness. In other words, it is a state of being aware of and giving out love, compassion and understanding. Thus, there is an intense awareness but there is no reaction, analysis, evaluation, **comparison** or argument.

Even though concepts like self-realisation and illumination are nearly synonymous, subtle **differentiations** can be made between them. Self-realisation is a gradual process and thus, a series of events may bring about the awareness. On the other hand, illumination is usually a single/isolated moment of great awareness which may be epiphanic. Thus, **self-realisation** accommodates illumination as its ultimate point of awareness. In his essay, "The Function of Imagery in Patrick White's Novels," Michael Cotter defines illumination as "a final culminating moment in which the whole of life is given meaning; in which the "inklings of transcendence" that manifest themselves at different points in a character's life assume . . . full scale proportion" (in Ron Shepherd and K. Singh ed. Patrick White: A Critical

Symposium 25) .

The quests for self-realisation undertaken by the protagonists in the two writers may be assessed within the frames mentioned below. A common feature which almost all the protagonists share is their urge "to be a pilgrim of the imagination and understanding on a path that leads to light" (Clara Thomas. "Towards Freedom: The Work of Margaret Laurence and Northrop Frye" 88) . The first step in this process involves "emptying the self of the socially approved constituents of personality including communally sanctioned moral values and sentimental social or religious illusions" (Robert S. Baker. "Romantic Onanism in The Vivisector" 204). According to Hilary Heltay, the world of perception that opens up when the characters cross the socially defined limits "has its foundations in love, nature, art, and faith, in utmost simplicity and madness" ("The Novels of Patrick White" 92) . However, such a movement also results in the alienation and isolation felt by the protagonists. On the positive side, alienation from society helps the characters to come to terms with reality (or what White calls "pureness of being") devoid of any trappings. This idea can also be found in Vedanta and Existentialism. For instance, The Bhagavad-Gita sees reality as being enveloped by maya or 'illusion.'

As a flame is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo is wrapped by the amnion, so This [the Eternal or Brahman] is enveloped by it [māya] (The Bhagavad-Gita trans. Annie Besant. III. 38 59).

A similar idea may be discerned in Sartre's reference to the world as a "varnish" on the surface of being-in-itself and concealing it (cited in Robert G. Olson's An Introduction to

Existentialism 39). Carol Christ voices a similar idea in her discussion of women's spiritual quest. She describes "nothingness" as a spiritual experience which necessitates "a stripping away of the facade of conventional reality that allows us to confront our own depths and to see the world without illusion" (Diving Deep and Surfacing xviii).

Another feature of the quest is the protagonist's attempts to choose for oneself. This entails accepting total responsibility for one's actions. This attitude that "the individual must accept responsibility for his [her] own life and make of it what he [she] can" (David Tacey in Ron Shepherd and K. Singh ed. Patrick White: A Critical Symposium 37), is what White and Laurence have in common with Existentialism. Patricia Morley's description of the existential nature of Laurence's vision is equally appropriate for White's vision.

Man is rarely free, The other side of the coin is bondage, entrapment, alienation. Some of the bonds are forged by her characters for themselves; some are imposed from without, Laurence depicts an often agonizing struggle to break these bonds, to overcome alienation, to achieve an integration both personal and social which is imaged as a freedom to love and to accept love, to share, to meet and to touch ("The long trek home: Margaret Laurence's Stories" 19).

Another Existentialist feature which the writers seem to insist on, is the direct confrontation with love and death. These two topics are tabooed in the societies depicted by the two writers and hence, the necessity to break the taboos.

Let us now consider the important criteria that are emphasised by the writers in relation to self-realisation. Intuition occupies an important part in the quest. One of White's

illuminati, Mordecai Himmelfarb (Riders in the Chariot) states that "[t]he intellect has failed us." This remark, according to Patricia Morley, "reflects a contrast between two sorts of knowledge--spiritual wisdom and purely abstract rationalism" (The Mystery of Unity 6). The 'elect' in both White and Laurence despise the intellectual curiosity combined with spiritual sterility. Emphasis is laid on the acceptance of the non-rational modes of knowledge. The aim, as Dr. Radhakrishnan puts it, is to harmonize "[b]ody and mind, instinct and intellect [to] become the willing servants of spirit and not its tyrannical masters" (Eastern Religions and Western Thought 37). Further, intuition enables the self to perceive the full meaning and significance of the moment of insight at that very moment and not afterwards as it happens in the case of objective knowledge and intellect.

Another criterion of importance is suffering. The major hurdle in realising the self is the incapacity or the refusal to see oneself squarely as one is. Suffering forces this insight and awakens awareness. "Suffering is but intense clarity of thoughts and feelings which makes you see things as they are," says J. Krishnamurti (Luis S.R. Vas 207). The Gandhian epigraph to White's Happy Valley equates suffering with spiritual progress. More importantly, empathy with suffering implies certain spiritual purity. It can also be seen as a way of obliterating the distinction between self and other.

Another facet of self-realisation that can be discerned is the heightened awareness of the textures of experience and a perception of the nature of reality in all its aspects. Thus, it

is a **moment** when the individual is most deeply in touch with the inner self and most open to the world around. Carol Christ defines illumination as "a powerful experience of finitude or limitation in which social structures and structures of consciousness which had provided meaning in a person's life are called into question and recognized as less than **absolute**" (Diving Deep and Surfacing xiii). This necessitates a movement beyond distinctions such as good and evil; illusion and reality; joy and suffering; life and death; and that of the self and the other. Experience imparts knowledge of the world and through it, the knowledge of the self. According to Vedānta, this is the knowledge that the ātman in every individual partakes of the Brahman (the Cosmic Soul/Divine Essence/ Absolute Reality etc.) as also the fact that the ātman and Brahman are one and the same. This enables the questers to achieve realisation in the midst of worldly affairs. This also explains the return to society of the self-realised women in the novels of White and Laurence. They operate within the confined limits of society but are aware of what is beyond these limits. Peter Beatson gives a comprehensive summary of the relationship between the questers and society, and to quote him:

As the body is to the core of being, so society in general is to the unique individual. This relationship is expressed through a typical nodal pattern... . An individual at the centre undergoes a supreme **moment** of exhilaration or despair. From this central character circles of awareness radiate out, through one or two who are intimately involved in the experience, to others who are less intimately concerned but still have some intuition of the significance of the mystery, to a peiphery that swirls about, sometimes indifferent, sometimes repelled, sometimes fascinated, sometimes concentrated on the centre with murderous hatred (The Eye in the Mandala 122-3).

Patrick White

In the novels of Patrick White, women undertaking quests for self-realisation may be classified under two heads: Earth Mothers and Illuminati. Earth Mothers, through their bountiful, protective and understanding nature give endlessly. They also respond to everyday life in a simple and direct manner through instinct and intuition. The illuminati, on the other hand, move away from society and their experience of self-realisation gives them knowledge of the self and knowledge of the world. While Earth Mothers may gain an illumination and thus form part of the latter category, the reverse is not always possible. Mary Hare and Ruth Godbold in Riders in the Chariot are fine examples of Earth Mothers. Theodora Goodman (The Aunt's Story). Laura Trevelyan (Voss), Elizabeth Hunter (The Eye of the Storm), Ellen Roxburgh (A Fringe of Leaves) and Eadie Twyborn (The Twyborn Affair) are illuminaries. Ellen Roxburgh combines the qualities of both categories in her personality. The same may be said of Mary Hare and Ruth Godbold though they fit into the former category more appropriately.

Patrick White stresses on humility and simplicity as necessary conditions for self-realisation ("The Prodigal Son"). This search for "purity of being" which is described in T.S. Eliot's "Little Gidding" as "[a] condition of complete simplicity /Costing not less than everything," is a recurrent motif in the novels of White. The need for discarding inessentials is expressed in terms of Hinduism. In an early short story, "The Twitching Colonel," Patrick White uses the onion-peel image to

describe the process of self-realisation.

"Only in dissolution is salvation **from** illusion": "I shall strip myself, the onion-folds of prejudice, till standing naked though conscious I see myself complete or else consumed like the Hindu conjuror who is translated into space" (606-7).

A similar image is used by Mary Hare in Riders in the Chariot: "Eventually I shall discover what is at the centre, if enough of me is peeled away." The idea embodied in the above statements is the knowledge of everything/nothing that are inherent in being. Let us now analyse the novels of the two writers in the light of the ideas discussed above.

The Aunt's Story

Theodora Goodman is the first of Patrick White's characters who undertakes a quest for the realisation of the self. Through her character, White puts forth ideas which are to become recurrent themes in his later works. In her lonely search for the self, she undergoes suffering. As Thomas L. Warren rightly **remarks**, "[s]uch suffering functions as a means of paring away layers of superficial being until a central core of the self is found" ("Patrick White: The Early Novels" 134). During the course of the novel, Theodora asks: "Why then, ... , is **this** world which is so tangible in appearance so difficult to **hold?**" (AS 272). Her search for self-knowledge provides the **answer. It** is because the world and reality are veiled by illusion or what in **Vedānta** is termed **maya**.

At the beginning of the novel, we see Theodora being defined in terms of the roles forced on her by society: an ugly spinster

with no bright chances of marriage, a good **companion** in the service of old Mrs. Goodman, her mother and an aunt to her niece. Further, she is also unfairly compared with her sister. Theodora's loneliness at this stage is alleviated by a series of figures: her father, the Man Who Was Given His Dinner, **Moraïtis** and Miss. **Spofforth**. They prophesy Theodora's vision.

'You'll see a lot of funny things, Theodora Goodman. You'll see them because you've eyes to see. And they'll break you. But perhaps you'll survive...' (AS 4 5).

.... there is much that you will experience. You will see clearly, beyond the bone... . 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 (AS 63).

Theodora's insight into things is established early in the novel when she is "riding round Our Place with Father":

Theodora looked at the land that was theirs. There was peace of mind enough on Meroe. You could **feel it**, whatever it was, and you were not **certain**, but in your bones. It was in the clothes-line on which the sheets dropped, in the big pink and yellow cows cooling their heels in creek mud, in magpie's speckled egg, and the disappearing snake. It was even in the fences, grey with age and yellow with lichen, that tumbled down and lay round Meroe (AS 24. emphasis added).

This kind of insight reaches a climax in her statement of faith to Gen. Sokolnikov in the Jardin Exotique section. There are **times** when Theodora sees the world as "a little crystal ball that she could hold in her hand, and stroke and stroke" (AS 151). This gives the realisation of the coexistence of **sūnyatā** and all-pervading Brahman or that 'Everything is nothing, and nothing is everything' (AS 152). This, in turn, enables her to answer the General's question whether she believes in saints. 'I believe in a pail of milk,' said Theodora, '**with** the blue shadow round the rim.' '**And** the cow's breath still in **it**' (**AS** 152).

Alongside such moments of insight, Theodora also realises her own destructive nature [in Beatson's words, "The Fall is a necessary prerequisite for the Resurrection" (The Eve in the **Mandala** 36)] as is seen in her instinct to kill her mother and in the hawk shooting incident with Frank Parrott. On one occasion, she takes the kitchen knife "very thin and **impervious**" with an aim to kill her mother but at the right moment she realises that this '**does** not cut the knot' of her bondage. The **mandalic** significance of the '**knot**' becomes evident in reference to Arthur's knotted **marble** in The Solid Mandala which is considered a symbol of perfection and wholeness. "I am guilty of a murder that has not been done, she said, it is the same thing, blood is only an accompaniment" (**AS** 123) . On waking up, Mrs. Goodman **significantly** comments on Theodora's appearance as one who has seen a murder.

This type of a destructive instinct termed "The Great Monster Self" in the novel, looms large and is exorcised in the Jardin Exotique section. This exorcism is an attempt to achieve the desirable state which resembles "nothing more than air or water." The epigraph from Henry Miller to this section with its emphasis on "the great fragmentation of maturity" subtly explains Theodora's journey. At Hotel du Midi, people lead illusory lives. They take on aspects of people known to Theodora, for instance, the relationship between Katina Pavlov and Theodora recounts her relationship with Lou, her niece. But Katina may also be taken to represent the positive side of Theodora herself. In such a case, Lieselotte represents Theodora's destructive nature. With the final destruction of the hotel by fire, Theo's

link with the realistic illusion breaks and she realises the need for **humility, simplicity** and suffering in order **to gain** a knowledge of the self. One way by which she achieves this is by stripping herself of all the factors determining the ego. She gains anonymity by relinquishing some material objects including her rail tickets. She also refers to herself as Miss. Plinkington and presumes that "[t]his way perhaps she came a little closer to **humility**, to anonymity, to pureness of being" (**AS** 269). On the one hand, the assumption of a different name may suggest the acceptance of "everything and nothing" in one stroke and on the other, a newer form of ego-assertion. That Theodora has reached a state of acceptance is evident in her performance of menial tasks like scrubbing and washing the shack. She also refuses to go with Mrs. Johnson "[b]ecause she firmly intended that this game for the soul of Theodora Goodman should be finally hers" (AS 281). This marks Theodora's progress in her quest when she makes her own choices and accepts responsibility for them. Perhaps, this is the reason for her arrival in the American West and not returning to Australia. Commenting on Theodora's destination in the American West which is considered as Abyssinia, Patricia Morley makes an interesting observation that links the American autumn to the Australian spring and sees Theo "embracing all continents, all seasons" (The Mystery of Unity 69). This may also be taken to suggest **Theo's** escape from the spatio-temporal bounds.

Theodora's conversation with Holstius emphasises and explains her vision. Holstius emphasises the need to let go of her past.

'Your sense of **permanence is perverted**, as it is in **most** people. We are too inclined to consider the shapes of flesh that looms up at us out of **mirrors**, and because they do not continue to fit like gloves, we take fright and assume that permanence is a property of pyramids and suffering. But true permanence is a state of **multiplication** and division. As you should **know**, Theodora Goodman, Faces inherit features. Thought and experience are **bequeathed**' (AS 284. emphasis added).

The mathematical metaphor brings to mind a similar image used during Stan Parker's vision in The Tree of Man: "One, and no other figure, is the answer to all **sums**." According to Thomas Warren,

White's use of the mathematical metaphor suggests his **Platonism**; for Plato, mathematics bridges the worlds of being and becoming. There is infinite possibility for multiplication and division in mathematics, as well as in the universe, and that infinitude constitutes permanence ("Patrick White: The Early Novels" 138).

Elaborating these ideas, Warren states that, in this passage, Patrick White has stressed the point that for

[t]hose who suffer in humility and simplicity glimpse a World beyond that described by those who favor the reasonable life. The vision is of the unity that the universe possesses and which should be man's base for his view of reality (137).

With the advent of Holstius, the different threads of the novel are drawn together.

'You cannot reconcile joy and sorrow,' Holstius said. **'Or** flesh and marble, or illusion and reality, or life and death. For this reason, Theodora Goodman, you must accept there is sometimes little to choose between the reality of illusion and the illusion of reality. Each of your several lives is evidence of this' (AS 278).

Acceptance of the paradox of life instead of trying to reconcile them is itself a form of realisation. Such an understanding of the ultimate reality underlying one's knowledge of the world helps Theodora to gain her vision. In this respect, Holstius may

be viewed as the reality which Theodora recognises only after she has broken the illusions of the world: whether **Meröe** or Jardin Exotique. She has progressed to such a state that she is known by herself rather than as a daughter or an aunt. The representatives of society cannot understand her view of reality or her relationship with the universe. Hence, the suitability of the Olive Schreiner epigraph: "When your life is most real, to me you are mad." The epigraph may be taken to suggest the relative nature of madness. However, in relation to the novel, it may be taken to suggest the inability of transcribing such moments of awareness into words or communicate it to fellow humans.

Voss

While discussing Laura's journey towards self-realisation, it is important to bear in mind the fact that, for her, it is not a lonely search like Theodora's. Both Laura and Voss progress together in the path of self-knowledge. Veronica Brady in her article, "In My End is My Beginning: Laura as Heroine of Voss," describes Laura as a "twinning device" of Voss, similar to Waldo and Arthur Brown in The Solid Mandala (24). Thus, Voss' journey across the landscape is paralleled by Laura's journey through her mindscape. This concept of doubling will be elaborated in the Chapter on Techniques. While Laura teaches Voss the need of humility in accepting human weakness before God, it is because of her relationship with Voss that she herself returns to her religious faith. Laura's relationship with Rose Portion also gains significance in the novel.

At the beginning of the novel, Laura is portrayed as an intellectual prig and a religious skeptic. Though on a higher rational plane than the others in her **immediate** circle, Laura is described as being 'suffocated by the fuzz of faith' (V 9). Like the other **illuminati**, however, Laura is intuitively perceptive. "She did believe, however, most palpably, in wood, with the reflections in it, and in clear daylight, and in water" (V 9). Again, she is also totally **self-sufficient**, a quality which makes her alienation from others easy. However, unlike Theodora or Mary Hare, Laura does not reject human relationships: "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" (V 9). This accounts for her instant liking for Voss. She attributes her strength to "arrogance" and "will" (V 75), qualities she shares with Voss. Her brief, yet significant, meetings with Voss, awakens her to the fact that only by humble surrender can both of them be saved. Again, this is a move away from her rational stand.

With the return of faith, Laura becomes involved with Rose's life. Earlier, her only reaction towards Rose Portion is her repulsion of the physical body. However, it is only through Rose that Laura learns about the true nature of suffering. As Rose tells Laura, '... I was not meant to suffer, not then, or now--you would have said. But sufferin' creeps up. And in different disguises. You do not recognize it, miss. You will **see**' (V 76-7). Laura also understands from Rose's lifestory that some superior power operates and so suffering cannot be resisted by her will alone. This is why, while accepting Voss' proposal,

Laura tells **him** that their only hope of salvation lies in praying together. Her involvements with Voss and Rose grow **simultaneously**. She begins to identify closely with Rose and thus, her impassioned plea to her uncle and aunt:

'Do you not understand the importance of this life which we are going to bring into our house? Regardless of its origin. It is a life. It is my life, your life, anybody's life. It is life. I am so happy for it. And frightened. That something may destroy this proof of life...' (V 224. **emphasis** added).

Laura's **identification** with Rose grows closer and closer that on certain occasions, she physically experiences the sense perceptions of Rose. "Once she had felt the child kick inside her, and she bit her lip for the certainty, the shape her love had taken" (V 227). At the time of Mercy's birth, the midwife tells Laura: '**Well**, you are that drawn, dear, about the face, anyone would think it was you had just been delivered of the bonny **thing**' (V 230). As Geoffrey Dutton correctly points out, such a "visible token of love" seems far-fetched (Patrick White 27). While Dutton's comment is acceptable, one has to take into account the effect of such an experience in Laura's progress towards self-realisation for which Rose's death acts as a climax. She describes her reactions to Voss:

... 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 (V 239. **emphasis** added).

This quotation assumes importance because it stresses the onset of the dissolution of Laura's ego and the shedding of superficial

layers of existence. The significance of this passage lies in Laura's experience of "everywhere and nowhere" **simultaneously** which is very similar to Theodora's experience of "everything and nothing." Furthermore, Laura's acceptance of nothingness (**sūnyatā**) frees her of the fear of death which is crucial to self-realisation. Describing this instance as "the **moment** of the eclipse of the self, of its dissolution into wind, earth and the ocean beyond, through which it attains to a greater understanding and love," G.A. **Wilkes** sees it as a high point in Laura's quest in his essay "A Reading of Patrick White's Voss" (Ten Essays on Patrick White 135). That she realises the value of suffering and the worthiness of a virtue like humility, is evident in her remark.

Laura begins praying in earnest and surrenders herself **completely** to God.

'My prospects . . . are in the hands of **God**' (V 308). Laura could not answer. This is the point, she felt, at which it will be decided, one way or the other, but by some superior power. Her own mind was not equal to it (V 313).

Laura's words echo Le **Mesurier's** earlier in the novel.

'In the beginning I used to imagine that if I were to succeed in describing with any accuracy something, . . . , then I would be expressing all truth. But I could not... . Until I became aware of my **power**. The mystery of life is not solved by success, which is an end in itself, but in failure, in perpetual struggle, in **becoming**' (V 271).

Laura grows in her spiritual stature. In an attempt at complete surrender, she even prepares herself to sacrifice Mercy whom she greatly loves: "You see, I am willing to give up so much to prove that human truths are also divine. This is the true meaning of

Christ" (Y 371) .

The final stage in Laura's self-realisation is her understanding of her suffering as well as feeling intuitively Voss' illumination. While both Laura and Voss struggle to decipher "the **simplicity** of a great **idea**," it is she who, by undergoing the passion of Christ, understands the message central to the novel. 'How important it is to understand the three stages. Of God into man. Man. And man returning into **God**...' (V 386). She also understands that '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' (V 387). Through this understanding, her **moment** of awareness comes to her in a flash.

' ... there are certain beliefs a clergyman may explain to one from childhood onward, without one's understanding, except in theory, until suddenly, almost in spite of reason, they are made clear. Here, suddenly, in this room, of which I imagined I knew all the corners, I understand!' (V 386)

The religious significance of Laura's concept of the three stages of spiritual progression so well brought out by John and Rose Marie Beston, is essentially Christian ("The Theme of Spiritual Progression in Voss"). They see Laura as a Virgin Mother and a Female Christ in a novel where Voss is the Christ-figure or John the Baptist, Jackie, a Judas figure and Judd, a Peter figure. However, a Vedantic interpretation is also possible in seeing **man** (**jeevātma**/individual soul) as a part of God (**Paramātmā**/Cosmic Soul). In every human life, the Divine Power is continually veiled by **maya** (illusion) and **avidyā** (Ignorance). **By** escaping this illusion, an individual realises the Divine Essence (Brahman).

Laura's importance in the novel does not stop with her experience of illumination. In coming to live in society and working for social progress with the knowledge gained through this profound experience, Laura emerges as the centre of interest in the novel. Veronica Brady brilliantly sums this up in her article, "**In My End is My Beginning: Laura as Heroine of Voss**":

White comes to a classical humanistic position, asserting in effect that this world is not all that we can know or aspire to, but that it is what we can be sure of and must trust in. In this sense to go on living in the city of man, honestly and true to one's personal values, is more heroic perhaps than to die, however, splendidly, in the desert (17).

How Laura translates and combines her visionary experience with life experiences has been dealt in the section "**Women as Teachers**" in Chapter Two. Since she understands that all truths are partial, except "the greatest truth," she allows myths and legends of Voss to grow where it cannot be avoided. She never loses sight of reality and that is why she emphatically states that:

'**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**' (V 448).

Riders in the Chariot

As suggested in the opening paragraph of this section, Mary Hare and Ruth Godbold gain self-realisation through their roles as Earth Mothers rather than their roles as the feminine part of the quartet of riders. Mary Hare is close and sensitive to Nature and Mrs. Godbold cares maternally, not only for her children but also for the other three **riders--Mary, Himmelfarb** and Dubbo. It

is interesting to note the difference in the modes of perception of the four riders. Cecil Hadcraft sums up comprehensively in his article "**The** Theme of Revelation in Patrick White's Novels":

... their modes of reception are varied--in a **fit** or seizure, in intellectual contemplation, in a sensual or physical joy, in a tortured or drunken insight. And their acceptances correspond to their **sensibilities--as** compensation, as understanding, as accepted mystery, as a subject for expression (40) .

Such a difference springs from the fact that their knowledge of the chariot comes from different sources. Mary Hare comes to know of it when, in an unusual moment of understanding, her father refers to the chariot. Himmelfarb gathers knowledge from his readings in Kabbalistic writings. Ruth Godbold knows the chariot from the hymns she sang as a child in England and **Alf** Dubbo from a book of paintings.

While looking into Mary Hare's character and her self-realisation, the personality trait which strikes the reader is her closeness to nature. This trait enables her to move unhindered in the wild bush like any burrowing animal. She understands the natural world well, even though her link with the human world is rather tentative. Himmelfarb and Mrs. Godbold enable her to reach out to the human world. Her closeness to nature also enables her to conceive of the chariot in terms of natural occurrences.

That Mary Hare is different from others is revealed in her statement early in the novel. 'I am not afraid,' she said, '**of** anything. Or not of the things people are afraid of (RC 9)'. As for her relationship with nature, her early years in Xanadu may be described as **Edenic**.

She scattered **crumbs** instead, and birds came down, hobbling and bobbing at her feet, clawing at her shoulders, and in one case, holding on to the ribs of her hat (EC 38).

Every morning ... , she had put a saucer of milk, but the snake remained to be converted. She would wait, and eventually, of course, perfect understanding would be reached (RC 39).

She believes in the good of all existing things. Her belief in nature is essentially transcendental.

' I have no proper gift, of words, I mean. Oh yes, I believe! I believe in what I see, and what I cannot see. I believe in a thunderstorm, and wet grass, and patches of light, and stillness. There is such a variety of good. On earth. And everywhere' (RC 58) .

This enables her to fix her identity close to nature.

Now she recalled with nostalgia occasions when she had lost her identity in those of trees, bushes, inanimate objects, or entered into the minds of animals, of which the desires were unequivocal or honest (RC 82. emphasis added).

Such an attitude helps her in building a strong sense of good and evil. That is why she questions Mrs. Jolley's **justification** for killing the snake. She also feels that it is difficult to distinguish between good and evil. She sees nature as essentially good and human beings as bad and cruel. In fact, in close moments of contact with humans, she connects them to some object in nature. For instance, in moments of understanding, she sees her father as "a distressed or desperate animal" (RC 23).

Mary Hare shows complete ignorance of the Bible and conventional Christian religion.

She found the Epistles too dry, and did not go **much** on the **Revelations**-- 'I will find out what I am to find out, in my own way, and in my own time. I am different,' maintained Mary Hare (RC 49).

She also replies in a similar vein to Himmelfarb when he asks her about relating the chariot to redemption: "My own house **is** full of things waiting to be seen. Even quite common objects are shown to us only when it is time for them to **be**" (RC 155). She does not foresee or work consciously for redemption but allows things to take their natural course. Thus, she progresses gradually **from** nature to love of man through her relationship with **Himmelfarb**:

Whether she had suspected a moment before, probably for the first and only time what it was to be a woman, her passion was more serious, touching. Urgent now that she has been reduced to the status of a troubled human being (RC 30).

Thus, **Himmelfarb's** crucifixion and his ensuing suffering have a great impact on her. "So Miss Hare was translated. Her animal body became the least part of her, as breathing thoughts turned to being" (RC 432). In his exposition of Riders in the Chariot, Colin Roderick perceives that:

To Miss Hare, Himmelfarb's passion is a **transfiguring** agent: "she had entered that state of complete union which her nature had never yet achieved" that is to say, . . . , that she had at last glimpsed the divine in man (70. emphasis added).

Patrick White's statement early in the novel is suggestive of Mary Hare's final insight.

. . . , her mind would venture in foxy fashion, or more blunderingly worm-like, in search of a concealed truth. If fellowship with Himmelfarb and Mrs. Godbold and perhaps her brief communion with a certain blackfellow, would confirm rather than expound a mystery, the reason could be that, in the last light, illumination is synonymous with blinding (RC 24).

Just as she glimpses the cosmic soul in the individual--Himmelfarb, she herself surrenders to the magnificence of Nature. In **terms** of Vedanta, she has reconciled **ātman** and Brahman.

Walking and walking through the unresistant thorns and twigs. Ploughing through the soft, opalescent **remnants** of night. Never actually arriving, but that was to be expected, since she had become all-pervasive: scent, sound, the steely dew, the blue glare of white light off rocks. She was all but identified.

So Miss Hare stumbled through the night. If she did not choose the obvious direction, it was because direction had at last chosen her (RC 439-40).

Ruth Godbold, always presented with her brood of children and always found helping other people, is the perfect Earth Mother archetype in Patrick White's novels. She is also the only one who has known suffering from a very young age. She mothers her brothers and sisters, when their mother dies. Like Hardy's Tess, she faces tragedy when her younger brother is crushed under the wheels of the cart, while haymaking and she brings the body home. Such an incident, awakens her compassion and she offers help without **differentiating**. As she tells Himmelfarb, people are not to be **differentiated** by their religious faith or any other thing but by their inherent good or bad natures (RC 219). Such an attitude enables her to care for Mary Hare, Himmelfarb, **Alf** Dubbo and Tom Godbold when they are ill. Like Mary's bond with Nature, Mrs. **Godbold's** bond with daily life is very strong. She finds exaltation in simple acts of routine because of her unswerving devotion. For instance, as Mrs. Chalmers-Robinson's maid, Ruth attempts

to express her belief, not in words, nor in the attitudes of orthodox worship, but in the surrender of herself to a state of passive adoration, Or, in the performance of her duties, polishing plate, scrubbing floors, mending the abandoned stockings, ..., she could have been **offering up** the active essence of her being in unstinted praise (**RC 24 5. emphasis added**).

This passage emphasises Ruth's adoption of the karma **marga** of self-realisation which stresses the need to **perform** one's duty

with devotion and without any desire for the ensuing benefits (cf. The Bhagavad-Gita III. 7-9).

It is this unswerving devotion that enables Mrs. Godbold to empathise with the fallen human beings at **Khalil's** brothel. Her understanding and compassion reach their **culmination** when she encounters her dead husband in the street.

Mrs. Godbold's self was by now dead, so she could not cry for the part of her which lay in the keeping of the husband she had just left. She cried, rather, **for the condition of men**, for all those she had loved (RC 288).

Patricia Morley observes that Ruth has attained a state of **equanimity** (The Mystery of Unity 173). More importantly, by universalizing her personal grief, Mrs. Godbold gains realisation of the same reality present in every man.

Mary and Ruth together provide instinct and emotion to the intellect and imagination of **Himmelfarb** and **Alf** Dubbo. Illumination, thus, becomes collective in the novel. Though **Himmelfarb's** crucifixion and the events that follow emphasise the illumination, Ruth is more illumined in her daily thoughts and deeds. Though she does not fully understand the significance of the Easter egg and **lamb**, it is she, not the Rosetrees (**Himmelfarb's** fellow men), who **offers** them to him. The scenes after the crucifixion and those preceding Himmelfarb's death show Ruth as a ministering angel. Expanding this idea, Colin Roderick remarks:

To Mrs. Godbold the Jew's agony is a means of expressing the supreme love: she takes the bruised soul home to her shed near the post office, and in him she, too, glimpses the illuminating power of redemption; but she sees nothing either peculiarly Jewish or peculiarly Christian about **Himmelfarb**--"it is the **same**," she said; "**men** are the same before they are born. They are the same at birth... . It is only the coat they are told to put on that **makes** them any **different**" (70).

However, her little acts of kindness **assume** Christian **symbolism**.

She would work fast and skilfully, even while **remembering** painful things: how the women, for instance, had received the body of their Lord... . And would lay the body in her whitest sheets, with the love of which only **she** was capable (RC 411) .

Similarly, her vision of the Chariot is firmly rooted in the fearth.

Mrs. Godbold remained a seated statue. The massive rumps of her horses waited, swishing their tails through eternity. The wheels of her chariot were solid gold, well-axled, as might have been expected (RC 67).

This is Mary's conception of Ruth's chariot. Ruth's own explanation somewhat reflects her character. "She had her own vision of the Chariot. Even now, at the thought of it, her very centre was touched by the wings of love and charity" (RC 489) .

In her article "Patrick White's *Götterdämmerung*," Leonie Kramer questions whether Ruth's "almost vegetable existence" is compatible with illumination (18). There are two arguments possible in support of Ruth. At the end of the novel, she has realised two different things. As a **mother**, she sees beyond what is evident (women as producer of children) .

Finally the woman sitting alone in front of the deserted shed would sense how she had shot her six arrows at the **face of darkness**, and halted it. And wherever her arrows stuck, she saw other arrows breed. And out of these arrows, others still would split off, from the straight white shafts.

So her arrows would continue to be aimed at the forms of darkness, and she herself was, in fact, the infinite quiver. '**Multiplication!**' (RC 489. emphasis added).

Like Stan Parker, she too has been given to understand the Platonian thought of the infinite possibility of multiplication and division as constituting permanence. The image of "the

straight white shafts" brings to mind the simple phenomenon in physics of the disc of spectral colours showing as white when turned fast. In this respect, she includes within herself all the varied ramifications of the world. Going by Vedāntic views, Ruth has realised not only that ātman is but a manifestation of the Brahman but also that the ātman in each individual is to be sought and respected for its own worth.

Patrick White's description of Ruth Godbold at the end of the novel puts to rest all doubts regarding her illumination. Like Laura earlier and Ellen later, Ruth returns to civilisation with the added knowledge of her vision. "Now she could approach her work of living, as an artist, after an interval, will approach and judge his work of art" (RC 491). This statement suggests that Ruth has reached the state of stithaprajna (i.e., an individual who is not affected by the endless flux of life).

