THE WOMEN OF PATRICK WHITE:
A MANDALIC VISION
by
John Sutherland
B.A., University of Toronto, 1957

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Department
of
English

© JOHN SUTHERLAND 1970
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

April, 1970
APPROVAL

Name: John Sutherland
Degree: Master of Arts
Title of Thesis: The Women of Patrick White: A Mandalic Vision

Examinining Committee:

__________________________
(Bruce Nesbitt)
Senior Supervisor

__________________________
(Sandra Djwa)
Examining Committee

__________________________
(Gordon Elliott)
Examining Committee

__________________________
(William New)
External Examiner
(Professor of English)
(University of British Columbia)
(Vancouver, British Columbia)

Date Approved: 13 April 1972
ABSTRACT

Patrick White's most recent novel, The Solid Mandala, not only seems a natural and logical stage in his creative development, but also suggests through its incorporation of the mandala, "a symbol of totality... its protective circle... a pattern of order", that White has been fashioning his own mandalic form all along, perhaps from as early as 1937. Certainly, recent articles for Southerly by Thelma Herring and A. P. Riemer present significant evidence in support of the view that White has used, prior to his latest novel, certain recurrent symbols which possess distinct mandala qualities; as well, these writers stress the cyclical development of these earlier works.

However, it is Patrick White's mandalic vision of women that is my main concern. I find that The Solid Mandala affords a point of view that encompasses all his female characters, from Mrs. Whale of "The Twitching Colonel" to Mrs. Poulter in The Solid Mandala. Specifically, it is Arthur Brown's remarkable dance of the mandala (256) that serves as the focal point for such an expansive vision. The four-cornered dance is a symbolic projection of the collective values of womankind in his fiction and drama,


despite the fact that we must understand first the suggested duality of
the two brothers of *The Solid Mandala*: Arthur in his Tiresias-like
role as seer, and Waldo in his motherly role as guardian of moral
rectitude. The dance reflects, in antithetical balance, a totality of
impression for what might be termed the universally acknowledged Woman.

In the first corner, we have Arthur's own dance, "Half clumsy,
half electric", reminiscent of "gods dying on a field of crimson velvet,
against the discords of human voices", offering "what he knew from light
or silences" (256). This is strongly linked in the suggestiveness of
movement and image to qualities inherent in White's earlier creations
of Alys Browne, Connie Tiarks, Theodora Goodman and others.

The dance in Mrs. Poulter's corner is crowded with sensuous
images, of "ripening pears", of "little rootling suckling pigs", of
"skeins of golden honey" (257); nevertheless, the dance tokens, in its
more subdued moments, a lack of ultimate fulfilment. In balanced
contrast to the quiescent moods and rhythms of Arthur's own dance,
Mrs. Poulter's dance incorporates a quite different set of images
associated with such established White figures as Vic Moriarty, Alma Lusty,
Nola Boyle and Amy Parker.

The two remaining dances are similarly antithetical in nature.
In contrast to Dulcie's dance with its "ceremony of white notes", its
"twisted ropes of dark music" and its pattern of "the inextinguishable,
always more revealing eyes" (256), we are presented with a brittle
stamping, with sounds of "a shuffling of dry mud, a clattering of dead
flags" and movements of "clipped twitching" (257), remindful of the
"pinned and persecuted" (257) brother, Waldo. The former, indicative of Dulcie's goodness, naturalness and liberality, has its earlier counterparts in characters like Julia Fallon, Belle Bonner, Stella Summerhayes and Ruth Godbold; the latter, is reflected in the dry, bitter, self-seeking personages of Sidney Furlow, Catherine Standish, Thelma Parker and Ursula Polkinghorn.

To trace the continuity of this vision as it takes form from that ever-expanding quaternary arrangement of White's female characters is the purpose of this paper. The introductory chapter will enlarge upon the nature and importance of the mandala symbol. Four successive chapters, each dealing with one of the four corners of the mandala figure, will present that complement of women created by White and given symbolic representation by Arthur Brown. A concluding chapter will stress the universality of this mandalic pattern as it applies to the work of Patrick White.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXAMINING COMMITTEE APPROVAL</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I  THE FOUR-SIDED MANDALA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Jung's Mandalic Theory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. White's Mandalic Vision</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II ARTHUR'S DANCE: WOMEN OF THE SPIRIT</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III MRS. POULTER'S DANCE: WOMEN OF THE FLESH</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV MALDO'S DANCE: THE ACQUISITIVE WOMEN</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V  DULCIE'S DANCE: THE ACCOMODATING WOMEN</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI CONCLUSION</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mandala symbol is explicitly central to an understanding of Patrick White's most recent novel, The Solid Mandala. Of all White's literary achievements, The Solid Mandala presents the most direct statement of concepts which make "use of a body of mystical and visionary material" quite possibly, as A. P. Riemer suggests, "derived from the writings and observations of Carl Jung." Certainly, there is a remarkable affinity between Jung's theory and White's practice. Moreover, Jung's views on the mandala in particular were delivered as a series of lectures at Yale University in 1937 and published a year later under the title of Psychology and Religion, a date that closely approximates the publication of White's novel, Happy Valley. Whether any direct and pertinent correspondences do exist between the observations carefully recorded by Carl Jung and the growing pattern of White's prose and dramatic works is less important than the assistance which Jungian tenets afford in clarifying White's own mandalic vision. For this reason, a brief investigation of those theories advanced by Jung in the 1937 Terry lectures is imperative.

Jung's Mandalic Theory

In studying the dreams of his patients, Jung became fascinated by the interesting fact that whereas the central Christian symbolism was "a Trinity", the formula of the unconscious mind was "a quaternity". Some

---

philosophers of old, Jung stated, often represented the Trinity as it was "imaginata in natura, viz., water, air and fire. The fourth constituent on the other hand was ... the earth or the body. They symbolized the latter by the Virgin. In this way they added the feminine element to their physical Trinity, producing thereby the quaternity".3

The basis for such a quaternary system of belief is traceable to many possible influences: the four seasonal cycles, the four phases of the moon, the four natural elements, the four dimensions of space, the four cardinal points of direction, the four evangelists apparent in Christian iconology, the four last things (death, judgment, heaven, hell) of that branch of theology called eschatology, the four noble truths (Satyani) of Buddha, the four forms of wisdom and their associated four colours of Tibetan Buddhism, and the Pythagorean designation of the soul as a square. Indeed it would appear that the "quaternarium or quaternity has a long history", appearing "in Christian iconology and mystical speculation" as well as "in Gnostic philosophy and from thereon down through the Middle Ages as far as the eighteenth century".4

In conjunction with and embraced by these four elemental properties lies another symbol, the circle. As Jung explained,

the image of the circle - regarded as the most perfect form since Plato's Timaeus, the prime authority of Hermetic philosophy - was also given to the most perfect substance, to the gold ... to the first created light. And because the macrocosm, the Great World, was made by the creator 'in forma rotunda et globosae', the smallest part of the whole, the point, also contains this perfect

---

3Ibid., p. 76.

4Ibid., p. 44.
nature.... This image of the Deity, dormant and concealed in matter, was what the alchemists called the original chaos, or the earth of paradise, or the round fish in the sea, or merely the rotundum or the egg. That round thing was in possession of the key which unlocked the closed doors of matter. As it is said in Timaeus, only the demiurge, the perfect being, was capable of dissolving the tetraktys, the embrace of the four elements, that is, the four constituents of the round world.\(^5\)

This latent demiurge became for many mediaeval philosophers the key to the possessing of the Philosopher's Stone which supposedly had the power of unlocking the secrets of all matter. Such a powerful being was considered a Second Adam, "the superior, spiritual man, the Adam Kadmon, often identified with Christ". While the original Adam was mortal, because he consisted of the corruptible four elements, the Second Adam was immortal because he consisted of "one pure and incorruptible essence".\(^6\)

It was believed that God, the one substance, had originally revealed himself in the form of the four elements, symbolized in mathematical representation by the four partitions of the circle; such was the vision of the Biblical Ezekiel who, when summoned by God, saw that "the spirit of the [four] living creatures was the wheels".\(^7\)

Buddhistic mandalas too were generally represented in circular fashion, often a lotus, containing a four-sided building or temple. Just as Ezekiel's fiery wheels contained the spiritual essence, the Buddhistic mandalas enclosed the figure of Buddha, the enlightened one. Jung stated:

\(^{5}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 66\)

\(^{6}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 68\)

\(^{7}\text{Ezekiel.} \ 1:20\).
Historically, as we have seen, the mandala seemed as a symbol in order to clarify the nature of the deity philosophically, or to demonstrate the same thing in a visible form for the purpose of adoration, or, as in the East, as a yantra for yoga practices. The wholeness of the celestial circle and the squareness of the earth, uniting the four principles or elements, express completeness or union. Thus the mandala has the dignity of a reconciling symbol.\(^8\)

In analysing the dreams of many patients, Jung was repeatedly confronted by the mandallic symbol. Strangely, there recurred one consistent phenomenon: "there was never a deity occupying the centre".\(^9\) Jung considered this a modern dilemma, typical of people who could not "project the divine image any longer",\(^10\) and concluded that "the modern mandala man", the complete man, had "replaced the deity".\(^11\) Man himself seemed to have been unconsciously transformed into a divine being. Jung did not see this as necessarily alarming or characteristic of man's egocentricity, but viewed it rather as a reflection of "a much needed self-control"\(^12\) in the modern mandala man, indicative of the fact that man was attempting to give meaning to his relationships with the world around him.

Several related investigations by Jung into the dream patterns of his patients and into the mystical experiences set down by such little-known mediaeval writers as Guillaume de Diguilleville not only give further

---

\(^8\) Jung, *Psychology*, p. 96.


support to Jung’s own views on the functioning of the unconscious mind, but also afford insights into Patrick White’s mandalic vision. Thus, they merit brief examination.

In his *Psychology and Religion*, Jung drew from two widely diverse dream experiences, each manifesting itself in a visual impression involving a circle, but with the added pattern of colour superimposed on the dream sequences. The first dream was of a "vertical and a horizontal circle within a centre common to both";\(^{13}\) though the vertical circle was described as a "blue disk"; the horizontal circle consisted of "four colours", yet was itself golden. The second dream, recorded centuries earlier by the mystic Digulleville, similarly was comprised of two circles, one golden and the other blue, the latter "rolling like a disk upon a great circle";\(^{14}\) when the dreamer was questioned by the guiding angel of his dream about a sudden appearance of a trinity of figures from the blue circle, he was offered an explanation in terms of three associated colours only: "The golden colour ... belongs to the Father, the red to the Son and the green to the Holy Ghost".\(^{15}\) No mention was made of the fourth colour, blue. The apparent congruency of the two dreams is evident. If the depiction of the Lord as seen by Ezekiel is added as a third vision, the strength of the parallels is even more striking:

---


\(^{14}\) *Ibid.*, p. 84.

The four had the same likeness, their construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel. And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form. And upward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were gleaming bronze, like the appearance of fire enclosed round about.  

In Digulleville's dream, in particular, the failure to obtain any explanation for the blue circle was seen by Jung as a result of a conflict within the dreamer's unconscious mind. In balanced opposition to the dreamer's desire to accept the Trinity of church dogma with its stress on the duality of Christ and Mary, the Mother of God (i.e. "the fourth primary colour [blue] symbolizing the Mother of God, the essential female spirit"\(^1\)), was the older quaternary system which emphasizes the fourfold nature "of the King and Queen of Heaven",\(^2\) Christ himself being the Trinity.

Jung postulated that, though woman was excluded from the doctrine of the Trinity since she was representative of earth only and was not divine, a female figure was necessary to the concept of the quaternity. Transmitted unconsciously through what Jung called "the archetypal patterns of the mind",\(^3\) she continued to appear mysteriously in many dreams such as that experienced by Digulleville. This unconscious awareness of the unknown woman of dreams apparently stemmed from many

\(^{1}\) Ezekiel, 1:16-27.  
\(^{2}\) Riemer, "Visions", 6.  
\(^{3}\) Jung, Psychology, p. 88.  
\(^{4}\) Ibid., p. 63.
ancient sources; as Jung pointed out, "since time immemorial man in his myths always manifested the idea of the coexistence of male and female in the same body".\textsuperscript{20} The idea of the hermaphroditic nature of the divine pair was reflected, for example, in the concept of Homo Adamicus, who though he appeared in male form, always carried Eve, his woman, with him, "concealed in his body".\textsuperscript{21} To this woman figure, Jung affixed the label, anima, "a psychical representation of the minority of female genes in a male body".\textsuperscript{22} The male counterpart composing a woman's total psychological framework was designated animus. Jung noted as well that one of the most typical manifestations of both figures was what had long been called animosity. The anima caused illogical moods, and the animus produced irritating topics and unreasonable opinions. Both were "frequent dream figures".\textsuperscript{23} Thus, by way of illustration, the inability of Digulleville in his dream to question the source of the colour blue revealed "a resistance against the female element represented by the anima".\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{White's Mandalic Vision}

The role that these concepts play in the work of Patrick White is most readily discoverable in his recent novel, \textit{The Solid Mandala}, though earlier writings too employ many of these principles with varying degrees

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 34.
\textsuperscript{21}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 90.
of emphasis and with less overall intensity of purpose.

The chief character in *The Solid Mandala* is Arthur Brown, a Pythagorean figure who is "safest with numbers",25 whose very name derives from the Celtic word for marvelous, and whose apparent naiveté belies his insights into the true nature of things. He is regarded by others as a "dill"; yet, as Thelma Herring points out, "Arthur is conceived as a person whose outward deficiencies humanize without undermining his inner perfection".26 Quietly absorbed as a child in the stories of the myths read by his father, Arthur selects the figure of Tiresias as his personal favourite:

He was only surprised they didn't notice how obviously his heart was beating when Zeus rewarded Tiresias with the gift of prophecy and a life seven times as long as lives of ordinary men. Then there was that other bit, about being changed into a woman, if only for a short time.27

It is not without significance that the twin Waldo's unfinished novel should be titled *Tiresias a Youngish Man*, that Arthur's interest in the hermaphroditic nature of man remains with him into old age, and that the womanly aspects of Arthur are stressed, especially in relationships with his twin. Waldo is fascinated by such a simple thing as Arthur's hair which lies "on the boards, in dead snippets and livelier love-knots, quite old-girlishly, if not obscenely soft";28 as a child, he would bury his face

---


26Thelma Herring, "Self and Shadow: The Quest for Totality in *The Solid Mandala*", *Southerly*, 26, 3 (1966), 188.


28Ibid., p. 20.
"in the crook of Arthur's neck, just to smell" Arthur's skin which
"Dwindled where protected to a mysterious bluish white. Almost edible."\textsuperscript{29}
Moreover, Arthur's particular gift for figures and his attachment for his mother draw him into the kitchen where "buttermaking and bread-baking" become his "solemn rites".\textsuperscript{30} Waldo's jealousy leads to his accusation that Arthur is "just a big fat helpless female",\textsuperscript{31} a comment that elicits an unspoken response: "Arthur did not tell him: If that's the way you want it",\textsuperscript{32} hinting at other moments when "their flesh was flickering, quivering together in that other darkness, which resisted all demands and judgments".\textsuperscript{33} With such a role to play, Arthur becomes an anima figure for Waldo. He proves so irritatingly perceptive that Waldo's own inadequacies and failures stand out in sharp relief against the insights of a brother who, though supposedly "not all that bright",\textsuperscript{34} possesses demiurge-like knowledge.

The hatred that he generates in Waldo is incomprehensible to Arthur. The existence of cruelty is something that Arthur seems unable to comprehend. His attempts to ferret out its nature through studying the character of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's novel, The Brothers

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. 26.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 29.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 222.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 41.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 8.
Karamazov, lead to open conflict with his brother in the public library. It is then that Arthur realizes that Waldo is what the books refer to as "a lost soul" who can never receive "enough of that love" that is "there to give" though love, as Arthur has apparently learned, is sometimes "more acceptable to some when twisted out of its true shape". Despite Waldo's search for some sort of inner reconciliation expressed through his exaggerated homage paid to the inherited traits of the Quantrell side of the family, through his clandestine transvestism in donning on occasion the dead mother's blue dress, and through his submission to Arthur's "vastly engulfing arms, which at the same time was the Gothic embrace of Anne Quantrell", Waldo rejects his twin. Arthur comes to recognize early in his quest for the meaning of totality that it is himself who is, and will remain, "the keeper of the mandalas, who must guess their final secret through touch and light"; his actions are motivated by the philosophic code: "I generate light, and darkness is not of my nature; there is therefore nothing better or more venerable than the conjunction of myself with my brother." Nevertheless, he fails in his efforts to be himself a mandala, a reconciling symbol. He does not see that "true' twins are two halves of a single soul" and

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., p. 270.
38 Ibid., p. 198.
39 Ibid., p. 232.
40 Ibid., p. 220.
that "Waldo, prig that he is, is yet a necessarily acceptable portion of the totality". 41

Arthur, then, is not the mythical demiurge; he fails to bestow all his love, expressed through his four coloured mandalas, to unite these symbolic representations of "the four constituents of the round world". 42 In the end, he loses the colourless, knotted glass taw, the one he loves best of all, and the one he feels he should see "his face inside", 43 but cannot. Though he seems somehow aware of the presence of the conciliatory mandalic symbol in its many natural forms - in the rock crystal where "God can be found", 44 in Mr. Saporta's Turkish rug that "has the mandala in the centre", 45 in Dulcie's Star of David that he comes to see is "another mandala", 46 in the patterning of his own strange, four-cornered mandalic dance for Mrs. Poulter - he is unable to voice its ultimate nature. Arthur's limitations are perhaps describe best in his visit with the dying and speechless Mr. Feinstein:

Then Arthur knew he could never explain what was too big, an enormous marble, filling, rolling round intolerably inside his speechless mouth.

He had sat down opposite the old man so that they were knee to knee. He was holding Mr. Feinstein's cold claws in his own warmer, spongy hands. Otherwise there was nothing

42Jung, Psychology, p. 66.
43White, Solid Mandala, p. 220.
44Ibid., p. 80.
46Ibid.
he could do.

'The mandala,' he was trying to say, and did, but mouthing it so idiotically, he too might have had a stroke. Then they sat looking at each other from opposite ends of the tunnel, in a light of such momentary intensity,"Arthur at least was too confused to know exactly what he saw."

His affliction, White seems to be suggesting, is comparable to the modern dilemma deduced by Jung from the dream patterns of his patients: the mandalic centre reflects no redeeming figure for the modern man. A. P. Riemer offers an extended view of this:

Arthur's goodness, his saintliness, makes him give away his most treasured possessions, and while this clearly establishes his worth and humanity, it means that, with tragic irony, he denies himself the ability of becoming divine. At the end he repudiates his visions; the repudiation is an act of supreme charity, but personally, for Arthur, its consequences are tragic.48

Though Arthur fails in his efforts to understand the selfishness and bitterness governing Waldo, he does attain divinity of a sort through others, especially Mrs. Poulter; having had her own faith shattered in witnessing the cruel death of Waldo, she seems willing to accept Arthur "as token of everlasting life,"49 and promises to set aside each Tuesday and Friday for him. Arthur will be her saint if she can "still believe in saints".50

For Arthur Brown, the mandala is "a symbol of totality.... a pattern of order super - imposed on - psychic - chaos";51 for Jung, it

---

47Ibid., p. 268.
48Riemer, "Visions", 8.
49White, Solid Mandala, p. 305.
50Ibid., p. 307.
51Ibid., p. 229.
is a reconciling symbol; for Patrick White, it has become a point of view, a way of looking at characters and their interrelationships so that "characters and situations always stand for more than themselves; infinity attends them, though they remain individuals they expand to embrace it and summon it to embrace them." 52 There has been a progression in White's work, in the sense that his writings show consistency of theme and symbol which recur yet expand in meaning and significance. This pattern of order that White has constructed, from "The Twitching Colonel" of 1937 to The Solid Mandala in 1966, is truly mandalic in its vision. A brief examination of recurrent motifs in White's earlier works, especially those already suggested in approximation with those concerns that interested Carl Jung, should serve to illustrate this continuity of vision imposed by White on his fiction and drama.

Jung, quoting Plato's Timaeus, sought to clarify the mandalic concept involving the "embrace of the four elements" which required only an individual with rare insight, a demiurge, who "was capable of dissolving the tetraktys". 53 White, both in his employment of objects possessing either a squareness or a roundness associated with the idea of permanency or completeness, and in his depiction of characters involved in a continual struggle to unlock and extract the secrets behind these objects—symbols, shows remarkably similar interests.