That evening, as she walked along the road, it was the hour at which the other gold sank its furrows in the softer sky. The lids of her eyes, flickering beneath its glow, were gilded with an identical splendour. But for all its weight, it lay lightly, lifted her, in fact, to where she remained an instant in the company of the Living Creatures she had known, and many others she had not. All was ratified again by hands.

If, on further visits to Xanadu, she experienced nothing comparable, it was probably because Mrs. Godbold's feet were still planted firmly on the earth (RC 491-2).

This passage shows that Ruth understands the pull of material life even in her moments of transcendence. In fact, she has gained the wisdom to see the transient perfection in everyday life.

The Eye of the Storm

From this novel onwards, a shift in White's attitude and treatment of what Elizabeth Hunter calls, "the utmost in experience" can be noticed. The earlier novels portray this experience as something characteristic of the "burnt ones," the **moment** of insight has otherworldly, abstract overtones of the chariot or the **mandala** (Leonie Kramer. "Patrick White: 'The Unplayed I'" 65). However, in The Eye of the Storm, there is no "triumphant emergence of the occulted greatness" but "[a] self-centred, possibly mediocre personality is subjected to an experience that radically alters her perspective and her perception--in her own way" (A.P. Riemer. "The Eye of the Needle: Patrick White's Recent Novels" 258). Whereas the other protagonists consciously strive towards **self-awareness**, the **moment** of insight is just given to Elizabeth Hunter. This is evident in the structuring of the moment of illumination, not at the end of the novel as in the earlier novels, but much earlier. Elizabeth Hunter does not die but lives on for about fifteen years after the episode. In the words of A.P. Riemer,

... the vision becomes quite general and all-pervading. It remains, consequently, quite **unspecific**. All we are given, all that Elizabeth Hunter experiences, is the general sense of illumination (ecstasy in the strict sense of the term)... ("The Eye of the Needle: Patrick White's Recent Novels" 257) .

Though the moment of insight itself becomes an annihilation of the self, the conscience takes a rebirth and continues to live. Thus, there is a conscious recalling of the moment of illumination by Mrs. Hunter, which incidentally brings about her death. Quoting **Simone** Weil's views on death, Peter Beatson remarks that "[d]eath tests and crowns the quality of life." Simone Weil is of

the view that "the instant of death is the centre and object of life ... [and that] it is the instant when for an **infinitesimal** fraction of time, pure truth, naked, certain and eternal enters the soul" (The Eye in the **Mandala** 51) .

Before we go on to analyse Elizabeth's illumination, it is worthwhile to consider a pertinent question posed in the novel by Dorothy, Mrs. Hunter's daughter and subsequently criticised by Leonie Kramer in her article "Patrick White: '**The Unplayed I**'." In the novel, Dorothy wonders:

Why was it given to Elizabeth Hunter to experience the eye of the storm? That too! Or are regenerative states of mind granted to the very old to ease the passage from their earthly, sensual natures into final peace and forgiveness (ES 71) ?

In her article, "Patrick White: '**The Unplayed I**'," Leonie Kramer comments that:

The essential thing is that the experience itself is curiously elusive; and it is a construction which does not arise from within Elizabeth Hunter's being, but which is imposed on her by the author, as a '**big scene**' **might** be given to a leading actress (66).

Kramer also says that Mrs. Hunter "preserves her moment of illumination" because of White's insistence and "not through his account of the mysterious logic of motivation and experience" (68). Countering these arguments, in his article, "The Gothic Grace and Rainbow Aesthetic of Patrick White's Fiction: An Introduction," William Scheick rightly observes that,

such moments, not by transcendence but of immersion, not of cognition but of a "sensation" of blinding light and deafening silence, not only occur but specifically do so because the human self is sensual, mendacious (masked), materialistic, and **superficial--all** of which demarcate the subjective nature of that self, existing amid visible surfaces, as well as the incompleteness of that self, unable to close with the depths of its own objectivity (141) .

The entire passage may be interpreted as a vivid description of the momentary insight/awareness which pierces the veil of illusion thus revealing the self in its subjective and objective aspects.

In the text itself there are two possible explanations to this query. According to Sister de Santis, Mrs. Hunter was chosen because,

[she] was also a soul about to leave the body it had worn, and already able to emancipate itself so completely from human emotions it became at times as redemptive as water, as clear as morning light (ES 12. emphasis added).

Narrating an incident similar to Mrs. Hunter's, the Dutchman tells Dorothy that "God had willed us to enter the eye" (ES 69). A new explanation becomes possible when we look into the Marjara Nyaya or cat-hold theory propounded by Rāmānuja which posits the belief that God chooses (and it is not in the hands of the human beings) the individuals whom He wants to enlighten. The only virtue expected from the individual is to surrender completely to God just as the kitten completely trusts the mother cat when the latter carries it by its neck to safety. It is interesting to note that Laura, in fact, aspires to achieve this humility and does so towards the end of Voss. At the moment of illumination, it can be seen how Mrs. Hunter surrenders completely to the force of Nature and later tries to seek alone "whatever the eye is contemplating for me [her]" (ES 532).

Elizabeth Hunter's moment of illumination takes place at the Bumby Island. Furious with her mother's attempts to capture Edvard Pehl's attentions, Dorothy runs away. In a solitary

moment, Mrs. Hunter acknowledges her own guilt. She recognises the type of relationship she has had with her husband and children and the lust she has kindled in her lovers, the latest among them being Edvard Pehl: "To confess her faults (to herself) and to accept blame when nobody was there to insist on it, produced in Elizabeth Hunter a rare sense of freedom" (ES 401). Having overcome the desire for possession, she searches for Dorothy and Pehl. Meanwhile, the storm gathers. For safety, she climbs on the shelf of a wine bunker. For once she is overpowered and surrenders herself unquestioningly.

She lay and submitted to someone to whom she had never been introduced... . She could not visualise it. 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.

It must have been the silence which woke her. No, not woke: she had been stunned into a state of semi-consciousness from which light as much as silence roused her (ES 408-9).

She is shorn of her identity.

Just as she was no longer a body, least of all a woman: the myth of her womanhood had been exploded by the storm. She was instead a being, or more likely a flaw at the centre of this jewel of light: the jewel itself, blinding and tremulous at the same time, existed, flaw and all, only by grace; ... (ES 409. emphasis added).

The moment lasts for what seems eternity and she is entirely at the mercy of Nature. "She did not feel she could endure further trial" (ES 410). The death-cry of a bird brings her back to reality. The moment of insight has taught her life and death, calm and ferocious activity. She sees herself as "an old woman and foolish, who in spite of her age had not experienced enough of living" (ES 410).

At the end of her moment of insight, Mrs. Hunter also realises that her material delusions of beauty, strength and power of attracting others are gone. "For the eye was no longer focused on her, she could tell; and as it withdrew its attention, it was taking with it the delusions of her feeble mind" (ES 410-1). This enables her to come back to social life and pleasures but the whole episode offers her enormous power of understanding others, understanding love and understanding her own weaknesses. She also touches the lives of others with this knowledge.

As against Sister de Santis' opinion on love as "a kind of supernatural state" (ES 157), Mrs. Hunter puts forward a realistic interpretation: "'The worst thing about love between human beings,' ... 'when you're prepared to love them they don't want it; when they do, it's you who can't bear the idea'" (ES 11). She also confesses her love of power and possessions, be it dolls or jewels (ES 156). Later, she desires to bind people to herself (ES 87), which is seen in her extra-marital love relationships with Athol Shreve and Arnold Wyburd. In this respect, she resembles Amy Parker in The Tree of Man and Alfreda Courtney in The Vivisector. However, she manages to move beyond their one-dimensionality through her powers of honest confession and self-examination. As Veronica Brady points out in her article "The Eye of the Storm,"

The Eye of the Storm explores and even succeeds in demonstrating major implications--..., Elizabeth Hunter here achieves 'salvation', that is, completeness of existence, not by denying but by affirming everything in her life, her failures as well as her successes, down to the last physical humiliations of old age (62).

She also realises the need to take charge of one's life. "Whatever is given you to live, you alone can live, and re-live, and re-live, till it is gasped out of you" (ES 399) .

The repetition of the eye of the storm occurs towards the end of the novel. Dorothy and Basil plan to leave Mrs. Hunter in an old-age home. This affects her deeply, though she bravely announces: "**nothing** will kill me before I am intended to die" (ES 399). As she bitterly tells Flora Manhood: "This morning they drove the temperature out of me for good and all" (ES 430) . This is followed by her plea to Flora to leave the bottle of sleeping pills. When this is rejected on the grounds of morality, she decides her final course of action. When she says that she will withdraw her will and thus die, Flora only replies that it is not as simple as she thinks. With a pun on the word 'do' in "I am the one who must do . . . " (ES 531), she attempts to gather "enough strength into her body to put her feet on the ground and walk steadily towards the water" (ES 532). She re-lives her moment of insight. In a humble acceptance she calls out to her husband. In utter simplicity, she surrenders and is ready to perform "whatever the eye is contemplating" (ES 532) . In a final moment of oneness, she withdraws her soul from the body and unites it with the cosmos. "Till I am no longer filling the void with mock substance: myself is this endlessness" (ES 532) . Commenting on this passage, Carolyn Bliss identifies "the familiar and prototypical elements" such as "the surrender of will, the immersion in creation, and an infinite outward flowing of the dissolved and expanded self" (142). In his article "Patrick White's The Eye of the Storm," A.R. Venkat perceptively remarks:

She [Mrs. Hunter] comes to understand that 'happiness' is being protected. Nature may be violent but one feels protected when one realizes that one is a part of nature. She might also be at peace just as the sea birds are. Death, as she is made to realize, is an evacuation (37).

The attitude expressed to death in this novel resembles that of Heidegger, who points out the inevitability of death even while stressing the awareness it creates in the individual regarding the 'totality' and 'self-transcendent' nature of existence (Robert Olson 192-212).

Though the validity of Mrs. Hunter's illumination is itself questioned, one thing is certain. She uses her insight wisely and well. As Veronica Brady brilliantly sums up in her article "The Eye of the Storm":

There is no attempt to disguise her occasional cruelties, her pride, her insensitivity to the claims of her husband's gentle love or of her children. But this is because White has no false illusions about human beings; the best most of us can do is to learn to live with what we are--as Elizabeth Hunter does. So, even she, for all her failures as a human being, is able therefore to achieve dignity and a certain nobility (66).

A Fringe of Leaves

The mysticism of the 'mandala' and 'chariot' gives way to the down-to-earth treatment as is seen in the humanistic depiction of Ellen's character and her experiences. Thus, White creates a new ethic stressing on qualities like 'survival' and the relative nature of 'savagery' and 'morality.' In her article "A Fringe of Leaves: Civilization by the Skin of Our Own Teeth" Veronica Brady presents these ideas succinctly and to quote her:

She [Ellen] learns how to survive, how to come to terms with that savagery which, White suggests, is not just a feature of life in so-called primitive societies but is endemic to the human condition even to "highly civilized" Australia (124).

As befitting the epigraph from Louis Aragon, love which is the last chance for human survival is given importance here. Thus, the love and compassion that characterises the relationship between Mrs. Hunter and Alfred during his last days in The Eye of the Storm develops into a permanent understanding in the Ellen-Austin relationship.

In the novel, Ellen makes two important entries. One, into high society through her marriage to Austin. Another, into the aboriginal tribe after the shipwreck and after her husband and the other men are killed by the aborigines. Both these entries set up various oppositions: natural and artificial; indigenous and metropolitan; civilised white culture and coarse aboriginal culture. In her entry into society, Ellen is the docile and diligent pupil who gives herself to be moulded by her mother-in-law to suit social norms. In the entry into the aboriginal tribe, the Gluyas self of Ellen asserts itself. Earlier, it is asserted once during her seduction by her brother-in-law, Garnet Roxburgh. This, in turn, goes back to "the presentiment of evil" which Ellen foresees during her visit to St. Hya's well.

Like Ruth Godbold earlier, Ellen also qualifies as an Earth Mother. This is shown in her relationship both with black children and the children at the Commandant's house.

The young children might have been hers. She was so extraordinarily content she wished it could have lasted for ever, the two black little bodies united in the sun with her own blackened skin-and-bones (FL 230).

The young Lovell children move closely with Ellen on her return and insist on tales of the black children.

Innocence prevailed in the light **from** the **garden**, and for the most part in her recollections; black was interchangeable with white. Surely in the **company** of children she might expect to be healed? (FL 342. emphasis added).

In fact, it is her closeness to children that keeps Ellen sane during her sojourn. Similarly, there is a near maternal element in her relationship with men. Her relationship with Oswald is a good example. She realises that, "[w]omen on the whole are stronger because more knowing than men, for all the knowledge men lay claim to. We also learn to numb ourselves against suffering whether of the body, or the mind... " (FL 67). Such a knowledge does not make her arrogant but helps her in understanding people. In one of her early journal entries, Ellen writes:

Often on such a night at Z., a country to which I belonged (more than I did to parents or family) I **wld** [sic] find myself wishing to be united with my surroundings, not as the dead, but fully alive (FL 92).

Such an attitude helps her to survive in the aboriginal tribe. She takes pain and suffering in her stride. Miss. Scrimshaw's **comment** early in the novel is accurate.

' ... I only had the impression that Mrs. Roxburgh could feel life has cheated her out of some ultimate in experience. For which she would be prepared to suffer, if need be' (FL 17. emphasis added).

In Ellen's life with the aborigines, one thing assumes importance and that is, hunger, and life revolves in assuaging this hunger. For instance, even death is followed by feasting as is seen in the fish-feast following the death of the child which Ellen nurses.

There was the occasional opossum, snake or lizard, and once or twice the huntsmen brought in a species of small kangaroo... . On a memorable evening Mrs. Roxburgh snapped up from under her **masters'** noses a segment of roasted **snake**, which produced in her an ecstasy such as she had never experienced before (**FL** 237-8).

This experience is contrasted with the dainty nibbling which goes by the name of eating in civilised upper class society.

The recurrent emphasis on hunger is a way by which Patrick White prepares the ground for Ellen's cannibalism.

She found herself stooping, to pick it up. There were one or two shreds of half-cooked flesh and gobbets of burnt fat still adhering to this monstrous object. Her stiffened body and almost audibly twangling nerves were warning against what she was about to do, what she was, in fact, already doing. She has raised the bone, and was tearing at it with her teeth, spasmodically chewing, swallowing by great gulps which her throat threatened to return. But did not (**FL** 244).

This incident enables Ellen to take part in a larger **system** of values and not the narrow ones posited by the society to which she belongs.

She was less disgusted in retrospect by what she had done, than awed by the fact that she had been moved to do it. The exquisite innocence of this forest morning, its quiet broken by a single flute-note endlessly repeated, tempted her to believe that she had partaken of a sacrament... . **In** the light of Christian morality she must never think of the incident again (**FL** 244. emphasis added).

The eating of human flesh by the aborigines may seem savage in society's view. But it is the same society which barbarically punishes fellow humans with penal laws. This questioning is provided by Jack Chance, the escaped convict who helps Ellen to return to society. Jack tells her: '**Men** is [sic] unnatural and unjust' (**FL** 253) . Further, Veronica Brady says that White has tried to point out in the novel as to how "**aboriginal** culture which acknowledges the debt to nature is closer to human truth

than white colonial society which doesn't" ("A Properly Appointed Humanism: Australian Culture and the Aborigines in Patrick White's A Fringe of Leaves" 67) .

Ellen accepts her transgressions--adultery and cannibalism. She never tells it openly either to the Commandant or anybody else. But her return to civilization suggests that she has learnt to combine and unite all aspects of life. Just as the cannibalism of Ellen is a crucial episode in the novel, so is her moment of illumination at the crude and primitive Chapel built by Pilcher.

She did not attempt to interpret a peace of mind which had descended on her (she would not have been able to attribute it to prayer or reason) but let the silence enclose her like a beatitude (FL 353).

In Jill Ward's view, this moment

represents a part of the cumulative growth in awareness which is at the heart of the mystical visions. Such moments are not intended to lend themselves to intellectual scrutiny for Ellen it represents a cessation of the struggle against the warring aspects of her nature ("Patrick White's A Fringe of Leaves" 80-1).

With such an understanding, Ellen moves once again into society. Towards the end, she is also on the verge of accepting a marriage proposal from Mr. Jevons. Criticising this act, Carolyn Bliss says that "[i]t is disconcerting to find a woman such as Ellen Roxburgh, a woman whose very survival testifies to her enormous strength, meekly accepting the fate of her sex in the shape of the merchant Jevons" (154). In the context of Ellen's experiences and realisation, this view is debatable. Further, Bliss contradicts herself later in her book by interpreting Ellen's reply to Miss. Scrimshaw as the embodiment of "Ellen's understanding of the task her life has set her: to love as well

as she can while never well enough. She thus turns back to life as we leave **her**" (165). The picture of a "troubled bull-frog of a man" awakens her compassion and **sympathy** for the frailty of human beings, a quality she shares. Such an understanding enables her to correct and check Miss. Scrimshaw's Promethean longings to soar and reach the elevated heights.

‘I was slashed and gashed too **often**,’ ... ‘Oh no, the crags are not for me!’ ‘A woman, as I see, is more like moss or lichen that takes to some tree or rock as she takes to her **husband**’ (FL 363).

It is an affirmation of love and successful human relationship or what Helen M. Gilbert calls "the symbolic rebirth towards which we may aspire even though we remain in a continual state of flux" ("The Prison and the Font" 22). Ellen's affirmative stance proves true her words early in the novel. "I discovered another world. Which will remain with me for life, I expect. Every frond, and shred of bark. My memories are more successful than my sketches" (FL 27).

The Twvborn Affair

The novel unfolds the complex relationship that exists between Eadie and her sexually ambivalent child, Eudoxia-Eddie-Eadith (referred to as E.). Eadie herself is guilty **of** a lesbian relationship with Joanie Golson, which E. obviously resents. As she later realises,

love was difficult. ‘**Quite** a trapeze act in fact ... I only ever really loved, and was loved by, my little flea-ridden dogs. I could talk to them and they understood. Children and parents fail one another...’ (TA 424. emphasis added).

Consequently, there is no single moment of realisation for Eadie

but only a gradual acceptance of her child's sexual **ambivalence**.

At the beginning of the novel, there are recurrent references to Eadie's ageing since her tragedy. The tragic event is that of Eddie running away on the eve of his marriage to Marian. Eadie is upset about two things: the social disgrace it involves and the attempted escape of her son.

There are reasons for Eadie's strained relationship with her child. In the first place, she considers her child as restricting her freedom. "The child atrocious all afternoon. Threw tantrum after tantrum. Nanny useless. Don't know why intuition didn't warn me against conceiving" (TA 68). Later, she resents E.'s sexual **ambivalence** as something which projects her own lesbianism.

Anywhere else it might have been unbearable to realise that the son with whom she had wrestled, perhaps even tried to throttle in the agony he had caused while forcing his way out of the womb where he was not wanted in the first place, had become the **mirror-figure** of herself (TA 149. emphasis added).

From this position she comes to the understanding that children and parents fail each other mutually and not one-sided as she had feared earlier: 'I hope you're not going to make us pay too dearly, Eddie, for being your parents' (TA 148).

In accepting Eddie as her daughter Eadith at the end of the novel, Eadie shows a change of attitude marked by time. For example, when she finds out that Eadith is actually Eddie, Eadie is full of understanding. In fact her former reaction is juxtaposed with her reaction at the present moment.

'I do wish, Eddie, you'd stop picking that scab on your knee. Sometimes I think you do things just to irritate me'... . Now in this violet, northern light, purged of her mortal sins by age, Eadie might have been prepared to accept a bit of scab-picking in others (TA 422).

Eadie also understands the true nature of her other relationships. She accepts her indifference towards her husband. She also realises her **closed-in** relationship with Joanie Golson.

I was fond of poor Joanie **Golson--the** friend I believe you disliked so **much** you always avoided. Joanie was too possessive. What one wants from a woman finally becomes suffocating (**TA** 424).

Thus, when Eadie sits in the hotel waiting for E., she realises that she no longer fears or cares for society. "Age had drained her of fear, along with her vices, doubts, torments" (TA 430). She also understands the value of suffering. Her understanding is juxtaposed to the screaming woman: "Down the corridor a woman was hopping screaming, as though she still belonged to the present, **some** young person no doubt who had not yet suffered enough" (TA 430). Eadie waits resignedly in spite of the threats of bomb blasts. The war-torn London with its bomb blasts is an illusion to Eadie. The waiting itself is real.

What was real was the garden in which she was sitting. She had come out to dry her hair, and was sitting on the discoloured steps amongst the lizards and bulbuls and hibiscus trumpets, waiting for Eadith (**TA** 431. emphasis added).

Eadie is hopeful of the future. She dreams of "[s]itting in the garden drying our hair together amongst the bulbuls and drizzle of taps we shall experience harmony at last" (TA 432). The concluding paragraphs of the novel fits White's description in Flaws in the Glass as "the Twyborn Moment of grace" (257). The same idea is conveyed in the "unusually fine sunset, if to the east rather than the west" (TA 430). The sunset in the east suggests rebirth as also the coexistence of life and death.

Margaret Laurence

In The **Fire-Dwellers**, Margaret Laurence describes Stacey's **modest** realisation in the following words:

I used to think there would be a blinding flash of light someday, and then I would be wise and calm and would know how to cope with everything and my kids would rise up and call me blessed. Now I see that whatever I'm like, I 'm pretty well stuck with it for life. Hell of a revelation that turned out to be (Ft) 255. emphasis added).

As Cathy Davidson rightly remarks, Stacey has begun to come to terms with "what she was, what she is, what she will be" ("Past and Perspective in Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel" 61). In all the four Manawaka novels, Margaret Laurence's protagonists come to terms with themselves and their present by evaluating their past. Just as the past helps in managing the present and **manipulating** the future, the present, by hindsight helps them to discover the pattern of their lives in the past. There are no profound revelations. Such a realisation helps them to distinguish clearly between what they think is real and what in fact is the reality.

Again the concept of reality is rooted within society and is not pitched in mystical or metaphysical planes. In one sense, self-realisation helps them in accepting their roles (though limited) in society. Almost all the protagonists return to society with the knowledge of attributes like survival, human understanding and communication. In this respect, the meaning of self-realisation, in Laurence's novels, implies standards of ethical and moral perfection rather than mystical vision. As John

Moss observes,

Laurence's protagonists share with most of us on a narrower scale the **conflict** between roles **imposed** by gender and what we sense is our essential self somewhere deep within us, surging randomly to the surface ("The Presbyterian Legacy" 75. emphasis added).

Thus, there is no overt religious framework juxtaposed in the novels. The references to religious thought are mainly interpretations. There is no 'mandala' or 'chariot' guiding and unifying the vision of the protagonists. Memory acts as a unifying agent of the past and the present. Another characteristic which the Manawaka women share is their roles as Earth Mothers. Even in the case of Hagar Shipley, it is her acceptance of her motherhood that gives her the final liberation. All the other women value their motherhood. Interestingly enough, Cathy Davidson points out the role played by memory in the process of self-realisation and to quote her:

Memory, for Laurence, is a self-conscious re-digesting not of former facts but of former **impressions--impressions** of others, of events, of one's self ... so it is by this process of re-living, not by living that the revelation of a lifetime occurs (62).

The Stone Angel

Hagar Shipley's moment of illumination, if we have to point out a single instance, occurs when she confronts willingly her past deeds and confesses and accepts the responsibility for the deaths of **Bram** and John to Murray Lees. Hagar meets Lees at a cannery when she runs away from home to escape going to an old-age home (much like Elizabeth **Hunter** in The Eve of the Storm). Lees also comes to the cannery in an attempt to escape facing the

fact of his child's death. Hagar drinks wine with him who is a perfect stranger and also sinks into sleep close to **him**. As Andre Dommergues points out in his article "**Order** and Chaos in The Stone Angel."

The fastidious lady is not ashamed of herself. For the first time maybe, she has established a genuine relationship with a man and understood the meaning of human solidarity (69).

Also, for the first time she outwardly shows her emotion when she openly cries for the deaths of her husband and her son. Even though Lees goes against his word and informs Marvin about Hagar's whereabouts, she forgives him. When he mumbles that he couldn't help it, she wants to say "I know, I know, you really couldn't help it--it wasn't your fault" (SA 252) and finally says: "I didn't mean to speak crossly. I--I'm sorry about your boy" (SA 253). She also reaches and touches his wrist in an open show of affection and regard for a fellow human being.

Furthermore, Hagar's meeting with Lees is followed by her only true and honest confession. Clara Thomas considers this passage as an "unforgettable" example of what Frye calls Kervana, "the vehicle of what is traditionally called revelation" in The Great Code ("Towards Freedom" 86).

Every good joy I might have held, in my man or any child of mine or even the plain light of morning of walking the earth, all were forced to a standstill by some brake of proper **appearances--oh**, proper to whom? When did I ever speak, the heart's truth?

Pride was my wilderness and the demon that led me there was **fear**. I was alone never anything **else, and** never free, for I carried my chains within me, and they spread out from me and shackled all I touched. **Oh, my two, my dead.** Dead by your own hands or by mine? (SA 292. emphasis added).

As J.M. Kertzer puts it, "**[r]esponsibility, freedom** and guilt are three of the terms by reference to which Hagar must judge her **life**" ("The Stone Angel: Time and Responsibility" 502). Hagar's freedom is linked to her acceptance of **responsibility** and guilt. The basic paradox of Hagar's life lies in the fact that she loses the love of her father by breaking the norms to marry **Bram** and loses the love of her brothers, of Bram and of her sons by adhering to the very norms she herself broke. Hagar also breaks out of the cocoon of either blaming fate for the events or trying to determine the causes. Lees performs the task of educating her regarding the fact that more than one cause determine an event. For instance, John's death is determined by a number of factors. They are: Hagar's conspiracy with Lottie to separate John and Arlene; John drunk, accepting the bet with Lazarus; Arlene, unable to prevent him, deciding to go with him; the unscheduled train bringing food for people on relief crossing the bridge at the same time and thus, causing the accident and the deaths of John and Arlene. Hagar accepts her position and tells **comfortingly**: "**No** one's fault, where do causes start, how far back?" (SA 240) This serene acceptance is an extension of her earlier statement.

I can't change what's happened to me in my life, or make what's not occurred take place. But I can't say I like it, or accept it, or believe it's for the best. I don't and never shall, not even if I'm damned for it (SA 160).

This brings to mind the Dylan Thomas epigraph to the novel. Hagar fights the inevitable. Thus, her pride is both a strength and a weakness. Commenting on Hagar's realisation, J.M. Kertzer describes it as "a human appeal made in recognition of human

weakness, a reconciliation of people with each other and with circumstance. Forgiveness suggests a concurrence or harmony with others and with life" (506).

The question of pride takes us back to Hagar's past. To recapitulate the events of the past: Hagar's refusal to comfort her dying brother, to accept her sexual urge for Bram, to accept responsibility for John's death and her contempt for Currie-like Marvin, her mockery of the minister--all arise out of her pride. These things have been discussed in detail in Chapter One.

Hagar's retribution for her past deeds comes with her acceptance of responsibility for John's death which is certainly not a heroic death in war as she makes it out to be. In a further step towards understanding, Hagar calls out to her long dead husband in the hospital. This scene echoes Mrs. Hunter's call to her husband Alfred in The Eye of the Storm. Also, Hagar tells Marvin: "You've not been cranky, Marvin. You've been good to me, always. A better son than John" (SA 304). She, thus, acknowledges Marvin's kinship which is something she had denied him at his birth by mistakenly seeing him as a Shipley. Though Hagar herself questions the truth of such a statement, she also understands that it "is a lie--yet not a lie, for it was spoken at least and at last with what may perhaps be a kind of love" (SA 307). In a further attempt to affirm values of human relationship, Hagar befriends Elva Jardine. She also endures great pain in order to relieve Sandra Wong's pain and heartily laughs over a joke. Hagar's sharing of warmth and love culminates when she parts with her prized possession, her ring, to her

granddaughter, Tina.

One obvious religious **framework commonly** observed in the novel is that of the Old Testament story of Hagar, Abraham's second wife, a bondswoman and the child born of the flesh, Ishmael. The parallels are as **follows--Hagar-Agar; Clara-Sarah; Bram-Abraham; Marvin-Isaac and John-Ishmael. However,** this reading does not take us far. For Marvin and John are so much unlike Isaac and Ishmael. In fact, in the final scene between Marvin and Hagar, Marvin resembles Jacob in wrestling with Hagar, the stone angel and bargaining "I will not let thee **go**, except thou bless me" (SA 304). Biblical echoes in the novel include, for example, Hagar's quotation from The Song of Solomon "His banner over me was love" (SA 80) to describe Brain's sexual passion for her. Similarly, Hagar's cry "If he **should die**, let me not see it" (SA 241) echoes that of the Biblical Agar who says "Let me not see the death of the child" when she fears the death of Ishmael in the desert for want of water. Elisabeth Potvin finds another Biblical echo and points out that "[i]n a parody of apostle Peter, Hagar denies her faith in patriarchy three times, fleeing first her father, then **Bram**, and then her son Marvin" ("A Mystery at the Core of Life" 28). As Claudette Pollack observes in "The Paradox of The Stone **Angel**,"

The effect of such references is to allow the reader to accept the archetypal associations without hesitation.

Although the Biblical references and analogies in The Stone Angel strengthen our feelings for Hagar and contribute importantly to the atmosphere and tone of the novel, they do not much affect our understanding of her character or her situation (269).

However, the Biblical references reinforce one thing: the wanderings in the desert by Agar corresponds to Hagar's quest for self-realisation. For Hagar's **quest**, Laurence "**transmogrifies** a hospital bedpan into the grail of medieval legend" (Patricia Morley. Margaret Laurence 81) .

Another critical practice is to place The Stone Angel in the elegiac tradition. In an interesting article, E.J. Hinz and J.J. Teunissen compare the novel with Milton's Lycidas. **Walt Whitman's** When the Lilacs Last in the Door Yard Bloom'd and Thomas Wolfe's Look Homeward, Angel. **Bram**, in his deathbed, reminds Hagar of an "ancient child." Hinz and Teunissen connect this to the episode of Hagar's inability to comfort her brother, and say that the whole episode contains a veiled critique of the major elegiac icon in the Judeo-Christian tradition: Michelangelo's Pieta where Mary's grief for her son (both depicted as being of the same age) is that of a grieving lover rather than of a sorrowful mother. Similarly, Hagar's refusal to show any emotion in the scene of John's death, finds a correlative in the lack of expression of grief on the face of Michelangelo's Madonna (484-5).

The final attempt of Hagar to hold the glass of water can be interpreted in different ways. In the Christian sense of redemption, it is the cup of grace which Hagar has humbly accepted thus asserting the continuation of life. But pointing out Hagar's earlier rejection: "**Ought** I to appeal? It's the done thing. Our Father--no. I want no part of that. All I can think is--Bless me or not. Lord, just as You please, for I'll not beg" (SA 307) , Hinz and Teunissen say that Hagar is actually rejecting the **masculine** Judeo-Christian solution. In their reading, the glass

of water becomes the amniotic fluid and her urgency in getting back to the "sleek cocoon" is followed by the mothering words "There, there."

Both the interpretations point to one thing and that is, Hagar's acceptance of responsibility as also human love and warmth. Whether Hagar is redeemed in the Christian sense or accepts her motherhood (in the sense that Laurence is offering a "female form of consolation"), the effect of coming to terms with the past certainly alters Hagar's present. Her death at the height of understanding prevents any talk of the future.

A Jest of God

In the case of Rachel Cameron, the protagonist of this novel, coming to terms with the fears and inhibitions of her past enables her to break the chains which have bound her for long. Coming to terms with her past, enables her to prepare herself for the present in a better way as well as to plan her future.

Though the beginning of her affair with Nick Kazlick itself serves as an initiation to her realisation, the specific moment occurs when she is in the hospital undergoing surgery for a benign tumour. Under anaesthesia she voices out: "I am the mother now." This cry assumes significance because she has finally come to terms with herself, her surrounding and her relationships. To put in Margaret Laurence's words: "She [Rachel] is beginning to learn the rules of survival" (in George Woodcock ed. A Place to Stand On 32). John Moss sums up Rachel's self-realisation in succinct terms:

When Rachel discovers that the growth inside her is not Nick's child she is carrying but a **tumour**, the transience of their affair is confirmed. It is a cruel joke that even this growth is **benign**, but one that shocks Rachel into capitulation to a more complete or integrated self than her rigid adherence to fragmenting roles had allowed. Rachel gets body and mind together, as it were, and accepts herself as a whole person ("The Presbyterian Legacy" 73) .

Considering her earlier conflict between her mental fantasies and her outward appearance and behaviour, Rachel has come a long way in uniting her inner and outer selves.

There are other factors which aid Rachel's awareness. One is the late night visit to Hector's funeral parlour. Through this visit, Rachel does away with the Manawaka taboo against confronting death directly. Commenting on the central role played by the consciousness of death in *A Jest of God*, CM. McLay makes some interesting remarks, and to quote him:

While human relationships are an attempt to counter isolation, death is a recognition of it,... . In Laurence, however, death ... accentuates our consciousness of an isolation which already exists. It is only in facing death that we are able to assess life, and to recognize our own isolation ("Every Man is an Island" 62-3).

Also, Calla's timely help enables Rachel to have a healthy friendship with her. Further, Rachel stops worrying about the fleeting relationships she will have with her pupils. Rachel's rejection of Calla's Tabernacle and her mother's Church culminates in her words: "Bless me or not God, for I'll not beg." This shows how far she has progressed and the final sentence of the novel "God's mercy on reluctant jesters. God's grace on fools. God's pity on God" (JG 202) is an indication of this. Patricia Morley points out the circular structure of this

sentence and how it identifies "God with mankind as Divine **Fool.**"

Mercy, grace and pity become the basic criteria of relationships.

According to **Morley**,

[t]his is the culmination of an intricate pattern on the folly of fear and fear of folly. Wrestling with it, Rachel is ready to smile at "that fool of a fear, that poor fear **of fools.**" "I should be honoured to be of that company" (Margaret Laurence 96).

Citing Rachel's final stance as the proof of "Laurence's concern with the human condition," Sandra Djwa suggests the possible Existentialist parallels in that Rachel is made to "choose between the nausea of bad faith and the anguish and despair of freedom" as also in her focus on the "process of becoming" ("False Gods and the True Covenant" 49). The culminating point of her realisation comes when Rachel understands and accepts the restrictions within which Nick is operating. She even forgives **him** for his deception with the photograph.

He [Nick] had his own demons and webs. Mine brushed across him for an instant, and he saw them and had to draw away, knowing that what I wanted from him was too much (JG 189).

Viewed from the present, Rachel's future holds out bright prospects. Above everything else, she takes charge of her life and plans her moves and takes decisions personally. Though this is nothing extraordinary, the fact that it comes from Rachel **marks** her triumph. The first among these is her decision to take **up** a **job** in Vancouver and thus move out of Manawaka. Rachel finally breaks free of her mother's domination over her. To her **mother's** plea against the move when she cites her poor health, Rachel replies:

It isn't **upto** me. It never was. I can take **care**, but only some. I am not responsible for keeping her alive. There is, suddenly, some enormous relief in this realization (JG 195).

She literally mothers her mother when the latter fervently, even childishly, appeals against the move. Rachel feels like saying "Hush, it will be all right--there, there. I am the mother **now**" (JG 196). In an article entitled "Politics and A Jest of God," Kenneth Hughes brings in an interesting analogy between Rachel's relationship with her mother and that of the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser, say, Canada and Britain. Mrs. Cameron becomes the imperial power whereas Rachel is symbolic of "a Canada seeking to free itself from an authoritarian colonial past and to make its own **future**" (50-1). Rachel's tumour represents the colonial past and its authoritarian values, while its removal suggests freedom from the colonial state of mind. Following this application of Mannoni's framework, this novel can be seen as a socio-political allegory of the colonial situation. As Patricia Morley points out,

Rachel's quest, like Hagar's is a search for freedom and joy she wins a partial release from fear, a new understanding of her relation to her mother, and an acceptance of the mystery of human personality: the other, in Mannoni's phrase (Margaret Laurence 89).

Rachel also re-works her relationship with **Willard**. She is clear about her thoughts. She now sees that her fear of him was totally baseless and unnecessary.

Regarding her own future, Rachel is realistic and does not fantasise. She keeps her options open. She may marry a middle aged widower, or a longshoreman, or a cattle-hoof-trimmer, or a barrister or a thief" (JG 201). She may or may not have

children. Light-heartedly, she pictures herself as an old spinster wearing outlandish costumes whom Stacey's children will call Aunt. She may feel light-hearted, light-headed, afraid of even going mad (JG 202). Her ironic jest to God ends the novel. This sort of a humour and fearlessly looking into herself will no doubt take her far in life.

There are three obvious Biblical references in the novel. First, is Rachel's fear of losing her pupils (her 'children' as she refers to them). This has its parallel in the mourning of the Biblical Rachel for her unborn dead children. Sandra Djwa's reading of this particular Biblical reference is perceptive in that, it points to the possibility of interpreting A Jest of God as a socio-religious allegory.

In Genesis this is a lament by a barren wife; in the allegory of Rachel in Jeremiah it is a lament by the Israelites who have fallen away from the fruits of the spirit into the worship of false gods: both concepts are contained in Laurence's presentation of Rachel's character (47).

Second, is the reference to St. Paul. "If any man among you thinketh himself to be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." This dictum is central to the novel. Behind such a statement lies the paradox central to Christianity. Third, is the reference to Jonah in the Sandburg epigraph to the novel.

If I should pass the tomb of Jonah
I would stop there and sit for awhile;
Because I was swallowed one time deep in the dark
And came out alive after all.

Rachel has to make the journey into her own self and there confront her repressed side just as Jonah was destined to spend time in the stomach of the whale.

Rachel's crisis is comparable to that of the alienation and

isolation experienced by any human being. She copes with difficulties and grows stronger in the process. As Patricia Morley rightly sums up in her book Margaret Laurence: "She [Rachel] escapes not from society, like some Canadian Huck Finn, but into more dynamic forms of community life" (93).

The Fire-Dwellers

Unlike Hagar and Rachel, Stacey MacAindra is affirmative and does not deny life. Hagar distances herself from others because of pride and Rachel, because of fear. But Stacey is fully involved in life and demands the reader's attention "whether in approval, in dismay or in rueful laughter." Stacey does not separate herself from others and in fact mourns human isolation. Clara Thomas' perception is convincing in this regard and to quote her:

She [Stacey] thinks of herself as commonplace and ordinary but the great achievement of her anxious, rueful, urgent voice is to reveal her extraordinary qualities of love, fortitude, and especially, vitality (The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence 128) .

Stacey has come to accept that an epiphanic moment or "blinding flash of light" (FD 255) cannot do miracles in her life. Nor does she see profound implications of being a housewife and a mother. Her understanding, at the end of the book, is how to be a human being.

Stacey's quest for self-discovery takes on a circular form as against the linear movements of the quests of Hagar and Rachel. Clara Thomas compares Stacey's consciousness to an 'eye'

whose **pupil expands to** accept the **world and contracts** in sudden fear.

[T]he **movement** is halting opening **and shutting**, a broadening and then a narrowing, and the final point of poise in the novel is not Stacey's coming to a revelation or to any new point of departure,' but her acceptance of her own kind of sensitivity, her own ways of seeing and understanding **others--and** herself (122) .

Hence, a particular instance cannot be cited as her moment of **illumination**. There are a series of events that bring about her realisation. The first of these is Mac's accusation of her infidelity. Believing Buckle Fennick, Mac suspects Stacey of going to bed with the former. Outraged and insulted by Mac's accusation, **Stacey** drives alone to the sea-shore where she meets Luke Venturi, a young artist. She feels that, with Luke, communication is much easier and enjoys having sex with him which, she feels is revitalising.

I'd like to start again, everything, all of life, start again with **someonelike** you [**Luke**]**--with** you--with everything simpler and clearer. No lies. No recriminations. No **unmerry-go-round** of pointless words. Just everything plain and good, like today, and making love and not worrying about unimportant things and **not** trying to change each other (FD 176).

Clara Thomas points out that Stacey feels this way because Luke treats her primarily as a woman, "as a singular being, freed of the kaleidoscopic wife-mother-housekeeper roles" in which she and others identify her (123). Furthermore, the guilt feeling of unfaithfulness to Mac enables her to get over her clearly erotic fantasies as also avenge his baseless accusation. This affair also teaches Stacey to be independent of Luke or any other man.

Other events which bring about change in Stacey's life are: Jen speaking her first words, as also Katie and Stacey

communicating like real adults after Katie rescues Jen from the hold of Tess Fogler, who forces Jen to watch the brutal cannibalism of the golden fish. In her book Margaret Laurence. Patricia Morley brings in an interesting intertextual connection to The Stone Angel.

In their mutual concern for Jen, Katie and Stacey encounter one another as persons, without the role-playing structures of mother and daughter; they say we. like Hagar and the Oriental girl in the hospital bedpan incident (106).

Duncan's narrow escape from drowning, the love Ian exhibits for Duncan in the place of jealousy and Mac's demonstrations of his affection for Duncan, aid Stacey's moment of awareness. Further, Buckle's death proves that he is only a masturbator and nothing had happened as Mac suspected and Buckle lied. The final stroke comes when the identity of Thor Thorlakson, the self-important man turns out to be runny-nosed Vernon Winkler from Manawaka. To cite John Moss' conclusion:

Super-male and super-female prove merely human, and Stacey MacAindra, nee Cameron housewife and mother, can have a young lover and can, by choice, turn away from him in favour of the roles of conventional homelife that both sap and sustain her. She discovers the freedom of choice that makes the choice itself irrelevant (74. emphasis added).

The effect of such a realisation is to wipe out the frustrations Stacey had felt in the past. In the present, she accepts change and is also sure of the fact that certain things cannot be changed.

It would be nice if we were different people but we are not different people. We are ourselves and we are sure as hell not going to undergo some total transformation at this point.... I can't take it yeh! I can though. By God, I can, if I set, my mind to it (FD 247-8. emphasis added).

In this way, Stacey more or less decides her future. Rather, she plans to take life as it **comes**. "If I could absorb the notion of nothing, of total dark, then it would have no power over **me**" (FD 263) . She does not demand this grace and accepts the condition that each one has to work out one's salvation. The condition is very similar to her realisation that she can never again be young or have decent-looking hip. She does not see this as a tragedy, but considers it normal, at the most, ludicrous. This ability to laugh at herself, will no doubt provide her with endurance, patience and wisdom.

Give me another forty years, Lord, and I may mutate into a matriarch.

Stacey heaves over onto her side. The house is quiet. The kids are asleep. Downstairs in the ex-study, Matthew has been asleep for hours, or if not asleep, meditating. Beside her, she can already hear the steady breathing that means Mac is asleep. Temporarily, they are all more or less okay (FD 264. emphasis added) .

Stacey does not seek to alter things. Like Mrs. Godbold and Ellen Roxburgh in White's novels, she is satisfied with the transient perfection of the world which is echoed in her prayer. Patricia Morley suggests that the **timespan** of forty years "is that of the **Israelites'** desert exile enroute to the Promised **Land**" (108) . Further, Morley points out that mutate suggest evolution of the species and is combined with the alliteration in matriarch which suggests the female head of the family, clan and dynasty. "This mutant joins her family and city in peaceful sleep" (108).

The Biblical framework which provided some insight in the earlier novels, is merely used as a parody in The Fire-Dwellers.

The first instance of this is Stacey's statement "Cain and his brother **must** have started their hatred like **this**" (FD 12) when her two sons fight over a go-cart. The religious parody is at its best in the sections featuring Thor. The Richalife campaign promising rejuvenation is a secular parody of the religious vision of the Promised Land. Thor is the pseudo-prophet. There is an obvious reference to evangelical testimonials, at rallies when people declare the alterations made in their lives by the pills. Similarly, the confessional element involved in the Richalife quiz which each employee and his family is asked to fill in, parodies religious confessions.

Another important Biblical reference is that of Luke's role in altering Stacey's life. Like the Biblical Luke, he is a physician to Stacey who also provides "a temporary unreality" to her by calling her 'merwoman' and identifying her with water (Clara Thomas 123). This affair enables Stacey to abandon her responsibilities as mother and wife temporarily and consequently, direct attention on herself. John Moss' comment on Stacey's affair and on the ending of the novel is precise and lucid and to quote him:

There were no scintillating alternatives for Stacey along the way; only variations. A life deeper than she was and a little older Stacey is left at the novel's close to carry on and perhaps even to enjoy life somewhat more, having witnessed it for a brief time from the different perspective afforded by her affair (75. emphasis added).

The Diviners

The river image that opens and closes the novel subtly and vividly captures **Morag Gunn's** growth as an individual. At the beginning of the novel, the "apparently impossible contradiction" of the river flowing both ways fascinates Morag. Towards the end of the novel, the same phenomenon urges her to "rl **look** ahead into the **past**, and back into the **future**, until the silence" (p 452-3). Her **recollections** range from the Snapshots, memories, reminiscences and songs from her personal past as well as her ancestral past. As John Moss rightly puts it, The Diviners "is a brawling vision in the middle of a life of the various identities that have been achieved, evaded and stumbled inevitably upon, by one person, Morag Gunn" (69).

However, the specific instances which bring out Morag's realisation are: (i) her acceptance of Christie Logan as her father and thus, accepting the heritage he has offered her through his '**tales**' as her only true **heritage**. (ii) As a writer, her acceptance of the limitations of the powers of the word. This knowledge is given to her by Royland, the water-diviner, and (iii) the momentary insight offered by the flight of the Blue Heron.

During her visit to the McRaith's home in **Crombruach**, Morag cancels her earlier plans of visiting Sutherland, a place from where the Gunns were believed to have originated. In answer to Dan McRaith's question, she says:

"I don't know that I can explain. It has to do with Christie. The **myths** are **my** reality... . And also, I don't need to go there because I know now what it was I had to learn here" ... "It's a deep land here, all right" ... "But it's not **mine**, except a long long way back. I always thought it was the land of **my** **ancestors**, but it is not" ... "Christie's real country. Where I was born" (D 390-1. emphasis added).

Morag realises that **Christie**, the **Manawaka** scavenger, apart from bringing her up, has given her a heritage which is truer and more real than what history has to offer. Before Christie dies, Morag manages to go back to Manawaka as also to voice out her realisation to him: "Christie--I used to fight a lot with you, Christie, but you've been my father to me" (D 396) . This scene is a touching one in the novel because both Morag and Christie "communicate a massive compound of love, pity, and mourning, shot through with the relieving incongruity of laughter" (Clara Thomas 162-3) .

Christie's funeral scene is one of the most powerful scenes in the entire gamut of Laurence's novels. Clara Thomas, interestingly enough, compares it to the scene in the hospital, when Hagar dares Mr. Troy to sing "Old Hundred" for her and then being released into the **magnificence** of her "Pride was my wilderness" confession (SA 163) . Sensing that Christie will be at ease only if he is buried alongside Prin and in the Nuisance Grounds which has formed such an important part in his life, Morag insists on burying him instead of cremating him as Hector suggests. She also insists on a piper playing the final farewell to Christie.

And Piper **Gunn**, he was a great **tall man**, with the voice of drums and the heart of a **child**, and the gall of a **thousand**, and the strength of conviction. The piper plays "The Flowers of the Forest," the long-ago pi-broch, the lament for the dead, over Christie Logan's grave. And only now is Morag released into her mourning (D 403).

Through **music**, Christie is connected to the ancestral figure Gunn and thus, a heritage is created which **Morag** accepts as her own.

Royland's divining for water parallels **Morag's** own search for words. She had known all along that words cannot do **magic** or sorcery but what she has to learn from Royland is the fact that "[t]he gift, or portion of grace, or whatever it was, was finally withdrawn, to be given to someone else" (D 4 52). Royland humbly accepts his loss of divining powers. She sees him as "The old Man of the River," "an ex-shaman" whose powers are gone. But he points out to her how, true to her depiction of him "as an elder of the tribe," he can pass it on **to** somebody else.

"It's something I don't understand, the divining," Royland said slowly, "and it's not something that everybody can do, but the thing I don't usually let on about is that quite a few people can learn to do it..." (D 451-2).

Her realisation, here, is that all forms of divining whether for water, words or heritage may be passed on and thus, does not become extinct.

The inheritors. Was this, finally and at last, what Morag had always sensed she had to learn from the old man? She had known it all along, but not really known (D 452. emphasis added).

Morag realises that her own heritage and Jules' will be carried forward by Pique just as she herself, though unwittingly, carried on Christie's heritage.

The instance which offers a visionary insight to Morag occurs when she goes out fishing with Royland. It is then, that she sees the Great Blue Heron, a species facing the threat of extinction. On spotting the boat, the heron takes to flight but

[a] slow unhurried takeoff, the vast wings **spreading**, the slender elongated legs gracefully folding up under the creature's body. Like a pterodactyl, like an angel, like something out of the world's dawn. The soaring and measured certainty of its flight. Ancient-seeming, unaware of the planet's rocketing changes. The sweeping serene wings of the thing, unknowing that it is speeding not only towards individual death but probably towards the death of its kind (D 357. emphasis added).

The emphasised portion of the passage quoted above may be interpreted as the intuitive understanding offered to Morag about Pique's mission, by the heron's flight. Like the Great Blue Heron, the Metis are threatened with the fast extinction of their heritage. According to Cheryl Cooper, in "the vision of the heron, Morag glimpses the perfection she has been seeking in her life and art: certainty, serenity, mastery. The heron symbolizes wholeness, the cycle of life and death" (in John Moss ed. The Canadian Novel: Here and Now 96). Apart from her serene acceptance of this fact, Pique also decides to journey back and work for the welfare of her people in Galloping Mountains. Thus, Pique offers Morag the realisation that "[Morag's] quest for islands had ended some time ago, and her need to make pilgrimages had led her back here" (D 357).

Through such a realisation, Morag has progressed a long way from her initial frustration of being Christie's ward and her desperate attempts to leave Manawaka and escape the heritage it has to offer. This sets her apart from the other Manawaka heroines. Whereas Hagar, Rachel, Vanessa and Stacey are born and brought up in Manawaka, thus imbibing its values, Morag is an outsider who enters Manawaka society to live with Christie after the death of her parents. Her life with the town's garbage collector certainly influences her view of Manawaka. Again, her

artistic temperament keeps her out of the normal circle of the other heroines (Vanessa, perhaps, is the only exception).

Such a **marginalisation** enables her to acquaint herself well with things considered as taboos, according to **Manawaka** norms. The two main factors here are her direct acquaintance with death and sex. Morag's first knowledge of death comes when both her parents die of infantile paralysis. Later, as a reporter of a Manawaka newspaper, she is asked to report the deaths by fire of Piquette Tonnerre and her children. Later still, she senses closely the end of Jules. "The brief sound in the darkness was the sound of a man crying the knowledge of his death" (D 446-7) . John Moss vividly captures the poignancy of the relationship between Morag and Jules:

The tremendous power of his death comes of the complex, almost mystical, relationship Jules and Morag shared, which somehow transcends ordinary passing. Theirs is a story of bonds and affection more enduring than love; of sex more potent than passionate embraces; of a lasting connection between psyches and souls, occasionally complemented by sexual consummation and wordless touching, but needing no such reinforcement to endure ("The Presbyterian Legacy" 79) .

Just as death is revealed to Morag in its varying shades, so is her knowledge of sex. Her attitude to sex is more open and overt than that of any other protagonist of Margaret Laurence. While she is in Grade Eleven, she shares her virginity with Jules. The bond between the two strengthens and grows during the next thirty years till Jules' death. For an outsider like Morag, Jules is more of an outsider since he is a half-breed. For instance, after their first intercourse, "[t]hey smile, then, at each other. Like strangers who have now met. Like conspirators"

(p 138) . It is this strong bond which brings **them** together when Morag decides to walk out on Brooke Skelton, her professor--husband. Her sexual behaviour seems to determine her sexual identity as is seen in her other affairs. The encounters with Harold **and** Chas teach the fleeting nature of such unions. In her unhappy marriage to Brooke, Morag tries to overcome her inability to have his child by turning to creativity, which again he fails to support. Her frustration with Brooke and her eventual walk out is aided by her three week affair with Jules and the birth of their daughter, Pique. Morag's encounter with Dan McRaith makes her realise the importance of family and place.

Jules visits Pique and Morag from time to time and passes on his songs on Rider Tonnerre and on Lazarus to Pique just as Morag tells her stories about Piper Gunn. During one of his visits when Pique is very young, Jules tells Morag: "Sure, Morag," ... "She's yours, all right. But she's mine too, eh? (D 338). emphasis added). True to his word, Jules shares responsibility of Pique's life by pointing out the future to her. He asks her to go up Galloping Mountains where his brother Jacques lives. Similarly, after his fair trade of the Shipley plaid pin for the Tonnerre knife with Morag, Jules passes on the knife to Pique as his share of her heritage. Whereas Morag's journey was away from Manawaka, Pique's takes her to her own people. Whereas Morag defied conventions, Pique in fact is affirming them. Thus, Morag's life has taught Pique certain things. "Freedom for Morag is the evasion of negative forces; not, as for Pique, the quest for positive ones" (John Moss 79).

The end of The Diviners marks the end of the **Manawaka** cycle "[w]ith a resolution of the ME and the NOT-ME into the humility of an acceptance of a place within the ALL" (Clara Thomas 170). In terms of Vedanta, it is the realisation of the union of the Self and Not-Self within the Brahman. In Existentialist thought, it is the presence of the **being-for-itself** and being-for-others within the **being-in-itself**.

Before attempting comparisons and contrasts of the various ideas discussed in this chapter, it is, important to bear in mind that the fiction of these two writers serve as good explications of self-discovery. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's comment in his paper "Patrick White: Laureate of Australia" is perceptive in this regard and can be applied with equal relevance to Laurence's fiction. He compares the novels to "Sudana's Tower and towers as described in the Buddhist Gandavyuha Sutra":

And all these towers ... each preserves its individual existence in perfect harmony with all the rest ... there is a state of perfect intermingling and yet of perfect orderliness. Sudana, the young pilgrim, sees himself in all the towers as well as in each simple tower, where all is contained in one and each contains all (14).

Conclusion

As the preceding sections show, female protagonists in the novels of Patrick White and Margaret Laurence undertake quests in order to realise the Self. Women in both the writers begin by being frustrated and dissatisfied with the roles assigned to them in society. Thus, their spiritual quest involves the breaking of long-standing habits "of seeking approval, of trying to please parents, lovers, husbands, friends, children, but never herself.

In probing her experience and asking basic questions, a woman may begin to wonder whether she has ever chosen anything **she** has done" (Carol Christ 9). This feeling alienates and isolates them from the immediate surrounding of the family and from society at large. Further, almost all of them are **self-sufficient** (Rachel Cameron in A Jest of God is one possible exception) with a very strong and active ego. Hence, communication with others becomes difficult. The quest for self-realisation, then, is an attempt to understand oneself. This enables them to understand others. Hence, every quest demands a conscious attempt to develop such qualities like love, compassion, humility and simplicity.

Both the writers insist and affirm the value of the survival instinct in their **protagonists**. It ranges from a blatant adaptation of the aboriginal mode of subsistence in a character like Ellen Roxburgh in A Fringe of Leaves, to learning the simple rules of society by a person like Rachel Cameron in A Jest of God. However, there is a paradox involved in this respect. For instance, qualities like pride, will-power and **self-sufficiency** go a long way to enable the protagonists in their quest. Characters like Hagar Shipley, Laura Trevelyan and Elizabeth Hunter have to give up their pride, **self-sufficiency** and arrogance in order to gain an illumination. On the other hand, Rachel Cameron has to substitute these same qualities in the place of her fears and inhibitions in order to gain a little human dignity.

Almost all the characters undergo tremendous suffering before gaining a vision. Both the writers are affirmative and

view suffering as a positive feeling, which **strengthens** the **individual**, as also provide self-awareness. Again, suffering ranges from the extreme physical torture which Ellen Roxburgh undergoes in the aboriginal tribe to the mental trauma of all the others (say, **Morag's** trauma as an outsider in the **Manawaka** society) .

Both Patrick White and Margaret Laurence depict their protagonists as going back to the past in order to understand the present and shape the future. The past is not only the personal past of the individual concerned but also the ancestral pasts of the society and country. Thus, the pioneering days in Australia and Canada respectively are re-created vividly before the eyes of the reader. The ideas mentioned above will be explored in detail in the Chapter on Techniques. However, both the writers move beyond the situation of merely placing their characters in specific situations, to embrace such concerns as human isolation or survival, thus making the experiences universal.

Talking of the past, both the writers insist on the need to acknowledge the experiences and perceptions of the natives as means for understanding the country. Thus, the aborigines and the Metis are vividly presented by White and Laurence respectively. For instance, the cannibalism episode and the heritages offered by Christie Logan and Jules Tonnerre assume importance in the self-realisation of Ellen and Morag, respectively. Morag's frequent reference to the pioneering experience through imaginary conversations with Catherine Parr Traill help greatly in her realisation.

Another common feature which both White and Laurence share is their depiction of a vivid sense of place. Nearly all of them gain their moments of illumination amidst natural surroundings. Witness, Mrs. Hunter's illumination in the 'eye' of the storm and Hagar's in the cannery. The importance given to landscape is a recurring feature in the literatures of both Australia and Canada and the two writers are no exceptions to this trend. Further, the two writers also use landscape to analyse and probe the **mindscapes** of the individuals. This tradition has been made popular in this century by D.H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad and Graham Greene. In the New Literatures in English, White and Laurence share this convention with Wilson Harris and Malcolm Lowry. Another point which both the writers emphasise is that women are essentially 'travellers' across the landscape and mindscape and hence, are able to assimilate and understand all the experiences comprehensively. A good contrast is provided by the male protagonists in Patrick White who seek to imprint their **impressions** and consequently, fail in their attempts to overpower nature. Voss and Stan Parker may be cited as examples.

These being the shared aspects of the two writers, let us now consider the differences with regard to self-realisation. At the beginning of this section, there was an attempt to differentiate between the concepts of self-realisation and illumination. Patrick White lays emphasis on single moments of illumination (consider Elizabeth Hunter's, Ellen Roxburgh's and Laura's illuminations). Of course, Theodora and Eadie go through processes of self-realisation. On the other hand, Margaret Laurence considers self-realisation as a gradual process, which

sometimes requires efforts for a lifetime. Again, White ~~is~~ meta-physical in his approach and deals with such questions as good and evil and appearance and reality. Characters in White deflect from society in a marked manner whereas Laurence's characters work within social restrictions.

Further, White insists on a binding mystical framework of a mandala or a chariot. There is no such binding image in Laurence. In White's fiction, there is a steady evolution from a spiritual, mystical stance to a position of Humanism. The shift occurs in The Eye of the Storm and proceeds steadily throughout the rest of the novels. This vein can be perceived right through Laurence's fiction. The reason, perhaps, may be that White had to consciously and cautiously move to an insider's position whereas, Laurence had this advantage of being of the same sex as her characters. However, in Laurence, the division between protagonists and others is distinctly marked. Though, White begins somewhat similarly in his early novels (as his satirical portrait of Sarsaparilla women show), he moves on to a position where he portrays flawed characters as gaining a vision (Elizabeth Hunter, for instance). However, both writers insist and succeed in seeing and presenting the extraordinary behind the ordinary.

White emphasises on the essential androgyny of the mind. Commenting on the Tiresias motif in The Aunt's Story, Patricia Morley is of the view that the motif points to three aspects of White's vision.

The first is that sex, unlike love and hate, good and evil, is not of ultimate importance... . Secondly, the bisexuality suggests a universal or unlimited quality of vision, which is not restricted to the experience of merely one half of mankind... . Finally, fertility or creativity is not limited to physical reproduction... (The Mystery of Unity 77).

His all-embracing concern for men and women questers reaches its acme in his creation of the sexually ambivalent Eudoxia-Eddie-Eadith in The Twyborn Affair. White distinguishes between the questers i.e., the sensitive men and women against the materialistic, insensitive people. Bonners and Pringles, for instance, come in for a lot of ridicule. On the other hand, Laurence's concerns are predominantly feminine. She shows considerable understanding of the problems of the opposite sex. Witness, Rachel's final understanding of the restrictions within which Nick operates in A Jest of God.

Another area of difference lies in the depictions of the respective landscapes by the two writers. In Patrick White, landscape is raw, uninhabited nature, whereas in Margaret Laurence, it is peopled with human figures. In White, landscape remains the same, though each individual perceives different aspects of it. Laurence's Manawaka, grows and changes, much like R.K. Narayan's Malgudi. Though both White and Laurence are satirical of restrictive social values, Laurence comes out as being more sympathetic towards humanity in general. Whether this is due to the difference in their sexes is debatable.

The comparison so far leads to one major conclusion. Though there are subtle differences in perceptions of the two writers, their concerns are essentially humanistic. For instance, though the fiction of White and Laurence are not "conventionally

religious," running through their works are "a deep concern **with** what invests **human** life with **meaning**" and "an affirmation of the essential worth of human life" (Frederick Sweet. Profiles in Canadian **Literature** 50-1). The quests undertaken by the protagonists to unravel the hidden meaning of life assumes psychological significance also. This aspect of the quest will be examined in the following Chapter.

Chapter IV

Structuring the Patterns of the Quest--

Individuation of Women

... a [psycho-] spiritual journey ... begins in an experience of nothingness, a shattering of the conventional pieties that had supported the self, comparable to the mystic's dark night of the soul. ~~When~~ supported by the courage to see, the clear-sighted facing of the emptiness at the heart of conventional views of the self, it leads to an ontological insight, a new seeing or revelation of "what is," which then requires a new naming of self and world.

(Carol Christ. Diving Deep and Surfacing)

The last Chapter discussed the **attempts** made by **women** to realise the self and the ensuing spiritual implications. The present Chapter attempts to study the **self-actualisation** or '**individuation**' of **women** in the fiction of Patrick White and Margaret Laurence by applying the psychoanalytic framework of Carl Gustav Jung. Though feminist and literary theories, in **general**, extensively use Freudian concepts, the present study makes use of the Jungian concepts for the following reasons:

- (i) Whereas Freudian psychoanalysis is a paternally-based psychology with a good deal of emphasis upon conscience, duty and fear of punishment, Jungian analytical psychology is rooted in the maternal and is concerned with the efforts of the developing personality to extricate itself from the toils of maternal encirclement (Anthony Storr. Jung 8). A maternally-based psychology seems more suitable for a study of **women**.
- (ii) Whereas Freudian analysis aims at developing a mature relationship with another person as its goal, Jungian analysis aims at an integration within the fragments of the individual mind itself. Thus, while Freud and **Adler** place emphasis on the object and subject respectively, Jung's focus combines "a centrifugal **movement** of libido in hysteria (outer), as contrasted with a centripetal movement in schizophrenia (inner **world**)" (qtd. in Storr 63). The present study concentrates on the attempts **made** by the protagonists to reconcile their inner and outer worlds in their growth towards **self-awareness**.
- (iii) "For Freud, the ego remained . . . the most important part of the personality; Jung, although recognizing the validity of

repression as a psychological mechanism, attributed more importance to dissociation and splitting within the mind; ... " (Storr 14). Doubling and fragmentation of personalities is a common feature in the works of both White and Laurence. This aspect will be explored thematically in the present chapter and technically in the next.

(iv) Freud's study attributes supreme value "to the orgiastic release of sex" (Storr 19) whereas Jung's study attributes equal value to the unifying experience of religion, sex and culture and points to a symbol of wholeness through the reconciliation of conflicting opposites. In his "Two Essays on Analytical Psychology" (Collected Works Vol. 7), Jung criticises this aspect of Freudian psychology as an attempt "to solve the world riddle in a test-tube" (27). Since the present study emphasises the varied implications of the individual's development in different spheres alike, Jungian framework seems more appropriate.

Despite the fact that Jungian psychology is maternally-based, it has faced severe criticism from the feminists. Thus, Rosemary Ruether finds fault with Jung for supporting men's "co-optation" of the feminist movement through the idea that men too have suffered from sexism and their need to recover the feminine side of themselves. Mary Daly considers "Jung's androcentric animus-anima balancing act" as a token inclusion, for Jung, according to her, ascribes anima to males only and defines animus mostly in negative terms. Defending Jung, Ann Ullanov criticises the feminist method of placing the blame outside oneself and of equating the feminine to sexism (Demaris S. Wehr. Jung and

Feminism 2-3; 99).