53 Jung, Psychology, p. 67.
One of White's earliest short stories, "The Twitching Colonel", for example, presents an aging Colonel Trevellick, feeding on memories of golden brown Indian temples, grating prayer wheels and Buddhistic lotus thrones, much to the consternation of his simple landlady, Mrs. Whale. Trevellick is "breaking up", determined, it appears, to "strip[himself of] the onion-folds of prejudice, till standing naked though conscious", he sees himself "complete or else consumed like the Hindu conjuror who is translated into space". Only through the "decomposition of substance" may he seemingly find salvation from "the frail symbol of reality which man clutches". Finally, caught in a blazing fire, Trevellick dances his imminent release from the world on the rooftop, assured that only "now the houses are alive with a square and livid reality". Ironically, such freedom involves personal sacrifice, and Trevellick, like Arthur Brown of The Solid Mandala, fails in his bid to communicate to others the nature of his vision. The horrified spectators, including Mrs. Whale, creep into their houses, afraid of "something[they] do not understand".

Over the next thirty years, White's novels, plays and short stories display an amazing consistency of interest in characterizing

55 Ibid., 606.
56 Ibid., 607.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., 608.
59 Ibid., 609.
individuals, generally isolated in some way from the commonness of experience shared by others, who engage in a quest for a meaning that transcends the ordinariness and restriction of their lives. This is evident in White's plays, by way of illustration. The young artist of The Ham Funeral, intrigued by the landlord's observation that a "table is love... if you can get to know it", soon realizes that "people living together in a house walk with their hands outstretched", but only occasionally "touch one another". "Once," he states, "I almost took the world in my hands. It was a lovely ball of coloured glass". In order to cast off those limitations of life which he has imposed upon himself, the young man must escape the confinements of the seclusion which the house affords, if he wishes to convert potential experience into actuality. In Jungian terms, one must seek to embrace the squareness of existence within a larger, more complete understanding of life, suggested in the symbol of the mandala, the circle of coloured glass. Later plays, too, incorporate the same symbols with different though related connotations. Roy Child, the youthful narrator of The Season at Sarsaparilla, decries the wasted lives of the townspeople who sleep and dream "in the brick boxes" of their homes, people who "call out" yet receive no answer. Miss Docker,

---

60 Patrick White, Four Plays (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), p. 27.
61 Ibid., p. 46.
62 Ibid., p. 54.
63 Ibid., p. 118.
64 Ibid.
the central figure in *A Cheery Soul*, glorying in the self-righteous fulfilment of her own life, forces the sum total of her life-long achievements, a "box of photos", on the unwilling residents of the Sundown Home for Old People at Sarsaparilla. Miriam Sword (*Night on Bald Mountain*), driven to desperate measures by isolation within her own household, sacrifices her ancestral ring, the last possession that links her to a more meaningful past, for the escape offered by a carton of whisky.

This symbolic interplay of square and circle is embodied in White's novels as well, giving added significance to theme, heightening contrasts, or rounding out character.

Themes are often carefully terminated by such symbolic suggestiveness. Having introduced disorder and violence into other lives, Amy Quong quietly contemplates the smoke rising from a lustrous incense bowl, its roundness reflecting for her "nothing of the past", for to touch the bowl is to touch "not conscience, but achievement". Elyot Standish gains personal freedom in the final recognition that both he and the squareness of his house are receptacles, the one containing the material possessions of those who have "lingered in its rooms", the other the aspirations of those he has "come in contact with", as though one is "inside the other, leading to an infinity of other boxes, to an infinity of purpose, 

---


uniting "the themes of so many other lives". Theodora Goodman finds, at last, her true identity in "the blank house" devoid of all links to her past. Voss, rejecting the security offered by a "solid house and ... the kind of life that is lived in such houses", finds fulfilment instead in his struggle against a hostile landscape, enduring hardships that test a man's will to power. The Parker's young grandson peers through the roundness of a piece of coloured glass given to him by his grandmother, and sees "the crimson mystery of the world" that challenges his future. The varied lives of four people, united only in their common pursuit of the mystery implied by a fiery, heavenly chariot, are ultimately fused in the whirling figures of Alf Dubbo's painting of the "Four Living Creatures".

Characterization too is enhanced by the power of these same symbols. The sense of confinement within a quaternity expressed by box-like structures or within an enclosure of globular surfaces gives an extended meaning to the complexities of motivation which dominate certain characters. Thus, Connie Tiark's choice of "the little cloudy box with the faded stars" as a gift for Elyot Standish because she wants "to

68 Ibid.
73 White, Living and the Dead, p. 218.
give something, to express by some proxy for words", that fail her always, 74 is an abstraction of her own personality; just as Con the Greek's little tin box with its treasure of private yet forgotten articles contains really the "essence"75 of the man; or, as Alf Dubbo’s tin box holds "everything he did, any fruit of his own meaningful relationship with life". 76 Similarly, the marble-like eyes of Arthur Quong with their white circles enclose "not only the iris, but the whole secret being"77 of the man; General Sokolnikov displays self-assurance in his own creative powers by blatantly ascribing artistic merit to a gob of his spittle; 78 Mary Hare, like Colonel Trevellick, seeks some understanding of her inner self, of "what is at the centre, if enough ... is peeled away". 79

Finally, important contrasts, essential to a more complete interpretation of theme and character, are developed in conjunction with the use of these two symbols. We learn, for example, that Theodora Goodman, torn between a denial of the sorrow she has witnessed and a search for personal joy, must learn to accept the unity of these "two

---

74 Ibid.
75 White, Tree of Man, p. 242.
76 White, Riders, p. 364.
77 White, Happy Valley, p. 246.
78 White, Aunt's Story, p. 162.
79 White, Riders, p. 56.
irreconcilable halves" of existence; that, though Amy and Stan Parker catch brief glimpses of the extraordinary behind the ordinariness of their daily routine, their lives still stand "four-square"; and that, for Mordecai Himmelfarb, an awareness of the divine purpose of God in a table accounts for little in saving the wife he loves.

It would prove challenging and rewarding to pursue and evaluate more fully the extent and significance of this symbolic integration in the writings of Patrick White. One might incorporate, as well, his concern with colour patterns, anima figures and hermaphroditic concepts. Nevertheless, the province of this paper lies not in that direction, but along more definitive lines, dependent, however, on a knowledge of these tenets and the fact that White's employment of them was not accidental, whatever their source. By his use of recurrent symbols, themes and characters, White has superimposed on his material a pattern of order that is mandalic in the limitations such a vision implies, yet that is remarkable for the degree of variation in approach to theme, setting and character permitted within such restricted guidelines. That he has chosen the mandala itself as the focal point for characterization in his latest novel gives further credence to the importance that White has come to place on such a concept. As that mystical mandala holds the key to an unravelling of life's mysteries, The Solid Mandala affords an important

80 White, Aunt's Story, p. 272.
81 White, Tree of Man, p. 69.
82 White, Riders, p. 152.
point of view from which to examine a particular aspect of White's fiction and drama: his all-encompassing view of womankind.

One of the central themes that remains consistent in White's work is "the infinite possibilities of the single personality"; however, it is not an analysis of the "infinite possibilities" of any one character that is the subject of this paper, but rather a more synoptic view of the collective character of White's fictional women. Such a complete or mandalic vision is specifically suggested by Arthur Brown's four-cornered mandala dance, a dance that reflects in antithetical balance a totality of impression for what might be termed the universally acknowledged Woman. Certainly, the four interpretative points of the dance "function almost as an icon denoting the presence of the Deity or of an equivalent idea", and Arthur, in his role as seer, fashions for Mrs. Poulter an image of Woman that is archetypal in design. It may well be that "White's greatest gift lies in his power to create the female character"; undoubtedly, Arthur's quaternally patterned dance provides a basis from which to investigate the nature and scope of such particular creative genius.

83 Harry Heseltine, "Patrick White's Style", Quadrant, 7 (Winter 1963), 63.
84 Jung, Psychology, p. 44.
ARTHUR'S DANCE: WOMEN OF THE SPIRIT

Though two of the four corners of Arthur's mandala dance in The Solid Mandala are devoted seemingly not to feminine figures at all, but rather to Waldo and Arthur Brown, one must understand clearly the importance that White gives to an early assertion in the novel that "the two brothers" are "two twins".¹

Erich Neumann, in his book The Origins and History of Consciousness, discusses a common "motif of hostile twin brothers", appearing when "the male attains to self-consciousness by dividing himself into two opposing elements, one destructive and the other creative".² In The Solid Mandala, White has paired these elements of opposition in the form of two brothers representative of the struggle between the conscious and the unconscious: Arthur tries desperately to unite their two separate lives into a harmony of understanding, while Waldo seeks to rid himself of any association with a twin whose presence proves a hindrance to the establishment of his own identity. Neumann credits Jungian analytical psychology with this concept of the "psychic archetype - the twin brothers locked in a life-and-death struggle".³ In White's novel, the fact that Arthur and Waldo are twins is further complicated by what Neumann refers to as the natural disposition of every individual "to be physically and psychically bisexual, the

³Ibid., p. 99.
differential development of our culture [forcing] him to thrust the
contrasexual element into the unconscious. Hence,

'feminine' or 'soulful' characteristics are considered undesirable
in a boy, at least in our culture. Such a one-sided accentuation
of one's own specific sexuality ends by constellating the
contrasexual elements in the unconscious, in the form of the
anima in men and the animus in women which, as part souls,
remain unconscious and dominate the conscious–unconscious
relationship.

Thus, when Waldo puts on the clothes of the dead mother, and when Arthur
assumes a feminine role for the satisfaction of Waldo, one is witnessing
the divided halves of an essentially single personality struggling to
overcome a "tension of opposites" to form a "structural wholeness ... symbolized by the mandala".

As well, through the mandala dance, Arthur is attempting to
synthesize into an even more complete pattern his own life and the lives
of the three who have become, in essence, part of himself; in dancing
"the passion of all their lives", he gives conscious expression to
private emotions and recollections normally relegated to the regions of the
unconscious mind. He is, as Erich Neumann indicates,

pre-eminently the man with immediate inner experience who, as
seer, artist, prophet, or revolutionary, sees, formulates, sets
forth, and realizes the new values, the 'new images'. His

4Ibid., p. 403.
5Ibid., p. 404.
6Ibid., p. 417.
7White, Solid Mandala, p. 257.
orientation comes from the 'voice' from the unique, inner utterance of the self, which has all the immediacy of a 'dictate'.

The mandala dance, in its total quaternal performance, becomes for Arthur a momentary yet intensely ruling passion; White's depiction of Arthur as an exhausted figure, depleted of all vitality, as though, at the end of the dance, "he had been spewed up, spat out, with the breeze stripping him down to the saturated skin", supports the idea that such a revelation of inner experience truly possesses all the "immediacy of a 'dictate' ".

In the first corner, Arthur continues a "dance of himself. Half clumsy, half electric"; the dance is reminiscent of "gods dying on a field of crimson velvet, against the discords of human voices". Arthur offers in prayful mood what he knows "from light or silences", of people safely locked "in a wooden house," of the "moon, anaesthetized by bottled cestrum". He dances "the disc of the orange sun above icebergs", which is in a sense his beginning, and shall perhaps "be his end". The dance is strongly linked in its suggestiveness of movement and image to qualities inherent in many of White's earlier created women characters. They, like Arthur, are outsiders, yet seem extraordinary in their efforts to "conquer the ordinary" in their lives though it means "sacrificing normal values and so coming into conflict with the collective". Such

8 Neumann, Consciousness, p. 375.
9 White, Solid Mandala, p. 257.
10 Ibid., p. 256.
11 Neumann, Consciousness, p. 375.
12 Ibid.
personages, motivated by the dictates of some driving inner spirit, are generally isolated individuals rejected by those who represent the collective mass of humanity; the success or failure of their search for self-fulfilment varies within the context of events as White determines them.

The first of these Women of the Spirit appears in Happy Valley. Alys Browne is the prototype for "White's shy, ungainly heroines whose only reward is to serve those who pity or despise them and to glean from life more than others harvest". 13 Geoffrey Dutton calls her "a typical White figure, sensitive and indrawn in a harsh, outgoing environment"; 14 as Harry Heseltine points out,

Alys Browne, the lonely, sensitive music teacher, provided White with an image of personality which has fascinated him ever since. There is in his work a long line of isolated women, deprived for the most part of active participation in the physical world, but deriving interest in White's eyes from their pursuit of the inner life. 15

White prefaced Happy Valley with the words, "It is impossible to do away with the law of suffering, which is the one indispensable condition of our being. Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone"; 16 Alys Brown's existence exemplifies both the condition and result implied in this slice of Gandhian philosophy.


16 Patrick White, Happy Valley (London: Harrap, 1939), p. 7. All references are to this edition.
Alys, granted in her early youth a large measure of independence by a neglectful father and reared for a time within the ordered confines of a convent, learns the meaning of loneliness, and "like most lonely people living alone", says she likes "living alone" (39), isolated from the discords of human voices in Happy Valley. By many of the residents in the valley, Alys Browne is considered either snob or neurotic; yet in introducing her to the reader, White is careful to point out that she has "at least a spine", you do not feel she is "a dangling bundle of chiffon rags" (38). Alys occasionally dresses in mauve, "a dangerous colour" (38), takes pride in her reputation "of being pretty well read" (39), cultivates a "mysterious look" (39) to accompany this role, deliberately changes the spelling of her Christian name of "Alice", and accepts the post of companion to a Mrs. Stopford-Champernowne in order to accumulate enough money to permit her the escape of a journey to distant California. However, despite these token shows of resistance to the monotony of her daily existence, Alys is quite aware that "nothing has happened to her" (41), that her life seems marked by numerous possible courses of action; she cannot "altogether decide" (40), cannot "make the effort" (41) to determine any positive plan which will offer her a true sense of independence and self-achievement. For Alys Browne, who likes "to talk about the past, because it is something achieved and distinct" (98), who finds comfort in "patting things" (102) the solidity of which assures her of the permanency of life around her, and who fears a "formless and volatile" (98) future, the progress of events seems frozen in the present as she waits expectantly for that sudden "turn into a direction that is inevitable" (42).
Alys, like the hero of Erich Neumann's investigation, is "alienated from the normal situation and from the collective. This decollectivization entails suffering"\textsuperscript{17} that, for her, manifests itself in the contrastingly varied forms of "false pretence" (99) and self-disdain, public and private responses respectively. It is through the sensitive understanding of another, Oliver Halliday, who seems to have touched in her some nerve that has "always hung slack" (104), that "a sense of fulfilment in waiting" (131) becomes for her a blossoming reality, entailing in its demand, however, a necessity "to sacrifice normal living",\textsuperscript{18} to strip away "all those superficialities" (132) that cause her to be afraid. The physical union of Alys and her lover affords her, more importantly, a psychological release, "as if her consciousness of outer activity" has become numbed "by her intentness on an inner change" (218); she ceases "to be afraid" (220), and "the sudden illumination" in her face is not "altogether confined to [her] face" (218).

Oliver's decision to break with her in the interests of family unity forces Alys once again "out of the succession of events" that have happened (221) so that she feels "discarded from the pattern of time" (223), and she closes "her mind, in a little circle of the present" (223) that resists the intrusions of time; despite her apparent resumption of a "lock-and-key existence" (297), the relationship with Oliver gives her "a mind, that is part of Oliver's mind, the constant reminder" (297). In contrast to the suffering incurred by the dissolution of the physical bond

\textsuperscript{17}Neumann, \textit{Consciousness}, p.378.

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Tbid.}
between them, "the returned theme [is] larger" (319); attempts to
"furnish ... life with incident" (321) are no longer satisfactory escapes. Alys learns not to wait for events to shape her life, not to
"live altogether in the past" (321), but to "resist the inertia of the house" (318), to "shape time" (322) with what limited resources she possesses. This, for Erich Neumann, is what determines the hero, "one who can call his soul his own because he has fought for it and won it". 19

White is suggesting that the mind can become "a fortress against pain" (321) only through the ordeal of suffering, after one consciously strips away the onion-fold trappings enclosing the inner being that contains a more perfect self-awareness: "This is ... alive. This is interminable" (321). Such rare insight places its possessor in the ranks of those called demiurge, who hold the power to see beyond the permanency implied in a material world to a more significant core of existence.
Oliver Halliday serves as a catalyst to that discovery by Alys Browne.

Unlike Alys Browne, Connie Tiarks (The Living and the Dead) has no one to whom she can communicate the nature of the feelings that lie hidden within the lumpy exterior that follows "Connie about like a classical epithet". 20 As Arthur Brown (The Solid Mandala) found that "he could never explain what was too big", 21 Connie Tiarks repeatedly finds

19 Ibid., p. 379
21 White, Solid Mandala, p. 268.
her mouth rounded into an O, unable "to express the inexpressible misery".22 Within herself.

Connie Tiarks bears many resemblances to her predecessor, Alys Browne. In the imagery drawn from Arthur's dance, both are like that "orange sun above icebergs",23 possessing warm and sensitive natures that contrast sharply with the cold, unfeeling reactions of those about them. Neither fits "into the old pattern" (88); both show fear and awkwardness before others; each finds solace in "the warmth and familiarity of her own possessions" (95). Above all, both hold firmly to a belief in the inevitable pattern of events with its possible change in design that may reshape their respective lives. As Alys attempted to give meaning to her life by molding the future of her young pupil, Margaret Quong, Connie tries to live vicariously "by reading the biographies" (171) of more interesting people.

Connie, however, is "the weak sort" (95), given to patterned dresses and droopy hats that are "such an outspoken comment on her own life" (283), and reduced to tearful comment on "oppressors almost as if she were repeating the correspondence in The Times" (168). Connie hates the restricted life which companionship to the aged Mrs. Lassiter offers, with its limited surroundings of "the damp pale faces of other houses that [peer] unnaturally" (215) at her through the trees; her inner nature is so sensitive that she can "hear, almost, the ticking of an

22 Patrick White, The Living and the Dead (New York: Viking Press, 1941), p. 182. All references are to this edition.

23 White, Solid Mandala, p. 256.
eyelid" (279). Unlike Alys Browne, she seems unable to "make the best of the worst" (216), to offer more than what she has "been taught to offer of herself" (282). Hence, when she selects as a gift for Elyot Standish "the little cloudy box with the faded stars" (218) as a "proxy for words", that fail her "always" (218), she seems unconsciously to be giving him an abstraction of herself, remote and locked in space, "a cold, white, passive square .... at the centre of a spinning universe" (318).

Finally, a feeling of "unexpressed sympathy" over the death of Elyot's mother, coupled with an "unconfessed loneliness" (317) takes possession of Connie Tiarks; confronting Elyot with her love for him, she, like Arthur in his dance of the first corner, appears "Half clumsy. Half electric", offering what she knows "from light or silences", unable to "get possession of her own will" (317). Though rejected by Elyot Standish, she experiences a kind of exorcism; unwilling any longer to face the prospect of a future in which she sees herself standing "appalled, on the same spot" (321), she chooses to accept instead the proffered love of Harry Allgood with its "calm monotonv of eggs and bacon, the morning paper, the morning kiss" (321) as a more tangible alternative. Her decision is less of a solution than an escape, yet represents, perhaps, her only attempt to shape her own destiny. Though now, "outside the box the night [is] less of a problem for Connie Tiarks" (322), she has actually been driven back again to seek refuge within the very permanency of a life she abhors.

---

24 Ibid.
Theodora Goodman (The Aunt's Story) accepts neither failure nor compromise. She is the first of White's Women of the Spirit to achieve freedom through self-destruction. As Geoffrey Dutton states, "Theodora's alienation is what would happen to all of us if we were as honest and as uncompromising, or conversely, as liberal of our several selves as she is." 25

Theodora's life is presented to us in three distinct phases: her bleak existence at Meroé until the death of her mother; her association with an assortment of European holidayers whose lives are meant to hold a mirror to her own; and her final willful annihilation of her Self, of all that she is and has been, in a "blank house" 26 in western America. Each of these successive stages in Theodora's life is significantly prefaced: Meroé, "that solitary land of the individual experience, in which no fellow footfall is ever heard" (Part One); Europe, "the great fragmentation of maturity" (Part Two); America, "When your life is most real" (Part Three). Thus, it is Theodora's "point of view that dominates the novel. Her way of isolation and growing madness is a form of 'progress' " 27

The drabness of a near half century spent by Theodora at Meroé is, perhaps, most succinctly summed up in the opening paragraphs of the novel: "Theodora was the spinster. She had lived with her mother, and

---


27 John Barnes, "A Note on Patrick White's Novels", Literary Criterion, 6, 3 (1964), 96.
helped her into her clothes. She came when the voice called" (3); Meroë was "an old house, in which nothing remarkable had taken place", about which there was "very little to tell" (11). Despite Theodora's ungainly appearance, — her face a "shadow under her large and timeless hat. Her clothes — quiescent and formalized as stone" (93), her posture and movements too masculine at times — there are moments when Theodora is "as smooth as glass" (82), when her own mystery offers "subtler variations" (48) than those revealed to the eye alone. Sensitive to the complexities lying beneath the apparently routine events in her life, Theodora Goodman experiences, as her "opaque square" (42) of a school-mistress had intuitively foreseen, "moments of passing affection, through which the opaque world" (56) becomes transparent, moments when she seems able to peer beneath the objectivity of things and people, perceiving a unique and more permanent inner core. "And, above all," observes J. F. Burrows, "she shows from childhood a remarkable gift of empathy, an ability to see through the eyes of other creatures, to enter their very minds, and to discover in them new aspects of herself."28

Such moments of insight are many and varied: Theodora is attracted to the silent, brown Syrian trash dealer, readily recognizable by the "blue tattoo marks on his hands" and "the jingled harness of his old blue horse" (21), the colour not without significant Jungian overtones; she perceives in the reddish-golden eye of the little hawk that invades her father's paddocks a vision "of worlds ... brief and fierce" (26), worlds

she is yet to experience; she becomes increasingly aware of truth behind the uttered warning of the strange Man who was Given his Dinner, that if one puts one's life in a house "it stops, it stands still" (37); she rejects the prospect of a comfortable marriage to the wealthy Huntly Clarkson, collector of "unusual objects" (96), since such a union does not truly represent for her a harmony of two beings, but represents only a possession of "things with one's hands" (115); she establishes a far more permanent bond with the Greek Cellist, Moraitis, whose music she can read "underneath his flesh" (105), whose conviction that "it is not necessary to see things ... if you know" (103) she believes.

The prolonged intensity of Theodora's loneliness and misery, broken only by isolated moments of inner joy, leads her to postulate desperate measures, supported by the convenient premise that love and hate "are alternate breaths falling from the same breast" (116); in a moment of frustration, she considers the idea of murdering her domineering mother, an act that remains unperformed though it leaves her nevertheless with the sense that she is actually guilty. In spite of the fact that "her body still clanged and rang when the voice struck" (122), she remains adamant in the desire to find some means to destroy that "great monster Self" (122), and thereby to liberate the multiplicity of other selves that are also Theodora Goodman. The sudden death of Mrs. Goodman gives her the opportunity of setting forth on such a "journey of spiritual recovery".

Unlike Alys Browne, Theodora does journey to faraway places; there

she merges her own life in the lives of others, though she has now come
to believe that there is "no more complete a reality than a chair and a
table" (129), objects the permanency of which is attested to by the very
squareness of their shape and by a solidity that can be felt. To the
young replica of herself, Katina Pavlou, she becomes "a mirror held to
the girl's experience" (136) so that, in her imaginary role as governess
to Katina, Theodora views "some inner perfection of her own" (224). For
the poet Wetherby, dominated as she herself has been by a woman who hoped
to "create her own posterity" (157) through the control of others, Theodora
is "some haphazard cupboard" in which he proposes "to arrange his thoughts"
(158); to Lieselotte, Wetherby's lover, Theodora seems a comforting
protectress against the hostility aroused in those who love her. In time,
Theodora discovers that their lives are interchangeable with her own; as
J. F. Burrows points out, these "imaginative projections of herself into
these other lives" are not "retreats from reality. What she is doing is
facing her own problems in the subtly altered perspectives that these
other lives afford." 30 Thus, through Katina, abandoned by her globe-
trotting parents, Theodora both relives her own early life, devoid of
parental warmth, and recreates that same affectionate bond that links her
to her niece, Lou Parrott; to her, Wetherby epitomizes her own ideal
lover, traceable in many respects to those qualities that she admired in
her father and Moraitis, figures carried away by the "escalators" of time.
For Theodora, "Lieselotte reincarnates Julia Goodman in her intense but

30 Burrows, " 'Jardin Exotique', " 156.
tight-reined sexuality, in her marriage to a man whose life was real only when it was mythic, and in her lust ... for destruction."\footnote{Ibid., 159.}

However, it is General Sokolnikov and Madame Rapallo, the one of "fat Russian 'rubber', above all resilient",\footnote{Argyle, Patrick White, p. 29.} the other with "a hard American core from which she seldom found relief" (151), who most powerfully influence Theodora's progress towards a more complete understanding of the fragmentary being that is her Self. By assuming an imaginary role as Sokolnikov's mannish sister, Ludmilla, a role that her nature and his need give credence to, and by being permitted access to the privacy of Madame Rapallo's room where the very "corners ~ confess ~ physical secrets" (182), Theodora discovers that for each of them "illusions are necessary" (230). Such a "led life ... does not bear questioning, it is its own light" (173). Both are impostors in the sense that they have chosen to impose a particular reality upon themselves: Sokolnikov is "a general in spirit" (230) only, but enjoys the reality of the illusion; Madame Rapallo's wealthy daughter, the Principessa, does not exist though the illusion of her reality provides Madame Rapallo with the satisfaction of having created something of her own choosing. As Barry Argyle suggests, their importance to Theodora is that "they admit the illusions of their reality while sharing the reality of their illusions".\footnote{Ibid., p. 33.}

Theodora's years at Meróé represented a harsh reality from which
she sought to escape; yet, her journey abroad seems to her somehow unreal, reducible to labels, "all those places to which apparently she had been" (129). At the Hotel du Midi, in the presence of so many people whose lives appear to be self-generated illusions, she is forced to an examination of the one remaining aspect left to her: in Lieselotte's words, applying as much to Theodora as they do to Katina, "She does not yet know herself. She has not explored her own depths" (239). In the face of the fire that ultimately consumes the hotel, Theodora, like White's earlier figure of Colonel Trevellick ("The Twitching Colonel"), senses that the "elaborate ritual of the flames" (243) is both an end and a beginning of life for her. The decision to return to Meroë, to the security of people safely locked in a wooden house, "if the biscuit houses still existed" (246), seems a logical choice for Theodora who seeks a place from which to begin her final self-exploration.

Ironically, she never reaches that destination. Journeying by train across America, she is struck suddenly by the realization of the truth behind words spoken to her years before by the mysterious 'man who was Given his Dinner: Put one's life in a house "and it stops, it stands still" (37); Theodora does "not fit the houses" (254) any longer. Unfolding "herself from the narrow shelf" (254) of her train compartment, Theodora begins on foot the last stage of a journey that appears to have no particular destination, no set purpose; in the course of her errant wanderings she discards the final vestiges of her former identity, "the practical handbag, that last link with the external Theodora Goodman" (257), and, ultimately, her name. Nor can she find comfort as before in the
familiarity of things; thus, her hands slide "over the surface, not of objects, but of appearances" (266) only.

Alone, away from the houses "in which she might not be able to make the necessary answers" (267), and from their array of objects, the impermanence of which seem merely "disguised as permanence" (269), Theodora encounters Holstius. He is like the animus figure that lurks in each individual's unconscious being, "an emanation of her psyche .... Theodora herself drawing on her experience of fatherly preceptors in order to act as preceptor to herself". Erich Neumann offers an explanation more attuned to psychological interpretation:

After passing through all the phases of world-experience and self-experience, the individual reaches consciousness of his true meaning. He knows himself the beginning, middle, and end of the self-development of the psyche, which manifests itself first as the ego and is then experienced by this ego as the self.... The wholeness that comes into being as a result of the individuation process corresponds to a profound structural change, a new configuration of the personality. Whereas in the first half of life there was a tendency to differentiation and ever-increasing tension at the expense of wholeness, the integration process tends towards increased stability and a lowering of tension.... The genesis, stabilization, configuration, and consolidation of the personality are therefore associated with a symbolism whose ingredients are perfect form, balance, harmony, solidity. The mandala ... contains all these elements.35

Such consolidation of personality for Theodora means an acceptance of the "two irreconcilable halves" (272) of herself; as Holstius advises: "You cannot reconcile joy and sorrow ... illusion and reality" (272), for "true permanence is a state of multiplication and

34Burrows, " 'Jardin Exotique' ", 172.
35Neumann, Consciousness, p. 416
division" (278). In submitting to the inner peace that such a rationale affords her, Theodora also accepts the only course open to her, "an outward submission coupled with an inward self-respect." On these terms is "freedom possible even for a prisoner". Her deference "to those who prescribe the reasonable life" (278) sets her apart from White's earlier Women of the Spirit. She does not simply revert to that pattern of conformity which the reasonable life demanded of Connie Tiarks; nor does she stoically accept the challenge of a life that will continue to test her capacity for endurance, an existence for Alys Browne metaphorically suggested in a culminating image of "nettles powdered with frost". Rather, she fingers "the spikes of a thistle", touches the cruel spikes (279), in a gesture tokening an acceptance of the suffering which living entails; yet, she understands, as well, that this is only one facet of her life, that there is "no end to the lives of Theodora Goodman" (278).

Theodora Goodman's apparent madness brings her inner solace; Doll Quigley's eventual insanity (The Tree of Man) affords that "dry, sandy girl" no such release from the harshness of reality; instead, as Amy Parker clearly saw, "Doll Quigley was in hell" (497).

Doll's role as her brother's keeper is a concept that White enlarges upon a decade later in the strange interdependency of the brothers, Waldo and Arthur, in The Solid Mandala. Yet there is no animosity between Doll.

37 White, Happy Valley, p. 322.
38 Patrick White, The Tree of Man (New York: Pyramid Books, 1966), p. 52. All references are to this edition.
and her mentally incapacitated brother, Bub Quigley: Doll is "full of love. She would have suffered willingly if she had been asked" (121); Bub is "inoffensive as water. And as passive" (52). That Doll seems born to live inside the family circle, if she is not "herself the circle that enfolds" (52); that she has learned "that things do not matter" (122); and that, by her words and very presence, she puts "completeness" (227) into the life of Stan Parker who has been "diffident of accepting anything as solid, factual, or what is called permanent" (226), clearly align Doll with White's other Women of the Spirit.

Though Doll is a character of minor importance in this novel, The Tree of Man, she may be viewed as an extension of at least one of the many lives of Theodora Goodman. Theodora had contemplated the murder of her mother and an end to servitude, but could not bring herself finally to "cut the knot" since she would have had to relinquish all the cherished moments of her own past as well. Through Doll Quigley, White permits us to explore the committed act. Doll, like Theodora, experiences the same inner conflict of love and hatred, as though they are "alternate breaths falling from the same breast". Doll's explanation of Bub's death is simple: "I put him away. I will not say kill. Because I loved Bub" (495). But the "blinding logic of Doll's act" (495) destroys all memories of a simple yet essentially "happy life" (494); Doll's deed of love is carried out at the expense of her own identity, a sacrifice that she with "her own

39 White, Aunt's Story, p. 117.
40 Ibid., p. 116.
limited powers" (494) cannot foresee. Brother and sister, fused into a single personality, still wait to be "received" (497) from their suffering.

Doll Quigley also prepares readers for another of White's extraordinary female creations, Mary Hare (Riders in the Chariot). Doll, "stalking, brown-grey, behind the turkey school" (492), has the appearance of being "born old-young", or of growing "young-old" (226); she loves the birds, or takes pleasure from "feeling the new loaves of bubbly bread" (493); alone, she often puts "her arms round her knees in the position she had adopted as a girl, and attempts deliberately to approach that state of perfection which would sometimes drop voluntarily over her head like a simple bag" (494). Thus, the foundations for the more substantial being of Mary Hare are fashioned.

"When your life is most real, to me you are mad"41 is White's epigraph to the third part of The Aunt's Story; Mary Hare (Riders in the Chariot) is as much an embodiment of that truth as are Theodora Goodman or Doll Quigley. Certainly Mary's appearance, behaviour and isolated existence in the crumbling estate of Xanadu warrant the understated irony behind the novel's opening generalization about her, expressed through Mrs. Sugden, the postmistress: "I cannot deny that Miss Hare is different."42 As a child, Mary learns, despite a "natural clumsiness" (18) reminiscent of Connie Tiarks (The Living and the Dead) and foreshadowing Arthur Brown

41 Ibid., p. 247.
(The Solid Mandala), "to move softly, like a leaf" (18), to stand quietly "thinking very intently. Or allowing her instincts to play around her" (13); she finds companionship in "sticks, pebbles, skeleton leaves, birds, insects, the hollows of trees, and the cellars and attics of Xanadu" (25). In early youth, she takes pleasure from observing the glittering life that transpires at Xanadu, content herself merely "to watch, from some familiar corner, protected by mahogany or gilt, in cave of chalcedony or malachite, peering out" (32). Much later, the aging Mary Hare appears "speckled and dappled, like any wild thing" encouraging "a choked plant to shoot, freeing a fledgling from its shell" (17), or, "under the great targe of her protective hat", digging "her blunt, freckled fingers into the receptive earth" (15). As a result of a mother's abundance of "rational kindness" (24) that passed for love, and a father's harsh "male egotism" (27) that demanded a son rather than a daughter, Mary practises detachment, drifting alone through life "like a little, wondering, transparent fish, in search of those depths which her instinct told her could exist" (24).

Nevertheless, understanding is for Mary Hare an intuitive gift, as it is for so many other of White's Women of the Spirit; she is like them, too, in being unable to communicate to more than a rare few the truth locked within her: "the truth is what I understand. Not in words. I have not the gift for words. But know" (39). Ironically, it is a "rather oblique remark" (27) by her drunken father that encourages the daughter "to expect of life some ultimate revelation" (27). For Mary Hare, and for the three other main characters in the novel, the vision of the ineluctable riders in the chariot becomes a consolidating life force,
though the form and nature of the vision varies according to the experience which each brings to bear in its pursuit. Yet, Mary is "The unifying character ... the madwoman who serves as the central figure about whom the others revolve. The other three mystics are peculiarly attracted to her, so that her crumbling estate becomes a temple of mystic contemplation devoid of rational direction."43

Whether it involves a simple Lawrentian-like homage to a black and tan snake that hides in the rocks and remains "to be converted" (43), the fiery immolation of a goat that she intends to protect, or her own frequent displays of arrogant pride before the aged housekeeper, Peg, through an unrelenting exploration of self and environment Mary Hare is determined to "discover what is at the centre, if enough ... is peeled away" (56), to "find out what [she is] to find out" (53). However, her life is contained within the limited sphere of Xanadu; the twinned alliance of Mrs. Jolley and Mrs. Flack represent a threat to the simplicity of that existence, "some danger to the incorporeal, the more significant part of her" (65). In a harmony with the processes of nature, Mary views life itself as a natural progression combining both growth and decay; thus, she seems able to smell the evil Mrs. Flack "amongst the black sods of rotting leaves" (313) in the undergrowth, to accept the presence of grubs at the heart of a flower as a necessary development of decomposition and death, or, in the manner of General Sokolnikov (The Aunt's Story) and Stan Parker (The Tree of Man), to find joy in her own simple creative powers: "she spat

43 Colin Roderick, "'Riders in the Chariot': An Exposition", Southerly, 22, 2 (1962), 75.
once, and laughed to see it fall, wide, of course, curving in the wind, glittering in the sun" (318).

With the arrival of the Jew, Himmelfarb, Mary's sensitive nature is directed towards this man whose narrative of brutality and injustice so moves her that she finds she has "suffered in the course of her companion's life" (162). His self-imposed confinement to the obscurity of "a small wooden house" (322), and her efforts to peer beneath the surface of this man whose present life bears an affinity to her own, holding his hand as if it were "some thing of value found in the bush: polished stone" (323), engenders in Mary a devotion for the Jew, a desire to share with him her innermost secrets, a willingness to kill for him "if it will preserve for [them]" (326) what she senses is right. Thus, the Jew's earlier observation that her name suggests "the sacrificial animal" (101) seems, in retrospect, a prognostication. Eve-like, Mary shares his ordeals and come to know through his suffering the true nature of evil; in his willingness to accept the pain and to forgive the inflictors she experiences the awakening of a kind of love that she has never really understood before: "She would have liked to take the Jew's hand, and shut it up in her withered bosom, together with all those images which could only be preserved in love, as Peg the immemorial had bottled plums" (451).

For Mary Hare, who considers herself partly responsible for the drowning of her father, "the relationship comes to signify a resolution of her personal guilt through his willingness to become a scapegoat", and she is at last to risk death in Himmelfarb's blazing hut in an attempt to
save him". 44 But the elemental fire that consumes Trevellick ("The Twitching Colonel") and terminates an episode in the life of Theodora Goodman (The Aunt's Story) momentarily holds Mary Hare, transfixes her "in the everlasting moment" (453) as she waits for the revelation that "should have been made to one possessed of her especial powers" (453); like White's other demiurge figures, Mary cannot penetrate that "more rational curtain of flame" (453). Nevertheless, at the bedside of the dying Himmelfarb, Mary again succeeds "in closing the circle of her happiness" (462), entering a "state of complete union" which her nature has "never yet achieved" (463). The recognition that "disintegration is the only permanent ... state" (452) leads Mary Hare to relinquish both her quest for self-knowledge and her hold on the permanency which Xanadu with all its memorabilia denotes, and to accept in their place a direction that has "at last chosen her" (470).

Though Mary is "to go away", is "never seen again" (498), the essence of Mary Hare is recorded in the strange allegorical paintings of Alf Dubbo, the half caste artist who, having secretly witnessed the scene of Himmelfarb's death, is moved in a final feverish burst of creative energy to fashion on canvas his personal vision of that moment and the people involved. molded by the religious teachings of his past, governed by a sense of guilt in having failed the Jew in his time of need, and, in particular, obsessed by the haunting image of the chariot, Dubbo knows that he has "reached the point of compulsion" (484) to paint what suddenly

appears "so convincing, so unshakably right" (485). In his painting of the Deposition of the Jew, Mary Hare is transformed into "the Second Mary curled, like a ring-tail possum, in a dream-time womb of transparent skin, or at the centre of a whorl of faintly perceptible wind .... harsh to the eye, but for all her snouted substance illuminated by the light of instinct inside the transparent weft of whirling, procreative wind" (487). As one of the Four Living Creatures in Dubbo's conception of the Chariot, with its foundations "laid in solid blue" and "heavenly gold" (490), her human eye reflects "all that is ever likely to happen" (490).

The quaternal grouping of the figures, the predominance of earthly blues and heavenly golds, the vague "tentative nature" (490) of the central chariot bear some relationship to details noted by Jung in his study of the dream patterns of patients. A further congruity of interests for White and Jung seems evident when one considers the anima-like roles of the Young Girl in The Ham Funeral and Laura Trevelyan in Voss.

To the Young Man of The Ham Funeral White ascribes "a bisexuality of which he is only half aware .... The half of him that is aware is his anima, called simply 'Girl', his unseen fellow-lodger ... serving as the actuality of his projection," 45 Though the Young Man views his grappling encounter with the indomitable Mrs. Lusty in disgust, the Cassandra-like girl comprehends more fully the nature of his loathing: that "walls are no protection from thoughts"; 46 that he is disgusted by what he is beginning to suspect might be life.

45Argyle, Patrick White, p. 92.
46Patrick White, Four Plays (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), p. 54. All references are to this edition.
The emergence of the Young Man from a state of frightened innocence to an acceptance of life with all its aspects of good and evil is, in part, the result of the persuasive arguments put forward by his anima, that probing contradictory force stemming from his own unconscious mind. Her words prompt him to abandon his cloistered existence, which he has come to recognize as amounting to "little more than acts of self-abuse in an empty room" (71), and to make a new beginning; as his other self realizes, "there is no end where there is a beginning. Beginning must follow end. Endlessly" (69).

Elizabeth Loder notes that the girl "has some points of similarity to the character of Holstius in The Aunt's Story - both represent means by which the mind may be brought to recognize things that it knows but does not wish to accept".47 Just as Theodora Goodman gains a final insight into the nature of her Self through her encounters with Holstius, the Young Man achieves an enlarged awareness of his own capabilities from the girl; "having brought this about, she vanishes forever, thus supporting his first steps towards an integrity that needs no other self".48

Laura Trevelyan (Voss) acts too as an anima-like figure, a haunting presence in Voss's mind, "the alternative to his self-deifying mania".49 As James McAuley suggests, Voss himself becomes a "battlefield

47 Elizabeth Loder, "'The Ham Funeral': Its Place in the Development of Patrick White", Southerly, 23, 2 (1963), 90.


in which his pride and will fight it out with the impulses to love, compassion, humility, identified with Laura". Yet, the influence which she exerts over Voss is reciprocated. Laura, who will seldom "come out of herself for choice", who is what may "be called a rationalist" (11), and who has "never asked for rescue from her isolation" (25), exhibits an independence and strength of will which are complementary to those traits which dominate the nature of the explorer, Voss. Their natures seem so finely attuned that an essential stability is asserted, not "together, but alone"; "the records of the fantasy and temptations each is indulging about the other - and self" play vital roles "in the ravelling out of the characters' destinies".