These criticisms aside, the appeal of Jungian psychology lies in the fact that it is a "meaning-making" psychology which opens up new worlds, not only those of dreams, fairy-tales and myths, but also of poetry, music, dance, arts and crafts (Wehr 6). Further, Jung's concepts are not gender specific or context based. Archetypal factors transcend time and space (Wehr 13-4) and Jung's method demonstrates the fact that "inner" and "outer" realities are intertwined and mutually reinforce one another (Wehr 21). In combining the individual and the mythical/archetypal, Jungian method offers universal significance to the individual. This organising principle is of importance in enabling an individual to be in harmony with oneself and with others in society. Such ideas provide valuable insights to the study of the protagonists. Though the ultimate result of the quest, self-awareness, is important, more interesting is the common underlying structure of the quests which will be explored in greater detail in the following pages-

A detailed reading of the quests of the protagonists reveals a common underlying structure which can be explained in Jungian terminology as follows: The psychological journey which seems circular, is in reality spiral. The questers begin in a state of total identification with the persona and are oblivious of their real selves. Thus, there is a gulf separating the inner and outer realities. In this journey, the travellers must first meet their shadow "and learn to live with this formidable and often terrifying aspect" of themselves. According to Frieda Fordham, "there is

no wholeness without a recognition of **opposites**" (An Introduction to Jung's Psychology 79). Terming this as "the integration of the shadow, or the realization of the personal unconscious," Jung calls it "the first stage in the analytic process" (qtd. in The Portable Jung 161). In the second stage of the journey, the quester also **meets** the archetypes of the collective unconscious which include the **anima** and **animus**. The successful confrontation with other archetypes like the **Wise Old Man** and the **Great Mother** marks the final stage of the process of individuation. The total integration or wholeness is explicated by the figure of the **mandala**. Thus, a psychological quest has at least one descent followed by an ascent. The emphasis on the descent characterises many religious and mystical thoughts. Further, the four stages mentioned above find a parallel in Carol Christ's classification of women's spiritual quests as consisting of four **stages--viz., "nothingness, awakening, insight, naming"** (Diving Deep and Surfacing xv). Before analysing the novels of White and Laurence within the framework mentioned above, it is worthwhile to attempt a definition of terms like self, shadow, persona, archetypes, personal and collective unconscious, mandala and individuation.

Jung defines '**self**' as the "centre of personality," a position "between that of consciousness with its hardly-won values, and unconsciousness with its vitality and power," from which "a new centre of personality can emerge, differing in its nature from the ego-centre" (Fordham 61). Thus, the self is a totality of the conscious and unconscious which are not in contradictory but complementary relation. The centre of the mandala

represents this state.

One factor which obstructs understanding of the conscious and unconscious is the '**persona**' which is a term derived **from** the Latin for the **mask** used by actors and is used by Jung to designate the role played by an individual in accordance with the expectations of society, as opposed to what the person is in reality. In his "Two Essays on Analytical Psychology," Jung describes the persona as a mask for the collective psyche and as a compromise between individual and society as to what one should appear to be (name, occupation, etc.) (Collected Works Vol.7 156). The persona is broken by dreams and fantasies, or by the archetypes of the personal/collective unconscious.

Consciousness, personal unconscious and collective unconscious together form the three psychic levels of human personality. In his work, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. Jung **differentiates** between the levels in the following terms: "Whereas the personal unconscious consists for the most part of complexes, the content of the collective unconscious is made up essentially of archetypes" (Portable Jung 60) .

Archetypes are symbolic formulae represented in consciousness through religious ideas, myths, folktales, visions and dreams. For instance, the archetypal images of the good and bad mother, according to Jung, manifest themselves in ways ranging from mother goddesses to more abstract things associated with fertility, protection, containment and the like. This archetype is expressed through symbols like witches, dragons, devouring and entwining animals, grave and sea. The mythological figures used

in the **mother-daughter** relationship are usually **Demeter-Hecate** and **Kore-Persephone**.

Jung defines '**shadow**' as an archetypal **figure--"the negative side of the personality,"** (Collected Works Vol. 7 65) the sum of all those we like to hide. In his book, *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*. Jung defines the shadow as;

a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance (The Portable Jung 145).

Further, the individual projects the shadow aspect on to others, usually of the same sex.

Animus and **anima** are the archetypal images underlying a person's experience of the opposite sex. The former refers to a woman's image of a man and the latter, a man's image of a woman. Both these are **personifications** of parts of personality opposed to the conscious ego. The anima has an erotic, emotional character and the animus, a rationalizing one.

Two other archetypes which become influential in a person's life are the Wise Old Man and the Great Mother. These archetypes hold positive and negative meanings. While the magical, prophetic and healing powers of the Wise Old Man enables a genuine development of personality, they also tend to be destructive if developed into megalomania. Similarly, the Great Mother figure has infinite capacity for loving and understanding, helping and protecting. But, in making others dependent, this figure exercises a subtle tyranny which can demoralize and destroy the

personalities of others (Fordham 60-1).

A successful confrontation with the above-mentioned archetypes results in "individuation" which literally means becoming an individual and embraces our innermost, last and incomparable uniqueness. It also refers to the process of becoming one's own self and refers to the inner development of a person emancipated from undue influence, journeying towards the integration of opposites. The aim of individuation, according to Jung, "is nothing less than to divest the self of the false wrappings of the persona on the one hand, and the suggestive power of primordial images on the other" (Collected Works Vol.7 172).

The symbol of the mandala denotes the successful individuation. It is generally a circular form or a quaternary structure which represents a new synthesis or union of opposites. Thus, it is a conjunction of conscious and unconscious, fantasy and external reality, thought and feeling. Combined with the Yantra symbol of the East, it becomes, according to Jung, a kind of symbolic representation of the archetype of God.

Let us now consider the structure underlying the quest of the protagonists in the light of the concepts discussed above. The first step in the quest is the attempt to break the total identification with the persona. The next step is the confrontation with the shadow or the repressed part of one's psyche. The third step involves the understanding of the archetypes of the collective unconscious. The final step of the individuation process involves a successful reconciliation of consciousness, shadow, complexes and archetypes. In his analysis of White's novels, Ingmar Bjorksten describes the four stages of develop-

ment as "innocence, experience, death and reconciliation" (Patrick White; An Introduction 40). The rest of the Chapter has been divided into two sections which analyse the novels of the two writers individually.

Margaret: Laurence

Margaret Laurence's African works (This Side Jordan, The Tomorrow-Tamer and The Prophet's Camel Bell) and her novel written for children, Jason's Quest serve as reference points for a study of the psychological quest. In her essay, "Shadow Continent: The Image of Africa in Three Canadian Writers," Patricia Monk shows how Africa becomes the shadow or the dark other self in the quest for a Canadian identity (3). The integration of the African element results in the reconciliation of the shadow element of the Manawaka society--the Tonnerre family in The Diviners (Monk 21). In Jason's Quest, Jason's journey to find a cure for the "invisible sickness" that affects Molanium involves an understanding of the need for change as well as an insight into the dark forces of the human psyche and world. The central characters in the Manawaka novels share this trait with Jason. The novels also reveal the movement away from the patriarchal to embrace the maternal and feminine which becomes evident in the use of feminine archetypes such as Hecate, Demeter, Persephone and Artemis.

The opening description of the Manawaka cemetery with its "doubly blind" stone angel is a striking passage which provides a series of alternatives. Commenting on this passage from The Stone

Angel, ("Antimacassared in the Wilderness: Art and Nature in The Stone Angel") Dennis Cooley perceptively **remarks** that Laurence "opposes what is foreign and what is native, what is **imposed** and what is discovered, what is artificial and what is natural. In psychological terms she contrasts conscious and unconscious experience" (30). Early in the novel, Hagar is seen walking only "on paths." This is an early indication of the repression of natural instincts by Hagar who is totally subsumed by the values of the Currie household upheld by her father.

Such an attitude alienates her from her husband and children. Though she derives pleasure from being with Bram, she never lets it out. Such a repression cancels her rebellion against her father in marrying **Bram**, for she has internalised her father's value system. Instances of this kind abound in the novel. To cite but one, Hagar fancies Rosa Bohnneur's painting of horses whereas she hates the very sight of **Bram's** horses. Bram thinks she objects to them because they are smelly. But the reason is that she "was frightened of them, so high and heavy they seemed, so muscular, so much their own **masters--I** never felt I could handle them" (SA 83). As Dennis Cooley rightly points out, this incident shows **Hagar's**

avoidance of the powerful, even sexual, forces embodied in horses and in Bram, who identifies with them. Art enables Hagar to evade or control the dark side of life ("Art and Nature in The Stone Angel" 34-5).

Such a negation of her own natural instincts makes her rigid and totally submerged behind the mask. The instances of the bees and the chicks further point out her withdrawal from natural things. Her pride in preserving her joy during her intercourse with Bram

distances **her** normal reactions. Commenting on this **pride**, Helen Buss comes to the conclusion that Hagar

has no true sense of her womanhood . . . [or] her own genitalia... . Typically she names her vagina "a second head" thus translating her Eros into Logos--her body into head--refusing to accept her womanhood... . To show response would be to accept some part of the feminine (Mother and Daughter Relationships in the Manawaka Works of Margaret Laurence 15) .

In her relationship with **Bram**, she also faces the conflict between what her persona imagines him to be and what he really is.

Love, I fancied, must consist of words and deeds delicate as lavender sachets, not like the things he did sprawled on the high white bedstead that rattled like a train (SA 80).

This is why she expects **Bram** to become sophisticated though she is internally aroused by his coarseness. The restraint which she exercises with **Bram**, extends to her relationship with **Marvin**, whom she **mistakenly** identifies as a Shipley. Her inability to speak the usual things mothers say, when **Marvin** leaves for war is an instance which points out how tightly she has bottled up her emotions.

Another problem which **Hagar** faces is her inability to accept her motherhood and **maternal** instincts. This is seen in **Hagar's** rejection of her feeble dead mother, her weak effeminate brothers, her sharp tongued attacks on **Doris**, a daughter-in-law who literally mothers **Hagar**, and her contempt for **Clara**, **Bram's** first wife. In her article, "Laurence's Fiction: A Revisioning of Feminine Archetypes," **Stephanie Demetrakopoulos** describes **Hagar's** problem as "animus-bound" pride that makes her reject feminine relatedness and describes **Hagar** herself as a "Persephone

trapped forever underground with the depressing, disconnecting masculine values of Hades" (57). This unrealized **femininity** becomes evident in Hagar's use of negative animal images. For instance, she refers to Doris as an "unwilling hen," Arlene as a "pouter pigeon," the old women at Silverthreads as "ewes" and Brain's daughters as "lumps of unrendered fat."

In The Stone Angel, Lottie Drieser is the shadow projection of Hagar. The scene at the dump assumes great significance in the novel. In refusing to join Lottie in the killing of the chicks, Hagar quite successfully represses her destructive instincts. However, she carries the negative instincts for a long time afterwards and is satisfied only by her successful plotting with Lottie to separate John and Arlene. This ends in the tragic deaths of their children. By not shedding tears at John's death (John can be seen as an extension of the animus-figure, Bram) and by pretending that he died in the war, Hagar evades her shadow. However, Nancy Bailey in her article "The Recovery of Self in The Stone Angel" interprets the scene at the dump in positive terms. Bailey sees Hagar's refusal as,

the rebellion of her unconscious against the destruction of the fertility symbol even though when she remembers the incident later in life and is convinced that her reaction was right, she has no awareness that in the incident she was revealing her truest personality. It is this same unacknowledged inner self that accounts for her marriage to Bram who, like her mother, represents Hagar's "otherness," and whom, like her mother, her conscious ego rejects and denies (68).

Hagar's acceptance of the unconscious is aided by Murray Lees in the cannery scene. In an attempt to escape Marvin's attempt to put her in an old-age home, Hagar runs away from home. Hagar's descent from her "tower-like" house to a dark cannery by

the sea-shore is **symbolic** of her psychological descent. Here, she **meets** Murray Lees, who comes under Jung's category of the Wise old Man, whose insight, understanding and good advice is of great help. Dennis Cooley brings to our attention the symbolism in Lee's name.

That Hagar is in the '**lees**' of life makes his surname appropriate. "**Murray**" is a Scottish name "by the sea" and "Ferney," of course refers to some of the plants found in the forest around the cannery. The Christian names indicate the "wilderness" Hagar has entered ("Art and Nature in The Stone Angel" 43).

In confessing to Lees, her rejection of **Bram** and her role in John's death, Hagar confronts and frees herself of the complexes that has plagued her for so long. Her final realisation, however, depends on her acceptance of motherhood and she is aided in this process by a series of surrogate mothers. Citing Doris, Mrs. Steiner, **Elva** Jardine, Mrs. Dobereiner and Mrs. **Reilly** as mother figures, Helen Buss makes an interesting remark that Hagar is helped in her **identification** of womanhood through the Keatsian figure of Meg Merrilies.

It is the image of woman outside the civilized order whose "house was out of doors," whose "bed it was the brown heath turf," that Hagar needs to touch in herself. Meg is also "brave as Margaret Queen" and "**tall** as Amazon" thus representing a womanly strength based on a female tradition rather than a denial of femininity. The fact that Meg's "bed" is the "brown heath turf" connotes not only the earth-mother aspect of the figure, but also indicates the old gypsy's connection with the mother as the archetypal female figure that welcomes the individual to death (17).

The positive effect of these mother figures is seen in three of **Hagar's** acts. Hagar asks for Tina's perfume '**Lily** of the Valley' which shows her acceptance of her imminent death. She passes on

her prized possession of a ring to Tina and has a funny, yet **moving** relationship with Sandra Wong whose pain she relieves by bringing a bed pan. Finally, she lies out of love to Marvin. Hagar questions her earlier repression in a true and honest confession.

Every good joy I **might** have held, in my man or any child of mine or even the plain light of morning, of walking the earth, all were forced to a standstill by some brake of proper **appearances--oh**, proper to **whom?** When did I ever speak the heart's truth? (SA 292).

Such a realisation enables her to help the other patients in the hospital, to accept Marvin as her son and to use the mothering words for the first time in life: "There, there" (SA 308). **Citing** Erich Neumann, Helen Buss is of the view that in holding the cup by herself, Hagar is accepting "the vessel character of the Feminine [which] not only shelters the unborn in the vessel of the body, and not only the born in the vessel of the world, but also takes back the dead into the vessel of death, the cave or coffin, the tomb" (21). The final acceptance comes when in her **half-conscious** waking dream in the hospital she calls out to **Bram**. Thus, "**Bram** becomes the final symbol for Hagar's own lost self, her animus or '**soul-image**'" (Nancy Bailey. "The Recovery of the Self in The Stone Angel" 71) .

The epigraph to A Jest of God (**from** Carl Sandburg's Losers) reinforces the Jungian concept of the need to accept one's own dark side in order to realise the self. Commenting on the opening interior monologue in A Jest of God, Coral Ann Howells in her essay "Weaving Fabrications," points out that there is "no harmonious relationship between subject and object" and that " ... **[Rachel]** is haunted by the discontinuities between her inner and

outer world, . . . , she is conscious of the doubleness of her perceptions." Quoting George Bowering, Howells describes Rachel's life as a pendulum life "oscillating between the world of social convention and her inner fantasy life" (Colin Nicholson 96). Like Hagar, Rachel Cameron alienates herself from human warmth and companionship. She does this not because of pride but because of the fear of transgressing the norms of Manawaka society. Hence, she tightly clings to her persona provided by her roles as spinster, daughter and schoolteacher. She totally suppresses her instinctive nature. Her relationship with James Doherty, her favourite pupil is one such instance. For fear of making public her maternal affection for him, she punishes him unduly. Her true inner self, at this point, is completely hidden behind her facade as spinster schoolteacher. At unguarded moments, her shadow breaks in. Once it happens, early in the novel, when she fantasises a sexual encounter with a shadow prince. She imagines the whole scene to be set in a deep forest. That she wants this scene to be in a place away from the places she normally visits is because of her fear of being seen by somebody. Thus, even in her dream, she cannot confront her own sexuality without being afraid of what others might say. She also cuts short her erotic fantasy and tries to justify herself as is evident in the following remark. "I didn't. I didn't. It was only to be able to sleep. The shadow prince. Am I unbalanced? Or only laughable? That's worse, much worse" (JG 19).

Another area of tension is Rachel's relationship with Calla, who acts as her shadow. Rachel's resentment of Calla calling her

'child' is a rejection of her own nature. As Nancy Bailey points out:

Her [Rachel's] childishness is evident in her fearfulness and in her refusal to venture beyond the tracks or down into her father's world. Rachel, like her **bedroom**, remains "girlish," she resists growth ("Margaret Laurence and the Psychology of Re-birth in A Jest of God" 64).

Her true nature emerges during her speaking in tongues at the Tabernacle. Instead of accepting it gracefully, Rachel feels ashamed of her hysteric outburst. Further, she concludes that Calla is a lesbian because Calla kisses her. "The kiss frightens Rachel because it is so close to her own innermost erotic and sensual need" (Nancy Bailey. "Margaret Laurence and the Psychology of Re-birth in A Jest of God" 64). Calla offers positive support to Rachel during her supposed pregnancy and this changes Rachel's attitude towards Calla. It is this true friendship which makes Rachel finally accept the wisdom of being a fool.

Rachel's affair with Nick Kazlick liberates her against the sexual taboos which her mother emphasises. By losing what her mother terms "a woman's most precious possession," Rachel finds (realises) and appeases her natural sexual instinct. However, she does not experience a complete individuation because Nick fails to match her as her animus. He is seen grappling with his shadow in the figure of his dead brother, Steve. However, the whole episode prepares Rachel for the final step in her quest for individuation, in her midnight visit to the funeral parlour of Hector Jonas.

In this visit, she learns to confront death which is another taboo in the Manawaka society. In the figure of Hector Jonas, she

confronts her own father whom she had not understood **fully** when he was alive. This lifts the final veil which blinds her vision.

Hector Jonas... . Comic prophet, dwarf seer. The life he wanted most. If my father had wanted otherwise, it would have been otherwise. Not necessarily better, but at least different. Did he ever try to alter it? Did I, with mine? (JG 124-5).

Hector, the Jungian Wise Old Man, helps Rachel to realise that like her father, she had so far chosen to alienate herself from any living thing, thus leading a dead life. This incident offers her the strength to accept her supposed pregnancy. She decides to have the child even after Nick leaves her. When it turns out to be a benign tumour she gracefully accepts being a fool. With a reversal of roles with her mother, she accepts her own motherhood. Nancy Bailey's comments that Rachel's statement "I am the mother **now**" should not be taken literally but as a symbolic one throwing light on Rachel's rebirth in finding a new self. This reading is suitable because while applying the archetypal relationship of **Demeter** and Persephone to May Cameron and Rachel, the final scene is taken to reveal a complete identification with the Great Mother. In such a reading there is a danger of seeing Rachel as self-centred and tyrannical as her mother. Warren Stevenson, in an article entitled "The Myth of Demeter and Persephone in A Jest of God," applies the Greek myth of the abduction of Persephone by Zeus and the ensuing grief of Demeter resulting in Persephone's two-fold roles as the goddess of the dead and goddess of fertility. According to Warren Stevenson, Rachel's discovery that she is a mother who,

represents by means of ironic reversal the **fulfilment** of the quest of Demeter for her lost daughter, just **as** the tumour represents the ironic fulfilment of her

[Rachel's] role as Persephone, who was also childless after her descent to the underworld (123) .

Quoting Erich Neumann, Helen Buss shows the positive aspect of the archetype which shows "Kore full grown and almost identical with her virgin-mother Demeter... . The one essential motif in the Eleusinian mysteries ... is the heuresis of the daughter by the mother, the finding again of Kore by Demeter, the reunion of mother and daughter" (37). This reunion is brought about in the novel by Calla whose "figure is not a plot convenience but a psychological necessity to Rachel's development" (43).

Whereas Rachel does not accept her sexuality, Stacey in The Fire-Dwellers is aware of it, but is frustrated by routine. However, unlike Rachel, she maintains a right relationship with her father and accepts him as the animus. In this sense, she is more balanced than Rachel. Stacey is frustrated by her roles as wife and mother. She is impatient with the present and apprehensive of the future. This is the reason why she worries unnecessarily about the supposedly strained relationship between Duncan and Mac and Jen's inability or unwillingness to speak. Stacey best exemplifies Jung's description in "Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype" of the type with an exaggerated feminine side and with "an intensification of all female instincts, above all the maternal instinct. The negative aspect is seen in the woman whose only goal is childbirth." She belongs to the class of hypertrophied maternal types who is unconscious

of her Eros **and** mothers her husband (Helen Buss 44-6) . There is **a** persistent conflict between her life as she is leading and what she imagines. In one such fantasy, she imagines herself to be leading an idyllic life with Mac much contrary to her life at the **Bluejay** Crescent.

There is **a** ladder leading up to each sleeping **plateau**, and when she and Mac are safely on **top**, they pull up the rope ladder after them. The children are not here. They are in another **place**, grown and **free**, nothing to worry about for her at this moment (FD 221) .

Similarly, she longs to keep up an attractive appearance but is faced with the reality of her bulky self. Further, Katie serves to emphasise Stacey's age.

Stacey's life with Mac lacks vitality. Her fantasy about having an affair with someone else comes to her mind very often but she keeps it well within control.

I want some other man, someone I've never been with. Only Mac for sixteen years. What are other men like? ... I think of all the men I'll never make love with, and I regret it as though it were the approach of my own death. I'm not monogamous by nature (FD 15).

This image of her shadow breaks out when she is forced to watch Buckle's coarse sexuality. The effect on her is worsened by Mac accusing her of infidelity. However, the positive effect of this encounter is her brief affair with Luke Venturi, in whom she finds her animus image. She learns that no man or for that matter not even God can give her the illumination and that she has to work out her realisation. She also realises that her relationship with Luke will not be in any way different from her relationship with **Mac**. However, on the positive side, Stacey's affair with Luke helps her to extend **"the** Mother archetype to include the

sensual that **is** to reunite the Demeter (Mother) and Kore (Maiden) figures so long kept apart by patriarchal and Western **culture**, The **mystery** of the mother who is at the same time a maiden was central in primitive matriarchal societies" (Nancy Bailey. "Identity in The Fire-Dwellers" 114). Further, Jen's sudden willingness to speak, Duncan's rebirth from the sea and Mac's release from Thor serve as rebirth symbols in the novel. All these events are of equal significance in making Stacey accept her roles, which, in archetypal terms is a combination of Aphrodite, Demeter and Hera i.e., lover, mother and wife (Stephanie Demetrakopoulos 48) . Even though she cannot be young again with attractive features, she only wishes to be a matriarch. Such a wish makes her accept things without seeking to alter them. As Nancy Bailey neatly sums up,

Thus at the end of The Fire-Dwellers, Stacey is as triumphant as life allows... . The emphasis on quiet peace and intimate closeness in a continuum of past, present, and future suggests that Stacey is much closer than she realizes to fulfilling her quest for selfhood ("Margaret Laurence, Carl Jung and the Manawaka Women" 308) .

The image of the river flowing both ways which opens and closes the novel assumes importance in The Diviners. It signifies the fluid state of realising the self through the past and the future by locating Pique as a mirror and catalyst to Morag's growth. Morag differs from the other protagonists in that she is marginalised by society at an early age. She is forced to live with Christie Logan, the town garbage collector, after the deaths of her parents. She resents Christie's profession and Prin's uncouth appearance.

Morag is completely swayed by the **mask** (persona) and is impatient to get away from Christie and the **Manawaka** background and enter as an acceptable citizen of society. This is the reason why she moves to Winnipeg to study in a university and also plans to marry Brooke, a respectable university professor and vows never to let him know of the Black Celt in her. Jules realises this much earlier and states it during their final meeting before she leaves. "To him, she is now on the other side of the fence. They inhabit the same world no longer" (D 165).

However, **Morag's** days with Christie impart some useful knowledge to her. Christie's stories of Piper Gunn gives her a sense of her own past and heritage. Christie is also the first diviner and animus figure in Morag's life in his insistence on reading people's minds through their garbage. Her stay in **Manawaka** also gives Morag a firsthand knowledge of death during Piquette's death by fire. She also shares her virginity with Jules Tonnerre who becomes a mainstay in her life. Thus, at an early age, Morag confronts the two main taboos of Manawaka society--death and love.

Further, Prin acts as a shadow figure of Morag. Fearing society's scorn, Prin exiles herself and dwindles to a vegetable existence. However, Morag pushes herself forward through the obstacles and confronts society. This, perhaps, is the reason why Morag's decision to leave Brooke Skelton comes soon after Prin's death and that section is named "The Halls of Sion," the title of Prin's favourite song. She realises that Brooke Skelton is not the prince she had dreamt of.

Her meeting with Jules enables **Morag** to walk out of her sterile marriage with Brooke. As Jules rightly says, " ... You were doing magic, to get away... . I'm the shaman, eh?" (D 273). Before the birth of Pique by Jules, Morag moves to Vancouver. She also maintains close relationship with two animus figures who help her in her individuation--Jules and Dan **McRaith**. Whereas Jules divines into the past, McRaith teaches her the value and security of family life. She also realises that her forbears are not in the Scottish Sutherlands but Christie's own land and ancestors. Thus, she also accepts the heritage passed on to her by Christie and the ancestral heritage of the Gunns. "Her individuation is tested and proved by Christie's death. She blesses him in recognizing him as father..." (Nancy Bailey. "Margart Laurence, Carl Jung and Manawaka Women" 315). Commenting on Jules' role as **Morag's** shaman in The Diviners, Catherine Sheldrick Ross quotes Eliade who defines a shaman as a mediator between the earthly world and invisible powers:

Jules as shaman can help Morag make a breakthrough to the upper world. But equally important he can help her find her way back to the lower world represented by Christie and the Nuisance Grounds. Therefore he gives Morag access to deep sources of power that Brooke has kept repressed ("Female Rites of Passage" 93).

Morag's individuation in her career as novelist and in herself is aided by Royland, the Jungian figure of the Wise Old Man. His loss of divining power makes her realise that "[t]he gift, or portion of grace, or whatever it was, was finally withdrawn, to be given to someone else" (D 452). She is content that Pique is carrying on the heritages of both Jules and herself.

Another figure who helps Morag is Catherine Parr **Traill**, the pioneer woman. Through the imaginary conversations with her, Morag learns the instincts of survival as also the collective past of Canada. She applies this past to her own present just as her present will enable Pique in future. Though less perfect, she learns to live in the present. In this, she resembles Stacey. The figure of Catherine Parr Traill is the culmination of the "Hestian or domestic role" played by Prin and Mrs. Gerson in Morag's life. Along with Jules, they pave a way for Morag to become a Demeter figure herself (Stephanie Demetrakopoulos 52-3).

Quoting Toni Wolff, Nancy Bailey points out that the feminine form in The Diviners appears in four forms: the Mother, the Hetaira, the Amazon and the Medium. In Morag, the Mother and the Amazon are combined in the nurturing support she offers to Prin, Jules, O.K.Smith and young Dan. The Medium is expressed in her 'divining' activities as a novelist. Morag's relationship with McRaith brings out the Hetaira in her, since it involves the deception of Pique and necessitates the proper orientation of her other aspects ("Margaret Laurence, Carl Jung and the Manawaka Woman" 318-9). Thus, by bringing together the various facets of her personality, Morag rejects the mask and achieves a realisation of her true self. Commenting on the Pique-Morag relationship, Helen Buss sees a parallel of Morag with Psyche who epitomizes the balance between "the progressive character of the self and the regressive character of the Great Mother" by her ability "to take the male path to consciousness and yet to surrender her gains to the greater demands of her feminine nature... . Psyche's reward is not only the reunion with her Eros

but the birth of a girl-child, Pleasure" (75).

The steady movement from the patriarchal to the pre-patriarchal and an acceptance of the values of both, marks the culmination of the **Manawaka** cycle. As George Woodcock rightly points out:

Margaret Laurence's four Manawaka novels are concerned with the masks of woman ... and the bewildered real selves who peer through them at the world. In every case there is a concealed self, sustained by a flow of memory and monologue; and the world is the place where beings masked by prejudice and fear confront each other and occasionally drop their masks and come together in freedom and love... . Laurence is presenting a paradigm of the Canadian condition, with the relationships of its characters exemplifying the divisions and distrusting and imperfect understandings and frustrated longings that make the collective psyche of Canada ("The Human Elements" 151-2).

It is this understanding that marks the successful individuation of all the Manawaka protagonists.

Patrick **White**

White's novels also share the same structure of individuation, we find in Laurence's novels. However, the structure is **more** complex because of the multiplicity and **doubling** of the animus and shadow figures. These will be analysed in detail in the Chapter on Techniques. There is also a combination of the traits of **anima** and animus. The question of good and evil takes a **moralistic** turn. The religious framework is also heavily laid down. Taking the view that the opposites signify the descent of Nous to Physis, Peter Beatson remarks that "White is concerned with the ethical, **psychological**, artistic and spiritual significance of the **descent** ... [which] is an ethical imperative; since

it is only by accepting the flesh in all its **imperfection** that the virtues of compassion and humility can be discovered" (The ffye in the Mandala 12). The figure of the mandala, which forms an important part in Jungian psychology, plays a major role in White's fiction. For instance, in The Solid Mandala, it signifies the opposing personalities of Waldo and Arthur (Intellect and Intuition; Thought and Feeling). It further points to the masculine and feminine in them. Again, in Riders in the Chariot, the four visionaries symbolically refer to the Thought/Feeling, Sensation/Intuition aspects of the mandala. As a symbol, it is used both directly and indirectly. Any circular or four-sided object takes on mandalic significance Eg., the rose in The Aunt's Story and description of the circular garden during Stan Parker's visionary moments in The Tree of Man.

Several critics including Patricia Morley, Peter Beatson, Ingmar Bjorksten and A.P. Riemer discuss mandala as signifying a union of opposites in Patrick White's fiction. However, in a recent Jungian study, Patrick White: Fiction and the Unconscious, David Tacey points out that all these critics and Patrick White himself have mistaken the uroboros, which refers to the primordial unity that existed even prior to consciousness, for the mandala signifies the unity regained. According to Tacey, all the protagonists in Patrick White are completely submerged in the matriarchal matrix and their vision of individuation is a mere illusion. Though a pioneering study following archetypal criticism, Tacey's viewpoint is not wholly acceptable for the following reasons:

(i) The questing nature of the protagonists betrays the fact that the unity which once existed (uroboros) is already lost and has to be regained and the **mandala** is but one **manifestation** of this unity;

(ii) Only the dark aspect of the mother archetype has been projected. The positive features have been totally neglected;

(iii) By describing any positive attitude to the quest as being the result of the working of the unconscious resulting in the lack of perception about the failure of the quest (whether the characters or Patrick White), seems a reductionist approach.

The opening statement of The Aunt's Story--"But old Mrs. Goodman did die at **last**"--marks Theodora's freedom from the tyrannous hold of her mother, Julia Goodman. But true freedom eludes her because Theodora does not take into account the demons and angels of her own psyche. A quest for these complexes and archetypes takes Theodora to Jardin Exotique and the American Mid-west as well as the labyrinths of her own mind.

The first animus figure in Theodora's life is her father, George Goodman. He understands her well and is warm and affectionate towards her, unlike her mother. Theodora, and her father tell stories to each other and take long walks at Meroe. Two such things assume **significance**.

It was the bird that sat in the crocodile's throat. Fanning his larynx, She could not set down on the black grass of the country that was called Ethiopia. ... In this dead place that Father had described the roses were as brown as paper bags, ... (AS 23).

The bird in the mouth of the crocodile symbolises the co-existence of opposites such as good and evil and bondage and

freedom. Similarly, her quest in the Jardin Exotique section takes her to that place of fantasy. Tacey views the above-mentioned instances as exemplifying the complete submersion of the ego in the matriarchal matrix. **However**, the positive connotations of the instances become evident in Jung's statement in his book Modern Man in Search of a Soul, that fantasy is actually "the maternally creative side of the masculine spirit." Jung further states that though the fantasies may look worthless, inadequate, morbid, unsatisfying and sterile to a person with **commonsense**, this proves nothing against the value of creative imagination (76). Mr. Goodman is the first person who understands the true nature of Theodora. He is the first person to point out that she '**has great understanding**' (AS 31). Much the same thing is stated by the other animus figure--The Man Who Was Given His Dinner. '**You'll see a lot of funny things, Theodora Goodman. You'll see them because you've eyes to see. And they'll break you. But perhaps you'll survive**' (AS 45). While her sister Fanny acts as a foil to Theodora, her mother symbolises the sort of devouring stifling relationship from which Theodora constantly tries to escape. The constant search for a substitute animus figure after the death of her father provides the reason why Theodora rejects the conventional suitors, Frank Parrott and Huntly Clarkson. However, in both the incidents (shooting of the hawk and the clay ducks), Theodora essentially tries to confront her own shadow or in her case, the evil latent in her personality. As she herself says:

... I shall continue to destroy **myself**, right down to the last of my several lives... . It was her aspiration. In a sense she had succeeded, but at the same time she had failed (**AS** 71) .