Laura's determination to "resist all attempts to make her suffer, or to bring suffering to others" (76) is soon submerged in what becomes for her an attitude of expiation, a driving need "to humiliate herself in some way for the German's arrogance" (73). White very definitely intends his heroine to be an extension of those earlier female figures - Alys Browne, Connie Tiarks, Theodora Goodman - who attain a degree of self-knowledge through suffering; White's introductory statement to Chapter Four makes this quite clear:

Few people of attainments take easily to a plan of self-improvement. Some discover very early their perfection cannot endure the insult. Others find their intellectual pleasure

50 Ibid., 40.

All references are to this edition.

lies in the theory, not the practice. Only a few stubborn ones will blunder on, painfully, out of the luxuriant world of their pretensions into the desert of mortification and reward.

To this third category belonged Laura Trevelyan. Voss is truly her desert. As she explains to him in a letter, arrogance is the quality that draws them together; the crucial question becomes for her whether "two such faulty beings [can] endure to face each other, almost as in a looking-glass" (181) The bond that unites them is strong enough to suggest to each a marriage of minds; Laura's world becomes self-contained, enveloped in the invention of an "unborn child" and "the love of her husband" (221), Voss. The poet Le Mesurier, who accompanies Voss on the journey across the barreness of Central Australia, recognizes the essential spirit that motivates the man:

Man is King. They hung a robe upon him of blue sky. His crown was molten. He rode across his kingdom of dust .... Fevers turned him from Man into God. (286)

What Le Mesurier learns to understand about Voss, Laura knows by instinct; in another letter to Voss, she writes:

I understand you are entitled, as a man, to a greater share of pride, but would like to see you humbled. Otherwise, I am afraid for you. Two cannot share one throne. (233)

The severity of Laura's illness is matched in duration and effect by the ordeals undergone by Voss; as though Laura is a voice that is "locked inside him" (267), transmitting by some mystical transmigration of self her own thoughts and wishes, Voss learns too late the humility that humanizes, drawing man to God so that "in the end [man] may ascend" (371). Significantly, Voss, in dying, transcends death, gaining renown as a legendary figure who will continue to live on in the minds and thoughts of
others, such as Arthur Brown (The Solid Mandala) is to survive, in a more restricted context, through the memory of Mrs. Poulter.

The concepts of progress and suffering, expressed succinctly in the Gandhian epigraph to White's first published novel, retain their relevancy here, as they have in previous novels. Laura Trevelyan, exorcised of her demon lover, is content to spend her remaining days "to the exclusion of all personal life, certainly of introspection" (388), assured that the apparent inevitability of what she has experienced has brought with it that rare illumination of self granted to the few who, like Alys Browne, Theodora Goodman and Mary Hare, learn to accept that "true knowledge only comes of death by torture in the country of the mind" (428).

Patrick White shows a tenacity in his repeated exploration of this particular type of character, devoted to a pursuit of the inner life at the expense of social approval. From such brief character sketches as that of the Young Pippy Pogson (The Season at Sarsaparilla) who learns "to make of her childishness a shell of indifference ... beneath which she can cherish the world she has,"53 or of the aging and solitary Miss Quodling (Night on Bald Mountain) who, like some Delphic priestess hidden high on the remoteness of Bald Mountain, is able to hear and interpret the tiniest whispers of natural forces, to the more extensive and sensitive analyses of such women of the Spirit as Alys Browne, Mary Hare and Theodora Goodman, White maintains a consistency of characterization that in itself is

---

53Argyle, Patrick White, p. 92.
remarkable. However, when we consider that this embodiment of character represents only a part of the total fabric of characterization which White has imposed on his work, we must agree that such a synoptic view warrants a certain degree of literary acclaim. As Arthur Brown's four-cornered dance of the mandala fashions in its total performance a vision incorporating the lives of all those who share a common experience, the remaining facets of Patrick White's pattern of female characterization must be examined in turn before one can begin to appreciate fully this writer's own mandalic achievement.
The mandala dance of Arthur Brown in *The Solid Mandala* not only captures the intrinsic nature of Mrs. Poulter, but also calls to mind earlier White creations who possess features inherently similar: Vic Moriarty, Mrs. O'Dowd, Amy Parker, Alma Lusty. The dance pattern executed by Arthur speaks for all of them. It is crowded with sensuous images suggestive of "ripening pears, and little rootling suckling pigs," of "skeins of golden honey ... swinging and glittering"; however, the dance at "the stillest moment" (257) alludes to some lack of ultimate fulfilment, a "child ... never carried" (257).

We are informed at the beginning of the novel of Mrs. Poulter's love for "the glossier side of Sarsaparilla, of the picture windows and the textured brick" (5), and for the shops that give life to the town. As well, she professes "to Love All Flowers" (9), and is usually seen "poking at them, ruffling them up, tweaking them" (249) as she talks. In addition, she often sports a "brave red hat" (133) in making the short journey along Terminus Road to the post office; even later, at sixty-seven Mrs. Poulter likes "a bit of colour" (290). Moreover, she has "faith also in food" (151), in a "nice lamb's fry before it loses its shine on a slab" (151); in thinking of food, her lips glow with no more assistance than she gets from "contemplating the desiderata of life" (151). Her natural warmth finds outlets in simple charitable acts of providing provender for

---

those who have suffered "the attacks of other people" (10); in fact, her own charity gives her a "faint pleasure" (10), and she remains always "prepared to pounce heavily on possible disaster" (65).

Nevertheless, behind her love of simple pleasures lurks another side of Mrs. Poulter. Viewed by the peeping Waldo Brown in the privacy of her bathroom, she appears as some earthy creature, "her breasts two golden puddings" (55), her "yawning armpits" sprouting "tendrils of black hair" (55). In her youth, she had been a woman "of firm flesh and high complexion, her hair glistening in certain lights" (136); yet, "there was nothing you could have accused her of" (136), though some of the men in Sarsaparilla had expressed the desire to "do with a slice of Bill Poulter's missus" (138). Mrs. Poulter loves her husband. She is drawn especially to the black hairs that grow on his wrists and the backs of his hands, or to his throat where the hair begins and ends (291). In those early years, she had been possessive, "only because she loved, and could not learn enough about him" (293); she "could have eaten Bill" (291), and retains still those pleasurable memories of that "lovely-fitting grooved love of the beginning" (294), when "his legs like a pair of scissors would cut her short" (292). Ironically, she remains childless.

The sense of unfulfilment is very much a part of Mrs. Poulter. Presented with a large plastic doll by Waldo Brown who views his own act of charity as commensurate with the need to establish some "moment of higher idealism" (174), Mrs. Poulter secretly projects her motherly warmth on it, until she is discovered by Arthur "holding the naked doll against her bosom as though the plastic were turning molten in her arms" (279).
Yet, the relationship between Arthur and Mrs. Poulter remains intact. Her attraction to him cannot be "fitted to word or hand" (294). He becomes for her both a surrogate for the child she never has, and a lover whose impotency never threatens her marriage to Bill Poulter. Arthur is someone for whom she can "take down [her] hair, and nobody will see or think it strange" (254), or one to whom she can safely reveal secrets "about what will never happen" (255). More importantly, she comes to see him "as token of everlasting life" (304), a saintly substitute for "her God [who is] brought crashing down" (304) with the cruel death of Waldo, the twin. In that final alliance of Child-Man-God and Woman-Mother, "their two faces becoming one, at the centre of that glass eye", which Arthur sits holding in his hand (306), we are reminded of that quarternal union of a masculine trinity with an essentially feminine spirit. Archetypally divine as she may appear in this larger design, Mrs. Poulter retains enough of those earthbound qualities of character to be classified as Patrick White's most recent addition to a long line of Women of the Flesh.

Vic Moriarty is the first of such women. Married to a pedantic schoolteacher whose asthmatic affliction repels her at times, she readily seeks the attention of other men in order to gain assurance that her attractiveness has not vanished; however, by nature she always enters into "everything" too unhesitatingly. Nevertheless, nobody has "ever called [her] bad" (109); she has remained, up to her chance meeting with Clem Hagan, "good in deed; only a thought sometimes slipped" (110).

---

The fact that she is childless has left her, as well, with the sense that life has somehow cheated her, that "there is nothing else left" (253). Essentially, she appears as an early prototype for Mrs. Poulter of The Solid Mandala. However, Vic Moriarty lacks the latter's sense of moral rectitude; nor is there anyone in Happy Valley as innocently receptive as Arthur Brown to whom she can turn for comfort.

There are other differences too. Unlike Mrs. Poulter, Vic Moriarty is ruled by pretensions to a life she desires but has never experienced. Her dreams of having "a cook, and a maid with a cap" (37), of gaining recognition "in The Sydney Morning Herald on the Ladies' Page" (37), and of learning to play bridge because it is "a social obligation" (37), has an obvious effect on the course of her actions. As well, she marries Ernest Moriarty partly because she likes his moustache, and partly because "marrying a schoolteacher is one up on" (36) her friends. Disillusionment breeds in her a dissatisfaction that needs only some agent to trigger its release. For Doctor Halliday, who makes frequent visits to her ailing husband, she deliberately assumes daring poses in the hope of catching his attention. For the more attentive Clem Hagan, the seduction of Vic Moriarty is "like standing under a tree and having apples fall right into his hand" (158).

Distinct from those Women of the Spirit who gain a measure of transcendence over the objectivity of their environment through a reassessment and assertion of more permanent values of personal identity, women like Vic Moriarty are strongly rooted in a world of immediate surroundings, suggested in the mandala dance with its images drawn from
nature. As Mrs. Poulter's essential disposition is suggested by the pleasure she derives from exposure to a great variety of sensory stimuli, the hidden moods and motivating forces governing Vic Moriarty are reflected in the symbolic rise and fall of the cyclamen that stands in a lustre bowl in her sitting-room. Sometimes it seems to sprawl "in wide, voluptuous curves" (109); at other times, it sticks up "straight, like an old maid that [has] listened to a dirty joke by mistake" (111). Always, it mirrors the cycle of passion and regret experienced by Vic in her successive meetings with Hagan. Finally, it lies "crushed upon the floor" (272), like Vic Moriarty herself.

There is no saving grace for her, no spiritual recovery from the kind of "Armageddon of which Mrs. Poulter" is aware, no opportunity to do again "the expected things", to re-enter the "actual sphere of life".

Throughout the works of Patrick White there appears a host of minor characters who, like Vic Moriarty, attempt to face life on essentially pragmatic terms, and who fail to achieve any degree of ultimate attainment beyond the satisfying of immediate needs. In the pursuit of more tangible goals than inner tranquillity or self-understanding, they often experience bitter frustrations and disappointments as natural consequences; for them, life is a limited existence requiring only that they play out their respective roles with the regulated gestures of puppets on a string.

---

3 White, Solid Mandala, p. 296.
4 Ibid., p. 309.
Mrs. Steele of Happy Valley is typically of this designation. Only briefly delineated in the novel's opening chapter, in her stolid watchfulness she is representative of the forces of opposition and resentment to change: "the old woman with the puffs of hair always came to assist at a birth or a death. She had helped bring a lot of children into the world.... Now she stood by the bed and stared at the doctor with all her expert experience, and resented his presence a great deal because ...

... she could have managed the lying in herself" (11). Although she seems more like some silent choric witness to the delivery of Mrs. Chalker's stillborn child, Mrs. Steele in "a low, monotonous kind of recitative" (14) reveals some of the details which comprise her own rudimentary existence. Old and alone, she takes comfort in the expectation of visiting her son: "Kambala's no place for an elderly woman. When the summer comes I ought to go down to Tumut an' live" (14). Later that following summer, Mrs. Steele has still "not gone to Tumut to live with her son Tom" (118). Nor do we get the impression that she is likely to go. Tied to the self-importance of her role as midwife in Happy Valley, she is, in essence, childless, cut off from the lives of her offspring. Her life is one of patterned simplicity expressed in basins of "potted meat" for which she is famous and in "cuttings of plants" (118) which she bestows on those whom she admires; such is the extent of her compromise with the changing times.

Mrs. Steele, unlike Vic Moriarty, foreshadows an austere and sombre side to the Women of the Flesh, expanded later by Patrick White in his characterization of Mrs. Jolley, Mrs. Flack and Miss Docker.
Mrs. Child (Voss) and Mrs. Angelotti (The Living and the Dead) flourish briefly in subsequent works as extensions of Mrs. Steele. Both engage in the rather dubious occupation of midwifery.

Mrs. Child, "a small woman with eyes ... sharp and black", is careful to take into account the quantity of "solid mahogany and figured brocade" (222) on hand before offering an estimate of the cost for her professional services; only then does she deign "to notice the patient" (222). She takes great pleasure, as well, in recounting to her new clients "details of the more spectacular cases" to which she has been called (222); such narration, we are told, not only boosts her own spirits but also affords her the opportunity to devour the "light refreshment" (222) that she finds such a necessary prerequisite to the task of assisting at a birth.

Mrs. Child, her face "averted in considerable delicacy of curls" (223), displays an outwardly jolly manner; yet, her actions, as she fumbles and bungles to twist the child from its mother, suggest a callousness, culminating "with a yawn" (223) of sheer indifference for human suffering.

The "plump white pouchiness" that is Mrs. Moya Angelotti seems "to swell over her almost white apron, to encroach, to increase" (159); when she sits upon a chair, you hear "the planting of her thighs" (160). Despite her predisposition for clothing with a professional whiteness, she is an abortionist. Nevertheless, like her counterparts, Mrs. Steele and Mrs. Child, she is proud of the services she renders; as she tells

---

5Patrick White, Voss (New York: Pyramid Books, 1968), p. 222. All references are to this edition.

Patrick White, The Living and the Dead (New York: Viking Press, 1941), p. 159. All references are to this edition.
Eden Standish, her client: "I like to think I do what I do for a definite reason.... An' you shall see the letters, the very nice letters, that I have from those as appreciate. You wouldn't believe" (160). Though she professes satisfaction in the simple act of helping others in difficulty, she obviously gains greater pleasure from prying into "private affairs" (159) over a cup of tea, picking away at the lives of others as though twisting "a dead frond from a fern" (159), or prodding "with plump fingers... at the mould" (159) that threatens to destroy.

The insidious nature inherent in this particular grouping of those female figures that I designate Women of the Flesh is, perhaps, most caustically portrayed by White in his characterization of Miss Docker (A Cheery Soul):

MISS DOCKER: Once I read the Bible from cover to cover. That was when I was at the end of me tether. A whole fortnight it took me. I lay in bed, and read, and read .... Never stopped. Before that I was pagan. But suddenly I saw.

MR. CUSTANCE: What did you see?

MISS DOCKER: Don't be silly! You can't say what you see. But 'see! See?'

What exactly it was that Miss Docker "saw" is not as vital to our understanding of her as the effect that the vision has on Miss Docker. It is Reverend Wakeman who, in the course of delivering a sermon before a congregation which includes Miss Docker, expresses this telling effect most explicitly:

I am going to speak to you this morning about sin ... no ordinary

---

7Patrick White, *Four Plays* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), p. 197. All references are to this edition.
sin, however. But the sin of goodness. That is to say, ... of 'militant' virtue. (257)

Miss Docker's "militant virtue" rests with her unceasing bestowal of an abundance of love that waits "to be poured on those who are unwilling to accept it" (198). She becomes a truly destructive force that blights everyone and everything with which she comes in contact. The repeated association of the colour brown in conjunction with Miss Docker seems a deliberate attempt by Patrick White to suggest an atrophying of life:

"She sounds so ... brown" (224), stammers Baby Porteous; "She's brought you something. Something brown. I can see it dangling from her hand" (243), reports Mrs. Wakeman to her husband. Certainly, this "over lifesize" (189) woman who is essentially "a dark brown woman underneath" (189), finds the Chinese room of the Sundown Home for Old People at Sarsaparilla, with its "disintegrating hangings", "worn furniture" and hints of "former splendour" (209), an ideal place from which to begin her crusade of love.

The ladies who frequent the room are mere human reflections of the environmental decay: Miss Dando, child-like, seeks attention by any extreme measure; Miss Perry finds consolation in memories of "fruitful lives" and "promises of everlasting peace" (213); Mrs. Tole's level of intelligibility has been reduced to "Ooh, mummy, mummy, mummy" (213); Mrs. Chambers has "an accident" (213) if detained too long; Mrs. Lillie soliloquizes, in her sadness, on a spent youth. Into this death-in-life world is thrust Miss Docker; yet, her vitality animates the others, perhaps to reaction rather than action. Her strength awes the ladies, just as, years before, it "rocked the ... sordid little house" (213) of the Lillies where she served.
In three days, she musters the ladies into weeding parties and plans excursions to the village for the purchase of sweets. Sensing that she has been placed at Sundown "by the Grace of God" (215), she proffers comfort to her less fortunate compatriots. Attempts at organizing a recreational period, ironically, "Animal-and-Vegetable" or "the Truth Game" (215) fail because the ladies are not exactly "a gamey lot" (215). Her grotesque efforts at the Charleston encourage a few to "swing a leg" (220). She makes it known that she has "a list of people she prays for, thirty-seven in all" (214). She offers her cheery philosophy even to the dying: "When I keep [Mrs. Chambers] company she closes her eyes. I can't seem somehow to pep up her spirits however hard I try" (237).

The essential love, of course, is lacking. Despite pretensions to goodness, Miss Docker is very much of the world. One senses an earthiness at the core of her projected vitality, revealed in her comments about men: "Never been able to make up my mind about husbands. Though I can't say I'm not partial to the men" (191); about her own past: "Wouldn't know I had a voice. Only amateur of course. Chorus work" (195), or "I could kick up my heels with the best" (219); and about the present: "Once or twice I've smelt him [Reverend Jekeman] just after shaving.... I love those finger joints... handling the chalice.... Of course, it's nothing sinful" (241). Mrs. Hibble comes closest to the truth. With keen insight, she recognizes in an early photograph which Miss Docker has thrust upon her and verbally labelled "the true portrait of Little Men" (232) the voracious, all-consuming nature of the woman: "You look as though you'd... swallowed the world" (232).
Certainly Miss Docker is not totally unlike that archetypal Great Mother who combines "a bewildering variety of contradictory aspects", who can be both "terrible and devouring, beneficent and creative; a helper, but also alluring and destructive", who is "immemorially old and eternally young". As well, in that mythological creature who combines "conscious 'good'" with "unconscious 'evil'", there is hidden the witch, who gobbles up little children and grants them, as a reward, a passive, irresponsible existence without an ego.

Mrs. Flack of *Riders in the Chariot* is no mere dabbler in witchcraft; she seems rather a kind of "incarnate Satan" who, in Delphic terms, is "'priestess' and 'pythoness'". Her function in the novel is as a figure of the Evil Mother ... who out of her own motiveless malignity might well have employed a morally obtuse Sarsaparilla as her instrument for destroying the Charioteers .... We are powerfully shown what it is to be the devil incarnate. The display of Mrs. Flack in this role consists in Delphic and Satanic resonances in the narrator's account of her ... juxtaposed with the stereotyped figure of a Sarsaparillan gossip.

She is "omnipresent" (78) and insidious. She does not feel that it pays "to hurry cooking" the deadly gossip that consumes other lives: "You must let it simmer, and give it a stir, like, to keep it nice. Then, when it is ready, you can be sure someone will be only too glad to step in and eat it up" (241). With unctuous pleasure she expresses a belief in letting

---


9Ibid., p. 94.

10Ibid.

"the blood run when there is plenty of it" (425). She huddles at the window of her brightly-glazed brick "KARMA" (78) in the company of her friend, Mrs. Jolley; the two of them pick at the minds and hearts of their neighbours, expressing hate for those who will "never be persuaded to tell" (226), drenching "the room with the moth-colour of their one mind" (79).

If Mrs. Flack is to be thought of as an embodiment of Satan, Mrs. Jolley, who crouches "before the tripod" (238), is truly a Miltonic Beelzebub. In contrast to the "yellow look" and "medium shade of buff" (78) that give general form to Mrs. Flack, Mrs. Jolley who loves "to sing the pinker hymns" (63), wears a motherly expression which, however, becomes "suspect under the weight of its suspicion" (44). Mrs. Jolley celebrates "the square brick homes" (63), and expresses faith in the solidity of existence offered by "a home, and a Hoover, and kiddies' voices" (57). Like Mrs. Angelotti (The Living and the Dead), she feigns disinterest in the lives of others, though Mrs. Jolley tries doors "never yet opened" and forces "locks when necessary, to interpret the letters stuffed inside a drawer" (90) at Xanadu, her place of employment. Like Mrs. Child (Voss), she takes delight in recounting her daughter's concern for her, that "Merle is not at all satisfied with the steps her mum has taken to lead an independent life" (75). Like Miss Docker (A Cheery Soul), Mrs. Jolley finds satisfaction in "reading of the deaths, and storms, and any acts of God" (503), or in being solicitous to those whose hidden lives are revealed to her.

Though this twinned alliance of Mrs. Flack and Mrs. Jolley seems representative of the force of evil that menaces the lives of those who
fail to conform to a socially-acceptable ethical code of behaviour in Sarsaparilla, there exists a more substantial side to the respective natures of the two women, a capacity for sensual enjoyment characteristic of all women of the Flesh.