That she has learnt to confront her shadow is a success to her. In the process she loses her suitors and thus becomes a social failure.

In The Aunt's Story, the meeting of the animus figure and shadow occur alternately. Another animus figure Theodora meets at Meröe is Moraïtis, the Greek cellist. There is a perfect understanding of her own animus by Theodora, though the whole episode is significant only on a symbolic level. **Thus**, for the first time, there exists a sexual element in her animus confrontation. At this point, her evil side projects itself when Theodora attempts to kill her mother.

But this, she trembled, does not cut the knot. She threw back the thin knife, which fell and clattered on the zinc [sic], where it had been put originally to be washed (AS 123. emphasis added).

The phrase '**does not cut the knot**' symbolises the warring opposites in her that have not been reconciled. It also reminds the reader of the knotted marble (**mandala**) of Arthur in The Solid Mandala. David Tacey makes an interesting comment on Theodora's unsuccessful attempt to kill her mother.

Theodora has confused mythic with literal levels of reality. It is right that she should want to destroy the dragon-mother, yet the dragon to be slain is within herself, in her own longing for disintegration. She cannot kill it for that would mean conquering what she values most, the backward striving movement of her own psyche (31) .

With such an experience and with the death of her mother, Theodora is free to undertake a physical journey to complement

her internal quest. At Hotel du Midi, she meets surrogate figures who are also fantasy figures. They provide parallels to the Mæroe figures. (Mrs. Rapallo-Mrs. Goodman, Animus-Sokolnikov, herself-Katina Pavlov). She also acts as the surrogate anima figure, Ludmilla, to the General. With the stealing of the nautilus shell from Mrs. Rapallo for the General, Theodora's repressed side is fully projected and symbolically, all that are held dear are destroyed in the fire. In spite of the understanding, the final realisation is not effected since none of the animus figures has so far given her the ultimate knowledge.

'We have destroyed so much, but we have not destroyed enough. We must destroy everything, everything, even ourselves. Then at last when there is nothing, perhaps we shall live' (AS 168).

The culminating figure in the entire drama is Holstius. He teaches Theodora the need for absolute self-annihilation and the need to combine the opposites. He asks her to reconcile the eternal opposites of joy and sorrow, flesh and marble, illusion and reality and life and death. In teaching her the mystery of life contained in the varied earthly forms, Holstius helps in giving a break to Theodora's life which becomes an endless cycle of life and death, joy and sorrow. Though Tacey sees Holstius as a trickster figure who merely fantasises a wholeness for Theodora, the Jungian overtones are obvious and point out the final mandalic unity. The black rose closing the novel is but a symbol of this. Further, according to Jung, a trickster is but a negative aspect of the archetype of the Wise Old Man.

Unlike Theodora's individuation or that of any other female protagonist in Patrick White, Laura's progress in individuation

appears **more** complex. One reason for this is that in Voss. the focus is on the realisation process of more than one character (i.e., Voss, **Palfreyman**, **Le Mesurier** and Laura). Most critical readings treat in detail Voss' quest for selfhood and Laura is treated as his consort or helpmate. Critical readings vary from seeing Laura as Voss' **Anima/Bride**, to that of seeing Laura as a Circe/Siren figure and the devouring Earth Mother as in David Tacey's book, Patrick White; Fiction and the Unconscious . The present study focusses on Laura's individuation and **maturati**on as an individual. The structural progression outlined earlier is followed in the analysis of the novel.

Laura's social persona in the novel is presented very minimally for, even before her meeting with Voss, Laura tries to break her social status as the niece of the Bonners. Much against the social norm, Laura is intellectually superior. Tacey cites these instances as examples of "the awakening of the contrasexual masculine side" (74) or what Jung terms the effect of the negative animus. However, in the opening scene of the novel, Laura is at her best socially, in her role as the hostess of Voss, in the absence of her aunt. Like other people of Sydney society, she is "tired of this enclosed man" (V 15) and dislikes his scarecrow appearance (V 16). She offers him the second best port and engages in polite conversation with him. Even under this veneer of social mask, Laura has a true understanding of Voss and his expedition. This is seen in her defence of Voss at the dinner table (V 28-9).

Laura's rejection of the mask and thirst to realise her true self is seen early in the description of her childhood. "The

rather thin, grey voice of the mother, to which she had never succeeded in attaching a body" (V 12) shows not only the distant past of Laura but also the feebleness she wishes to avoid. In this, she resembles Hagar in The Stone **Angel**. The influence of her father on her is seen in the following description.

Often the Captain would lock her in his greatcoat, so that she was almost part of him- ... all **smelled** of salt and men. The little girl was falling in love with an immensity of stars, or the warmth of his rough coat, or sleep. How the rigging rocked, and furry stars. Sleeping and waking, opening and closing, suns and moons, so it goes (V 12-3).

That the masculine element dominates in her is seen in her intellectual witticisms and her aptitude in solving mathematical problems. This sets her apart from the women of her own class, like Belle Bonner and Una Pringle, who confine themselves to prescribed social roles.

With Voss' journey across the landscape, Laura's quest traverses her **mindscape**. Her maturation process is **combined** with that of Voss. As we have seen earlier, individuation occurs only with the descent confronting one's own dark side/shadow. Laura has to confront the shadow on two levels: sexual and religious. On a sexual level, Rose Portion acts as her shadow. Through her, Laura realises the physical aspect of marriage. Laura partakes of Rose's pregnancy as a physical dimension of her spiritual **marriage** to Voss. (A detailed analysis of this has already been made in the sub-section "Women as Wives" in Chapter One). Phyllis Fahrie Edelson sees Laura's **identification** with Rose's pregnancy in a new light.

Through her experience with Rose, Laura seeks **to regain what** the intellectually superior woman in a patriarchal society is in danger of **losing--her** sexuality ("The Hatching Process: The Female's Struggle for Identity in Four Novels by Patrick White" 231).

The process of her maturation develops with her acceptance of her own sexual feelings.

Then the girl [Laura], who in the past had barely suffered her maid to touch her, on account of a physical aversion such contact invariably caused, suddenly reached out and put her arms round the waist of the swelling woman, and buried her face in the apron, in the sleeping child, to express what emotion it was difficult to tell (V 164).

Laura's religious maturation was analysed in detail in Chapter Three. One aspect which has to be stressed here is, her acceptance of humility which she eventually teaches Voss. This attitude enables her to sacrifice Mercy, her adopted child, the fruit of her spiritual marriage to Voss and the acme of her rebellion against social norms.

The animus figure in Laura's quest is Voss. He provides a refreshing contrast to the huddling society of Sydney. His exploration is not materialistic. Laura learns through the experience of Voss. Many critics question the validity of Laura's return to normal life without any influence of the journey. For instance, David Tacey remarks:

When she recovers from the psychological adventure she returns to her earlier state of being, previous to her involvement with Voss. She emerges from the chaos as if nothing ever happened, as if she were surfacing from a bad dream only to reawaken to her former self ("Patrick White's Voss: The Teller and the Tale" 266).

The possible reason for this (which of course applies to nearly all female protagonists), is the fact that women are not explorers who break into Nature and try to imprint their mark on

the land. They are travellers across landscape and **mindscape**, who **imbibe** and succour all experience.

Another aspect of the novel which has encouraged critical debate is that of Laura's appearance as an aboriginal woman to Voss just before his death. According to Tacey, this sequence of images suggests that Laura is a dark, destroying figure who shares a psychological affinity with **Voss'** primitive captors. However, Patrick White's description of their final intense **moments** as husband and wife discredits Tacey's analysis.

Given time, the man and woman might have healed each other. That time is not given was their one sadness. But time itself is a wound that will not heal up (V 383).

Further, on the positive side, Laura's appearance as an aboriginal woman suggests an acceptance of the opposites: self/other, light/darkness, persona/shadow.

The **mandalic** design which becomes explicit from The Solid Mandala onwards, is made more complex in Riders in the Chariot by juxtaposing the spiritual concepts [Christian **symbolism**, (Ezekiel's vision of the Chariot), Transcendentalism, Jewish Kabbala and Blake's visionary poetry]. This aspect was examined in the Third Chapter. The mandalic symbol which usually takes the form of a circle/round is replaced here by a four-cornered figure of the chariot which unites the riders. The picture becomes more complex because what is seen as the four corners of the individual ego is given four personalities. Hence, it is easier to take all the four riders as moving towards one goal and therefore constituting one individual. Patrick White also links each of them subtly and makes them confront the same evil even

though they take different paths to achieve realisation. Thus, Mrs. Jolley and Mrs. Flack provide the evil mother counterparts to Mrs. Godbold just as **Reha** and **Malke, Himmelfarb's** wife and mother, are extensions of the good mother. Similarly, **Himmelfarb** proves to be the ultimate animus figure to both Mrs. Godbold and Mary Hare. In fact, his death enables both of them to achieve the final illumination. The spiritual implications of this scene outweigh the psychological implications and hence was studied in the preceding chapter. The other animus figures who appear in their lives are not strong enough to sustain them. There is a single instance of this in Mary Hare's life during the momentary understanding between Mary and Cousin Eustace. Similarly, Ruth Godbold offers help to the needy. Her service extends to her loving care of her now dead brother, her husband Tom and **Alf** Dubbo, when he suddenly takes ill at the brothel. However, it is only with her **ministrations** to **Himmelfarb** that she attains individuation. A possible reason for this is that Himmelfarb, according to the Jungian **mandala**, represents Thought, the highest level to reach the state of individuation. All other faculties have to translate their dominant emotions to thought before realising the self. Thus, the services to Himmelfarb assume importance. Though Himmelfarb and Mrs. Jolley and Flack act as animus and shadow figures for Mrs. Godbold and Mary Hare, there are certain individual instances that serve to bring out the good and evil components of their psyche. Thus, Mary Hare feels responsible for "**the** sacrifice of her poor goat" and "her father's unmentionable end" and becomes aware of "her own powers

of emulating the cruelty of **human beings**" (EC 83). Similarly, Ruth **Joyner's** pride in her capacity for physical endurance **amounts** to nothing during her brother's death. Her father also advises that she "should learn to forgive" (**RC** 240) when she decides to go to Australia on hearing his decision to marry again. Mrs. Godbold compensates for her helplessness during her brother's death by taking good care of the other three riders and forgives unconditionally her wayward **husband**, Tom.

Let us now consider the positive and negative aspects of the Great Mother figure that Mrs. Godbold represents. In the words of Jung, a personality like Mrs. **Godbold's** is "a sublime, matri-archal figure, the Great Mother, the All-Merciful, who understands everything, forgives everything, who always acts for the best, living only for others and never seeking her own interests, the discoverer of the great love, ..." (Collected Works Vol.7 226). The negative side of the personality shows itself as the "Great Goddess" or roagna mater and "**Himmelfarb**, Miss Hare and Dubbo all appear as her children, offshoots from the maternal source" thus serving as pueri **figures** (Tacey 90). This is evident in Tom's statement when Mrs. Godbold goes to **Khalil's** brothel to bring him home: "You done a lot to show me up, Ruth, in our time, but you just about **finished** me this go" (**RC** 286). However, our interest in the character of Mrs. Godbold is kindled by the fact that she combines both the aspects of the archetype and becomes at the end of the novel, a universalized Earth Mother who grieves for the sufferings of humanity.

In Riders in the Chariot, we found a single ego and vision split between four individuals. In The Eve of the Storm,

Elizabeth Hunter plays polymorphous roles. The masks she has to wear are numerous. Her character includes: bedridden geriatric, lustful mistress, domineering mother, '**old** witch,' '**ancient queen**' and '**barbaric** idol.' Behind all these masks, she has a self which is more serene and which surfaces during the '**eye**' of the storm.

As Alfred Hunter's wife, Elizabeth, (like Ellen Roxburgh in A Fringe of Leaves) merely plays her social role and there is no inner fulfilment for her. It is a loveless marriage and all the passion ends as a duty paving the way for the birth of the two children. She encourages the lust of Arnold **Wyburd** and literally covets Edvard **Pehl** from Dorothy. But she also has a clear-sighted notion of the negatives of her life.

She recognised her own type of useless, beautiful woman, whose husband had got the number of children required by convention from the body he had bought at an inflated price because he was over-loving, and regretted the contract-... . She was a woman who had encouraged her **lovers'** lust; indeed she had made it inevitable; ... (ES 400).

With the discovery of her own sexuality during the storm at Brumby Island, she realises what it means to look beyond the **confines** of her womanhood.

Just as she was no longer a body, least of all a woman: the myth of her womanhood had been exploded by the storm. She was instead a being, or more likely a flaw at the centre of this jewel of light: the jewel itself, blinding and tremulous at the same time, existed, flaw and all, only by grace; ... (ES 409).

Thus, her lustful, sporting sexuality ends with her realisation in the storm. There is a knowledge of her own dark side. After this, there is only an ascent upwards to realise herself, as also help others in their individuation. One result of this is her

admission that she had not loved **Alf** enough and her ministrations to him during his last days. She also confesses about this to Sister de Santis: "I wanted very badly to love my husband, sister, even after I knew I didn't--or couldn't enough" (ES 20) . Even though her charm attracts other characters as well as the readers to **her**, she combines and passes on her spiritual triumph to those around her. Thus, Sister de Santis and Flora Manhood embody **her** spiritual and instinctual selves which though opposed, achieve a working relationship with each other, Dorothy learns the limitations of power and Lotte **Lippmann** learns to control her "**undifferentiated** personality" (Tacey 160-1). Elizabeth teaches the value of the physical relationship, of love, of compassion and of human communication to those around her. On the negative side, Tacey sees her as the Mother Goddess who relishes in the sacrifices and the offerings of her worshippers.

During the last moments of her life, Elizabeth Hunter once again experiences the '**eye**' of the storm. This time it serves to reinforce her knowledge **of** the self. The animus figures she had searched for in life is revealed to her in the figure of Alf, whose love she had earlier rejected. "Alfred my dearest dearest you are the one to whom I look for help however I failed" (ES 532). In this, she resembles Hagar Shipley (The Stone Angel), who in her last moments calls out to her husband, **Bram**. Elizabeth Hunter's "**withdrawing** her will" and re-living her illumined **moments** in the '**eye**' of the storm (which marks the end of her life and of the novel) have generated considerable critical debate. But a psychological interpretation of this can be found

in Jung's "Two Essays on Analytical Psychology" where he points out the danger of activating the unconscious. What is **a minor** folly in the case of feeling out of sorts can result in dangers; which, given the right psychological **moment**, may well put an end to our lives. According to Jung, the popular saying, "**Old** so-and-so chose the right time to die," comes from a sure sense of **the** secret psychological cause in question (Collected Works Vol.7 113).

In A Fringe of Leaves, Ellen's role as Mrs. Roxburgh, wife of Austin Roxburgh, fully projects the social persona in her. She complies with social norms as taught to her by her mother-in-law just as she submits herself to the torture of the aborigines. The only difference lies in the fact that with the latter, she is mentally free and is not tied down by conventions. Her role as wife has already been discussed in Chapter One. Beneath the socially well-adapted veneer, lurks Ellen's real self which is highly sexual and which rebels against the traditional Lord God of Hosts. Her fantasies of Tintagel are the first evidence of the highly erotic but repressed dark self of Ellen Roxburgh. Ellen's descent into the St. **Hya's** well gives her a premonition, "a presentiment of the **evil**"--that is, adultery to be committed later. However, more importantly, Ellen's dream resembles the one discussed by Jung (in Collected Works Vol.7) of a young man who dreams of a lofty cathedral filled with mysterious twilight. In the centre is a deep dark well, into which he has to descend. Jung concludes his analysis by stating that the dream implies "an unconscious infantile bond, a psychically embryonic state" (101-2). The descent to a nascent stage is the first step in Ellen's

individuation. Ellen's contact with her Gluyas personality occurs more than once in the novel. Guilty of her feelings towards her seductive father and discontented with her husband, her act of rebellion first takes the form of a coarse lusty encounter with her brother-in-law, Garnet Roxburgh. Though guilty of adultery, Ellen's individuation is not complete since Garnet is only the dark side of Austin.

With the shipwreck and the death of her husband, Ellen becomes the captive of the aborigines. In his "Two Essays on Analytical Psychology," Jung states that religious mysteries usher in a wholly new set of relationships as also a renewed and changed personality, into a new world, like one reborn. Jung further remarks that "the initiation is often attended by all kinds of tortures, sometimes including such things as circumcision and the like" (Collected Works Vol.7 104). Soon after the capture, the aborigines strip Ellen of the vestiges of her Roxburgh personality. Psychologically, Ellen reverts back to her Gluyas personality. Though she undergoes physical torture, she quickly adapts to the surroundings. The reason for this is that her Gluyas personality takes over the Roxburgh personality. Her natural agility and her early rural conditioning help her adaptation and later, her escape. As Phyllis Fahrie Edelson remarks:

White touches the heart of feminists who have argued against suppression of young girls' athletic abilities when the strength of Ellen's country girlhood comes to her rescue, enabling her to climb trees and sustaining her through exhaustion and hunger ("The Hatching Process: The Female's Struggle for Identity in Four Novels by Patrick White" 233).

Another significant thing to note in Ellen's stay with the aborigines is the **latter's** acceptance of her at a spiritual level notwithstanding the **confrontation** at a physical **level**. This acceptance paves the way for Ellen's realisation during her act of **cannibalism**. As Kay Schaffer rightly points out Ellen's cannibalism "leads her back to the dark/ instinctual side of her nature" ("Australian Mythologies" 1). Her re-entry into society is aided by Jack **Chance**, the escaped convict. It is only with Jack that Ellen experiences true love in the physical relationship.

The easy transit of Ellen between the outback and the city in the novel is described by Tacey in terms of her resemblance to the archetypal daughter and maiden--**Kore-Persephone**, "who moves constantly between upper and lower worlds" (175). Her individuation is complete in her successful adaptation to the worlds of darkness and light. This seems a possible defense against Phyllis Fahrie **Edelson's** statement that Ellen's decision to marry Jevons suggests retreat and that her individuation is incomplete. Tacey draws our attention to the final scene in the novel. When Mr. Jevons inadvertently spills a cup of tea on Ellen's dress and rushes to mop up the mess, Ellen bursts out in her Cornish idiom. This, according to Tacey,

suggests that she is not re-assimilated to the values of culture and high society as she would like. The natural self still rests there, just below the surface, liable to break out at any unguarded moment. The worlds of darkness and light are not as far apart as they were before her Australian nekyia [descent] (182).

In his analysis of the novel, John **Colmer** points out the fact that in her quest for wholeness and fulfilment, Ellen passes,

through the historic phases that have transformed savage tribes into civilized nations. We carry within us not only our own pasts but the past of the race. Neither must be denied ("Patrick White's A Fringe of Leaves" 99).

Such a conclusion serves to reaffirm the Jungian notion of the coexistence of the personal and the collective unconscious in the individual psyche.

In his book, Patrick White: Fiction and the Unconscious, David Tacey sees The Twyborn Affair as recording "the advanced stages of psychic disintegration" (184), though this is presented behind a facade of "bisexuality," "androgyny" and "transvestism" (185). According to Tacey, even the archetypal resonances of Demeter-Persephone relationships dwindle into a total submersion in the matriarchal matrix. However, the archetypal framework of Demeter and Persephone is important because it doubles the quest for individuation by Eadie and E. Thus, Judge Edward Twyborn is the animus figure for both Eadie and E. Despite the search for several animus figures--Angelos, Don Prowse, Greg Lushington and Lord Gravenor--it is the acceptance of Edward Twyborn that offers individuation to both Eadie and E. Similarly, Joanie Golson serves as the shadow figure for both Eadie and E. While the Eadie-Joanie relationship verges on lesbianism, it also emphasises the ambivalent sexuality of E. Further, Joanie's entry marks the transformation of guises/avatars in E.'s case. Joanie's entries mark E.'s exits from Crimson cottage and Bogong.

Let us now examine the quests undertaken by Eadie and E. in some detail. The inability to answer satisfactorily the question of sexual identity sets the path of self-discovery in the novel.

For instance, in a **moment of introspection**, Eudoxia states: "I would like to think myself morally justified in being true to what I **am--if** I knew what that is. I must **discover**" (TA 63). Similarly, Eddie refers to himself as "**a kind of mistake trying to correct itself**" (TA 143). E.'s "**pseudo-man-cum-crypto-woman**" **image** results in his/her life becoming "a collage of fantasies". (TA 392). Further, "the reality of love, which is the core of reality itself" (TA 336) eludes him/her. Thus, the acceptance of sexual ambiguity by Eadie and E. alike and the acceptance of Edward Twyborn as the animus figure become the criteria for individuation in the novel. Problems arise in reading the text because of the polymorphous roles played by E. and because of the presence of several animus and shadow figures.

E. undergoes three transformations—as Eudoxia, Eddie and **Eadith--in** the novel. In the first part of the novel, Eudoxia is the Byzantine hetaira in the service of Angelos Vatatzes, an aged Greek. There are numerous instances to suggest that the Eudoxia-Angelos relationship is an echo of the mythical Persephone-Zeus relationship. For example, Angelos is described as a "cadaverous," "skeletal" man (TA 18) with "cold bloodless fingers" (TA 21). Such descriptions, as also Angelos' seclusion, suggest death and a mysterious underworld realm of fantasies. Further, **Angelos'** gift of a pomegranate shawl echoes Zeus' offer of the seeds of pomegranate which binds Persephone to the lower realm. Angelos fails as an animus figure because he himself is struggling to come to terms with his past. However, a couple of instances enable Eudoxia in the path of individuation. For example, Eudoxia

understands that in their relationship they have "explored each other's scabs, experienced each other's airs and graces" and have understood "as far as it is possible to understand" (TA 31). Thus, the underworld is also a place for transformation and understanding. Further, in a dream where Eudoxia associates Angelos and her father, she realises for the first time her "love for this man I was privileged to call 'Father'" (TA 34). Significantly enough, Eudoxia compares her stay with Angelos as being "shut in a tower" (TA 65). The image of the tower implies their isolation from the reality of the outside world and their total submersion in the persona they create for themselves. The facade is only partially broken by the entry of Joanie Golson. Towards the end of the section, there is a brief and tentative attempt by Eudoxia to accept Joanie's entry and thus accept the lesbian relationship between Joanie and Eadie. She realises that everything depends on her "own free will" as is evident in her questioning: "Shall my will ever grow strong and free enough for me to face up to myself?" (TA 122).

In the second part of the novel, E. takes on the avatar of Eddie Twyborn, the jackeroo at Bogong. Don Prowse, the station manager and Greg Lushington, the owner, serve as animus figures. Marcia, Greg's wife parallels Eadie and is also the shadow figure. At this stage of the individuation process, Eddie realises the need to exorcise his past. This is conveyed through a dream where he simultaneously experiences "the protective wings" of a great eagle (TA 136) and his own "floundering in mud" and "the slime and blood of human bowels" (TA 137). This dream accurately portrays Eddie's psychic state. While there is a

desire to be individuated and fly above like the **eagle**, the inability to **come** to terms with the shadow results **in** his unsuccessful grappling with the flesh and slime of **human** life.

Don Prowse and Greg Lushington act as potential animus figures. In wanting a son and in his affection for Eddie, Greg acts as an extension of Judge Twyborn. However, his relationship with Eddie remains as tentative as the one between Eddie and his father. The other animus figure, Don Prowse, comes out more as a shadow projection of Edward Twyborn. Don counters Edward's fineness with his "brashness, brassiness of tone" (TA 212). He fails as animus because he himself is still humiliated by the recurring nightmare of his wife's desertion. Thus, even after his rape by Don, Eddie realises that "[i]n the light of shared desire, it was some consolation . . . to remember a moment in which he had embraced, not so much a lustful male, as a human being exposed in its frailty and tenderness" (TA 298) .

Marcia acts as a shadow figure of Eadie in her possessiveness, her readiness to accept Eddie "back into her body" and "to imprison him in her womb" (TA 222) . She serves as an extension of Eddie himself. In an archetypal reading, Marcia is the childless figure of Persephone. The positive figure in this section is Peggy Tyrrell, the housekeeper at **Bogong**. Her reference to Eddie as a girl foreshadows **Eadie's** acceptance of Eadith as her daughter in Part III. Eddie believes that Peggy will "**be** more inclined to sympathise with the anomalies of **life**" (TA 183). It is this belief that enables Eddie to see the Lushingtons as extensions of his own parents (TA 232) and defend

Marcia to Eadie. He seeks to correct Eadie's impression of **Marcia** as "a bad **woman.**"

Aren't you perhaps blaming her for showing up your own faults? This is how most blame is doled out. I shouldn't be accusing you of this if I didn't know how alike we are. It should have brought us closer, but never has (**TA** 241).

Apart from some significant alternation of shadow and animus figures, this section is also important for its portrayal of Eadie's self-growth. This process is aided by her acceptance of blame for **E.'s** disappearance as also her confession that she had not loved her husband enough. Eadie's acceptance of Eddie is evident in her letter to Marcia in which she realises and points out their folly in aspiring "to possess a human being" (**TA** 302). Her reference to the losing of her child and her sufferings consequent to the loss is reminiscent of Demeter's at the loss of Persephone. Further, for the first time she realises that her child is a "**mirror-figure** of herself" (**TA** 149). His/her sexual ambiguity highlights her own lesbian relationship with Joanie. The narrator's comment about "hands locked in sisterhood" (**TA** 149) confirms her growing acceptance of her child and foreshadows her acceptance of Eadith as her daughter.

E.'s transformation as Eadith Trist, the owner of a London brothel marks the culmination of the quests within the novel. Eadith realises that "in any of its permutations [her transvestism] her life had never been simple" (**TA** 328). For the first time, she meets Lord Gravenor who is ready to accept her in whatever form she appears. As he states firmly in his letter, "[m]en and women are not the sole members of the human hierarchy" and points out that if they had broken their inhibitions, they

could have "loved each other, completely and humanly" (TA 426). With Gravenor, Eadith finds the strength to drown "in Wagnerian waves of love and redemption" (TA 410). In his role as the Jungian Wise Old Man, Gravenor enables Eadith to examine herself which leads to her confession: 'That's the kind of remark I'd have made to my parents if I hadn't been numbed by youth, cruelty--yes, a bit--and fear' (TA 412).

In Gravenor's company, Eadith accomplishes a few tasks which enhance her individuation. They are: (i) Eadith's wish to adopt a child (TA 353) which is very different from Eddie's earlier rejection of Marcia's statement that she is carrying his child. (ii) In attempting to answer the questions which the adopted child might ask, E. dreams of several children probing his/her sexuality (TA 414) which leads to an acceptance of both aspects of his/her personality. (iii) E. successfully exorcises the shadow figure of Joanie when Eadith helps an old "wheezing, groaning, panting, hobbling" (TA 366) Joanie after her accident on the road. This is a reversal of Part I where Joanie helps Eudoxia recover from an accident. Further, significantly enough, Eadith refers to Joanie's visiting card as "an epitaph" (TA 367) thus, pronouncing her final word about Joanie. (iv) Through Reg and Nora, Eadith breaks through the materialist, conformist facade of the Golsons (TA 386). (v) Philip's acceptance of his homosexuality brings him closer to Eadith (TA 400). This marks her own acceptance of her sexual ambivalence. Thus, Philip is a mirror-figure of E.

Finally, on learning about Judge Twyborn's death, Eadith

begins her quest for reunion with her **mother**. This phase has several false starts when Eadith's will falters and "**the moment** of longed-for, but dreaded expiation had once more **evaded**, and was followed by one of passionate regret" (TA 405). Eadith's despair following the loss of Eadie, "the mother of her flesh and blood if not her spirit" (TA 394) is a reversal, both of Eadie's loss in the earlier sections and the archetypal loss of Persephone by Demeter. Both Eadie and Eadith admit that love is difficult. In Eadith's resolution to meet her mother and tell her everything about her own existence (TA 427) and in Eadie's "waiting for Eadith" (TA 431) amidst bomb raids, there is a hope for "harmony at **last**" (TA 432).

In a study of the individuation of women, Memoirs of Many in One occupies a crucial position for two reasons. First, the quest is as much White's as Alex Gray's. Secondly, Memoirs objectively scrutinises many of the concerns underlying the earlier novels. Thus, religion, love, art and the authenticity of **illuminatory** experiences are questioned thoroughly, where they were accepted as solutions to the quests in the earlier novels. Similarly, the entire process of individuation is portrayed from the wrong end. The other side of the coin is schizophrenia. Unlike other schizophrenics, Alex is very much aware of the delusions, even as White is **forced** to encounter at the end of the **novel**.

That there are two simultaneous quests for individuation by the author and character alike, is seen in some of White's editorial comments to the text. For instance, in his Editor's Introduction, White states that "some of the dramatis personae of this Levantine script could be the offspring of [his] own psyche"

(MMO 16). **Similarly**, in the Epilogue to the text, White traces Alex's psychological quest and his contribution to the **same**. "... Alex had spent so much of her life wrestling with the saints and demons wished into her at birth. Sensing their presence early on, I suppose I had encouraged her to cultivate them as an extension of my own creations" (MMO 185). That the interaction operates both ways, is revealed in White's comment towards the very end of Memoirs.

While I ~~I--the~~ great creative ego--had possessed myself of Alex Gray's life when she was still an innocent girl and created from it the many images I needed to develop my own obsessions, both literary and real.

If she had become my victim in those endless scribblings which I was faced at last with sorting out, I was hers through her authoritarian bigot of a daughter (MMO 192).

Alex differs from the earlier protagonists on two counts. On the one hand, she is fully aware of the fact that "[n]obody understands one but oneself" (MMO 18) and that "the key to anybody is in one's self" (MMO 64). On the other hand, she is not sure both of the persona and her real self. Thus, she dons various disguises to find her persona (Dolor, Eleanor Shadbolt, and Empress Alexandria of Byzantium and Nicaea) and her self (Cassiani and Dolly Formosa, for instance). The first instance of inventing a persona for herself is seen in her penchant for acquiring names--Alex Xenophon **Demirjian** Gray. As White succinctly remarks, "Alex acquired names as other women encrust themselves with jewels and bower-birds collect fragments of coloured glass" (MMO 9).

In an **attempt** to fix **meaning(s)** to her existence, Alex spins fantasies in her mind. This aspect of the text is comparable to the Jardin **Exotique** section in The Aunt's Story. Thus, Alex plays roles as different as Cassiani, the nun, Sister **Bernadette**, Dolly Formosa, the actress, apart from being a shoplifter or Princess Thingummy as and when it suits her. The artistic and spiritual aspects of Alex's roles were examined in the Second and Third Chapters respectively. Just as Cassiani and Dolly Formosa are surrogate creations to express her religious and artistic inclinations, Alex's encounters with the derelict Mystic and the stray Dog are expressions in the spiritual and personal spheres.

The first insight into Alex's creation of surrogate figures occurs when she runs away from the **clutches** of Hilda. As Eleanor Shadbolt, Alex makes a "surrogate mother and reluctant dad" of **Mollie** and Frank Dobbin (MMO 51). During this encounter, she desperately tries to prove "that inside an old woman there's a young girl waiting" and expresses her need for parents by snuggling close to the sleeping Dobbins and saying, '**I** was lonely. I wanted to be with my **parents**' (MMO 47). However, her encounters with the Mystic and Dog are attempts to atone the sins committed in the past, i.e., her role in the deaths of her husband and his dog, Danny. For instance, seeing the big black dog, Alex says, " ... this dog may be sent as atonement for the dog I **murdered--Hilary's** Danny. I can feel his tongue licking the sins from my sticky hands" (MMO 87).

In all her fantasies, White is Alex's companion. While on the rational level, he is a plotter with Hilda against Alex, at a psychic level, he is her animus. The shadow figure in the entire

drama is Magda Demirjian, Alex's mother-in-law. For example, in her attempted role as Cleopatra, Alex wears make-up "to suggest the earthiness, the Nile silt, the ful medames of which this Egyptian slut is composed." She only wonders as to how her mother-in-law "Magda Demirjian, herself a Middle Eastern slut, would have appreciated the transformation" (MMO 129-30). Another shadow figure is Hilda. Alex projects her own drab and dull aspects on to her daughter. Alex's constant confrontations with Hilda on the conscious plane is a mere extension of her unconscious rebellion. In a reversal of the daughters' confrontations with parents in the earlier novels (Theodora and Mary Hare, for instance), Alex has problems with her daughter. In this sense, Memoirs reverses and demythologises the Demeter-Persephone myth which dominate novels such as A Fringe of Leaves and The Twyborn Affair.

As a last attempt to order the maze of her life, Alex writes her memoirs. As she questions sceptically, "But do I want absolution from the sins I have committed--perpetuated? That is a difficult one to answer" (MMO 35). But she also realises that "[n]o husbands lovers fathers children saints mystics. Only when you're stranded amongst human furniture, the awfulness of life, you've got to set out on a search to find some reason for it all" (MMO 105).

Within the text, White begins by aiding Alex's individuation. Thus, Alex's fantasies are partly hers and partly what White has "helped her create for herself" (MMO 143). Alex's moment of death becomes the moment of realisation for both Alex

and White. Whereas Alex asks '[i]s it this--then...?', White, on seeing the falling black skull with "a trickle of garnet-coloured blood escaping from one corner of the mouth" is, in his own words, "hypnotised by what I saw as the moment when the last of human frailty makes contact with the supernatural" (MMO 183).

Alex, thus, has come a long way in her individuation process from her earlier questioning. For instance, she realises that Hilda is "self-satisfied."

Whereas I who have had men, women too, have never been consummated in a true sense. During the sleepless hours I am a failure. I hate myself because I know the inner me. My beauty is a mask, my writing a subterfuge (MMO 57).

On the other hand, for White, the trip to the Church of Santa Chiara is "the final act of exorcism" when he realises "what must have driven her [Alex]" perpetually in her quest (MMO 189). In spite of being warned that the head or mask of Santa Chiara is fake, White states:

[t]he candles, the incense, the glitter of embroideries, could not prevent me re-living a personal relationship with a barely human figure in another setting, life slipping from the dark skull as we watched. I would have sworn I could see a thread of garnet-coloured blood trickling from a corner of Santa Chiara's mouth (MMO 189).

In his book, Patrick White: Fiction and the Unconscious, David Tacey describes Memoirs as "a psychopathic parody of individuation" in which the psychic drama leads Alex "to criminality, vandalism, delusion and death" as also to "shoplifting, prowling and poaching, exhibitionism and indiscriminate attacks on the public" (201) and this assessment is acceptable. However, to call Alex's parody "anarchic" (200) and White as "a blind attendant . . . who dedicates his services and talents to

something which lies beyond his understanding" (200), is to underscore the entire work. Tacey further discredits any positive reading of the text as a mindless adoption of "Alex's delusive system" (207). Arguably, one may read Memoirs as a case of mutual projection or transference of qualities by White and Alex alike which is but a different manifestation of the mutual animus and anima influences positively portrayed in Voss (Voss and Laura) and Riders in the Chariot (the four riders).

Conclusion

In both Patrick White and Margaret Laurence, the psychological individuation assumes importance in the quest of women to realise their selves. One common feature in this process is the splitting of personality which occurs in both the writers. For instance, the two personalities of Ellen (Gluyas/Roxburgh) serve to emphasise the difference between the persona and the shadow. The common practice, however, is to present women in polymorphous roles and differentiate the Self from these. Elizabeth Hunter's roles in The Eve of the Storm have been dealt with in the earlier section. Similarly, Morag Gunn's roles in The Diviners can be cited as an example. Both the writers use doubling as a technique. This will be examined in greater detail in the next Chapter. The common archetypal figures referred by both the writers are Demeter and Kore-Persephone (Refer to the treatment of Ellen in A Fringe of Leaves and Rachel in A Jest of God). On the one hand, such archetypal figures represent the activation of

the unconscious and on the other, the union of **mother and daughter** at the literal and mythical levels. In her book, Diving peep and Surfacing. Carol Christ focusses on the positive aspect of the **Demeter-Persephone** relationship. According to her, this relationship represents the "power of life and death: there is no life without death, no joy of connection without **separation**." Thus, both Demeter and Persephone are "two aspects of the same whole" and the underworld is "a place of depth and transformation" (xix). Further, both the writers portray the presence of multiple animus figures. Thus, George Goodman, **The Man Who Was Given His Dinner** and **Moraïtis** act as animus figures for Theodora in The Aunt's Story and Christie, Jules and Dan **McRaith** as animus figures for Morag in The Diviners. Also, both the writers accord to "the non-rational ... a role of supreme importance and value" (Cynthia Vanden Driesen in Patrick White: A Critical Symposium 81). This accounts for the emphasis given to dreams, fantasies (say of Theodora, Rachel, Ellen and Stacey), the telepathic communication between Laura and Voss, and the magical powers of divining (in The Diviners, for instance).

Regarding the differences, in Margaret Laurence, the conflict between the roles and the real self is central to individuation (Eg. **Stacey** in The Fire-Dwellers). In Patrick White, roles are relinquished more easily (Eg. Theodora Goodman is portrayed as an independent guest free of any ties. This is one reason why she is able to take on the role of Ludmilla in her relationship with Gen. Sokolnikov in the **Jardin Exotique** section. Similarly, Alex Gray in Memoirs of Mary/ in One tries out various roles as nun, actress and princess in her quest for individua-

tion) .

In Patrick White, the spiritual framework is often combined with the psychological. Hence, a reading of the two different aspects in Riders in the Chariot becomes difficult. In Margaret Laurence, the two dimensions are kept apart. In fact, the psychological is given more importance and the religious framework is imposed from outside.

The symbol of the mandala plays a central role in Patrick White. Hence, the connotations of it are direct (Eg. Riders in the Chariot. The Solid Mandala and the image of the rose in The Aunt's Story). On the other hand, though there are references to the conflict of opposites in Margaret Laurence, there is no direct reference to the mandala. Hence, circle/round images are not commonly found. On the other hand, the individuation process itself is symbolically presented through the image of the diviner and the process of divining (Ref. The Diviners. The diviner figures in the novel include Morag Gunn, Royland, Christie Logan, Jules Tonnerre and Pique).

Patrick White often combines the animus and anima figures, thus representing an androgynous state. It is presented through the representation of masculine qualities in women (Eg. Theodora's moustache, skill at shooting and Laura's intellectual superiority) or through the coupling of personalities (Eg. The four riders in Riders in the Chariot as representing one personality and the ambivalence of sex in Eudoxia/Eddie/Eadith in The Twyborn Affair). In Laurence, the feminine is given more importance and the masculine appears only in the figure of an

animus (Eg. Jules as Morag's **animus** in The Diviners). The difference in the sex of the two writers is, perhaps, the reason for such a difference in perception.

Leaving aside the similarities and differences in the perceptions of the two writers, what strikes the readers is the quest undertaken by the protagonists "to accept the psychic depths of [one's] own nature of which the conscious rational process form only a fraction of the totality. The harmoniously integrated personality is one which reflects a balance between the promptings of the conscious rational intellect and the darker powers of the unconscious" (Cynthia Vanden Driesen 80) . The present study has used the psychological implications merely as a framework for interpretation and to gain a better insight into the workings of the novels. Therefore, there has been no attempt to study either the author's stance in the individuation process or the effects of the individuation of the characters on the two writers. This omission is a deliberate one following Jung's cautionary remark in Volume XV of his Collected Works:

The personal psychology of the artist may explain many aspects of his [her] work, but not the work itself. And if ever it did explain his work successfully, the artist's creativity would be revealed as a mere symptom. Hence if a one-to-one relationship is traced/ it is detrimental both to the artist and the work (86).

However, interestingly enough, White and Laurence use a select combination of techniques to express the spiritual and the psychological aspects of self-realisation. This aspect will be explored in detail in the following Chapter.

Chapter V

Exploring the Fictional Methods of Expression- Techniques

The human passion is first, but it must yet be joined by an equal passion for the medium before good writing can happen... .

(John Ciardi. "On Writing and Bad Writing")

Critical studies on the technical aspects of the fiction of Patrick White and Margaret Laurence often deal with: images (apocalyptic/natural), symbols (diviner/mandala/chariot), quest motif, journey metaphor and the use of stream-of-consciousness techniques through interior monologues and first person and third person narrators. The aim of this Chapter is to study other techniques used by the two writers which have not been explored by critics. Two main techniques have been identified for this purpose--doubling of characters and the concept of Time. Other related techniques will also be studied.

Doubling

Answering a query by Robert Kroetsch, Margaret Laurence replied that she was not conscious of doubling or counterpointing Stacey and Rachel till she completed A Jest of God and The Fire-Dwellers. However, Kroetsch points out that devices like the "doppelgänger" motif and the act of dividing oneself or meeting oneself "in another form," in order to "discover our own complexity, our own contradictions" are commonly used by Canadian writers ("Conversation with Margaret Laurence" in A Place to Stand On 51-2). Incidentally, Patrick White has also pointed out quite often "the infinite possibilities of a single personality" (quoted in Heseltine's "Patrick White's Style" 63). It is interesting to note that multiple personalities are commonly found in the fiction of White and Laurence.

The double in itself is quite a common technique in litera-

ture. Robert Roger's illuminating study (A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature) reveals this with many instances from the works of writers including Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Shakespeare, Melville and Henry James. However, a study of this technique is rare (almost unexplored) in the critical works on White and Laurence. These two writers use this technique for several purposes. The main aim is to effectively dramatise the "intrapsychic" conflict of the protagonists. Doubling also effects the disparity between the true and false identities of the characters. Several other related techniques used to bring about doubling are: use of various guises and disguises, use of mirror images (symbol of the 'mandala' by White), dream symbolism, multiple narrators and flashback and flashforward techniques.

There are a few general characteristics in the type of fragmentation shared by the writers. For instance, fragmentation/doubling is both implicit and explicit; multiple and dual; and by multiplication and division. Let us consider these in some detail in the novels.

(i) Fragmentation of characters can be either implicit or explicit (Rogers 4). The major similarity between the two writers lies in the fact that both use implicit fragmentation where it concerns the fragmentation of a single character. Examples from Laurence's novels include the division of Shipley-Currie personalities of Hagar in The Stone Angel, Cameron-MacAindra sides of Stacey in The Fire-Dwellers, Gunn-Skelton facets of Morag in The Diviners and the younger and older Vanessa in A Bird in the House. Examples from White's novels include the Salkeld-

Hunter personalities of Elizabeth in The Eye of the Storm, Gluyas-Roxburgh identities of Ellen in A Fringe of Leaves and the **Eudoxia-Eddie-Eadith** personages in The Twyborn Affair. Patrick White uses explicit fragmentation where there is a distribution of a single selfhood into various characters. Instances include Laura and Voss in Voss. Waldo and Arthur in The Solid Mandala and **Himmelfarb**, Mary Hare, Mrs. Godbold and **Alf** Dubbo in Riders in the Chariot. The distinction between implicit and explicit fragmentations also reveals a marked difference between the two writers. Whereas Laurence uses only the implicit method, White uses both. This implicit method, in turn, accounts for the predominant use of interior monologues and first person narrators in Margaret Laurence. White combines the narrative and dramatic, first and third person narrators.

(ii) Fragmentation can be either dual or multiple (Roger 4) . Most of the characters mentioned above serve as instances for dual break up of characters. Let us discuss multiple fragmentation in this section. In Riders in the Chariot, four characters combine to form a single personality or psyche. In Jungian terms, they constitute Thought, Feeling, Sensation and Intuition (A detailed analysis has already been done in the Fourth Chapter) . Jung sees these four elements as basic constituents of human personality, even though one or the other of these elements may dominate in a person. In religious terms, these four characters are the **Zaddikim**, according to Jewish Merkabah, who through their goodness counteract evil in the world. The Twyborn Affair offers a different picture where E. Twyborn successively alternates

between **male** and female roles with his/her sexual **ambiguity**. By creating three avatars out of a single individual, White attempts to emphasise the fact that sexuality is not even biological but is only **man-made**. Alex Gray in Memoirs of **Many in One** serves as an excellent example of splitting of this kind. She consciously undertakes various roles to **find**, what she calls, "the frame which would fit **me**." In a spellbinding attempt to fix her own identity, she alternates successively as Cassiani, the nun, Sister Benedict and Dolly Formosa. Her intermediary roles include that of Empress Alexandria of Byzantium, Dolor Gray and Eleanor **Shadbolt**. All these roles reveal her attempt to grasp her own self in material, spiritual and artistic terms. As far as the works of Margaret Laurence are concerned, we find the role-playing in almost all the protagonists. (This has already been analysed in Chapters **One** and **Two**).

(iii) Another category of **fragmentation** is that of doubling by multiplication and by division (Roger 5). Doubling by **multiplication** is characterised by several persons striving to define a particular concept or attitude. The Aunt's Story offers rich evidence in this aspect. The various father figures serve to bring into focus an intimate knowledge of Theodora's true nature. These figures include George Goodman, The **Man Who Was Given His Dinner** and Holstius. The first two predict Theodora's self-realisation whereas Holstius actually helps her to grasp the truth. Also, many of the figures of the first section are complemented in the **Jardin Exotique** section--Theodora-Katina Pavlov, Mrs. Goodman-Mrs. **Rapallo** etc. In The Eve of the Storm. Lotte **Lippman**, Flora Manhood and Sister de Santis are projected as supplementing

and symbolising various aspects of Elizabeth Hunter. David Tacey sees them as Elizabeth's 'acolytes' extending her own sensual and spiritual aspects. There is only one instance in Margaret Laurence for the use of doubling by multiplication. In The Diviners. Colin Gunn, Christie Logan and Royland serve as father-figures. All these characters contribute to Morag's realisation about her ancestral and creative heritages. Christie Logan and Royland also function as guiding spirits of Morag. Both function as diviners in the novel.

Doubling by division takes place when characters are shown to be 'complementary' (Rogers 5). Characters with opposing qualities are contrasted against one another, say 'good' and 'bad' father. In The Aunt's Story. Frank Parrott and Huntly Clarkson are portrayed as conventional suitors who fail to establish a fruitful bond with Theodora. On the other hand, the almost silent, yet strong, bond created by Moraitis vividly conveys the foundations of true love. Further, Theodora herself is matched unfavourably against Fanny (These two aspects have already been elaborated in the First Chapter). In Riders in the Chariot, characters are contrasted in terms of motherhood. Mrs. Godbold, the epitome of ideal motherhood, is contrasted with Mrs. Jolley and Mrs. Flack. In Voss, Laura Trevelyan is differentiated from Belle Bonner and Una Pringle. She remains a spinster and becomes a headmistress after Voss' death and thus tries to work for social welfare instead of following the roles of wife and mother in a stereotypical fashion. Similarly, in the final scene of A Fringe of Leaves. Ellen Roxburgh is set off

against Miss. Scrimshaw with her longing for Promethean heights and Mrs. Lovell who is totally subsumed in her maternal role.

The division of characters along this axis is relatively rare in Margaret Laurence's novels. One example which comes in handy is the various men in Morag's life in The Diviners. There are noticeable differences between Brooke Skelton, Harold, Chas, Dan MacRaith, and Jules Tonnerre. All except Jules fail her. Her relationship with Brooke is sterile and is marked by his authoritarianism. To Harold and Chas she is nothing but a woman and that too in a very physical sense. For Dan, making love is an extension of speech, comfort and reassurance all of which he constantly needs. On the other hand, though Jules and Morag come together at long intervals, there is a complete giving and understanding between the two.

The three categories mentioned above constitute the major types of doubling. Let us now discuss some of the other devices closely related to this technique.

(i) Use of masks, guises and disguises:

All these are interrelated in the sense that disguises form the physical aspect of masking in a character. In A Fringe of Leaves, the stripping of Ellen by the aborigines constitute in a crude physical form the metaphorical stripping of the superficial values of civilization. In The Twyborn Affair, Eadith's transformation into Eddie at the end of the novel, is portrayed in a grotesque manner. Eddie wears male attire whereas he still keeps the mask of the bawd.

The great magenta mouth was still flowering in a chalk face shaded with violet, the eyes overflowing mascara banks, those of a distressed woman, professional whore, or hopeful amateur lover (TA 428).

Through this description, White re-emphasises the thin line which demarcates male and female sexuality. Another instance of the use of disguise recurs throughout the novel. This is the repeated versions of Eadie in Judge Twyborn's clothes.

She [Eadie] was dressed in a pair of check pants and a coat which could have belonged to my [E.'s] father. Certainly the waistcoat of crumpled points was his, though she hadn't been able to commandeer the watch-chain. . . . Its most incredible detail was that Mummy had corked on a moustache: . . . (TA 38).

Eadie's disguise not only highlights her lesbian relationship with Joanie Golson but also serves as constant reminder of the sexual ambiguity of her child. Alex Gray's repetitive transformations also bring out the disguise element. Alex's desire to dress up brings out her sensual nature as also the constant doubt about her real identity. One such instance, in Memoirs of Many in One, is the scene when Alex dresses up in a "lovely film of sari," "pale lipstick" and "black liner" (MMO 26) in order to go out with Patrick. While on the one hand, this shows her desire to look her best, physically, in spite of her advanced years, this also fixes one of her many identities for she says: "I am Alex once more" (MMO 27). This fondness for the best attire and jewellery is shared by Alfreda Courtney in The vivisector and Elizabeth Hunter in The Eve of the Storm. In Elizabeth Hunter's case, two instances in the novel serve to emphasise this point. The first of these is the scene in Brumby Island when Dorothy and Mrs. Hunter compete to attract Edvard Pehl. Throughout this scene, Mrs. Hunter's costume and dress are

presented through the critical eyes of Dorothy.

. . . she had obviously dressed herself for an occasion, in a long white robe of raw silk, of unbroken fall if it had not been for a corded girdle, and faint **flutings** which gave her slenderness an architecture (**ES** 382) .

... why leave off her shoes? . . . , Elizabeth Hunter had done it to **impress**, if not to seduce. She was sitting sideways at the table, sipping the wine she had brought up from the bunker, exposing her slender, miraculously unspoilt feet from beneath the white, raw-silk hem (**ES** 385).

This desire for dressing up continues to be Mrs. Hunter's passion till the end. She orders Flora Manhood to make her up in the best **manner**. Thus, she adorns "**rose** brocade," emerald earrings, "an emerald stomacher" and "green wig" (**ES** 522) . That she is not satisfied with all this is seen in her desire to wear the pink sapphire ring. In a well-argued article, "The Structure of The Eye of the Storm," David Kelly connects the '**mask**' element in the novel to the epigraph from a NO play. It is interesting to note that the NO tradition in Japanese drama is dominated by the use of masks. Contrasting Mrs. Hunter's mask of cosmetics and Basil's hypocritical mask of an actor, David Kelly observes:

Mrs. Hunter's mask is not a protection against the threatened annihilation of the self. Wearing it, she seems "conscious of her own fiend": it is a way of acceptance, which leads her to accept that nothingness which Basil screens off, and to discard that mock substance which Basil clings to (67-8).

In Margaret Laurence's fiction, Hagar (The Stone Angel) **matches** Mrs. Hunter in her desire to wear the best. She always chooses pure silks and suitable colours like lilac. Her good taste is also evident in her criticism of Doris' choice like dark brown silks. Later, when Doris comes to meet her in the hospital,

Hagar first notices only the inappropriateness of her **[Doris']** dress.

She's wearing her gray silk suit... . How like her to get dolled up just to visit a hospital. The bouquet on her hat nods foolishly. She's got terrible taste in **hats**, that woman. They're always loaded with artificial flowers. Her head looks like a green house full of tuberous-rooted begonias, petals of all rosy shades, flesh and blush and blood (SA 278) .

Hagar displays her interest in dresses **almost** till the end, for she notices what each one wears. **She** also strikes a bond with Sandra Wong by sharing a dab of perfume. **Stacey**, in The Fire-Dwellers, also shares these traits with Hagar. However, she soon realises the absurdity of the whole thing on seeing the stark contrast offered by her daughter, Katie.

In a green dress Katie **MacAindra** simple and intricate as grass is dancing by herself. Her auburn hair, long and straight touches her shoulders and sways a little when she moves. She wears no make-up. Her bones and flesh are thin, plain-moving, unfrenetic, knowing their idioms.

Stacey MacAindra, thirty-nine, hips ass and face heavier than once, shamrock velvet pants, petunia-purple blouse, cheap gilt sandals high-heeled, prancing squirming jiggling (**FD** 117).

Another type of guise is the mask of the role the characters play. An extreme adaptation of it can be seen in Rachel Cameron (A Jest of God) . She herself detects the '**simpering** tone' in her voice so typical of primary schoolteachers. This device of mask/guise/disguise is used by both the writers to emphasise the essentially grotesque nature of **existence**.

(ii) Dream symbolism and fantasy elements:

Both these devices serve to emphasise the inner lives of the characters which are markedly different from the roles they play. They also focus on the gulf between the inner and outer selves of

the characters. An excellent example of the use of these devices is seen in the telepathic communication that exists between Voss and Laura in Patrick White's Voss. Through this device, White tries to bring out the strong bond between Laura and Voss. This bond is more mental **and** spiritual than **physical**. The **first** instance occurs when Laura, at the height of her fever, tells Voss: "You need not fear. I shall not fail you. Even if there are times when you wish me to, I shall not fail **you**" (V 358). In the following lines, she is even aware of how dry Voss' skin is and that his dog is licking him. Barely five pages later, Voss riding through the hell of a desert hears the same words which soothe him like an "ointment." "'I shall not fail you,' said Laura Trevelyan. '**Even** if there are times when you wish me to, I shall not fail you'" (V 363). Such a fantasising is perfectly accomplished in the scene where Laura appears alternately as an aboriginal '**green**' woman and in an immaculate state before Voss. They also live mentally as husband and wife. She promises not to leave him. They not only pray together but receive the holy communion of wafers (V 393).

Both these elements operate in A Fringe of Leaves where Ellen, after the dip at St. Hya's well, waits with hope for a Tristan to rescue her. Alex's account of her theatrical tour of outback Australia shares elements of fantasy. Even though Alex's performances as Cleoptara and as Dolly Formosa are very realistically described, there are subtle hints by White and Alex to prove otherwise. For instance, Alex says: "[s]ometimes I am carried off into dreams" (MMO 126). "I wonder who will inherit

my midnight robe and sequined fan. Or have I never existed for any of them?" (MMO 140) . The editor, White, tells Hilda that the tour was a **"fantasy** life which we have helped her create for herself" (MMO 143) . Hilda talks of her mother's account of the famous tour: "Even if it took place only in her mind, I hope she will have learnt a lesson. It should have got theatre out of her system" (MMO 141) .

In Margaret Laurence's fiction, these devices operate in the erotic fantasies of Rachel and Stacey. Whereas, in A Jest of God dreams and fantasies operate to bring out Rachel's repressed sexual instincts, in The Fire-Dwellers, they bring out Stacey's longing for an idyllic world free of everyday chores. The opening chapter of A Jest of God closes with sexual fantasy: "A forest. Tonight it is a forest. Sometimes it is a beach. It has to be right away from everywhere. Otherwise she may be seen" (JG 18) . Rachel does not see her dream-lover's features or face clearly. She only sees his body distinctly. Immediately following this, is her dream of a mortuary where she sees silent people "lipsticked and rouged, powdered whitely like clowns" (JG 19) . These two dreams show clearly her revolt against the tabooed topics of **Manawaka society--love** and death.

Though escapist like Rachel's, Stacey's fantasies cover a wider range. They include elements of science fiction when Stacey imagines the galaxy as controlled by "a scorpion-tailed flower-faced film buff": "He switches off the pictures which humans always believed were themselves, and the imaginary planet known as Earth vanishes" (FJD 69) . It is wistful longing, the type offered in the advertisements of Richalife, when Stacey imagines

that,

Out there in unknown houses are people who live without lies, and who touch each other. One day she will discover them, pierce through to them. Then everything will be all right, and she will live in the light of the morning (FD 77) .

Science fiction is combined with erotic fantasy when she imagines Zabyul, a planet with a very advanced technology. She imagines herself to be transformed into a beautiful young woman who would make love to a handsome "galactic pilot" (FD 85). At other times, it is a desire to lead a carefree life with her husband Mac. Stacey imagines the place to be an island where,

There is a ladder leading up to each sleeping plateau, and when she and Mac are safely on top, they pull up the rope ladder after them. The children are not there. They are in another place, grown and free, nothing to worry about for her at this moment (FD 221).

Other devices which bring out the technique of doubling/fragmentation are the use of mirror images and of multiple narrators. The use of flashback and flashforward techniques will be studied in detail in the following section on Time.

Both White and Laurence use mirrors and mirror images to enable the characters to come to terms with themselves. These devices collapse the boundaries between appearance and reality and fact and fiction. Doubling is also seen in devices such as double narrators, double voices and double narratives. Elizabeth Waterston considers Laurence's focus on the twin motif as reflecting the Zeitgeist of the 1960s when speculation of doubleness was rife--"an ambidexterous universe, a black-hemispheric brain, a double helical structure of DNA, the fundamental genetical material" (in Colin Nicholson's Critical Approaches to

the Fiction of Margaret Laurence 84). **However**, doubling in both White and Laurence can be traced in their fiction before the 1960s also. The common aim of the writers seems not only to present **"polarities** such as radical setting of young versus old, havenots and haves, black versus white, dropouts against establishment, men versus **women"** (Elizabeth Waterston 89) but also to see the divisions within the individual personality.

Many of the protagonists in White and Laurence look into **mirrors** to get an objective perspective of themselves. The paradox lies in the fact that "while what they see is an accurate subjective vision, it is often an inaccurate objective **one"** (Cheryl Cooper. "Images of Closure in The Diviners" 93). This comment is very true of Laurence's novels where we can trace a development in attitude to mirror-watching. Hagar Shipley in her old age still sees the youthful Currie self reflected in the mirror. "Hagar, with her indomitable will, defies the mirror" (Cooper 93). As Clara Thomas rightly points **out**, **"[o]nly her [Hagar's] body has aged; her spirit is indomitably young, tough, and brave"** (The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence 63). Rachel is confused about what she finds in the mirror. "Do I see my face falsely? How do I know how it looks to anyone else? **Do** I have good bones? I can't tell. I'm no judge." After a series of confrontations with the mirror, Stacey, unlike Hagar, learns "to reconcile Stacey Cameron and Stacey MacAindra." Only the older Morag has an enviable mirror image. Morag realizes that who she is, depends on more than what the mirror offers (Cooper 93-4). Perhaps, only Morag achieves the self-objectivity so desired by the others. The striking feature about mirror-watching in White's

novels is the insight that the protagonists gain about themselves. For instance, in The Eye of the Storm, Elizabeth Hunter catches a glimpse of her "spiritual **semblance**" in a mirror on the night of her husband's death. As Manly Johnson points out ("The Eye of the Language"), what Mrs. Hunter sees is "her Doppelganger: aged, dishevelled, ravaged, eyes strained by staring inward, in the direction of a horizon which still had to be revealed" (347). Conversely, Ellen's reflection in the mirror in A Fringe of Leaves arouses her sensual self. "She was at first too amazed to move, but then began to caress while uttering little, barely audible, cries of joy and sorrow, not for her own sinuous body, but for those whose embraces had been a shared and loving delight." This scene assumes importance because she is herself and not a work of art of her husband or the aborigines. In her article "A Properly Appointed Humanism," Veronica Brady sums up the implications of this scene. "Here she is her own creation, poised between the two extremes of the "raw" and the "cooked," nature and art, in possession of herself whether naked or clothed because she has taken possession of an essential humanity" (64).

Both White and Laurence use various other devices to bring out the twin motif. For instance, White doubles or counterpoints characters: Arthur-Waldo; Himmelfarb-Mrs. Godbold-Mary Hare-Alf Dubbo; and Laura-Voss. Laurence uses puns and echoes, double plot, allusion to twins, twinned phrases and double entendres as in A Jest of God (Elizabeth Waterston critically analyses A Jest of God in this light. See Colin Nicholson 85-91). Both the

writers extend the two-character technique to double/multiple plots, narratives and narrators. This aspect has attracted a lot of critical attention. However, the important fact to be mentioned is the advantages and disadvantages of the technique. For instance, the double perspective in *A Bird in the House* helps in juxtaposing young and old Vanessa as also the narrator and the writer. As Kent Thompson perceptively remarks, "Vanessa sees things but Laurence sees the significance of things" (George Woodcock 232). On the negative side, the two-character technique forces Laurence "to overuse both the eavesdropping device and the listening-but-not-understanding device" (Leona Gom, "Laurence and the Use of Memory" 55). Similarly the "now-then" distinction gives ironic vision to Hagar but also makes it "difficult to see the relationship between the humour-less, self-involved Hagar of the past and the self-mocking, witty, and ironic Hagar of the present moment" (Claudette Pollack, "The Paradox of *The Stone Angel*" 267). *The Diviners* offers the two-character technique successfully because the older narrator Morag is reliable and self-aware.

Despite the disadvantages of the mirroring technique pointed out by critics like Leona Gom and Claudette Pollack, the major advantage of this technique has been examined by Veronica Brady in her review of White's *Flaws in the Glass*. She connects the mirror image to the Lacanian mirror stage of development. Brady's argument is acceptable in this regard:

[T]his reflection of the self can have a formative effect something like the process of psychoanalysis, which enables the individual to come to terms with feelings of powerlessness by contemplating the painful, even shameful as well as the more pleasing possibilities of the self and mastering them at least in imagination (106).

The culminating point of this almost narcissistic dive into the self can be seen in juxtaposing not individual selves or characters but the protagonists and creators as in The Diviners (Morag and Laurence) and Memoirs of Mary in One (Alex Gray and White). Such juxtapositions collapse the boundaries between fact (autobiography) and fiction, and the creator and created. For example, in Memoirs, White frequently collapses the boundaries between an editor and a writer.

Now, let us consider the advantages of using the technique of doubling/fragmentation. Robert Rogers' conclusions are useful on this point. What he puts forward holds good for White and Laurence.

This technique stimulates defensive adaptations by the author/reader and character alike. Rogers points out that a "character may be said, to defend against an inner drive or conflict by projecting the unwanted 'thing' onto another character [or object]" (173). The best instance of this is the "Great Monster Self" of Theodora Goodman which is projected on to the hawk, clay ducks and to all the intriguing fantasy in the Mare section.

This technique also affords distortion. Author and reader alike can distort things and thus register unconsciously those things which cannot be easily confronted in all its naked glory (Rogers 173). Both White and Laurence see existence as essentially grotesque. The best way to reveal this is through distortion as is seen in E. Twyborn's sexual shifts, Alex's transformations, Rachel's sexual confrontation and Stacey's

mental projection of the chaos in the familial circle onto **the** social circle through fantasising of violence in media and **motor** accidents.

As Robert Rogers rightly **remarks**, all these techniques contribute to establish an aesthetic distance which has a balanced appeal to **the** reader's mind (173). Further, the intimate becomes distorted in these "inner space fiction" (to use Doris Lessing's phrase) through the use of doubling.

Time

In keeping with the popular trend in the fiction of this century, both Patrick White and Margaret Laurence emphasise the importance of time both in the form and the content of their novels. Time, in their novels, is not chronological but circular thus encompassing past, present and future in one continuum. This shifting of emphasis away from the linearity of time constitutes the **modernity** and psychological weight of their novels. Here, an attempt is made to study time in relation to: (i) Nicholas Berdyaev's categories of time-history, (ii) the Australian aboriginal concept of Dreaming (dreamtime) and (iii) Patricia Tobin's idea of the genealogical aspect of time. In a way, all the three categories are **interrelated**, for they basically point out the various aspects of time and the simultaneous operation of time at various levels. The commonly used techniques in both the writers to bring out the concept of time are the use of **memory** as a mode of linking the past with the present and the related techniques of flashback and flashforward. Another technique is to begin the

novel in roedias res, thus focussing on the present with a hindsight of the past and foresight of the future. Whereas White conforms to conventional techniques, Laurence uses innovative techniques (as in The Fire-Dwellers and The Diviners). The use of the river image (in The Diviners) to denote the flow of time and life has its implications in almost all the novels of the two writers.¹

According to Nicholas Berdyaev, there are three categories and corresponding symbols for describing time (qtd. in John Henry Raleigh's Time, Place and Idea: Essays on the Novel 45). The first type is 'Cosmic time' symbolised by a circle, which refers to the endless recurrence of things: night following day, season following season, the cycle of birth, growth and decay. In short, it is the circular character of human and natural experiences. The second type is 'Historical time' symbolised by a horizontal line and referring to the course of nations, civilisations, tribes through time. Likewise, an individual has a linear as well as a circular relationship to time. That is, the individual takes part in the historical and cosmic occurrences. The third type is 'Existential time' symbolised by a vertical line, referring to a notion of time somewhat like Bergson's duree, only religious or mystical in nature. This concept of existential time is actually an extreme form of individualism, or in Berdyaev's words, 'personalism,' and presupposes the individual's ability to free himself from either cyclic or historical time. It is interesting to note that these three types correspond to Morris Philipson's categories of natural time, society-determined time and self-

determined time (qtd. in Clara Thomas' "The Wild Garden and the Manawaka World" 402). We can also find parallels in **categories** like Time **spiritual**, Time historical and Time psychic mentioned by Jitendra Kumar Sharma in his analysis of T.S.Eliot's works in his book Time and T.S.Eliot: His Poetry, Plays and Philosophy.