Mrs. Flack's dream of Mrs. Jolley's bestowal of the kiss of death on a dying husband carries a certain truth behind it. In a letter from Mrs. Jolley's daughter, a letter discovered by Mrs. Flack in the privacy of Mrs. Jolley's room, hidden under a handkerchief sachet, we learn that the "married love" (510) of the Jollies had progressively soured, and that Mrs. Jolley stands accused by her daughter of the death of the husband through "coronary occlusion" (510). Yet, Mrs. Jolley still remains "partial to big men. Even the softish ones" (506), and is not above flattering them to gain their attention: "You mechanical men! I could look inside an engine, and not know the first thing about it". (506). Though she takes refuge in the respectability of being "a lady" (48), her pastimes include frequent visits to the movie houses where she is accustomed to sit "sucking a lolly" (48), indulging in moments of "sheerest velvet" (48) that "pass muster as life" (48), fearful all the while that perhaps "that lean fellow" may just reach down, "and put his hand - it made her lolly stick" (48). Vicariously, she experiences "enough of life and dreams to parry any further blows" (48) which might upset the equilibrium of her existence.

Arthur Brown's mandala dance for Mrs. Poulter suggests a complement of sensual images indicative of those intrinsic forces motivating such women; as well, it conjures up the stiller moments of terminated fruition. The Mrs. Jolley that we view in Riders in the Chariot has long since learned to sublimate the former urges, and to create new goals as substitutes
for the more personal endeavours in which she finds herself thwarted.

Mrs. Flack, though ostensibly a lady "of discretion and taste" (80), has her own past to conceal. Having reared a child, Bluey, for whom there is "no official father" (505), she, like Mrs. Jolley, seems indirectly responsible for the enigmatic death of her husband, Will Flack, "a weak sort of coot, but good" one who "could not face an ugly situation" (506). Masking her own guilt in a guise of puritanical self-righteousness, she now takes sadistic pleasure in sitting in judgment on the apparent follies of others. With an intolerance for human feeling, Mrs. Flack and her friend, Mrs. Jolley, produce "their knives and try them for sharpness on weaker mortals" (80).

Even such evil distortions as Mrs. Flack and Mrs. Jolley, deemed essentially Women of the Flesh, have significant roles to play in that mandalic pattern fashioned by Patrick White. As Barry Argyle indicates,

the existence of evil is the necessary twin to the existence of goodness. Mrs. Jolley allows Miss Hare to define Himmelfarb's nature, but as well she, Mrs. Flack and Blue between them enable Himmelfarb to live a life of goodness; for we are convinced that he does live such a life not only by his inability to practise cruelty, but by his capacity to suffer.... In other words, White is again referring us to the motto from Gandhi's works which he attached to his first novel, Happy Valley: Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone. 13

It is not by accident that the clandestine activities of Mrs. Flack and Mrs. Jolley are somewhat analogous to the exploits of Mrs. Goosgog and Mrs. Fauburgus (The Ham Funeral), those "knockabout girls" 14 of "the discard trade" (39). All four are scavengers of a sort, prying into the "tasty


14 White, Four Plays, p. 42.
dust-bin" (39) with its traces of other lives, extracting pleasure from
the "read of a good letter" (40) found by chance, searching out "the best
bits" of cast-off lives "towards the bottom" (41) of the bin. As Mrs. Jolley
and Mrs. Flack cloak their inquisitorial probings in the guise of
neighbourly concern, Mrs. Goosgog and Mrs. Fauburgus dress "in decaying
finery", and "live among the rubbish, subsisting on scraps and gossip".15

Yet, the latter seem less deliberately malevolent: there are "no
knives in our garters" (42), they confess. Indeed, there is a guilelessness
though coarseness in their manner lacking in the depiction of Mrs. Flack
and Mrs. Jolley. Life for them appears more directly in tune with the
immediacy of experience; they rejoice in "the surprises" (39) of their
discoveries, and acknowledge their roles as "two professional ladies" (42) with
candour. In this way, they reflect still another dimension of those earth-
bound women of the Flesh, evident in such minor figures as Mrs. Spice,
Hannah, Mollie Khalil, and Mrs. Whalley, but more fully developed in the
characterization of Alma Lusty (The Ham Funeral) and Mrs. O'Dowd (The Tree
of Man).

Certainly, Mrs. Spice of Riders in the Chariot, with her "empty-
bottle business" (357), bears a close affinity to the two trashcan plunderers
of The Ham Funeral. However, the bottle lady is governed by a coarse
sensuality, so that "inside the cotton dress, her breasts [suggest] small, but
active animals. Trying to jump at you", it appears at times (357); more-
over, her whiteness gives way to a rich brown, "the colour and texture of
mature bacon" (357). Her efforts to improve her appearance, to suggest

15 Elizabeth Loder, " 'The Ham Funeral': Its Place in the Development
"a young woman in a cleaner cotton dress, smoother, smelling of laundry above the strong armpits" (360), prove futile, and merely accentuate the ravages to which time and inclination have subjected her. Her addiction to the good life with its "ribaldry" and "alternatives of conversation and song" (362) which a "numerous clientele" (362) provide, carries its own bitter consequence in the form of an unheralded pregnancy.

Isba Whalley ("Down at the Dump") is similarly characterized by colour: her skin is "that of a brown peach"; and by occupation: Whalleys are "in the bits-and-pieces trade" (278). "Lit by the certainty of life" (280), she likes to "finger her children" (282), to assure herself of their maleness. She confesses an inability to "do without men". (282) Ironically, the raw crudity of her manner is tempered at times by a motherly concern for her offspring, hissed from between "stumps of teeth, the rotting brown of nastiness" (289): "I'm not gunna stand by and watch any kid of mine... turn 'isself into a bloody dipso" (289).

Hannah and Mollie Khalil (Riders in the Chariot) appear as extensions in time of one character. Whereas Hannah is a prostitute, "successful, and fairly satisfied in her profession" (368), Mollie is "no longer for the men herself" (292), but profits instead from having "set up whoring in a quiet way" (291), employing the youth and attractiveness of her two daughters, Lurleen and Janis, as well as a lady "from Auburn, to help out when necessary" (292) as bait for willing males. Hannah appears destined through a life of voluptuous surfeit to end up as Mollie, sick of men with "their hot breath, their double-talk, their slack bodies" (295).

Though "still the straight, brown girl" (385), Hannah already fears old age with its promise of "yeller teeth" and "snaky veins" (375); she takes pains to "pluck her eyebrows, and paint her nails, and paddle the big, desperate puff in the shadows of her armpits" (385). The sickness which plagues her is not so much a physical disability as an attitude of mind, a conscience which ticks "inside her like a cheap alarm clock" (386). During her many periods of depression, she grasps at any comfort which puts "the marshmallow back into life" (393). There seems not much time remaining before she, like Mollie Khalil, will relinquish her hold on the good life, acceding to the simpler satisfactions of "Sunday papers, [or] a cat against her kidneys" (295).

However, it is through the sustained characterization of Alma Lusty (The Ham Funeral) and Mary O'Dowd (The Tree of Man), combining in complementary completeness the traits of such apparently disparate figures as Miss Docker and Mrs. Spice, that we can more fully appreciate the aspirations and frustrations which govern the lives of all of them.

Alma Lusty is clearly a woman "embodying Dionysiac values", a woman of the flesh as her very name suggests. She is ostensibly "a large woman in the dangerous forties, ripe and bursting" (17); she possesses a Chaucerian earthiness and passion - often a bawdiness— that fuses in comic counterpoint with an underlying but omnipresent element of the tragic.

The language of Alma Lusty is rich in the rudiments of taste, smell and touch; there is a sense of closeness to the earth, of a pleasurable naturalness that seeps out despite the restrictions imposed by a stifling

---

environment. Yet, at times, Alma Lusty is capable of expression which transcends the bonds of her essential rootedness, which universalizes the personal utterance in a lyrical outburst seemingly drawn from the inherent rhythms and coercive energy of nature itself. Thus, from an overpowering awareness of simple tactile sensations, ranging from the solidity of masculine form:

We were two bodies in the bed. I could return to you out of my dreams ... push against your hot side. You didn't wake ever. But you was solid (18),

to the plasticity of yielding suppleness:

No man ever really leaves the breast. That's our weapon. The softest weapon in the world (64),

Alma rises to sensitively perceptive insights:

Thursday I went to the theater. It was lovely ... An' when I come out, the rain 'ad stopped, an' the blossom sticky on the chestnut trees. You could smell it, that strong and funny. It nearly bust my 'ead open (17).

For Mrs. Lusty, eating is more than merely pleasurable; she takes a kind of hedonistic delight in satisfying her appetite:

I like somethink you can get yer tongue around. A nice piece of fat 'am, for instance. Or a little bowl of stewed eels. Or a chop with the kidney on it ... Yes, there's no end to pleasure, if yer come to think (18).

Yet her penchant for food has a practical philosophy behind it: "There's nothink like food. 'Specially now. If you stuff yer mouths, they can't get inter mischief" (48). Nor is her appetite limited to food alone: "When I walk down the street, I often feel I could take the faces ... I could cat 'em up" (19). At times, however, her vulgarity of expression is transformed into poetic lyricism, yet always in the colloquial idiom that sustains the characterization. The imagery, though drawn from nature, is
not of nature, but of forces extant in nature. For example, Mrs. Lusty, hot in pursuit of the young boarder, shouts out to him in terms that suggest not only the sensual but the suprasensual:

But I was never a slow one. Nor cold. A cold colour, but not cold. Alma Jagg breathed life into the hedges. The frost melted when I lay beneath 'awthorns. I touched the warm, moist earth with my 'and. Afterwards, when flowers come, I lay back ... an' crushed 'em (65).

Nature becomes her world, and she, a goddess who can inject life into it, foster bloom upon it, or destroy it with casual indifference.

In preparation for the funeral, four visiting relatives arrive for the laying-in of Will Lusty; they range themselves spectre-like around the widow, Alma Lusty, "monumental in black" (48). In place of comfort, they utter chilling words of fear and morbid suggestiveness: "Remember 'ow the blood ran, as you turned the knife in 'is side?" (51); "I never loved Will Lusty that much, that we keep an empty chair and a full glass waitin' for 'im, after 'e's dead!" (52). As well, they goad Mrs. Lusty about her boarder, the "well-developed" (59) young man. In the face of the cruelty of their words echoes Mrs. Lusty's howling laughter, as she remembers her husband's own special brand of humour, the incongruity of an accidental fall, the comic substitution of a large ham for himself in the wedding bed. The restorative powers of Alma Lusty seem immeasurable. Sensing a kindness in the young man's nature, she is able to ward off her despair, to "pull the curtains an' make it snug" (62), to retain faith in the belief that "everythink begins ... over and over again" (60).

Ironically, despite the full-blown picture that she presents, she remains barren, unproductive. Alma Lusty's one child had died after only
a few days of life. In an anger directed, possibly, at the bitterness of this memory, or at the dubiousness surrounding the true identity of the child's father, Will Lusty curses "that little blue, queasy, wizened pimp" (29), and strikes his wife. Alma, in an infrequent moment of genuine tenderness, reveals a strange warmth of emotion underlying the coarseness of her appearance and manner:

I can't cry, Will. I loved 'im .... just as I loved you, Will. And other men. Or tried to. Only it dies too soon. It dies in your arms. (29).

These words indicate a motivating force at work behind apparently unquenchable appetites. Her life is composed of a series of fulfilment-seeking episodes, ranging from the time when she and Will had been "burnt up" (17) in the fires of passion, to the present of their lives that is "as regular as the silence and the clocks" (18). Nevertheless, immobility is not in accord with the nature of Mrs. Lusty. No sooner has her dead husband been laid to rest, then she, "tipsy warm" (62), is grappling with the young man; her

Oh, God! Will! Will! I don't know wot I done... to be shut up in this body ... an' nobody to open it an' let me out (68), serves as an expression both of frustration and explanation. Though the young man is able to view this encounter with Mrs. Lusty only in disgust, the Cassandra-like girl who haunts his presence comprehends more fully the actions of the woman in whose body the life beats and struggles "hoping she might express herself ... just that once more" (69).

As Barry Argyle points out, she is what Shaw called "the Life Force, which is essentially paradoxical in that it will kill in order to
fulfil itself."\(^{18}\) Certainly, she possesses a strange awareness of the cyclical order of life and death. Weddings, births, and deaths are all part of the human condition to her. Her parting with the young man, who was both "Fred" and "Jack" within the all-inclusive power of her love, seems converted to a mother-son farewell: "Then it's goodbye, Jack. You 'aven't been that close, Jack ... not since I carried yer" (73).

Mary O'Dowd combines both the natural vitality of Alma Lusty and that insidious diplomacy of Mrs. Jolley or Miss Docker. Overtly, she has "a pretty smile", and her soaped skin is "friendly to her audience" (45); yet, she is not above "looking for a crevice, through which to turn a knife idly on an afternoon. She takes delight in her "hugger-mugger" (473) life with the "hairy man" (84) who passes for her husband; not legally bound to him, she is quick to justify her stand on the matter with a rationale that suggests a rather fixed view of existence: "We were married before God .... there was no priests .... I never went nap on priests meself. There is God and there is priests, I allus said" (84). Nor, despite the seemingly endless string of violent quarrels with Mr. O'Dowd, does she intend to shatter that relationship: "I like him .... We are suited to each other" (152). Her packaged philosophy, generally meted out to friends over a cup of tea, carries, at times, the rudimentary simplicity of mandalic completeness: "Women are the half without the men. It is the men that make the round figure, even such men as we may have, some of us" (202).

Whether it is in the act of fumbling for her store-bought denture that occasionally shoots out from behind her hand, generally to be "caught

\(^{18}\text{Argyle, Patrick White, p. 92.}\)
mercifully in the V of her blouse" (305), or in the mannish energy she devotes to the brewing of strong ale, she retains that earthy quality which gives her "the colour of bark and leather and old dried-up brown things" (306). Her arms, even in the simple gesture of fastening a comb in her hair, look "monumental" (309); as she sits, her legs take on the appearance of having been "set into a permanent shape from being poured there molten" (152). Yet, she remains "mobile", "an active woman" (473), though life possesses her untidily. She is "surely the sheer physical zest for life" itself.

Nevertheless, as in the case of so many other Women of the Flesh, Mary O'Dowd is pervaded by an awareness of the incompleteness of her life, revealed most movingly as she lies dying of cancer: "I had no baby .... An am no lady. Not by a bloody long chalk. But I did not know enough. I was allus terrible iggerant .... of life, and of death for that matter. I did not believe in it till it had come" (483). The despair and frustration which mars her life accounts in large measure for those infrequent occasions when, with considerable relish, she pricks the conscience of others, uncharitably inflicting torment on them. Thus, her reaction to her friend's receipt of a substantial sum of money, a token of thanks from those whose very lives had been at stake, is coolly calculating:

But I am real glad, Mrs. Parker, you have struck lucky, both with your man an the bank balance. But I am glad it is you. An no sour grapes. It is simply this, that I would'uv rather it was Stan an not O'Dowd to rescue ladies from the flames, an them in their nighties, or whatever it was I am told she was dressed up in for the occasion (195);

or, arriving in black put on "out of respect and decency" (475), she reveals the murder of Amy's own son to her, though later she is moved to tears for "she could gush with anyone once she had begun" (475).

However, such moments are overshadowed by her overriding tenacity for life, a determination to give death a tussle (479) when it comes for her. At the moment of death, she expresses a joy in the living: "I love a crowd. I love to look right up the nostrils of strange people. I cannot see too much of um. I could run my hands through the skins of strangers" (487). She continues to express an assuredness in her own creative energies even as she utters her final words: "I shall not be havun any priest. I am not afraid. I can talk for meself. Thank God" (490).

I'm at least honest .... I'm a sensualist. When I was a child, I liked to take off my shoes and paddle in the mud. I liked the feel of mud. I like to feel it coming through my toes. 20

This slight portrait of Mrs. Mounsey furnishes a starting point for a third and final grouping of Patrick White's Women of the Flesh, amplified in the characterization of Nola Boyle, Kikitsa Alexiou and Amy Parker. All three aspire to a world which their senses tell them is worth possessing; like Mrs. Mounsey, they love the earthiness of life, existence rooted in the multiple dimensions of natural surroundings, observable and tangible. They are most clearly aligned with those representative figures tokened in Arthur Brown's mandalic dance for Mrs. Poulter, replete with sensuous images of "ripening pears" and "skeins of golden honey". Yet, despite the uniformity of their overgrown appearance, and their common effort to achieve a sense of self-identification in keeping with their true natures, they experience

20 White, Living and the Dead, p. 198.
varying degrees of successful self-fulfilment. For Nola Boyle, Self is sacrificed to the larger design of Sarsaparillan suburbia; for Amy Parker, life becomes a series of frustrating struggles to enclose the transitoriness of her existence within some framework of permanency which she can understand; for Kikitsa Alexiou, the harmony of life is restored only through self-metamorphosis.

Nola Boyle (The Season at Sarsaparilla), "unlike her neighbours is fat and forty and like Mrs. Lusty childless".21 Described at first appearance as "Generous of figure. Tawny of head. A lioness. Stretching and yawning", she is, as her role of explicator to young Pippy Pogson implies, like a bitch in heat, as hot-blooded as the name Boyle suggests. Her sexual appetites are apparent in word and gesture. She drinks her tea "in great animal gulps" (147); she envisages meat as "a must for men ... with the juice running out ... and a nice piece of fat to get their tongues around" (174); she blows "fruity kisses" (173) to her departing husband; she takes delight in remembering "the mad things, the long, velvety moments" (98) indelibly etched on her own conscience. Strolling in her suburban garden, she transforms it imaginatively into a paradisal Eden, devoid of men, where she can cavort in the fullest exploration of her senses, like some wood nymph "green in the shade" (125):

This is the best time of all. Before the men come. Even in summer, at the end of the day, when you feel you could have been spat out, when the hair is stuck to your forehead, it is best, best. A time to loiter. The flowers are lolling. The roses are biggest .... I could eat the roses! ... I'd take off

21Arple, Patrick White, p. 96.
22White, Four Plays, p. 81.
me clothes, and sit amongst the falling roses ... Splotchy. You can imagine the petals, trickling, trickling, better than water, because solid (125).

Nola Boyle and her husband lead lives of quiet desperation in Sarsaparilla's suburbia, isolated from neighbours by structural and social fences. Only Pippy Pogson, in her youthful innocence and enthusiasm, ignores such marked boundaries. She makes her way easily into the Boyle's yard and Nola's heart. Pippy's defiance of her parents' wishes in "squeezing through" (151) to Nola because, as she says, "I do what I want, you know. I only let them think I don't" (151), is tempered mildly by Nola's "That's all right, so long as you don't do too much of it" (151). Nola is quite aware of the parental hypocrisy which governs the child's natural curiosity, so that Pippy is permitted to "notice" the actions of the neighbourhood "bitch in heat" as long as she doesn't "look"; yet, Nola remains unaware of the impact that her own affair with Rowley Hasson has on Pippy. Pippy finds the Boyle's home unlike her own, a comfortable place where one can "be natural" (152), where life takes on all the familiarity of "bread. And tinned peaches" (153), where one can openly confess one's love.

Ironically, Nola Boyle is "about as barren as an old boot" (166). Unable to watch her neighbour, Mavis Knott, depart for the hospital to give birth to a first child, Nola turns her head away and mouths all the bitterness of a woman who has failed to achieve the full joy of fruition:

The pains have got her. It's happening to Mavis Knott. Always a decent, dumb cow. One of the lucky ones. She'll settle down to it like shelling peas. Wonder whether I could have stood that pain. Tearing me in half. Tearing. But, oh God, what lovely ... lovely...relief.... Of course I couldn'tuv stood it! It's nothing to what you bear in your mind (156).
However, Nola reflects a natural exuberance for life. Her reactions to the humdrum world in which she lives like a caged "lioness" are revealed in as terse a defiance as "I gotta be a tiger" (127), spit out at Masson as he moves in to trap her. Her devotion to Ern, her husband, remains unmarred by the experience:

So I've always waited. I've waited for you to come in. My life's been set by you, Ern. By your coming in and going out .... I know I'm lost, Ern ... but I'd be more lost without you. I'd finish it (167).

Her devotion, however, is based on need: "I've never really liked men. I only needed them" (128). In re-establishing harmony within her household, Nola also restores the cyclical pattern of her existence. Pippy learns something of the cyclical processes from her: "Over, and over, and over. For ever, and ever, and ever. That's nature" (176). In Nola's world, "dogs've gotta be dogs" (101), and men, though "dirty buggers .... oughta come. They're expected" (126). Nola chains her passions to the drudgery of daily living, though our final view of her suggests anything but peace of mind: "She throws aside the magazine. Sits with her face cupped in her hands, staring out into the evening .... A desperate outburst of hating from Nola as she sits tossing the slipper on her toes" (175). As J. F. Burrows observes: "Essentially she is afraid of allowing anyone but Ern to come close enough to stir her quick desire. Essentially she is afraid of herself.23

Amy Parker (The Tree of Man) is caught up in that same ebb and flow of events that mark a life governed by repeated acts and limited

---

human contacts. Nevertheless, her characterization by White remains "a triumph of observation and creative imagination".