According to the aboriginal mythology, dreaming (Alcheringa) denotes the mythical distant past when the cultural heroes and totem ancestors inhabited the earth. The popular aboriginal belief is that these spirits, which are form-changing, continue to live in the present and will do in the future. Quoting A.P. Elkin, John McLaren defines dreaming as encompassing "a past which is recreative in the present through ritual, and ... a future which is assured by that same ritual" (Australian Literature: An Historical Introduction ix-x). stating a similar idea in his essay "Twyborn: The Abbess, The Bulbul, and The Bawdy House," Manly Johnson observes:

This [aboriginal] view of the relationship between man and nature, between man and other species, sees humanity as part of nature, as bound to other parts of nature by strong emotional ties. All share a life force which is sacred. The individual is believed to contain the same spiritual essence as the mythic being with which he is most closely identified (167).

By linking an individual to a range of mythic beings and to the land **itself**, dreaming emphasizes its "unchanging nature within the context of seasonal fluctuation" (McLaren 146-7) as also the fact that "the past, present and future ... [form] a continuing and uninterrupted stream" (McLaren 302). Such an attitude to time prevents any abstract conceptualisation and results in the merging of objective and subjective realities.

It is the working out of the flow of **time** that is of importance in the works of both the writers. The graphic **image** in Margaret Laurence is the Yoruba symbol of the continuum of **time**, the three interflowing circles of the serpent swallowing its tail. The Yoruba belief that "the dead, the living and the unborn, literally inhabit the same time and same place" (David Richards in Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Margaret Laurence 21) is echoed in the Manawaka work where "history proceeds simultaneously along the linear, horizontal and **syntagmatic** paths of the Western consciousness of time and paradigmatically along a vertical, African axis" (Arthur Ravenscroft "Africa in the Canadian Imagination of Margaret Laurence" 39) . The corresponding image in Patrick White is the serpent eating its own tail, according to the Kunapipi ritual in Australian aboriginal mythology. It is easy to see a connection between these two images and the concept of the '**uroboros**.' Uroboros is the Greek equivalent of the tail-biting snake. Quoting C.G. Jung, David Tacey defines the uroboros as "the most basic and primordial of all archetypal symbols... . The uroboros symbolizes the all containing (self-fecundating, self-devouring) nature of the unconscious prior to the advent of human consciousness" (Patrick White: Fiction and the Unconscious 6) . In almost all mythologies and alchemical sciences, the uroboros is identified with the primordial dragon and represented as the "circle-as-beginning." Contrasting the uroboros from the **mandala**, "which signifies the '**recovered**' unity which includes humanity, time and creation," Tacey considers the uroboros as leading "one out of time and space into an inchoate, eternal dream-state" (238) .

In an interesting study (Time and the Novel), Patricia Drechsel Tobin offers the metaphor of the 'genealogical imperative.' According to her, the genealogical assumption results out of the linking of genetical descent (one of the oldest ideas of Western man) with mere chronological succession. If events in time come to be perceived,

as begetting other events within a line of causality similar to the line of generations, with the prior event earning a special prestige as it is seen to originate, control, and predict future events. When in some such manner ontological priority is conferred upon mere temporal anteriority time is understood as a linear manifestation of the genealogical destiny of events (7).

In Tobin's thinking, the fact that the concept of linear time is as intimate and peculiar an aspect of Western civilization as patriarchy, is no accident. "The prestige of cause over effect, in historical time, is analogous to the prestige of the father over the son" (12). In literature, the 'genealogical imperative' can be found in the conceptualized frame of the temporal form of the classical novel (6-7). Tobin contrasts this with the Eastern Philosophies which consistently emphasize "gigantic cycles of eternal recurrence" which is the reason for "the symbolic rather than mimetic nature of Eastern literature" (13). Thomas Mann, D.H. Lawrence, William Faulkner, Vladimir Nabokov and Gabriel Garcia Marquez along with James Joyce are the exponents who broke the linearity of time in their novels. Patrick White and Margaret Laurence easily form part of the list. What Tobin says for the rest holds good for these two writers.

Patrilineal authority gives way to matrilineal accommodation, relations of descent to those of affiliation, the socialized family to the biological community or mythical alienation... . The simple line, . . . , of genealogical structures, is replaced by such wild divergencies as the double cycle, the circle and the Moebius strip (26-7).⁴

The symbol of the mandala in White's novels and the interflowing continuum of time symbolised by the river which flows both ways in Margaret Laurence bring out this idea. The matrilineal accommodation can be seen in the re-definition of the mother-daughter relationships and the obvious affiliation to the mythical/archetypal models. Tobin cites matrilineal accommodation as the reason for the sins committed against the family which include adultery and incest. According to her, these sins are portrayed in the novels, in "a spectrum of value that arches from the tragic recognition of disorder to its joyous celebration" (26). The familial-social aspects were studied in the First Chapter and the archetypal resonances (for example, the Demeter-Persephone relationship) were examined in the Fourth Chapter. The genealogical imperative entails an emphasis on the present with constant revisitation of the past which, according to Helen Buss,

indicates a religious movement away from a patriarchal world-view that emphasizes cause-effect moral behaviour based on logical rules and notions of rewards and punishment, towards a maternal world-view in which one responds to the needs of the present moment through a freeing of the positive values of emotion and instinct. In such a world-view, the past is not remembered through recall on a cognitive level, but re-membered through a felt participation in life's cycles (30).

The main purpose accomplished by all three categories of time mentioned above is to establish the simultaneous presence of time at various levels. The novels of White and Laurence share this quality in their treatment of the past which is not only

individual past but encompasses the past of the nation and the ancestral/mythical past of the land. For instance, The Stone Angel treats not only Hagar's personal past but the pioneering past and the Scottish Presbyterian values of Canada through Jason Currie's past and the mythical past through the clan motto and war-cry of the Curries and finally the Old Testament Biblical past through references to Abraham, Agar and Jacob. A Bird in the House treats Vanessa's past which runs parallel to the Depression years. It moves backward to the pioneer past of Grandfather Connor and touches upon the Metis past through references to the Tonnerre family. In this respect, The Diviners is the culmination of such a treatment. The novel scans through the Gunn and Logan heritages through Christie's stories, some Snapshots and Memory-bank Movies and the early pioneering past of the country through Morag's imaginary conversations with Catherine Parr Traill. It divines the Metis heritage through Jules' songs and finally combines all these by bringing together the Currie plaid pin and Tonnerre knife.

Patrick White also follows a similar method to suggest the flux of time in Australian society and history in his novels. Thus, we come across the 'settlers' ('huddlers' in David Tacey's terms) represented by the Bonners and Pringles in Voss and Merivales in A Fringe of Leaves and convicts (Rose Portion and Judd in Voss) and aborigines (Alf Dubbo in Riders in the Chariot and Jackie and Dugald in Voss). Let us now analyse the various aspects of time evident in White's novels.

The Aunt's Story combines Theodora's personal past with the

materialist past of the society with its definite views on norms like **marriage**, physical appearance, behaviour, etc. through Mrs. Goodman, Fanny, Frank Parrott and Huntly Clarkson. The novel also brings in aspects of the 'new world' in **Theo's** travel in America. It also goes back to the mythical Abyssinia, so well brought out in the Meroe section. Voss traces the individual pasts through the characters of Laura and Voss, the historical past by re-creating the exploration of Ludwig Leichhardt, the German explorer, the past of the settler society through the Bonners, the outback culture through Sanderson and Boyle, the penal past through Rose and Judd and the aboriginal past through figures like Jackie and Dugald. The novel also traverses the distant mythical past of the aborigines through references to the appearance of the comet, The Great Snake. The Biblical reference is invoked through Laura's teachings to Voss about the virtues of love, grace and humility. Riders in the Chariot is a confluence of the Australian pasts of Mary Hare and Ruth Godbold, the aboriginal background of **Alf** Dubbo and the effects of the concentration camps in Nazi Germany through **Himmelfarb's** past. To this, is added the Biblical and Jewish Kabbalistic thought through references to Isaiah and to the four riders as the hidden '**zaddikim**' who do good to counteract the existing evil in the world. In A Fringe of Leaves, the reader encounters the personal past of Ellen through her past in Zennor farm as a peasant girl and in Cheltenham as Austin's wife. The historical past surfaces in White's basing of the novel on the Mrs. Fraser myth. The penal past is brought to focus through the personal histories of Garnet Roxburgh and Jack Chance. The aboriginal presence is

brought out by Ellen's sojourn with **them** and their mythical past is re-created by such instances like the **Ulappi** dance and the episode of cannibalism. The Scottish mythical past is captured in Ellen's visit to the St. **Hya's** well when she firmly believes the truth behind the Tristan and Iseult myth. References to the Genesis myth are clear in the description of the near idyllic lives of Ellen and Jack in the **forest**. The **Twyborn Affair** offers three different pasts through the three avatars of E.Twyborn. Eudoxia's relationship with Angelos signifies the Byzantine past and the Bogomil heresy. Eddie's stint as a jackeroo establishes the Australian past. **Eadith's** brothel in London and his/her final death before meeting Eadie, brings out vividly the reality of war-torn England. The title, Memoirs of Many in **One**, itself signifies the plurality of Alex's transformations which in turn signifies her multicultural heritage. In the introduction of Alex, the novel portrays Greece during the World War. It moves on to the Australian past in Alex's tour to the outback as an actress.⁶ There is also a reference to Christians of ancient Nisos in Alex's account of herself as **Cassiani**, the nun and lover of Onouphrios, the monk and as Sister Benedict, who, on the Feast of the Kippers, leads the frailest member of her order in the bush. Apart from minor transformations, Alex also has her stint as the Empress Alexandra of Byzantium and Nicaea at Lady Miriam's party.

By projecting the past (both distant and near), both White and Laurence present the heritages offered by the past (This is seen in their **affirmative** and positive attitude and treatment of

the aborigines and Metis), as also the cruelties in history (the harsh penal code, for example). The experiences of the past add to the present. The emphasis on the past by the two writers is, arguably, an attempt to understand the present as an interplay of various '**pasts**' (both distant and near). To state it in Henri Bergson's words:

there is no consciousness without memory, no **continuation** of a state without the addition, to the present feeling, of the memory of past moments (An Introduction to **Metaphysics** 40).

Further, PY going back to mythologies, both the writers try to universalise the otherwise personal and psychic journeys/quests of the protagonists. For example, Morag says that the echoes of Christie's tales and Jules' songs, go "back and back." As David Williams rightly points out in his article "The Indian Our Ancestor,"

They [tales and songs] sound finally, in racial "memory," in the subterranean haunts of the Dream Time. Ultimately, for Laurence, the ancestors are within; if in the blood, also in the unconscious as those who never lived in "so-called real life," but who will always be. If they come dressed in history, if they make their appearance through the particular time and place of the individual, they nevertheless make over the present in their own image. Thus the Dead live, and through ecstasis or intuition... (324).

However, personal and family histories provide alternate modes to the historical and archaeological models, in the works of White and Laurence. What John Thieme says of Laurence's novels can be applied with equal validity to White's fiction.

Mythos of personal and family origins provide another obvious focus for such investigation, with genealogy, another discourse of the past, providing the model for this kind of search, and the tracing of individual ancestry and the construction of family trees assuming representative significance as the ancestors being traced are located as archetypal figures in the Canadian [and Australian] consciousness ("Acknowledging Myths" 153).

Other related techniques used by the two writers are: the use of memory to reconstruct the past and the use of **premonition** to bring in the future. In narratological terms, these devices may be termed flashback and flashforward. In his book Narrative Discourse. Gerard Genette labels these devices as '**prolepsis**' and '**analepsis**.' These two devices function by, what Leona Gom calls, '**associative memory**.' Thus, something in the present triggers the memory of a past event in the lives of the protagonists.

Another common feature shared by White and Laurence is to begin the novels in medias res. The novels open in the present and then swings back and forth. Only in The Stone Angel, memories of the past are chronological.⁷ Even here, as in other novels, memory works by association. Thus, **Hagar's** lilac dress reminds her of the lilacs which bloomed in the Currie courtyard. The rhymes sung by children while playing reminds Rachel of her own childhood. Mac's angry words reminds Stacey of her father's angry words to her mother. Brooke's photograph published in the paper reminds Morag of her own married years with him. The main device used by Laurence to bring out the thoughts of the individual is through interior monologues. Apart from self-reflexive analysis of their own actions and words, **all** the heroines even address their partners silently. These are italicised in the text. Thus, the reader encounters such phrases as "**Bram, Listen--**," "**Nick, listen--**" and "**Listen, Mac--**." In The Fire-Dwellers. Laurence has used audio-visual techniques and fantasy **elements**. As Miriam Packer succinctly **sums up**, in her article "The Dance of Life: The

Fire-Dwellers."

"**Form** is intricately related to content in this novel. The indented memories, italicized fantasies, private thoughts preceded by a dash, capitalized news from the media, narrator's comments in ordinary type, and actual conversations in ordinary type create a page which is visibly cluttered and untidy just as is **Stacey's** life and her inner passion..." (John Sorfleet ed. The Work of Margaret Laurence 126) .

More important than the neat dovetailing of form and content is the novel's unfolding of Stacey's re-discovery of her psychic wholeness. In her illuminating article "The **Fire-Dwellers**: Circles of Fire," Sharon Nancekivell makes detailed analyses of Stacey's dreams, memories and fantasies to show how the novel follows the heroic quest pattern demonstrated by Joseph Campbell in The Hero of a Thousand Faces. **Nancekivell's** conclusions are perceptive. "The novel unfolds laterally and cyclically, progressing forwards and backwards simultaneously through many levels of time and the psyche" (158). A graphic representation of Stacey's memories, fantasies and dreams reveals "a recurrent pattern of peaks and valleys" (166) which indicates the **reaffirmation** of "the cyclic continuum of life" (167). Quoting Campbell, Nancekivell emphasises "this idea of circles turning within circles" which indicates "the **cosmogonic** cycle [which] is normally represented as repeating itself, world without end" (167). The identification of the circular nature of the quest is in accordance with the earlier argument about the circularity of time at the beginning of this Chapter. In The **Diviners**, there are a variety of devices to convey the past apart from the image of the river. They are Snapshots, **Memorybank** Movies and **Innerfilms** apart from Christie's tales, Jules' songs and Morag's tales to

Pique. Laurence's preoccupation with time in The Diviners **is** seen in the dedication "To the **Elmcot people--past** present and future and for the house **itself--with** love and gratitude." Michel Fabre makes interesting connections between the epigraph and the novel.

The three-fold time reference hints at the river of now and then; the "house" hints at the log cabin erected by the Coopers at McConnell's landing; and Laurence's "love and gratitude" parallels **Morag's** final thankfulness for her heritage and roots ("Text, Mini-Text and Micro-text" 174).⁸

Similarly, almost all the novels of White begin in the present and then swing to the past (Eg. The Aunt's Story, The Eye of the Storm, Memoirs of Many in One). The difference lies only in the shifting of time in the novels in relation to the past and present. In novels like The Aunt's Story and Voss, it is a pendulum movement between the past and the present. There is a "bio-dramatic" shift into the past as in Riders in the Chariot. In A Fringe of Leaves, there is an initial backward movement followed by a continuous move towards the present barring occasional reminiscences. The movement is circular in The Eve of the Storm and The Twyborn Affair. To sum up what has been described in the earlier paragraph, Bergson's concept of 'inner duration' comes in handy and is described as:

... the continuous life of a memory which prolongs the past into the present, whether the present distinctly contains the ever-growing image of the past, or whether, by its continual changing of quality, it attests rather the increasingly heavy burden dragged along behind one the older one grows. Without that survival of the past in the present there would be no duration but only instantaneity (An Introduction to Metaphysics 41).

Veronica Brady, in her article, "The Novelist and the New World" arrives at a similar conclusion about the time aspect in White's

novels which may be extended to Laurence's novels as well.

... in his handling of time White respects **reality**, resisting the temptation to soar above past, present, and future to live instead in the continuous present, the time dear to Romantics, in which the past is dead and the future represented only by desire. The Romantic hero lives in what Lawrence Durrell has called "**the** adventive moment," the moment of intensity which cannot be measured or dismissed but only experienced, ... (179).

This explains **the** appropriateness of the river image in Laurence's The Diviners.

The river flowed both ways. The current moved from north to south, but the wind usually comes from the south, rippling the bronze, green water in the opposite direction (D 3).

... the river, ..., seemed to be flowing, both **ways**. Look ahead into the **past**, and back into the **future**, until the silence (D 453).

The novel opens and closes with the river image. What happens in the middle is an explication of this statement. Laurie Ricou makes an interesting comment on the passage quoted above.

The past is something eluding us, still something to look forward to, but the future, already determined, seems behind us. And the silence which will provide resolution to the paradoxes is not only the silence of the grave, but also the silence of unspoken love and intuitive understanding ("Never Cry Wolfe" 178).

The knowledge and experience of the present enables **Morag** to re-visit and re-assess the past, whereas Pique's future course is directed towards a movement in the past, that of joining her living ancestors. Such an attitude towards time enables Morag as well as the other Manawaka heroines to probe the past in order to understand the present. As Morag rightly points out: "[a] popular misconception is that we can't change the **past--everyone** is constantly changing their own past, recalling it, revising it" (D

60). Thus, **Morag's** reconstruction of the Snapshots **is** more fictive than real. Thus, the past is not a 'given' existing 'out there,' but a psychological reality which can be revisioned or changed. On the other hand, by an honest **re-assessment** of the past, Hagar, Rachel and Stacey are able to change the course of their present and future. Vanessa's reaction to her Grandfather is no longer a hatred for an **authoritarian** figure but a sympathetic understanding of the man behind the mask, 'proclaiming himself in her veins.' For instance, time plays an important role in self-realisation in Hagar's life. As Shirley Crew observes ("'Some truer image': A Reading of The Stone Angel") :

The changes put forward by Marvin and Doris do not only threaten the immediate pattern of life but also those apparently settled interpretations of the past... . Driven back to her memories for comfort, she finds that, contrary to her expectations, the existing situation has altered the past in disturbing ways by producing unaccustomed perspectives and unwelcome truths (38).

Thus, these novels prove true Laurence's statement in "**Time and Narrative Voice**" that the "past and the future are always present, present in both senses of the word always **now** and always here with us" (A Place to Stand On 156). The same idea holds good for White's novels. The honest **self-reflexivity** of almost all the characters enable them to come to terms with the present.

At this juncture, it may be helpful to examine the flashback and flashforward techniques which are used by these writers to bring out the flowing continuum of time. The Fire-Dwellers offers a special insight in this regard. Stacey realises that she stands

"in relation to ... life both as child and as parent, never quite finished with the old battles, never able to arbitrate properly the new, able to look both ways, ... " (**FD** 40). The time epan in the novel includes Stacey's past as a young girl in **Manawaka**, her present as a parent which is similar to the past of her parents and Katie's present which corresponds to **Stacey's** past. Thus, her memories are constant comparisons between herself, her mother and her daughter.

Flashback techniques in White's novels, include various instances of the protagonists' memories of the past. Certain instances, however, may be singled out for analysis. In The Eye of the Storm, apart from associative memories, there are conscious recallings of the past. One is Elizabeth Hunter's reminder to Dorothy about their stay at Brumby Island and their meeting with **Pehl**.

'What was that man's name, dear?'

'Which man, Mother?' ...

'You know--the Norwegian--when somebody invited us to an island' (**ES** 336) .

Dorothy only remembers hating her mother's treachery in competing with herself for the attention of Pehl. However, to Elizabeth it is a re-living of a great experience as also a penitence for her past behaviour. Another instance when Mrs. Hunter forcibly recalls the past is during the last moments of her life when she tries to experience once again her illumination during the 'eye' of the storm (532). Michael Cotter's observation in "**The Function of Imagery in Patrick White's Novels**" is perceptive:

The storm is central to the novel's narrative and symbolic structures. The main character's past, present and future experiences are gathered within it into a single moment, so that the storm episode becomes a microcosmic enactment of the whole novel. By an interchange between the detailed events in the storm episode and the developments of Elizabeth Hunter's inner progression. . . . White conveys most powerfully what it is to understand the condition to which she aspires, both at the moment and more permanently (Ron Shepherd and K. Singh 23).

In The Twyborn Affair, White uses the theatrical technique of entries and exits to mark off the past and the present. Joanie Golson's intrusions into E.'s life at strategic points signify a forced memory of the past. In the first section of the book, Eudoxia is forced to leave the place for fear of exposing her identity. In her own words, " . . . just when I'd begun to order my life, perhaps even make it into something believable, this emissary comes to smash it to pieces" (TA 22). Similarly, Eddie's exit from the Lushington household is preceded by the visit of the Golsons. In the final section, again, Eadith Trist's life is somewhat disturbed by the arrival of Joanie Golson in the scene. However, this time the exit is marked by a renewed relationship with her/his mother. Another feature of Joanie's entry is the constant reminder of Eadie's tragedy which refers to Eddie's disappearance on the eve of his engagement. Joanie's appearance also reminds E. of Eadie's disguise in Judge Twyborn's clothes which, in turn, emphasises the lesbian relationship between Eadie and Joanie.

There is a two-way movement in the use of the flashback and flashforward techniques. One is a journey from the present to the past, while the other is a linear journey from the past to the present and the future. Quoting Miller, Patricia Tobin describes

these journeys as "a circle of time" and sees them as the doubling back of two linear journeys: "the setting out at the beginning, when nothing is known (prospective experience), and the analysis at the end of the journey, when everything is known (retrospective evaluation)" (24).

Premonition of events to come is one of the commonly used flashforward techniques in the works of the two writers. However, the future is accommodated in other ways as well. The presence of children towards the end of the novels is one example of this. Thus, in White's novels, Ray Jr. in The Tree of Man continues Stan Parker's quest, Mercy in Voss acts as the future referent to Laura's life, the Godbold children in Riders in the Chariot and the Lovell children enable Ellen's easy transit from nature to culture in A Fringe of Leaves. In Laurence's novels, Hagar's self-realisation is affirmed by her sharing of confidences with young Sandra Wong in The Stone Angel. Rachel refers to her mother as "the elderly child" at the end of A Jest of God. Duncan's newly found confidence with Ian and Mac in the beach scene, Jen's first words, Katie's sharing of responsibility with **Stacey--all** these events greatly help Stacey's self-awareness. In The Diviners, Pique's journey parallels and explicates Morag's own quest. Laurence seems to emphasise the need to learn from the experiences of the children. Thus, Morag wonders at the openness and flexibility that exists in Pique's relationship with men. Further, Pique's journey moves back towards the heritage offered by her ancestors whereas Morag's journey, earlier in the novel, takes her away from her roots.

Another aspect to be noted in the presence of children is the category of '**spirit children.**' While almost all the children fit **into** this category, the divine fools (discussed in the earlier Chapter) and the **mysterious** child who appears and disappears soon after the Wullunya flood in The Tree of Man and Margaret Quong in Happy Valley serve as fine examples. Pique is the spirit child in Laurence's canon. In his article, "'Leave the dead some room to dance!' Margaret Laurence and **Africa**," David Richards draws an interesting connection between Pique and the **abiku** figure, the child spirit in Yoruba mythology. Richards describes Pique as "a living miracle, a point of intersection between this world and the other, the present and past" (23). According to the Yoruba belief, the world of unborn is older to the world of the living. Richard sees Pique as the converging point of the Indians, Metis, Highlanders and English in the novel (23).

Let us now consider the flashforward technique in the works of Patrick White. This is done by way of a premonition of the future. This technique is not evident in Laurence's works. In White, these premonitions are made in the past of the novel's time-history. Thus, what is foreseen as the future is actually perceived by the reader in the present. In The Aunt's **Story**, for instance, George Goodman, The Man Who Was Given His Dinner and Miss. **Spofforth** have insights into Theodora's true self. George Goodman says that Theodora '**has** great understanding' (AS 31). The Man Who Was Given His Dinner and Miss. Spofforth are prophetic about Theodora's future. What the readers encounter in the present time of the novel is, in fact, an explication of

these statements.

Similarly, Ellen's premonition of the evil to **come**, in **A fringe of Leaves**, explains the moral stands she has to take in future regarding her seduction by Garnet, and her cannibalism. Another related technique used by White is the prologue-like opening chapter. The opening pages of White's novels assume importance in that they provide hints about the future course of the novel. Consider the **opening** chapter of **A Fringe of Leaves**; Mrs. **Merivale** and Miss. Scrimshaw rightly predict that Mrs. Roxburgh has been denied of a deeper experience in life and for realising which she would undergo tremendous amount of suffering. As the Merivales return home, they meet Delaney who tells them about a cannibal episode which subtly hints Ellen's cannibalism later in the novel. Further, there are repeated references to the beautiful fringe of Ellen's shawl which symbolically foresees her dress of a fringe of leaves which, in turn, points to the thin veneer that separates nature and culture. Similarly, the opening pages of **Voss** are significant and are full of hints to the future course of events.

The flashback and flashforward techniques reveal the Janus-faced view gained by the protagonists in relation to time. While historical -time is circular in that it repeats itself and individual time is linear, a combination of the two gives a spiral movement to the quest.¹⁰ Quoting Peter **Brooks'** Reading for the Plot, **Gayle** Greene sees the fundamental motive of narratives as: "the recovery of the past, transformation of the present, and transmission of inheritable wisdom to the future"

("Margaret Laurence's The Diviners: The Uses of the Past" 181) .
The protagonists do not **merely** experience repetitions of past events but,

[t]he circular **movement** of the **novel[s]** suggests a fruitful intertwining of ends and beginnings, a sense of life like that symbolised by the Ouroboros, the serpent swallowing its tail, figure for '**the** continuity of **life**' and '**continual** return, within a cyclic pattern' (200).

Furthermore, almost all the novels share the structure "in which time present alternates with time past until, in the final section, the past catches up with and becomes the present" (**Gayle** Greene 181). Identifying a similar structure in White's novels, Peter Beatson terms "anticipation, experience and contemplation" as the three stages of "inner, psychological time" (The Eve in the Mandala 66).

Perhaps, we can consider A Bird in the House in some detail in the light of the above-mentioned structure. The shifting of generic boundaries (short stories, fiction, autobiography, history etc.) reveals above all "the strangeness and mystery of the very concepts of past, present and future" (Margaret Laurence in "Time and Narrative Voice"). Stating that the stories are formally and temporally related, Sherill Grace observes that "the **stories** form a circle, within the mind of the narrator, that is embodied in the opening and closing words of the book. . . . The present tense of the opening sentence underscores the point of the entire **book--one** never merely drives away. The past lives on in the present as we re-create it" ("Crossing Jordan" 333). The

entire collection bears evidence to this fact by depicting the memory of a past moment, its connection with other events and its explanation offered by hindsight.

The discussion of time in the preceding sections has many implications in the novels of the two writers. The implications are not merely the use of various devices but what they address within the texts and outside them. Margaret Laurence states openly that in her writings she attempts "to assimilate the past, partly in order to be freed from it, partly in order to try to understand [her]self and perhaps others of [her] generation, through seeing where [they] had come from" (George Woodcock ed. *A Place to Stand On* 15). In another essay in the same volume, Laurence explains the use of time in her novels.

In any work of fiction, the span of time present in the story is not only as long as the time-span of every character's life and memory; it also represents everything acquired and passed on in a kind of memory-heritage from one generation to another. The time which is present in any story, therefore, must by implication **atleast--include**, not only the totality of the characters' lives but also the inherited time of perhaps two or even three past generations, in terms of parents' and grandparents' recollections, and the much much longer past which has become legend, the past of a collective cultural memory... . It is the character who chooses which parts of the personal past, the family past and the ancestral past have to be revealed in order for the present to be realized and the future to happen... . The past and the future are both always present, present in both senses of the word, always now and always here with us (George Woodcock 155-6).

Laurence's statement vividly sums up the preoccupations underlying White's novels also. The statement further echoes Heidegger's philosophical speculations which see time "not [as] a string of meaningless points to which significance is attributed time is not something . . . neutral and general."

Elaborating Heidegger's discussions, Wesley A. Kort emphasises the notion of **time** as an interflowing continuum of past, present and future.

Future time, the time of anticipation and possibility, and past time, the time of conditions and memories, have to do with present time because things future, while not yet existing, can be matters of concern in the present, and things past, while no longer existing, concern me as well in the present... . The past both yields to the present and conceals itself from it, and the future both withholds from the present and grants something to it... . In other words, present time provides us a sense of the unity of our temporality.... That unity is a kind of fourth dimension of time (Modern Fiction and Human Time 161-2).

The discussion in preceding pages also reveals the importance of time (whether past, present or future) in the self-realisation of the protagonists. Here again, Heidegger's ideas come in handy. Quoting Heidegger, Wesley Kort states:

Raising the question of temporality means facing the incompleteness and uncertainty of one's own existence, and it locates the meaning of that existence in something yet outstanding in and for one's life. Raising the question of temporality to the level of consciousness is, consequently, a difficult act for any person, but it is that person's defining and individuating act (157).

Commenting on the awareness of the sense of time, Wesley Kort sees the plots which reveal psychological or personal time as **melodic**.

Since melodic plots find their most congenial associations in the developing internal life of an individual person or group, metaphors and seatings of a psychological or internal nature are most congenial to it. Movement is caused neither by attraction to nor conflict with something outside the individual,, but by an actualization of internal potentials. The process originates from within, and its end grants identity to the individual (Wesley Kort 19). ¹¹

Conclusion

The preceding sections attempted to study in detail concepts such as '**doubling**' and '**time**' through a study of the related techniques which are used to **exemplify** these concepts. Collectively, all these techniques help in reinforcing the central themes of the novels. One reason for the choice of these two concepts and related techniques is to find a critical path unfrequented by others. More importantly, these bring out the neat dovetailing of form and content in the works of White and Laurence. As Harry Heseltine rightly puts it, "**White's** style is in fact a direct function of his deepest response to life" ("Patrick White's Style" 61). Arguing that White's style is more emotional and less logical, Heseltine concludes by saying that "every element of White's style works to explode and elucidate his themes" (74). White has openly accepted the role played by intuition in his novels. Laurence echoes this idea when she describes form as a '**vehicle**' of communication in a novel.

Form, in writing, concerns me as a means of conveying the characters and their particular dilemmas [It] is the kind of vehicle or vessel capable of risking that peculiar voyage of exploration which constitutes the novel ("Gadgetry or Growing: Form and Voice in the Novel" in A Place to Stand On 157).

Thus, the two writers are not innovators of particular techniques but use suitable variations of available techniques in their fiction to explore the predominant theme of self-realisation in its spiritual and psychological aspects.

Converging Standpoints and Differences-

Conclusion

... art is mutuality. The artist is both feminine and masculine, the male artist is fashioned internally, seized internally, by the women of all ages and climates that he creates or attacks, strips or sustains, renders violent or summons into sensuous beauty, The same is true of the woman who ... assembles into characters in fiction and poetry ... invisible and visible arrows pointed at her innermost guilts, innermost longings and desires, innermost fears of eternity.

(Wilson Harris. "The Quest for Form")

In the preceding Chapters, I discussed in detail the quests for self-realisation undertaken by the female protagonists in the fiction of Patrick White and Margaret Laurence. Though comparisons and contrasts were made at each point in the study, an overview of them at this stage may clarify the common ideas underlying the works of the two writers even though they are presented differently.

The three major obstacles that the protagonists encounter in their quests are: (i) restrictions posed by family, (ii) by society in general and (iii) by institutionalised religion. The breaking of norms and the movement away from these restrictions formed the basis for discussion in Chapters One, Two and Three respectively. In successfully resisting the conventions, the protagonists are true to themselves. This quality distinguishes them from other women who are subsumed in their familial and social roles. The urge to know the 'real' self sets the protagonists in the path of self-realisation. The quest has both spiritual and psychological implications and these aspects were examined in depth in Chapters Three and Four. The quest also strengthens the sense of their own identities. It also distinguishes them from other people with no sense of self. White terms this polarity the Living and the Dead (incidentally, the title of his second novel). Both White and Laurence portray the contrast and conflict between the two categories which has moral and psychological repercussions. Thus, the questing women in both the writers are spiritually and psychologically superior, though

they **are** far from successful in the social sphere. Their acceptance of society results from their acceptance of the spiritual and psychological aspects of the self.

The fiction of both White and Laurence is marked by a neat dovetailing of themes and techniques. In the Fifth Chapter, I discussed the concepts of "doubling" and "time" which highlight the themes discussed in the other Chapters, from the point of view of writing techniques. While "doubling" is a psychological concept which can be related to the idea of true/false selves, the concept of circular time highlights the entire process of self-realisation. Both the writers consistently show the relative nature of time and also of space. By projecting time from the present to the near historical past/ to the distant mythical/ archetypal past, and by making "real" the inner and psychological time, both the writers attempt to portray time as a continuum and break temporal restraints. Similarly, by offering an entire range of perspectives ranging from the mythical/archetypal to national, regional and individual, the two writers diminish the distinctions of spatial reality. Explaining these ideas, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, in his book The Vedas, concludes that at the point of self-realisation, there is freedom from "the play of time and space" (102).

Almost all the ideas that were examined in the preceding chapters clearly reveal the premises that the two writers share. The individuality of the two writers accounts for the differences arising out of a common base. Through this, the essential androgyny of the creative mind may be established and it can be seen to transcend all barriers of sex, nation and culture.

Further, Py viewing one against the other, a multicultural approach is available to the readers and writers alike.

The underlying similarities between the writers can be found in the following aspects: (i) the existential-humanist position occupied by the two writers, (ii) their deconstruction of social reality, (iii) the emphasis they place on psychic reality and (iv) the feminine mode of writing adopted by the two writers which offers scope for subversion. These aspects also help in an easy assessment of the individuality of the two writers arising out of the differences in their fictional methods of expression. In sharing certain preoccupations, the two writers collapse differences in time, space and culture.

Let us now consider the existential-humanist aspect in some detail. In Chapter Three, an attempt is made to study the presence of certain characteristics of Existentialism (freedom, choice and responsibility) in the works of White and Laurence. However, the nihilism associated with this philosophical system of thought is not found in the two writers. Further, despite their metaphysical insistence on self-growth, both of them are humanists. They may be termed humanists in their affirmative stance regarding the essential dignity of human beings within a complex reality. Though White and Laurence stress on the "**individuality**" of each person, they arrive at it through different means. Let us discuss this aspect in some detail.

White's works embrace two modes of thinking. As Kirpal Singh rightly points out, White combines the classical Greek position and "the existential **exigency**," (in Ron Shepherd and Kirpal Singh

ed. Patrick White: A Critical Symposium 120-1). While accepting the existential questioning of ethics and morality, White discredits the state of futility and meaninglessness that characterise Existentialism. White's working out of this thought is expressed in his belief, and as Kirpal Singh puts it, "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 coordinates and behold the mystery of the universe" (Patrick White: A Critical Symposium 121). All the ideas mentioned above may be applied with equal validity to Laurence also. White's works may be read in two different ways. One, is to see the duality of the classical and existential elements in his thinking which set up a conflict of other oppositions as well. The other is to see the shift to the existential position from The Eye of the Storm onwards. An early adherence to this position may be found in The Aunt's Story as well as his two earlier novels. The fiction from Voss to Vivisector is not divorced from this aspect, but in them White combines the existential with metaphysical, mystical and religious frameworks. Failure to take note of the combination of the two trends results in critical attacks like the one made by Leonie Kramer about the validity of Mrs. Godbold's self-realisation in Riders in the Chariot. Further, the equal insistence on the two aspects results in White's portrayal of ordinary people capable of experiencing the transcendental aspects of life. This accounts for the gaining of vision by flawed individuals from The Eye of the Storm onwards.

Unlike White who maintains two different positions, Laurence **maintains** the existential-humanist position in all her works. In

her **fiction**, it has psychological and social **implications**, taking into account both the individual and the society. This has several **ramifications** in her novels. Firstly, Laurence is constantly trying to balance the **amount** of freedom one wants, with what one can get in society. In her interview with Bernice Lever, Laurence states that in a social process and in the interaction between individual and society, "there's so much circumstance or fate. There are always things trying to limit your freedom or limit your chances to survival" (12). Secondly, the quest for identity in Laurence's novels is "the archetypal quest for identity" shared by many English-Canadian works. This trait also offers comparison between Laurence and writers like Chinua Achebe, **Wole** Soyinka, Edward Brathwaite, Derek Walcott and George Lamming all of whom are committed to a strong "sense of **mission**." As Clara Thomas observes, these writers attempt "to explore and illuminate the past of their peoples in order to bring a sense of dignity and continuity to the lives of men and women in the present" (The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence 189). Finally, Laurence carries this search for identity to a larger frame to embrace a nation's search for identity, the post-colonial search and on to the archetypal quest. To cite an example, Kenneth James Hughes in his article "Politics and A Jest of God" shows how Rachel's character **can** be read as "individual, as **woman**, and as the symbolic representation, the "type" of Canada in a process of transformation. Readers in other countries will readily see how Rachel embodies different aspects of their own post-colonial experience" (46-7). The same **may** be said of

Hagar who in the end becomes "everybody's grandmother" crossing boundaries of age, race, culture and nation. Thus, the underlying quest of the protagonists is an attempt to accept the past, and understand the present in order to shape the future. Arguably, this expanding movement from the individual outwards to embrace humanity at large, accounts for Laurence's creation of universal concerns within the space of an individual, regional, specifically Canadian identity.

Another concern which the two writers share is their attempts to deconstruct social reality. In Chapters One and Two, an attempt is made to examine the process of deconstruction of social reality by the protagonists seen in their questioning and rejection of accepted familial, social and religious norms. The deconstruction of male-dominated social conventions of marriage and chastity for women is accomplished through the creation of spinsters like Laura, Theodora, Mary Hare and Rachel and adulterous relationships maintained by married women like Elizabeth Hunter, Ellen Roxburgh, Alex Gray, Stacey and Morag. White further questions the validity of heterosexual norms regarding sex. This accounts for the presence of transvestites, homosexuals and lesbians in his novels. In Lord Gravenor's remark to Eadith in The Twyborn Affair, that "[m]en and women are not the sole members of the human hierarchy" (426), White questions man-made and socially determined attitudes and standards regarding sex and gender. White's constant striving for an androgynous state is evident in his use of the image of Tiresias.

The attacks by the writers on religion is not an attempt at creating a Nietzschean world where 'God is dead,' but a world of

a mysteriously silent God whose voice is **subsumed** by empty rituals and customs. While White allows his characters to choose between various religious thoughts, Laurence **seems** to work within a range of reactions to Scottish **Presbyterianism**. Despite adopting different ways of projecting the resistance to conventional religion, both White and Laurence seem to share a **common** view regarding the difference between religiosity and **spirituality**, in their exploration of ways of worship different from what the orthodox churches offer and in finally seeing conventional religion as another binding, restrictive factor for women. Thus, in Riders in the Chariot, May Hare who is more a nature mystic and who has no use for the Epistles or the Church of England services, is a positive character capable of self-realisation, while Mrs. Jolley and Mrs. Flack who attend Church services regularly, are in fact evil.

However, White and Laurence differ in a major way in their attempts to deconstruct social reality. White consistently demythologises the popular Australian myths by describing them as contributing to "The Great Australian Emptiness" through his characters (weak fathers vs mateship, strong **women** against the patient **women** waiting at home while **men** spend their lives outside in glorious feats). White's fiction may be seen to move beyond the oppositions discussed by G.A. Wilkes in his book, The Stockyard and the Croquet Lawn. The two stereotypes in the title set up "the antithesis of the genteel and robust, the refined and the crude, the old world and the new" (4). White condemns the **middle-class** Australian **philistinism** which lays emphasis on "**men**

of steel, coping with the rigours of **existence**" where "intellectual pursuits are unmasculine" (Wilkes 144). This, perhaps, is the reason for White being termed an "un-Australian" writer. Furthermore, his satirical portrait of the typical Australian suburb, Sarsaparilla and critical portrayal of conforming individuals only support this criticism. However, the breaking of norms is not so much an attempt to question and **redeem** the society that is depicted (though this may be the implicit aim of White), but to project the psychic/spiritual reality of the individuals which is in opposition to the existing social reality.

Like White, Laurence is highly critical of the superficial bourgeois norms of the Manawaka society. In presenting accurately the changes taking place, even while presenting the familiar landmarks, Laurence makes Manawaka a living community. She shares this trait with writers like R.K. Narayan, William Faulkner, Stephen Leacock, Robertson Davies and Alice Munro. In creating a dynamic town, Laurence emphasises the role of place as an identity marker. Although Laurence subverts the norms of Manawaka, she seems to rely more on the need to adapt and re-appropriate existing norms. A very good example of this is her treatment of the Metis in her Manawaka novels. Hagar convincingly echoes the popular view of the Manawaka society about the Tonnerres who live on "the wrong side of the tracks" of the town. For Rachel, it is the town's distinction between natives, settlers and immigrants that explains the difference between her and Nick. For Stacey and Vanessa, there are brief moments of questioning of norms in their relationships with Val and Piquette

respectively. In the Morag-Jules-Pique relationship, there is a culmination of the need for unity and communication between the settlers and the natives. What begins as the difference in the use of language between Hagar and John, Bram and Lazarus Tonnerre, ends in Morag accepting the songs and tales as heritage. Through the tales and songs, Laurence creates an identity specifically Canadian and regional. Yet, it is not narrow parochialism, for the attempt here is to project something that is common and necessary to humanity at large. While White emphasises the need to acknowledge the aborigines and presents them as spiritually superior, there is no portrayal of the integration of them within his social scheme.

The use of myths may also be seen as an attempt to discover things mythical/archetypal and to enhance the presentation of the individual. This leads us to the question of psychic reality, for the archetypal is but a collective manifestation of the unconscious psyche in Jungian terms. The psychological implications of the guests are examined in Chapter Four.

The first step in the quest for a psychic reality involves a movement away from society, which results in alienation. The positive aspect of alienation is the objectivity it gives the artists and their characters, to view the societies they condemn. As Jack Lindsay points out in his article "The Alienated Australian Intellectual," alienation in this context is to be understood "in the simple sense that they feel quite outside the thing they describe; they are cut-off and view the idiot scene from the other side of the asylum-wall" (49). However, this

objectivity results in quite different things in the works of the two writers. In Laurence, because of a strong sense of place, **myths** and heritage, the objectivity heightens the effect of self-realisation by placing the individuals within a larger national/**mythical/archetypal** framework. It enables Laurence to cross the barriers of narrow parochialism and **nationalism--for** she uses the very same barriers to shape a new reality from old. However, the case is quite different in White. Since, the locale and characters are not immediately recognisable as Australian by most people, the novels seem to project a matrix which is purely a landscape of the mind, sometimes combined with a mystical aura. White also attempts a psychological realism different from narrow nationalism or social realism. Further, White's alienation lands him in what Kirpal Singh calls "**an interesting paradox**" (119) . While White's novels transformed Australian literature from being the offspring of dreary journalism, they have not represented the Australian character in toto. The way out of the paradox may be effected by considering White's vision within a larger framework of the psycho-spiritual quest of humanity at large.

Leaving aside the debate about the Australianness or Canadianness of the writers and the much debated question of regionality versus universality, the emphasis placed on the psyche by the two writers has some interesting implications to the mode of writing evident in their works. Many of the techniques used by the writers bring out vividly their ideas on self-realisation. Two such techniques are examined in Chapter Five. It is interesting to note that the concept of doubling projects the distinction made by the writers between **inner/outer**

realities, true/false selves, which may be extended to embrace oppositions such as male/female, self/society, spirit/matter, mind/body etc. Likewise, the search for identity may be equated to, what S.H.Vatsyayan terms, as "the search for lost time" (A Sense of Time 33). The search for time can be traced in the reliance on memory by almost all the protagonists. The narrative techniques used are the flashback and flashforward modes. If the search is extended to that of selfhood (devoid of usually available identity markers like family and society), then the time-scale is universal, involving collective memory which is archetypal in the Jungian sense. Thus, the search moves outward towards social/national markers and correspondingly inward towards personal and collective unconscious which are repositories of myths.

Nearly all the techniques used by the two writers tend towards one destination, i.e., the feminine mode of writing. Though both the writers are not radically feminist in their concerns, their writing is 'feminine' in the sense in which Helene Cixous uses the term. Before discussing the feminine mode, it is important to clarify the fact that feminine is not equated to women and masculine to men. This clarification is important because we are dealing with writers of two different sexes employing similar modes of writing. The first aspect of this mode can be traced to the use of subversion by the writers which was discussed earlier. Both the writers use, what Veronica Brady calls "the mode of introversion and passivity, the mode of Narcissus and of Orpheus, exploring the world by means of the

self" (in Who is She? 178). These elements correspond with the elements Freud identified with the feminine--"narcissism, passivity and masochism" (Brady 186). The narcissistic elements may be traced in the quests of the protagonists in search of themselves and this is reflected in the narratives through the use of mirror images (discussed in Chapter Five). The passivity of **the** questers is revealed in their acceptance of the cosmic, **suprapersonal** and things beyond intellectual grasp. For Elizabeth Hunter, the "gift" of grace is given notwithstanding her many weaknesses. For Morag, it is not her reason which provides solutions to the riddles of life and art, but her intuitive understanding of the flight of the blue heron and Royland's acceptance of his loss of magical powers. The masochistic element may be traced to the pervasiveness of suffering in the fiction of White and Laurence. The realisation of one's sins and guilts and atoning for them parallels the confrontation of one's shadow in Jungian psychoanalytic terms. It also refers to the acceptance of one's body, one's frailties and omissions. Both White and Laurence emphasise the need for a state of "silence, simplicity and humility" combined with intuitive powers. The feminine mode may also be found in the use of circular time which proceeds infinitely and in the reliance on myths, dreams and archetypes.

So far, we discussed the frames which provide structures for the fiction of the two writers, viz., their existentialist-humanist position, their deconstruction of social **reality**, their emphasis on psychic reality and their use of the feminine mode of writing. Such common foundations lead to certain conclusions: the androgynous nature of the creative mind and the multicultural

perspectives available to writers and readers alike. While androgyny enables writers to cross the barriers imposed by sex and gender, the multicultural method enables the readers to inscribe ideas characteristic of a culture into texts of other cultures. In this **thesis**, the Vedantic ideas accessible to the Indian readers were inscribed into Australian and Canadian texts. Further, the use of the multicultural method offers scope to transcend confines imposed on the readers and writers by nation, sex, culture or age. Combined with the interdisciplinary mode, this method paves a way for the development of post-colonial criticism away from merely thematic studies. Such studies were essential to start the process of reading post-colonial texts. However, the formulation of new models of post-colonial critical theories is aided by experimentation such as the present study.

Notes

Chapter I

¹ In her article "**The** Hatching Process: The **Female's** Struggle for Identity in Four Novels by Patrick White," Phyllis Fahrie Edelson makes an apt comparison between the struggle for identity of "**females** in male-dominated societies" to "the psychological birth of the human infant" described by the psychiatrist Margaret Mahler (229). Like the human infant, women in society move from "a period of **differentiation**, condemned as rebellion **by** their social group" to "a period of practising independence, **in** some way separate **from** their social milieu." Finally, if successful, this leads "to a consolidation of self and re-entry into the social order on their own terms" (230). A parallel movement can be easily established in the identity quests of women in White and Laurence. The breaking of social norms or codes of conduct is not **merely** a rebellion but a way by which these women realise their "self-worth" and "individuality" as will be shown in the rest of the chapter.

² In her article, Constance Rooke makes a similar observation:

He [Jason] is proud ... of her intelligence, but wishes it had been granted to his sons instead. So Hagar is courageous, proud, **brainy--everything** that her father admires; and she is also female, so that these virtues are perceived as useless ("A Feminist Reading of '**The Stone Angel**'" 28).

3 Coral Ann Howells **makes** a related argument to show how Laurence's women express their deepest desires and resistances through "**fantasies**, daydreams and nightmares" or "the subtexts of inner-space discourses."

Female voices speak out of domestic spheres and nurturing roles, never openly dissenting from them any more than their mothers had done, and indeed in their own lives confirming traditional cultural patterns ("Weaving Fabrications" in Colin Nicholson ed. Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Margaret Laurence 94-5).

The internalisation of their parents' values by Hagar, Stacey, Vanessa and Morag confirms this aspect. **Howells'** statement also proves my argument about the subtle deviations from social norms of the Laurentian protagonists.

Chapter II

In her book Patrick White's Fiction: The Paradox of Fortunate Failure (1986), Carolyn Bliss lists the crucial functions served by the coda-like last chapter of the novel. These functions include: (i) the portrayal of Laura as "the inheritor of Voss' experience" (79), (ii) identifying Mercy, Topp and Pringle as Laura's heirs and (iii) what Bliss calls "a parting view of Laura and a chance to gauge how far back into life she has ventured" (80). Bliss cites Laura's determination to stay at Belle's party and her rummaging for lozenges at the end of the novel as instances to show Laura's failure to sustain the state of grace. Disagreeing with Carolyn Bliss, I would argue that these very instances show Laura's successful re-entry into society.

² This instance is of interest in many ways. It is a childish view of love. But that the child is perceptive is seen in Vanessa linking the picture of the barbaric queen "keening her unrequited love" to her Aunt Edna who dismisses Jimmy Lorimer's proposal. Vanessa understands the total mismatch of her mental picture of love and the reality she faces in seeing Aunt Edna crying in the night, for she dismisses Jimmy Lorimer only because the alliance would displease Grandfather Connor. Clara Thomas makes a perceptive observation that the stories not only show Vanessa's emotional maturing but her

growing awareness of appropriate and inappropriate modes of fiction, of the insufficiencies of the high romantic mode for the actual presentations of life's losses and agonies (The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence 103).

³ It is worthwhile to note that similar conclusions are drawn by Pamela McCallum. In her article "Communication and History: Themes in Innis and Laurence," she attempts to apply Harold Innis' ideas on Canadian economic history and on communications to The Diviners. Her conclusions can be summed up as follows: (i) "Writing is a means by which Morag can both formalize her denied past feelings and criticize them for the greater perception of present understanding"; (ii) While reworking lived experiences, Morag's novels also remove them "from the limited particularity" and (iii) Morag's novels mediate between "individual experience and the broad socio-historical patterns suggested by the tales" (12).

The distrust regarding the power of language to express one's experiences and thoughts are voiced by many protagonists in Patrick White's fiction. Some of the instances are as follows:

Theodora Goodman in The Aunt's Story concludes that "words, whether written or spoken, were at most frail slat bridges over chasms." Elizabeth Hunter in The Eye of the Storm reflects that "you can never convey in words the utmost in experience." Mary Hare to **Himmelfarb**: "'Oh, words, words!'" she cried, brushing them off with freckled hands. 'I do not understand what they **mean**'" (Riders in the Chariot). Mary Hare is of the view that "the truth is what I understand. Not in words. I have not the gift for words. But **know**." In spite of realising the gap between words and thoughts, Laurence's protagonists are frantic to explain themselves and do so in their silent pleas. For instance, Hagar, Rachel and Stacey constantly plead "**Bram**, listen--," "Nick? **Listen--**" and "**Mac--let** me explain" in The Stone Angel. A Jest of God and The Fire-Dwellers respectively. For these characters, completely articulate speech is possible only when there is a loss of conscious control as is seen in Rachel speaking in tongues at the Tabernacle and Stacey's drunken speech at Thor Thorlakson's party.

5 Morag's naming of the plants in her garden is very similar to what Mary Daly describes as "new naming." In her book, Beyond God the Father. Daly speaks of Adam's naming in the Genesis story as a "false naming" in which women and the world have been described from men's point of view. Citing Daly, Carol Christ remarks that "[a]s women begin to name the world for themselves not only will they create new life possibilities for women, they will also upset the world order that has been taken for granted for centuries" (Diving Deep and Surfacing 24) .

⁶ Such attitudes to words by Vanessa, Morag and Alex afford interesting interpretations. In an article entitled "Intersecting Marginalities: Post-colonialism and Feminism," W.D.Ashcroft considers language as an oppressive weapon which marginalises colonials and women. Curiously enough, strategies used by the three protagonists match those forwarded by Ashcroft to resist the hegemony of language. Such strategies include authenticating the existing language to the particular situation, using language as a tool for constructing a different reality and gaining power through the process of naming (27) . The parallels in the novels are quite direct.

Chapter III

¹ In her interesting study of the 'divine fools' in White's novels, Patricia Morley also places them in the long tradition of the fool in cultural history and in literature. Some of the 'fool' figures that she mentions include Perceval in the Arthurian legend, Fool in Shakespeare's King Lear. Myshkin in Dostoevsky's The Idiot. Little Pip in Melville's Moby Dick and Mr. Feeble-minded in Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress (The Mystery of Unity 85-95).

It is interesting to note an echo of these ideas in Margaret Laurence's "A Statement of Faith" (published in George Woodcock's A Place to Stand On 60) and Patrick White's "Credo" (quoted in Patrick White Speaks 197). Quoting a poem/prayer from Rev. Lois Wilson's Like a Mighty River. Laurence affirms her

faith in love and hope as redeeming factors of the spirit of humanity:

It's so easy
and so arrogant
to think that God
speaks only English
and works only through Christians.
Help me, O God,
to relate to those
other living faiths
with openness and trust.

White, on the other hand, rests his belief

not in God, but a Divine Presence of which Jesus, the Jewish Prophets, the Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi and Co. are the more comprehensible manifestations the Tere-sas, St. John of the Cross, Thomas Merton, — all these along with the anonymous who lift us from the gutters, wiping the vomit from our lips, who comfort us as our limbs lie paralysed on the pavement, feed us within their limited means, and close our eyes--these humble everyday saints created for our consolation by the same mysterious universal Presence ignored, cursed, derided, or intermittently worshipped by the human race.

³ Pointing to the difficulty and provisionality in grasping the superpersonal cosmic reality in terms of the personal, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, in his book Eastern Religions and Western Thought, quotes Sankara's distinction between the absolute self, the divine person, and the human individual.

Therefore the unconditioned self, being beyond speech and mind, undifferentiated and one, is designated as "not this, not this"; when it has the limiting adjuncts of the body and organs which are characterized by imperfect knowledge, desire, and work, it is called the empirical individual self; and when the self has the limitation of the creative power manifesting through eternal and unlimited knowledge, it is called the inner ruler and divine person. The same self, as by its nature transcendent, absolute, and pure, is called the immutable and supreme self (29).

This commentary by Śankara on Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad points out both the multifaceted nature of the self and the problem of

defining the self in terms of any one feature.

⁴ Self **differentiated** as subject and object finds its parallel in the Self/Other distinction much debated by Feminist, **Post-colonialist** and Existentialist thinkers. **Simone** de Beauvoir's question in her book The Second Sex. "Why is **woman** the **Other?**", is crucial because it differentiates clearly between the self as "free, determining being who defines the meaning of ... existence" and the other as "the object whose meaning is determined" by "the definitions, tables, and essences limiting ... existence" (Rosemarie Tong. Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction 6). In the colonial situation, Self/Other refers to the distinction made between the coloniser and the colonised. From this basic situation, further distinctions between black and white, male and female arise (the specific references here are to works like Albert **Memmi's** The Coloniser and the Colonised, **Aimé** Césaire's Discourse on Colonialism. 0. **Mannoni's** Prospero and Caliban and Frantz Fanon's Black Skin. White Masks). In Existentialist thought, this reference is directed towards Jean Paul Sartre's distinction between **Being-in-itself**, Being-for-itself and Being-for-others in his book Being and Nothingness.

⁵ The existential basis for this argument can be found in Heidegger's concept of the '**moment** before **death**.' Commenting on this, John Macquarrie observes:

Death is not merely a negative phenomenon. To anticipate death with resoluteness is to find a certain wholeness in it. It sets a boundary to my existence and so makes possible a unity of existence. [It is] a kind of eternity within time. It is the **moment** in which my past, present, and future are gathered into the unity of the resolute self (Existentialism 218) .

On the one hand, this statement refers to death as a **meeting** point of '**essence** and **existence**' or to put it differently, '**self** and **other**.' On the other hand, it refers to the moment of conjunction of the past, present and future. Time, at this point, is not linear and discrete but a unitary whole. This circularity can be found in the quests of almost all the protagonists. However, the '**time**' element involved will be discussed in detail in the Chapter on Techniques.

A different mode of Biblical interpretation can be found in David Jeffrey's article "Biblical **Hermeneutic** and Family History in Contemporary Canadian Fiction: **Wiebe** and **Laurence**." Jeffrey draws attention to the "**basic** inner rhetorical pattern" that can be discerned in the "typical Biblical model." He compares The Stone Angel and the Book of Isaiah in this light and comes to the conclusion that "the point of Laurence's evocation of the Genesis story is its Pauline hermeneutical understanding, and her "old covenant" Hagar delineates a binary structure to which "a new covenant" understanding is the presupposed complement" (99).

⁷ As a point of contention, it may be argued that Humanism is incompatible with the metaphysical and transcendental aspects of the works of the two writers. Nicola Abbagnano defines Humanism as a broad concept which embraces doctrines as different as Communism, Pragmatism, **Personalism** and Existentialism ("Humanism" 72). Hence, it becomes necessary to define the term in the sense in which I have used it. White and Laurence emphasise "the value and dignity" of the individual, but steadily move forward to embrace "human nature, its limits, or its

interests" as their **ultimate** themes. Further, in stressing human freedom, they see "traditional hierarchical orders an obstacle rather than an aid" (Abbagnano 70) . This is evident in the scepticism expressed by the protagonists about traditional religions. The works of the two writers are also **"permeated by the spirit of tolerance"** and "diversity of beliefs" (Abbagnano 71). Thus, the protagonists choose from among various beliefs ranging from orthodox Christianity to aboriginal religion. Lastly, Humanism has been used to designate both **Personalism/Spiritualism** which affirms human capacity "to contemplate the eternal truths or, ... to enter into a relationship with transcendent reality" and **Existentialism** which affirms "human subjectivity" (Abbagnano 72). These apparently contradictory doctrines are combined by White and Laurence. Even while exalting the soul, like the humanists, White and Laurence focus on "the body and that which pertains to it" (Abbagnano 70). The failure to notice the broader base of Humanism results in the questioning of the humanistic concerns of the two writers.

[There are no notes to Chapter IV]

Chapter V

¹ The use of the river image to denote the continuous flow of time is a trait that can be discerned from Heraclitus down to Herman Hesse. According to S.H. Vatsyayan, this image success-

fully captures the "timeless co-presence" of events for "in a river one can travel upstream as well as down." It also brings attention to memory which "has a non-uniform, dynamic order, commensurate with our experience of time as. a non-uniform, dynamic flow" (A Sense of Time 26).

² Manly Johnson uses Berndt's summary of the doctrine of dreamtime to point out the balancing of opposing qualities and characters in White's novels, quoting The Solid Mandala as an example.

... the fixation or instituting of things in an enduring form, and the simultaneous endowment of all things--including man, and his condition of life--with their good and/or bad properties (Iconography of Religions vs Australian Aboriginal Religion 7).

This, interestingly enough, refers back to the discussion of the double in the preceding section. Both Patrick White and Margaret Laurence have used the techniques of the double to expose the good and bad in individuals and in society in general. While White may be credited with a knowledge of aboriginal mythology, Laurence's usage is purely accidental.

³ The epigraph from Gerald Moore's The Chosen Tongue to Clara Thomas' book The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence clearly explicates the significance of the serpent eating its own tail and the Kunapipi ritual. Here is the quotation:

The tropical forest does not evoke symbolism of a seasonal death followed after some interval by a seasonal resurrection, but rather a continuous, unbroken process of decay and renewal. Thus the snake's ever-devouring mouth expresses life drawing its sustenance from decay and death, even as the young shoots of the forest do (3).

Peter Beatson echoes this idea when he talks of **"the twin spiral"** in White's novels "in which processes of degeneration and regeneration are locked together in a vortex, highlighting each other by contrast and relief" (The Eye in the Mandala 54) .

⁴ One inevitable question which arises **from** this view is whether the **preference** of circular over linear time by the two writers amounts to a rejection of patriarchy? Though the answer, **prima facie**, is affirmative, more research has to be done to justify the conclusion.

⁵ That this description and story owes a lot to Sidney Nolan's Eliza Fraser paintings is acknowledged by White himself. For a closer reading of the versions of the myth and its connection to the paintings, see Kay Schaffer's "Australian Mythologies: The Eliza Fraser Story and Constructions of the Feminine in Patrick White's A Fringe of Leaves and Sidney Nolan's 'Eliza Fraser' Paintings." Kunapipi XI. 2 (1989): 1-15.

⁶ This fantasy closely resembles the first theatrical performance in the Australian penal colony so well re-created by Thomas Keneally in The Play-makers

⁷ There are critical debates about the **artificiality** of Hagar's chronological memories. **Simone** Vauthier is of the view that the unequal narrative sequence "leads to the discrepancy between remembering and remembered time; chronological and psychological time; telling time and remembering time" ("Note on the Narrative **Voice(s)** in The Stone Angel" 136). On the other hand, Reingard M. Nischik considers the flashbacks to the past as revealing "not only what kind of person Hagar is but also how she has developed into what she is" ("Multiple Plot in Margaret

Laurence's The Stone Angel" 126). It also enables the writer to distinguish between what Wayne Booth calls **"telling"** or "showing" (**Reingard**Nischik 128).

⁸ The technical devices used in Laurence's The Diviners have attracted a lot of critical attention. They include: Sherill E. Grace's "Crossing Jordan: Time and **Memory** in the Fiction of Margaret Laurence," Ildiko de Papp **Carrington's** "Tales in the Telling: The Diviners as Fiction About Fiction," and Terry Goldie's "Folklore, Popular Culture and **Individuation** in Surfacing and The Diviners."

In The Diviners, Laurence places emphasis on re-telling rather than telling. Thus, there is a re-working of history and there is an enormous range of stylistic variation. Lynette Hunter makes an interesting comment on the **Memorybank** Movie, "Once upon a Time There Was"—"The story is told in the historical present, a tense conveying a sense of fatalism as if everything is known before it happens." Hunter quotes the example "Mrs. Pearl ... has come to Morag's house" ("Consolation and Articulation in Margaret Laurence's The Diviners" 136) .

⁹ There are detailed analyses of the opening chapters of White's novels. In his article "Patrick White: Chaos **Accepted**," Peter Shrubbs critically examines the opening chapter of Voss. Similarly, John **Colmer** in "Patrick White's A Fringe of Leaves" and Carolyn Bliss in the chapter on A Fringe of Leaves in her book Patrick White's Fiction: The Paradox of Fortunate Failure discuss the prologue-like opening scene performed by '**minor actors**.'

10 In a well-argued article, Paul M. St. Pierre **sees the** spiritual movement of White's protagonist as a spiral. Quoting Aristotle, Paul **M.** St. Pierre recognises two types of motion: "discontinuous linear and continuous circular; natural and enforced." Citing the hurricane, dance, **mandala** and tunnel **images** as symbols of the spiral, St. Pierre sees the spiritual movement in White's novels as being "linear and circular, natural and enforced." St. Pierre's conclusions may be applied with equal validity to Laurence's novels.

As [the quester] advances along the threads of an ostensibly contracting spiral the visionary moves both towards the centre of the circle and through the hole. His journey is enforced because he cannot return to the beginning, and natural because it is continuous and circular. As the quester moves away from the beginning his enforced movement decelerates, and as he nears the end it accelerates into a natural movement; Because the "unmoved mover" motivates continuous circular motion the quester along the spiral approaches this motion as he acquires spiritual enlightenment (in Ron Shepherd and K. Singh 101).

The dominant images, in Laurence's novels, used to express the spiral are: the river flowing both ways and diviner/divining in The Diviners and the stairs which lead to light as in A Jest of God and The Stone Angel.

11 In his book Modern Fiction and Human Time: A Study of Narrative and Belief. Wesley Kort analyses the underlying **pre-**occupations with time in philosophers like Mircea Eliade, Alfred Whitehead and Martin Heidegger and relates it to works of writers like Hemingway, D.H. Lawrence, Herman Hesse, Virginia **Woolf** and others. Stating that each of the three thinkers give importance to past, present or future, he concludes by analysing the predominance of one of the three aspects of time in the writers.

Kort divides the plots in their works into three categories: rhythmic, polyphonic and **melodic**. While the three categories coalesce freely, it is easy to identify the dominant note. The fiction of White and Laurence mainly follow the melodic pattern though strains of the other two patterns are evident. In this respect, White and Laurence share a common platform with writers like Virginia **Woolf** and Herman Hesse whose works Kort analyses.

List of Works Cited

Plan:

Section I **Primary** Sources

a) Patrick White

b) Margaret Laurence

Section II **Secondary** Sources

a) Background

b) Patrick White: Books

c) Patrick White: Articles

d) Margaret Laurence: Books

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[* texts taken for detailed analysis.]

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