Initially a thin, young bride with a "complete ignorance of life, as it is lived", the wife, Amy Parker, soon thickens a little in her new environment of "stones and sun and wind, sand-coloured and monotonous" (26); her flesh grows "conscious and suave" (31), and, in her loneliness, she becomes "greedy" (32) for her husband's love. In fact, Amy is "absorbed in the man Stan Parker" (33). Her life becomes the routine of daily existence where God is the "sound of wheels at the end of market day. And the love of God ... a kiss full in the mouth" (33). Thus, Amy Parker learns to find contentment in simple pleasures, in "her copper cow in the orange light of evening" (36), or in the casual touching of her husband's back. The solidity of what she can see or feel reassures her. She is "quite feverish with life", with all those events she possesses "in her head, inside her glowing skin" (94); she longs "to be pervaded by a permanence" (97). In this sense,

Amy Parker is an enlarged version of Mrs. Lusty. Like her, Amy is a sensual woman, delighting in the joys of the flesh; she is a possessive woman .... the possessiveness ... a ... desire for certainty, something which can really be obtained only through illumination. 26

However, Amy lacks those qualities of perceptive insight that characterize White's Women of the Spirit; nor does she have that vision to translate her suffering into more than mere self-gratification. Her relationship

26Loder, " 'The Ham Funeral' ", £4.
with life is a matter of all-consuming possessiveness, to unite the lives of others into "the creative rhythm of her own life"; in so reducing herself she reduces others ... to 'things' capable of being 'possessed' ".

At first, Amy Parker discovers peace of mind within the four corners of "her own place" where she is not "expected to find answers" (113). It is there, close to the familiarity of objects and the man she knows, that she grows accustomed to her isolated existence and its silence which soon fits "her like a skin" (113). Her own identity seems permanently rooted in the garden which flourishes under her watchful care, in the substantial figures of "her two growing children and her solid husband" (145), or, even in Blue, "the clumsy, fruitful dog" (137) whose "blunt puppies" (134) she holds warmly to her cheek. Secure in her sovereignty over such a world, Amy can afford the luxury of daydreams - "whether she would have resisted the advances of a lord, if he had driven up" (139), or whether she might not draw "from her hands the gloves of soapsuds" (138) and, like the cool Lady Madeleine, assume that same demeanor of self-indulgent indolence.

Yet the flux of life beats continually at the door of her world so that even the permanency suggested by that house and its possessions remains always "suspended, a bubble ready to burst" (53). Though she is as "firmly rooted in the past, as old roses" (125), Amy Parker is powerless to "move beyond her fate" (125); life becomes for her a gradual disintegration of all that she clings to and cherishes.


28. Ibid.
Manfred Mackenzie looks upon Amy Parker as the embodiment of a "corporeal vision" who tries to halt the flux in which she is immersed by 'possessing' it; she must possess her husband, her son, the child rescued from the floods, the 'poetry' of Madeline's life, Con the Greek, the commercial traveller Leo. She would reify potential being. Therefore, she more and more identifies herself with the organic and inorganic .... develops a form of materialism .... a mysticism of objects. 29

Certainly, there is evidence of this. She cannot love her first child enough; she devours him with kisses, and sometimes her moist eyes betray a longing "to have him safe inside her again" (119). She yearns to hold her husband's head in her hands, to look "into the skull at his secret life" (156). Her strength seems most apparent as she performs the simple mechanical actions of milking, when she sits "with the bucket between her strong legs, her buttocks over-lapping the little sawn-off block"; one cannot discount "the harmoniousness of her rather massive form beside the formal cow" (238). While standing in her garden beneath the "big glistening leaves" (155) of the mulberry tree, she appears almost "ashamed of her ripeness and her purple hands" (155). As well, she enters into "stranger's lives .... forming relationships of sympathy and even passion" (217). Her very name, Amy, carries with it connotations of love in manifest forms. Thus, she cries for the loss of Fritz, the old German, whose measured actions she has come to love as surely as "that contentment of first light" (205) which patterns her own existence. She feels sadness for Con the Greek "shut up inside his language" (239), and longs to know him better, "like a son" (240), or as "dog and mistress" in a "loolloping and friendly ....

relationship" (245). She accepts the invasion of the "reddish" Leo into her life for he has been "foisted on her by a strange dictatorship of the body" (333); for a time, her "grey flesh" (328) glows again.

Yet, the faces cannot be eaten; the permanency she seeks in time and place escapes her. Her son leaves, "slipping from her as easily and naturally as the seed from the pod" (265). Something is spent in her relationship with Stan Parker; though habit comforts them, "like warm drinks and slippers", it goes disguised as love only. Even her garden begins to take "possession of the house" (383), closing in on it "in over-bearing clumps and thickets ... a jungle ... with obsessive smells of rot" (446).

Amy Parker does not understand herself (394); nor does she "understand the eyes of people" (394). She reluctantly resigns herself to the realization that she will "never succeed in opening her husband and looking inside", that he is being "kept shut for other purposes" (444); her suspicions that her husband has "received the grace of God" (438) trouble her, for she lacks such visionary powers herself. She remains in her old age "a superficial and ... sensual woman" (497) drawn to the soothing aspect of things, looking into drawers, at objects she has forgotten, or thinking about that other man who has been her lover. Only with her grandson whom she has not "attempted to possess" (410) is she at last able to share some "secret thing" (411), a piece of coloured glass through which the child, not Amy, can view "the crimson mystery of the world" (512).

Stan Parker, seated majestically in old age within the concentric circles of his garden, discovers the image of divinity in "the jewel" (503) of spittle that lies "glittering intensely and personally on the ground" (508).
before him; yet, his vision is not egocentric "because he is able to establish an empathy and a harmony between himself and his material surroundings"; he has "an intuition of the wholeness of man". 30 Amy's egocentricity prevents her from seeing beyond the material world: "she is destroyed ... because she has not been able to achieve her husband's protective mandala". 31 At Stan's death, she is consoled by the simple consideration of the many people who will come to offer "material assistance" (510); she is not destined to follow her husband "into the boundless garden" (510) just yet.

Amy Parker fails in her life struggle to fashion the world in her own image, to attain that sense of self-fulfilment which lies beyond the grasp of those women locked within the dimensions of space and time. Of them all, only Kikitsa Alexiou ("The Woman Who Wasn't Allowed to Keep Cats") appears able to effect the conditions which permit her a limited degree of control and freedom within that worldly sphere of influence.

For Kikitsa Alexiou, "men are really rather lovely"; 32 the ardour that she shows for her husband might best be described as volatile or explosive, for it is her conviction "that anything of consequence must be short, sharp, stunning" (237). Thus, when she introduces him to her friends, she flies at him, "to support, to present, to rough up the hair just so much" (242); she plasters herself upon him, or indolently paddles a hand

31 Ibid., 18.
32 White, Burnt Ones, p. 239.
in his unresisting flesh. Despite her "rather slack, mature figure, innocent of girdle" (238), she is accustomed to peer "out of all that fat" (239), and bare her teeth so that her appearance is often more feline than feminine. Sometimes, overjoyed at the bond of love which unites her with Aleko, she prowls "about the roof, as though to give expression to the tumult of her feelings" (247).

Cat-like herself, she has a penchant for cats, and extends that passion for her husband to a uniquely-named masculine trio of the creatures — Hairy, Ronron and Apricot. The latter is her favourite; she delights in burying "her face in the orange fur" (241), and holds him in her arms in "yet another attempt to possess" (246), just as she encircles her husband as though he is a cat, her moist skin lapping at his.

Over the course of years, Kikitsa changes. She becomes thinner, "almost lithe" (260). Though she has rid herself of the cats at her husband's insistence, she seems to have absorbed their characteristics into herself, to be trapped "practically inside their skins" (253); she takes on "the look of a starved ... flattening cat" (264), and dresses in accommodating garments, which move naturally with her body as she prowls about the roof. In a moment of devilish abandon, Kikitsa engages her girlhood friend, Maro Hajistavrou, in sensual cat-like play, so that their thighs have "something of the duplicity, the elasticity, of softest cat-flesh bundled together in the sun" (266). Her manner and appearance alter so radically that even her husband is aware of some great transformation; their passion for one another grows accordingly, and like "two strangers", they are "more than ever in need of each other's support" (270).
Unlike other Women of the Flesh who face repeated disillusionment in their struggles to grapple with a material existence that is continuously subject to the forces of change, Kikitsa Alexiou has succeeded in recreating her world in terms that are ultimately sensual. She has become more truly herself — not, like Theodora Goodman or Laura Trevelyan, by any process of illumination that transcends self — by developing and refining that animal-like nature that is such an essential and inescapable part of her being.

Two of the four corners of Arthur Brown's mandala dance have already suggested a polarity of female characterization; White's Women of the Flesh are antipodal in nature to the Women of the Spirit. The two remaining corners of that four-cornered dance are similarly balanced in their presentation of women characters whose contrasting attributes serve to enclose the figure of the dance in a pattern of mandalic completeness; thus, White's grouping of Acquisitive Women is in antithetical opposition to his assemblage of women who might best be judged Accommodating.
WALDO'S DANCE: THE ACQUISITIVE WOMEN

White's Women of the Spirit seem bound by some process of individuation; in order to realize more fully a potentiality locked within their own natures, they must discard the trappings which give identity only in terms of an objective existence. By contrast, White's Women of the Flesh appear as inextricably linked to those rhythms dictated by natural forces; in seeking to understand the world and themselves, they attempt, as their very fleshiness implies, to assimilate experience, to possess all people and things by refashioning them into an ever-expanding pattern of meaning. Both courses of action carry with them certain dangers and hardships. The former are subject to ostracism and a resulting state of loneliness; the latter, generally frustrated by the very enormity of their endeavours, often discover more satisfying, though destructive outlets for their life goals of aggrandizement.

The fourth corner of Arthur Brown's mandala dance in The Solid Mandala is performed for Waldo; however, in symbolic gesture and movement, it sums up, as well, still another assemblage of White's female figures. The shufflings and clatterings of that dance portray their intrinsic qualities; like "The Hollow Men" of T.S. Eliot, their voices are "quiet and meaningless",¹ their bearings "without form ... without colour",² their actions reducible to a "Paralysed force, gesture without motion".³ They lead "pinned and persecuted"⁴ lives, their successes measurable only as "a dry twitter, a

²Ibid.
³Ibid.
clipped twitching" (257); unable to rise "in pure flight" (257) above "The weariness, the fever, and the fret/... where men sit and hear each other groan", they struggle futilely with "words and ideas" that continue to remain "skewered to paper" (257). They themselves, like "bent, overused, aluminum skewers" (257), seem external manifestations of that inner rigidity that possesses them. Although they are united in their efforts to surround themselves with a vast assortment of material comforts, they derive no real satisfaction in ownership. They lack both vision and benignity. They remain callously indifferent and emotionally sterile.

Happy Valley, in ironic contrast to the name it bears, breeds a number of such women: Amy Quong, Hilda Halliday, Mrs. Furlow, Sidney Furlow.

Amy Quong lives "in a kind of mystical attachment to her things", and she wants more, for each new possession enables Amy to escape still further into the security of that "soft and necessary structure of the cocoon" (33) which her world of things affords. This passion for things and the self-assurance that accompanies acquisition make her intolerant of human weakness. Though her face is "a smile for people passing in the street" (187), Amy remains essentially without passion, her forehead "golden, polished wax" (187), her hands "twisted ... into a ball" (189) of self-sufficiency, herself "a piece of stone" (203).

Lacking pity, Amy hates people like Ernest and Vic Moriarty, whose lives seem ruled by pettiness and deception; when that hatred comes "close

---


All references are to this edition.
to the surface" (203), only then is she moved by a "flow of unexpected passion" (206). Her anonymous letter is indirectly responsible for the deaths of the Moriartys; nevertheless, it is "not conscience, but achievement" (326) that lingers after the deed. Her hatred has been quenched, and her life is once again "rounded and intensified" (326); moreover, she has purchased the lovely lustre bowl that once stood on the centre table in the front room of the Moriartys. For Amy, the bowl reflects "nothing of the past" (326). Like the Jungian modern man who views only his own image in the mandala, Amy Quong sees nothing beyond herself and the limitations of "her room suspended in the lustre bowl" (326).

Hilda Halliday lacks the will to act but is no less successful in gaining what she wants than Amy Quong. Though her grey eyes are "full of sympathy" (16), she is largely a compound of blind "stupidity and anxiety for the future" (16); waiting is "Hilda's strong suit" (19). She longs for the prestige that generally accompanies being a "country doctor's wife" (72); however, she feels "safer being married to Oliver" (72). Her voice, like "the clicking of needles knit up with the vague protective softness of wool" (197), is a reflection of the dry, hollow person she has become. She lives for moments of certainty, ticks off time between those moments "as so many dead leaves" (217), reduces all else to "an incidental mechanical process" (217) that hardly touches her. This is Hilda's life; it is planned. She seems passionless, "an abstract virtue" (324) only; yet, her insensitivity fosters a kind of success: "Hilda Halliday gets her dreary security by hanging on to a husband who doesn't want her."7

For Mrs. Furlow, too, life is measurable; it becomes "a series of obligations, to her class, to her daughter, to her friends, and more especially to herself" (136). It is not surprising that the perceptive Sidney Furlow, the daughter, develops a hard core resistance to her Glen Marsh environment. Though Mrs. Furlow considers Sidney "her chief pre-occupation" (80), she consoles herself in the belief that Sidney's passion is "a flower fostered by her own hand" (81). Yet, it perturbs Mrs. Furlow that there is "something revolutionary ... in her daughter's attitude" (136), something which threatens to upset the mother's world of tiaras, pearls and state occasions. Mrs. Furlow possesses "an innate belief in her own importance as a public figure" (81); diamonds, the social columns of the Herald, Glen Marsh itself — all are representative of that prestige and success to which she aspires. She suspects the commonness of friends like the Belpers, but learns to accept them as "Good Sorts" when she discovers that they have social connections "at Government House" (128); she considers the hired help "rather uncouth, in fact definitely common" (87), and communicates with them only "to ensure a profitable return" (87).

However, Mrs. Furlow relies too heavily on false values; the world of material achievement lacks a dependable permanency. With a certain degree of retributive justice, Sidney chooses the hired hand, Glen Hagan, as her lover and husband.

Sidney's selection of the drifter, Hagan, is more a reflection of her indifference to life than a decision motivated by any love for the man; "I often think ... it'd be rather fun to blow out one's brains" (142),
succinctly sums up Sidney's attitude. Education at Miss Cortine's school for girls has largely been a matter of "tea-pouring and polite adultery" (85); life at home she finds "all a bloody bore" (85). Sidney fashions her appearance deliberately to match the consolidation of her mood; she applies lipstick wantonly so that her mouth looks "like a wound" (86), and blurs the lids of her eyes so that she looks "like a whore" (86). As well, she has cultivated a laugh "like a piece of wire" (86). Her reaction to the mother's choice of suitor is not encouraging; in fact, it is almost totally dependent upon her "being able to control the life of Roger Kemble" (177).

Defying social and moral codes, Sidney Furlow takes pleasure from testing her own sense of power; this is something "fierce and irrational" (180) to which she is drawn, as though she longs to be "swallowed up in a spasm of violence" (180). Despite the exhilaration she experiences in mastering an untamed colt or in watching a snake being beaten into a pulpy mass of quivering nerves, she remains herself a hard, thin figure, one to whom you can put out a hand, but cannot touch, as unfeminine as the masculinity of her name suggests.

Ironically, Hagan both desires and fears the unapproachable Sidney Furlow; her attraction for Hagan is based ultimately on wanting "to possess this fear in a human body" (280), on the self-containment that such possessiveness engenders. There is little question of love involved. Sidney remains stone-like, her face "supercilious" (304), her manner confident once she has conquered her man; only then is she able to accept "the future with tranquillity" (304).
Eden Standish of *The Living and the Dead*, in some ways, is a restatement of the earlier characterization of Sidney Furlow. As Marjorie Barnard observes, "Eden begins as a determined and spirited child, grows to disillusioned womanhood and recaptures certainty in Sacrifice". The point of departure in such a comparison rests with that word, "sacrifice". Sidney Furlow sacrifices nothing of herself; Eden Standish learns to scorn that indifference which "denies all the evidence of life", and to accept instead the life-giving power of love.

Even in childhood, Eden Standish is "persistent in a struggle against conventional procedure" (19). Determined to have her own way, she shows passion only in resistance, and, "in her mind" (93) readily disposes of the people she dislikes. Like Sidney Furlow, she finds boarding school a "hell" (134); as well, she possesses "an independent mind" (134) which disturbs the mother. Her defiance is painted in lipstick on her mouth; her movements become "suggestive of both resentment and desire" (137), and her mind settles "into a state of numb and helpless discontent" (137). People learn to avoid her moods; they recognize that if you touch Eden "you might get burnt" (173). Despite her self-reprimand, she is "determined to give too much" (178) of herself, whether in impulsive and sensual relationships or in a passionate oratory of "unassimilated ideas" (180).

Eden does not remain a mere shadow of the earlier Sidney Furlow. In finding Joe Barnett she discovers compassion; "a knowledge of sterile

---


9 Patrick White, *The Living and the Dead* (New York: Viking Press, 1941), p. 239. All references are to this edition.
years" (258) has, perhaps, prepared her for this transformation. She does not look upon Joe, as Sidney Furlow views Clem Hagan, as a conquest; although Eden desires Joe enough to swallow him up, her absorption in the man springs from love not mere possessiveness. Years of bitterness have given her "a used-up look" (187); however, they have also whetted her desire to possess those worlds that stand apart, "the less material worlds" (256). Now she wishes only to flood the world with her love. For Eden Standish, there is no "future with tranquillity"; there is only a sense of impotency in her struggle to unite the world of immediate sensation, of "pervasive, irrepressible warmth" (260), with the larger design that menaces the present moment.

Eden Standish discovers in Joe Barnett some direction to her life; Elyot Standish gains no such resolve from his relationship with that "transparent ... volatile mesh of steel" (200), Muriel Raphael. She is a "shadowless" and "clay modelled" (201) figure who clips and trims her words to suit the occasion; her smile remains only "a symbol of emotion, not emotion" (203). She governs her life along lines of sheer "physical necessity" (207), so that, unlike Sidney Furlow and Eden Standish, she exists almost totally without passion. As far removed from a flesh and blood world as a painting by the artist whose surname she bears, she appears as no more than a "lacquered smile" (211), a "magenta mouth" (212) or "brown skin" (253).

Elyot Standish is not her lover; he is simply an object to be examined and then relegated to anonymity among her other acquisitions. As Elyot discovers, making love to Muriel Raphael is "as impersonal as an accomplished act" (253); the mechanics of love-making completed, she
quickly slips "back amongst her own possessions" (253). Muriel Raphael is like "brittle glass" (322), an embodiment of "rational sensuality". She desires only the attainable; she moves solely within the confines of a circle of "right existence" (275), and achieves self-sufficiency by keeping "emotion at a distance" (275). In this way, she epitomizes most explicitly the type of woman depicted by Arthur Brown in the fourth corner of his mandalic dance.

Elizabeth Loder's brief reference to Catherine Standish's role in *The Living and the Dead* gives some credence to my selection of her as one of White's Acquisitive Women: "While Mrs. Standish has enough vitality to be placed among the living, White does not sympathise with the way this vitality is expressed, and she is ... given the pretensions of the dead". Certainly her life is "a colourful pretence" in which she, like some "copper-coloured sun" (141) remains eternally fixed in mandalic completeness, with everyone else "so many subsidiary planets" revolving "round the orb of Catherine Standish" (141).

The young Kitty Goose, is filled with pretensions to greatness; elegance is "a secret ambition" (23). She considers herself intellectually superior, and delights in catching a fleeting glimpse of herself in a shop window as she passes "with a play by Bernard Shaw beneath her arm" (26), or


11 Elizabeth Loder, "'The Ham Funeral': Its Place in the Development of Patrick White", *Southerly*, 23, 2 (1963), 79.

12 Argyle, *Patrick White*, p. 16.
in tirelessly weaving "Swinburnian similes ... into verses of her own" (26). Marriage to Willy Standish adds a new dimension to that world. She constructs a domestic scene from objects that afford "a golden tone" (39) to married life: brocaded curtains of yellow gold, a French gilt clock, wallpaper of neat sprigged flowers; she spends "all day long going up and down stairs, just for the pleasure of going up and down stairs, for enjoying possession of her territory" (39).

Yet, the permanency implied in the ownership of things is illusory. She and Willy are forced apart by their mutual self-dependence; just as Willy is "dependent on himself" (87), other people make "no impression on her own distinctness" (87). However, Catherine needs men, not in Muriel Raphael's terms as a "physical necessity", but simply because their encouragement contributes "towards her success" (49).

The realization that she is "no longer pretty, witty Kitty" (131) leads Catherine to a deliberate development of the more mature, "interesting Mrs. Standish" (131) for reasons of "economic necessity" (131). She has few aspirations beyond the consideration of her own security, and devotes her energies to reading in order to "increase her conversational stock" (140), or to listening sympathetically to men, giving them the impression she enjoys it. She flirts with her male companions though she never goes too far; however, she is not above accepting "a cheque, after protest" (131). Nevertheless, for the aging Catherine Standish life generally grows to be "epistolary, sedentary, and dull" (131). Though her mirror reflects the ravages of time, she pins her "faith to a conjunction "but"") (296), and strives to recapture some of the charm and attractiveness of a
spent youth. She reinforces her crumbling face "by rouge and a muscular determination" (205), and dons her discordant red dress, convinced that she can still stare a stranger into believing on second thought that she is impressive. The acquisition of Wally Collins, the saxophonist, as a conquest of passion she considers "something of a triumph" (263) at her age. Ironically, Wally accepts Catherine more as some "dame sort of dolled up" (224), an "Old Girl" (304) who is as reliable as "a comfortable pair of carpet slippers" (224). The precariousness of such a relationship dooms it to failure. At a drunken party, Catherine Standish falls from her self-made orbit like some "red and golden meteor" that is "past directing" (306), and throws up "on the carpet the last fragments of her dignity" (306). Our last view of Catherine Standish, withered and dying yet still concerned about the tidiness of her hair, is a final indicator of that dictatorship of pretence which has governed her entire life.

Catherine Standish, however incomplete her life may appear, possesses a stirring vitality in comparison with other white female creations whose very lives symbolize inertness and sham. Mrs. Rapallo (The Aunt's Story), Madeleine Fisher (The Tree of Man), Mrs. Chalmers-Robinson (Riders in the Chariot) and Mrs. Rosetree (Riders in the Chariot) represent almost total commitment to that world of self-interest and deception. Tragically, the passing of years merely reinforces their common need to project a glossy public image which in reality encloses a lifetime of lost hopes and bitter regrets.

Despite the self-assured manner with which Mrs. Rapallo enters a crowded room, with all "the pomp of cathedrals and circuses" (149), she is
separated from those "sensitive filaments that drink avidly of past and future" (127) only by her possession of "a hard American core" (151) that enables her "to face facts as uncompromising as the insubstantiality of her illusions, and live". 13 A figure of crimsons and purples, she has made of her life a kind of "perpetual house party" (152); yet, she has great need for an intimate friendship with someone who will offer private advice and who will share her secrets. Drawn to Theodora Goodman who, newly-arrived at the Hotel du Midi, holds promise as a sympathetic listener, Mrs. Rapallo carefully hides the truth beneath her great hat and behind a face that has "the metal of conviction" (179); she revels in recalling all the brilliant moments she has lived, and glows with maternal pride on recounting that her daughter, Gloria, has "made a brilliant marriage" (154).

The brilliance, as Theodora Goodman soon discovers, is reducible to a collection of objects and mementoes, "the visible details of Elsie Rapallo's life" (184), scattered in disarray in her narrow cell of a room, where even the corners confess secrets. All is on display "to be noticed" (184), to convince the onlooker of the richness of a past that is nonpareil. Theodora intuitively recognizes that events for Elsie are past, that they are reflected only in what hangs from hooks, or litters the chairs. Now, the "dead, underwater eyes" (185) of the woman merely peer into the mirror at a face of "crystallized naïve and crimson" waiting for time soon to "take the final bite" (154). She is consumed by "private regrets" (124) which only an awful awareness of passing time can accentuate. With the

---

13 Ibid., p. 29.
destruction of the nautilus which Mrs. Rapallo has generally borne as a splendid symbol of her regal bearing, and with her ensuing confession to Theodora that the daughter, the Principessa does not exist, the "cardboard collapse" (238) of Elsie Rapallo's world is assured. Like the fire-seeking Colonel Trevellick ("The Twitching Colonel"), she makes no effort to escape the burning hotel, but appears at a window "wearing her hair, for the occasion" (243), seeming to accept unquestioningly the inevitability of her death.

Like Elsie Rapallo, Madeleine Fisher (The Tree of Man) undergoes an ordeal by fire. Viewed by those not her social peers as the dark-figured woman, "godlike and remote" (136), or as the famous beauty "always in demand" (137), Madeleine truly possesses the power of command that only great attractiveness and self-confidence can bring. A raising of her arm governs the eyes of men; the "shape of her mouth" (167) tells them when to laugh. She plays "a cool game" (137) of love, with wealthy young Tom Armstrong as the potential stake; yet, Madeleine is "ice" (167). She remains remote and untouchable; though Armstrong's laughter tries "to stroke" (167), she remains as fixed in self-resolve as the "icy dress [to] her splendid body" (167).

With the appearance of the threatening fire near the Glastonbury estate, Madeleine begins to sense her own vulnerability. The approaching tongues of flame seem to possess the potential capacity to "consume, apparently, whole intentions" (176) and designs. Certainty of gesture and purpose have vanished from her by the time Stan Parker reaches the cooler air beyond the burning building with the smoke-blackened Madeleine in his arms; "retching, holding her head, and falling even to all fours"
in her agony, Madeleine, like Catherine Standish (The Living and the Dead), loses the last fragments of her dignity, and becomes a subject who evokes only loud, explosive laughter.

Yet Madeleine Fisher's determination to create for herself "the pocket into which she [desires] to get" (456) proves, in a sense, indomitable. Despite the ravages which time and the fire inflict upon her, she achieves a degree of success measurable in terms of marriage to a rich draper, companionship with brilliant conversationalists and "amusing relationships with artistic young men" (456). Nevertheless, such prominence affords her little real comfort; behind the composed "dry face" fixed "under her hat" (462) lies a mind tormented by "the nostalgia of lost possibilities" (463), a mind unable to understand fully any "precise meanings" (463) in human relationships. The discovery that lives "can only touch, they do not join" (463) comes too late for Madeleine Fisher; she has squandered her own life in the attainment of goals that are, like herself, subject to the irrefutable process of change.

Although Mrs. Chalmers-Robinson (The Riders in the Chariot) seems aware from the beginning that "the elastic souls of human beings" (258) are capable of being stretched beyond the limits of reliability and trust, she has reached "the stage of social evolution where appearance is not an end, but a martyrdom" (260), where dependency on people is more necessity than pleasure. She has become "famous for her amusing luncheons" (261); she minglees with those who have become "rich, useful, and therefore tolerable" (262), and glitters especially for those who have not yet "dared venture on [her] Christian name" (262) of Jinny. To ease the burden of self-torture that she endures in the name of success, she practises Christian Science,
and cultivates, as well, "the habit of standing a glass behind a vase" (262) as reinforcement for more trying moments.

Unexpected financial ruin brings immediate social disaster. She wilts "from the waist downward" (266) at the news, and drops to the floor, a "washed-out" (266) figure, disgraced before her guests who have already begun to snigger as they disperse. She blubbers quietly for the loss of all her pretty things; she seems like some "sac of a slack, sick spider, slithering out of its disguise of silk" (267). Adjustment to a more restricted existence is slow. She paints her mouth "like a big crimson flower" (276) as token of her restoration, but encloses it "with a little careful mauve line ... to keep it within bounds" (276) of a newly-prescribed life; she learns in time "how to enter the lives of her friends from a distance" (281). Yet, her experience has taught her that the permanency of "pearls" or "men" (283) is illusory; she longs for something she can touch. Ironically, she is at the same time disgusted and alarmed by such insights.

Years later, Mrs. Chalmers-Robinson, "palpitating with her own daring" (514), still dresses in "screeching pink" (514), and professes her love for "sapphires, and powder-blue" (516); but she continues to fix her eyes "on something distant and intangible" (516). Though her own "crater" is "by now extinct" (521), her enormous satin hat still bobs hopefully in the company of the "lacquered crab-shell" (514) and "conical felt" (514) of her cronies. Despite the colourful and animated tableau the three women present, their conversation and gestures suggest lives consigned to some "obscure purgatory" (521) of existence.
Of these four, Mrs. Rosetree (Riders in the Chariot) has the greatest "gift for assimilation" (221). Her Australianness becomes necessary compensation for a past replete with horror and deprivation. As a recent resident of Paradise East, Shulamith Rosenbaum is determined to strip herself of that identity she finds unforgettably repugnant; name, religion and custom are discarded in favour of a regimented suburban life with its new set of values. Shulamith and her husband, Haim, take refuge from themselves "there in the dark of their texture-brick shell, surrounded by the mechanical objects" (221) that promise comfort. Yet, family life seems "as breakable as Bakelite" (223), and their adopted Roman Catholicism affords them little true peace of mind. For Shirl Rosetree, "a read of some nice magazine" (224) temporarily eases the uncertainties of living.

The arrival of the Jew, Himmelfarb, is disturbing; for Mrs. Rosetree especially, who wants only "peace, and a nice home" (410), the presence of the Jew foreshadows involvements which may prove unpleasant. She is determined to protect that limited world to which she has become accustomed; for her, life is a business, and one has to be ruthless to survive. That she has a husband whom she despises is of little concern to her; she needs him. As well, she is of a practicality that respects a cold aloofness in her own children, but only because she has, "so to speak, paid for it" (472). Thus, when Harry Rosetree hangs himself in their bathroom, there is little doubt that Shirl Rosetree will not survive the shock. She is "rejuvenated by some power" (482), quite identifiable, to put her house back in order; "it is only right, only practical" (482) for her to know where she stands. Nor is it surprising that, years later, as the well-to-do Mrs. Wolfson, she reaches an "age of social innocence"
where she is "again dependent on success" (515). Life has been for her essentially "a series of disguises", which she has "whisked on, and off, whether Sheila Wolfson, or Shirl Rosetree, or Shulamith Rosenbaum, as circumstances demanded" (518). In this way, she is, perhaps, one of Patrick White's most satiric caricatures, epitomizing those Acquisitive Women who lead pinned and persecuted lives.

Mrs. Pask (Riders in the Chariot), Miriam Sword (Night on Bald Mountain) and Anne Brown (The Solid Mandala) suffer from that same inability to achieve personal identity beyond that physical environment which seems to contain them. They are united in their acquiescence to modes of behaviour which make their lives bearable.

In marrying Reverend Arthur Pask, the young Mrs. Pask simultaneously agrees to relinquish "all personal pretensions" (337) to her sketching, to her piano, and to her "light soprano voice" (337). What has been hitherto "rather a distracted life" (337) is dedicated instead entirely to "Our Lord Jesus Christ and Reverend Arthur Pask" (337). Soon a widow, she already so rigidly patterns her life that any creative talent she possesses is swallowed up by a moral code to which she unquestioningly adheres.

As self-appointed art teacher to the half-caste, Alf Dubbo, she applauds his technical skill, but can express only dispair at the flambouyancy of colour and sensuality of presentation. However, though artistic form has become for her "first and foremost a moral force" (337), she has not always viewed form in such abstract terms; her own complexion she knows to be the finest, "so clear and fresh" (338); her memories of her husband are not those of the preacher in the pulpit, but of a slim young
man jumping the net at tennis. Nevertheless, she is proud of having given "up all for Mr. Pask" (338). She seems to have sublimated successfully any natural urges, regulating her life instead by a moral coerciveness that permits her to see only the obscenity and not the beauty in Alf Dubbo’s paintings, or that persuades her to obliterate from conscious memory any trace of that ugly scene she once witnessed between Alf and her brother in the latter’s bedroom. In the end, she escapes even from the pleasures formerly provided by her interest in art; instead, she throws "herself into works" (356), thereby gaining the respect of "almost every member of the Mothers’ Union and the Ladies’ Guild" (356).

Miriam Sword’s alcoholism (Night on Bald Mountain), though "less a refuge than a mode of self-expression",\(^\text{14}\) is, nevertheless, a further example of that negation of the principles of life; "driven in on herself" to a point where she seeks "release in masochism",\(^\text{15}\) she displays only "the apathy which long illness and suffering bring" (286).

That she hasn’t always found solace "at the bottom of the glass" (308) is revealed both to the goatwoman and to her nurse, Stella Summerhayes, during more lucid moments between periods of drunken oblivion. There was a time when she and her husband, Hugo "could have drunk each other up" (313) in love, when dawn brought "exhausted mornings" (313) but new life as well. She has been an attractive woman; "men used to look at" (332) her. Even Hugo, long since devoid of any feeling for her, is


\(^{15}\) Ibid.
prompted to confess that the youthful Miriam once "[twirled] half the night... [attracted] the more racket type of physicist ... and fourth year students" (331). Yet, like her own ancestral past, she has become progressively "less important" (307), has diminished in esteem in the eyes of her friends, her husband and herself. The alienation of husband and wife, a result of the unhappy combination of Hugo's cold "Gothic soul" (314) and Miriam's own stilted sentimentality (330), has bitter consequences. It is strongly suggested that the daughter, having cut herself off from communication with her parents, has chosen the companionship of "a very bossy woman friend" (297) as an alternative to marriage; as well, Hugo increasingly devotes his energies "to a cult of sexual purity, to an asceticism of sexual disgust asserted in the very face of continuing desire and conflicting memories", 16 while Miriam seeks to lose her identity in self-pity and a bottle. Yet, the most tragic result lies in the death of Stella Summerhayes whose very name denotes purity and innocence. In spite of the Swords' common acceptance of their respective roles in bringing about Stella's suicide for no more reason than to keep their pride intact, there appears little hope that they will be able to re-establish any future harmony from this knowledge, to rise above the level of the mere "automata" (355) which they have become.

Anne Brown (The Solid Mandala), like Miriam Sword, is a victim of that same cycle of suffering and futile adjustment. Although Arthur's dance in the fourth corner of the mandala is particularly adapted to suit those qualities of character possessed by his brother, Saldo, the dance also portrays many of those traits which Saldo inherits from

16 Ibid.
his mother. Certainly, Mrs. Brown retains a strong "sense of moral proportion", which Waldo inherits "together with her eyes ... pale, too cold" (163). Though she has willingly married George Brown, she secretly thinks of herself still as "Anne Quantrell - never a Brown in spite of her love for that sallow little man with the gawky leg" (162); maintaining that union becomes largely a matter of "moral responsibility, of protecting a marriage with a man not her social equal" (153). Like Waldo, Mrs. Brown never quite accepts the strange, ungainly Arthur: Waldo is "officially her favourite, Arthur her duty" (21). When it appears evident to her at last that Arthur is not simply "some kind of genius waiting to disclose himself" (29), she dutifully grants him a place in that "closed circle" (224) of domestic life.

The double burden of disappointment, in marriage and in offspring, proves too much even for "the true Gothick" (158) soul of an Anne Quantrell. After the death of her husband, she is seen more often than not "dangling a bottle by its neck" (159). Her addiction to sherry makes what remains of her life bearable.

For women like Mrs. Bonner (Yo22), neither the maintenance of a public image nor the pursuit of some avenue of escape is sufficient in itself to cope with those forces which threaten the very roots of their existence. Ironically,

they do not know what there is to be afraid of, because they are it. The forces they represent or embody are the forces ... of conservatism, of respectability, of conventional morality, of the marketplace, of social convenience, of social order. Their deccencies are somehow indecent ... . What distinguishes them best, perhaps, as a group, is that they fritter themselves away, that they do not place the highest value on, as it were,
their personal substance - their souls, if you like - but instead care most for what they can surround their souls and themselves with: comforts physical and mental, lots of children and affairs to be busy with, commerce, power. 17

For Mrs. Bonner whose thoughts are "almost always visible" (13), an ordered life is a happy one. If spirits become frayed or situations tense, a party always serves as a cure. She loves the conviviality and all the "pretty coloured things" (77) that contribute to the immutability of her existence. Only occasionally does she dare the unusual by, perhaps, sipping a little champagne or "a thimbleful of dandelion wine" (77).

The unheralded pregnancy of the maid, Rose Portion, proves an embarrassment for Mrs. Bonner whose tidy world has no room for the unexpected; in fact, without a family to goad her conscience she "would have turned her maid into the street and learned to think no more about it" (216). Though the presence of the baby in the household is at first unwelcome, Mrs. Bonner learns to accept it with all the conviction of self-martyrdom, and soon takes charge of the child as though undergoing some "act of expiation" (355). That she grows enthusiastic in her duty towards the baby is less a change of heart than a restructuring of her world to suit her own immediate needs. "Otherly devotion becomes "her secret vice"; through the child, she is "reminded of her own child, living, but married, and of the several others she [has] buried in their babyhood" (355). Yet, in the very process of reshaping the boundaries of her life, Mrs. Bonner, who, in her "preoccupation with earthly matters, does not "often notice the sky" 17

---

17 Peter Shrub, "Patrick White: Chaos Accepted", Quadrant, 12, 3 (1968), 11.
(360), discovers some other side of herself which the "solid, dark, enamelled blue" (360) of the sky itself serves to token. For a brief moment she dares to hope that it may "lead her out of the state of mortal confusion" (361); however, she is too earthbound to be transformed by such a sudden revelation.

There is no such break in that rigid shell of existence which encloses the lives of Girlie Pogson and her husband, Clive. Girlie's adherence to unalterable principles expressed in such aphoristic terms as "daintiness pays" (174) or "it's a man and a washing-machine that counts" (87), amount "to self-applause for a frigid need to conform". There is little place in the Pogson household for "things that ... in the home... are not, well, nice" (134). Girlie's daily routine of sweeping out the dirt seems symbolic of a larger design: to keep that sterile, box-like existence free from contamination by elements which may introduce the unanswerable or the unattainable.

It is not that Girlie Pogson does not appreciate change. She enjoys the distinctiveness of being seen in a hat that is different, "so long as it's what the others are wearing" (106); she anticipates the holidays in "the rented cottage on the coast" despite the fact that she will become involved in "the same work in a different setting" (135); she experiences an unexpected joy in listening to some lady telling "how to make rissoles out of practically nothing" (114). Yet, the real joys for Girlie are not of the present, but of the past: of the "big verandas, and the willows" (84) of her girlhood Rosedale; of her girlish pride in

18 Burrows, "Four Plays", 161.
recounting that "no one in the district kept a better table" (102); of the host of "young fellers" who came "off the neighbouring properties" (175) to play at cards in the lamplight. That she is convinced that "everybody ought to be" (137) happy is hardly surprising in view of the limitations with which she permits herself to look at life. She can only view her daughters subjectively and would have been bewildered to discover that the eighteen-year-old Judy finds little "loving-kindness" (162) in the emptiness of her own home, or that the young Pippy prefers the naturalness of the Boyle household to her own.

The maintenance of such a fixed pattern of existence is not without hardship; Girlie Pogson wears "all the marks of anxiety" (79) that efforts in keeping up "a respectable social level" (79) entail. Martyred to the belief that "everything must be nice, even if you pay the price" (79), Girlie is very much a manifestation of those "bent, overused, aluminum skewers" stamped out by Arthur Brown in the fourth corner of his mandalic dance.

Fanny Goodman of The Aunt's Story is motivated to a great extent by those same tenets to which Girlie Pogson so tenaciously clings. For the most part, her life is one "of full cupboards" (9), and her fears centre on the possibility of that plenty diminishing. Uncertainty is Fanny's enemy. Even in childhood, she hated the darkness after "the nightlight sank in the saucer" (22); Fanny shines in importance only in the bright light of day, when she can relate to others her plans to "have a house with twenty rooms" (23) or a husband who will "make a great deal of money", and will buy her "diamonds and lovely furs" (23). She
is always careful only to "ask the questions that have answers" (32), and to show emotion only in the simplest of "black and white" (4) terms.

Marriage to Frank Parrott is not an act of love on Fanny's part; it is more of an investment in a secure future. Frank is "allowed to lapse after the act" (76) of fathering their three children; since his role is merely functional and his "achievement ... secondary" (108), Fanny is able at last to "dispense with love" (108), and to settle down to the more important task of strengthening the protective walls that enclose her own limited world. The subjects of war and death she considers "sad" (87), but remote and, therefore, unreal, suitable only as topical chit-chat in letters to her wandering sister, Theodora. It is a fact that she can be "struck by the sudden loveliness of truth" (252), but only when it touches on some "comfortable narrative of wives and mothers, or some harmless appeal" (252) which lays claim on her own vanity. For Fanny Parrott, life's bitterness is easily sweetened with the sugar of illusion (251); only the sensitive daughter, Lou, seems aware of "some great intolerable pressure" (253) that may indeed close off all avenues of escape to that world beyond the limitations imposed by Fanny.

Perhaps the fact that Amy Parker (The Tree of Man) loves "her daughter less than her son" (136) has a great bearing on the attitude and values that become intrinsically a part of Thelma Parker; certainly, from the start, she is a sickly, perverse child, who learns the solitary enjoyment of playing "neat games with a doll" (131), who comes to resent the intrusions of others into what she considers her private affairs, and who grows "quite dreamy with her own reflection" (159). Such self-
sufficiency breeds its own results: her concern for neatness and cleanliness becomes oppressive; her life develops into a series of secrets locked in boxes to which the key is "hidden" (224); her manner is disdainful, "as cool as the bell on the typewriter that [rings] at the end of the line" (266). That is, in essence, loneliness, she translates as "her freedom" (267); she counters uncertainty with increasing detachment and growing self-confidence. Though she despises and fears what she does not understand, she feels somewhat obligated to maintain cordial relationships with her parents whose needs puzzle her, and whose coarseness causes her only the deepest humiliation.

Before marriage to the solicitor, Dudley Forsdyke, Thelma keeps mainly to the "brown-papery gloom" (278) of her room at the Bourkes' boarding-house. Except for the occasional visit to a concert, with its music echoing her own "exquisite sadness and self-pity" (278), or in some attempted friendship, which she gradually comes to accept as an infringement on her freedom, she patterns her private life around the simple and solitary acts of improvising on the piano, writing in her diary or making cups of tea. Truly, when the house is dead, then she lives. Everyone wonders why Dudley Forsdyke finally marries the pale, skinny Thelma Parker, including Dudley himself. His decision is "sensed rather than reasoned" (360), for "he knows Thelma Parker", with her aloof, efficient manner, is "indispensable" (360) to the success of his legal practice.

The marriage is more of a partnership than a relationship based on love. For reasons of health, Thelma will not bear children; besides,
"she would not have known what to do with young children, knocking things over in her house ... discovering about sex" (397). Love is too closely associated with lust, and Thelma prefers "to paddle in the tepid waters of affection" (437) only. "Afraid, or unable to give herself" (397), she compensates by an over-indulgence in acts of generosity, especially in the bestowing of expensive presents on her parents. The giving is less a result of a truly generous nature than an attempt to salve that awareness of her own inadequacy; generosity becomes necessary to her.

In time, Thelma Parker discovers that she is still very much alone. "Sustained intimacy on [any] scale" (439) is not part of her makeup; even the "rich purples of religion" (439) prove only temporarily comforting. Faith, like wifely affection or filial devotion, becomes a duty. Gradually, she loses "all identity, even to the point of becoming 'Christine' to friends". She becomes recognizable only as "a thin woman of a certain age, in black" (499). Her sole pleasure remains her visits to concerts; yet, she no longer soars to great heights with the music, but interprets instead the sensuousness of sound in terms of her own passionate potentialities that lie enclosed within her body, as thin and cylindrical as the programme she rolls in her hands. "Thus compressed" she can do "nothing about her soul" (500); Thelma Parker remains uncertain of the direction that life is taking even as she lives it.

Such pinned and persecuted figures as Thelma Parker, Sidney Furlow or Elsie Papallo have their counterparts in the short stories of Patrick

white as well; they appear in surprising numbers and varieties.

In the coquettish lady of White's little-known short story, "Cocotte," we catch a glimpse of an early prototype for the decadent Mrs. Capallo or the hopefully glittering Jimny Chalmers-Robinson; all three share the need for attention and sympathy, the necessity of deceit. Whether the means of attracting is a proudly borne nautilus, a brilliance of pearls or a playful pup seems unimportant; the method serves to satisfy the acquisitive natures of these women.

For Ursula Polkinghorn ("The Letters") and Mrs. Skerritt ("Clay"), motherhood includes an unquestionable right to determine the course of the lives of their children; in this respect, they hold certain common values with Girlie Pogson (The Season at Sarsaparilla) or Mrs. Furlow (Happy Valley) who similarly attempt to shape the future for their own offspring. The "complete return to infantilism" of Charles Polkinghorn or the fantastical death of Clay Skerritt is no less of a tragedy, perhaps, than that callous indifference fostered in Sidney Furlow or the need for young Pippy Pogson "to make of her childishness a shell of indifference to protect her from the airless attacks of the adult world, beneath which she can cherish the world she has." 22

Certainly, Anthea Scudamore ("Dead Roses") is a resurrected Thelma Parker, fleshier perhaps, but still very much hampered by those limitations

20 Patrick White, "Cocotte", Horizon, 1 (May 1940).
21 Argyle, Patrick White, p. 84.
22 Ibid., p. 93.
that afford her a sense of security. Like Thelma, Anthea has "never
known anyone intimately" (9); though she attempts to improve herself by
taking "a course at Mrs. Treloar's Secretarial College" (18), she secretly
longs to become a nurse or a physiotherapist so that she can offer her-
self in "a voluptuousness of self-sacrifice" (19). Yet, she remains "a
crushed survivor in a room of her own" (10), "hankering [secretly] after
ornaments of jade, for the cool, sensuous throb which breaks through ...
remoteness of form" (11).

Anthea's eventual marriage to the staid and penny-pinching
Hessell Mortlock, as does Thelma's marriage to Dudley Forsdyke, results
in no startling changes to her life; she orders her life as she always
has. Nevertheless, her sudden denial of that existence and the ensuing
freedom that she, unlike Thelma Parker, at last discovers give her new
confidence; tragically, it comes too late, for her "grey face" has been
"mutilated unmercifully" (65) by time, and the bloom of youth has faded
from her as surely as it has from the wilted rose that she discards into
the basket at her feet.

Such pretentious figures as Mrs. Bonner, Catherine Standish or
Shirl Rosetree are detectable in certain characters drawn from the short
stories. Cyrilte Hoggan ("Down at the Dump") experiences as great a sense
of humiliation at the unconventional antics of her sister who refuses to
conform to that patterned existence of the "washing-machine, the septic, the
T.V., and the cream Holden Special" (28) as does Mrs. Bonner in the
unexpected pregnancy of her maid, Rose Portion. Constantia Philippides
("A Class of Tea") finally shatters as easily as the thin, brittle glasses
which are symbolic of the bond of love between herself and her husband;
her decline from "archontissa" (103) to a "thin and ugly" shrew seems a tragic recapitulation of the lives of Catherine Standish or Miriam Sword. Nora Mackenzie ("Willy-wagtails by Moonlight") is as "recognizable as a member ... of that little band of renegade individuals, aloof from and invulnerable to the assaults of a contemptible society"23 as are Eden Standish or Amy Quong.

Collectively, the Acquisitive Women do not afford a very attractive side to human nature. Their greed, rapaciousness and self-interest seem, perhaps, unnecessarily exaggerated. Yet, the works of Patrick White lay repeated stress on the duality of experience, revealed through as significant a concept as the interchangeability of masculine and feminine consciousness, or, more simply, in the frequent employment of an image such as the "grub curled in the heart of the rose".24 In essence, the Acquisitive Women represent only the "grubs" of existence; the beauty of the "rose" has yet to be depicted. The role of the Accommodating Woman serves that purpose.

---


It may be mere presumption on the part of Thelma Herring to suggest that Dulcie Feinstein of *The Solid Sandala* deserves consideration as some symbolic "earth goddess" if only "through her fecundity." Yet, Arthur Brown, in declaring his love for Dulcie through the strange mandalic dance, clearly indicates her affinity to the forces and mysteries of nature. Woven into the imagery of that particular corner of the dance are "flurries of hydrangea-headed music," mingled with "twisted ropes of dark music" (256), with a "ceremony of white notes falling exactly into place" (256); the blending of these images shapes for Arthur the essence that is Dulcie. There she sits, "restored to flesh" (257), gazing calmly with those "inextinguishable ... revealing eyes" (257).

Viewed through Arthur's eyes, Dulcie matures from the "skinny girl with a dark shadow on her lip" (233) to become, in marriage, a woman of increased beauty, "more outflowing, her eyes more lustrous in communication" (266). There is a "natural shyness" (235) about even the younger Dulcie, that is joyfully put aside when she plays the piano, forming "the shapes of fully-fleshed music" (236), or when she strolls in Arthur's company along the edge of some wild lake, confidently offering her face to receive the other's gentleness. For Arthur, that is "the real Dulcie swaying the music out of her body and shaking back her dark hair" (233). Though Dulcie is not "inward-looking" (245), and does not sense the mysteries of life as


does the deceptively-simple Arthur, neither is she dominated by those possessions which marriage and the inheritance of the Feinstein house provide; Dulcie doesn't allow "the inherited furniture to take over" (265), but pushes it around, "often into unpremeditated groups" (265). Her own "family circle" (266) seems to take root and grow under this same devotion to duty, so that Dulcie says, and laughs, "looking down at her swollen figure, 'I am a slave to all this!' " (266). At times, the lights play tricks and transfigure "her into something of a statue" (269); however, she retains "the same slow but natural motion" (269) which Arthur has known and loved since their first meeting. It is appropriate that Arthur bestows on Dulcie "one of his solid mandalas" (244) so that she may have in her possession a means of gaining renewed strength in times of "dreadful emptiness" (244). It is fitting, too, that she receives "the blue mandala" (246) the colour of which symbolizes "the essential female spirit", earthbound yet in conjunctive harmony with the threefold spirit that mysteriously governs all life.

The view of Dulcie Feinstein afforded by Maldo Brown, Arthur's priggish and pretentious twin, is determined ultimately by the feelings of frustration and rejection he repeatedly encounters in efforts to understand her, and by his own inexplicable attraction to her. Encountering Dulcie first at Mrs. Musto's garden party, Maldo is mildly interested in her; the pink dress she wears, in contrast to the white worn by others, suggests to him that she is "probably poor" (82), and Maldo believes that

---

poverty is the only virtue. Though her eyes remind him "of certain dogs" (85), and he dislikes those creatures for their treachery and stupidity, her practised manner, "sultry, morbid, beclouded" (94), captures his imagination. The "really very ugly" (95) girl with the frizzy hair is temporarily transformed into a dancing white figure "infused with some virtue" (96) he still fails to understand.

The contrasting moods of Dulcie Feinstein disturb Maldo. At times, she appears "too emphatically defined" (123), too like a giggly, "ready-to-become-hysterical young girl" (123); yet, on other occasions, her "pure candour of expression" (129) or those moments when she shows an "innate reasonableness" (129) catch him off guard. For Maldo, it is apparent that Dulcie has "not yet experienced the full agony of cello music" (123), that her innocence is something for which he can, at last, be responsible. The compassion that she shows for Arthur, the calm reserve she displays at the time of her mother's death, the promise suggested in her "soothing, practical hand" (125) persuade Maldo that he needs Dulcie Feinstein. Dulcie's rejection of Maldo's marriage proposal is less a personal affront than an affirmation of her own Jewishness; the sympathy that she feels for Maldo in the awkwardness of that moment shines with what she is "unable to share" (145). Maldo, hurt and embarrassed, can only view with disgust the "watery sympathy, or worse still, poisonous pity" (145) in her eyes. That vision of Dulcie that he creates for himself from "fragmentary impressions" (143) forms itself into a bitter "mosaic of truth" (149). She is no longer "Dulcie Feinstein, elbowing her way through the lashing rejoinders of ungovernable music, in loose embroidery
of white hydrangeas, and flashes of gunpowdery flesh" (148); instead, she has chosen the "ghetto of ignorance and superstition" (149), and becomes, for Waldo, some "Goddess of a Thousand Breasts" (149), a "giant incubator" (149) who poses a threat to his self-sufficiency, waiting menacingly to "suck him in" or "to hatch him out" (149).

Our final view of Dulcie, an "old woman of fuzzy sideburns and locked joints, caged by her own back" (302), seems almost ambiguously an affirmation of both points of view. For Waldo, that final homage her family pays her, that is, "after all, her right" (302), may well be interpreted as her ultimate achievement in controlling all those who fall within her sphere of influence. Yet, Arthur, a silent witness to the scene, recognizes in her lowered eyes her accommodation to the situation, "expressing approval, but of others" (302) not of herself.

Julia Fallon (The Living and the Dead) is one of the first of those solid, simple women distinguishable by their liberality and naturalness. By the age of sixteen, Julia has taken on the duties of servant in the Standish household. An ugly and ungainly girl, with all the "integrity, the dignity, the directness of a Flemish primitive", ¹ she becomes as well a willing nurse for the young Elyot Standish. Despite her awkwardness of manner and coarseness of appearance, Julia has "an unconscious respect for the substance of things" (59); her hands, "as stolid as yellow cheese" (16), and her "swollen red" face (235) belie the gentleness and humility that prompt her actions. She moves in "grave,

¹ Patrick White, The Living and the Dead (New York: Viking Press, 1941), p. 58. All references are to this edition.
slow movements." (58), yet there is an absorption in them that reassures; to the young Elyot, she becomes inseparable from that familiar world "of yellow soap and of shredding beans" (59), "of stale loaves, or the remnants of a pudding in a basin" (138). Julia plants "her feet firmly on the ground" (137); her life is "as deliberate as a box" (179), comprised of all that she herself has seen or heard. She remains suspicious of anything that has not "touched on her own life" (184); "with her legs apart, plump, and deliberate, and questioning" (184), Julia Fallon is content "to hold herself responsible for the material comfort of her world" (231) and no other.

Julia desires "no different plane" (232) of existence. Her strength lies in bestowing a "disinterested concern" (231) on those she comes in contact with, or in being able to "sense very keenly through the shape of things" (237), to speak about what she knows and to "unravel it beautifully, like a bunch of knots from a piece of string" (232). Her mind is a storehouse of accumulated experiences from which she can draw; her face is like a "conscience, pointing towards a more orderly past" (269). Over the years, she has become an integral part of the Standish household. The clink of milk bottles from the kitchen restores "the circulation to the house" (16); at seven-thirty each morning she pulls "back the darkness with the curtains" (231); in times of crisis, she hovers nearby "with cups of tea" (231), so that one may hear "her breathing outside the door" (231). The process of living she views with as fixed an eye as she considers death, with its "varnished coffin and a pair of white marble hands" (313); she prefers the surety of that "envelope of narrative" (312)
which her life has become.

Yet, her red arms that shine "like onion skins" (231) and her "scrubbed, and tangible, and clean" face (269) are very much of the world of the living. That she cannot begin to grasp the mysteries of life beyond her limited sphere of understanding becomes painfully evident to her; she can only "oppose to the mystery her own too solid flesh", the wheeze that rises "from a corset, the thick chugging of the blood through her red and swollen hands" (325). The outbreak of war in Europe, the death of Joe Barnett and the sudden departure of Eden Standish are occurrences that she fails to comprehend and that she cannot cope with. Instead, Julia, like some giant "monument to sorrow" (325), absorbs the pain she is unable to express. Yet, bent under the burden of unshared grief, she continues to plod on in the only way she knows, hoping to discover something that will fill that void in her life.

Mrs. Judd and Belle Bonner (Voss) further exemplify that capacity of some women to accommodate themselves to the exigencies of life.

Mrs. Judd, like Julia Fallon, is "a heavy woman" with strong "red hands" (142); as well, her days seem measured out in "little suet dumplings" (406) or in "butter tumbling crumbly in a wooden churn" (141). The intended departure of her husband as a member of Voss's transcontinental expedition does not appear to detract from the sense of purpose which she ascribes to her own life. The simple replies of Mrs. Judd set against

---

All references are to this edition.
the deliberate questions by Voss give their brief meeting catechistic overtones:

V: What will you do when your husband goes?
V: Have you no wish for further experience of life?
MRS. J: What else would I want to know.
V: Or revisit lovely places?
MRS. J: I do not love any other place, anyways enough to go back. This is my place. (142)

Voss sees no reason to doubt the truth revealed in her animal-black eyes, eyes that do not appear to "betray the honest shapes of her possessions" (142), that do not look for an interpretation for the wonder of things. Mrs. Judd is content to accept the premise that men "know more about things. And want to know more" (143); she dutifully puts aside any aspirations she may have in order that her husband can find fulfilment in pursuing that elusive "glory" (143), the natural goal for all men.

Belle Bonner, however, shows little inclination towards self-sacrifice; the harmony she achieves springs from her earnest desire to avoid unpleasantness and from that "opulent and complaisant kindness" (413) that governs her nature.

From the beginning, the "honey-coloured" (20) Belle seems a "purposely designed" (20) goddess of productivity. Child-like herself, she romps easily with the "bouncing children" (59), shouts with them in unison, flings herself into their games with all the natural abandon of "the boisterous wind" (59). Her hair dripping gold, her hand brandishing "a spray of the crimson bottlebrush" (65), her skirt a storehouse of "smooth pebbles" (65), she appears as some wood nymph at play. At such times, it seems that she has been made "drunk by life" (113) itself. There are moments, however, when Belle senses restrictions to her freedom, when she
begins to suspect that there are "rooms she [may] not enter" (113). When her thirst for people and her penchant for things remains unsatisfied, she reacts like some tormented "lioness prowling in the passages" (226) of the empty house.

Belle's marriage to Tom Radclyffe gives purpose to that animal vitality. Though her face reflects only a passive rapture, the wedding ceremony marks a new stage in the development of those life-giving forces that control her; indeed, Belle herself does not feel, so much as "vibrate, inside the shuddering white cocoon" from which she will "emerge a woman" (319). Her need for love is still great; but now she devotes herself to the practicalities of motherhood. Such is "her appetite for her children" (414), that she has to remind herself continually that they are not wholly her own. This new life is governed by the simplest of premises; "to accept, to respect, to let live: these [are] enough" (411). In spite of her accommodation to the present, Belle still cherishes the past, is still tempted to gather flowers in "reckless quantities" (411), takes on "the colour of moonlight" (415) on occasion. Nevertheless, those passions remain caged within her role of "practical woman, loving wife, and devoted mother" (411).

In many instances, this process of adaptation is not simply a matter of discovering more positive and rewarding channels of self-expression. Often, the Accommodating Woman finds, by the very fact that her own life is quite inextricably bound up in the lives of others, that she faces social disapprobation in pursuing those goals dictated by her own nature.
For example, Daise Morrow's "charitable carnality" has long been an embarrassment to her sister, Myrtle Hogben, whose life revolves around the respectability of her "liver-coloured brick home" and Les Hogben, her councillor husband. Yet, the very name, Daise Morrow, with its connotations of a dawning new day, suggests that White wishes his readers to view Daise as "a woman of sustaining love."

Certainly, Daise Morrow is "large by nature" (285). Her laughter lingers in the places she visits; whenever she drops in she is "all around the place" (285). She never lacks companionship; there are "always lights on at Daise's place after dark" (286). Those men who remain socially aloof from any dealings with her often experience a secret desire to do "a dash with Daise Morrow on the side" (286). There is little doubt in anyone's mind that Daise knows "how to get service" (286) when she wants it.

Nevertheless, there is another side to Daise Morrow ignored by most, who see her only in the black-and-white terms of carnal delight or social disapproval. Few understand the Daise Morrow who finds early morning joy in wandering up and down the garden between the rows of carnations, "her gown dragging heavy with dew, binding with bast the fuzzy flowers by handfuls and handfuls" (287). Few care to understand her reasons for

---


carting home that "old deadbeat" (292), Ossie Coogan, in a barrow; for the first time, Ossie is accepted for himself, "received" (297) by that "strong, never-ending river" (296) of Daise's love. There is little to be gained in seeking an explanation for her actions. Words are always "too big for her" (303); her feet are too firmly "planted in the earth" (303).

Though, at last, they "dump Daise" (304) beneath that "fresh mound formed unimaginatively in the shape of her earthly body" (304), they do not succeed completely in silencing her. Having "surrendered at last to the formal crumbling" (304), Daise Morrow has "not altogether died" (304). The strength of her appeal remains locked in the memory of the young, sensitive niece, Meg Hogben; the appeal is both an affirmation of self and a proclamation in the name of universal love and understanding:

Listen, all of you, I'm not leaving, except those who want to be left, and even those aren't so sure - they might be parting with a bit of themselves. Listen to me, all you successful no-hopers, all of you who wake in the night, jittery because something may be escaping you, or terrified to think there may never have been anything to find. Come to me, you sour women, public servants, anxious children, and old scabby, desperate men.... Truly, we needn't experience tortures, unless we build chambers in our minds to house instruments of hatred in. Don't you know, my darling creatures, that death isn't death, unless it's the death of love? Love should be the greatest explosion it is reasonable to expect. Which sends us whirling, spinning, creating millions of other worlds. Never destroying.... I will comfort you. If you will let me. Do you understand? For ever and ever. And ever. (303)

The mingling of "dark music" and "white notes"9 tokened by Arthur Brown's mandalic dance has never been more explicitly put into words; the limits of that willingness to accommodate oneself to the needs of others has never

9White, Solid Mandala, p. 256.
been more clearly defined.

Pearl Brawne (The Aunt's Story) and Titina Stavridi ("Being Kind to Titina") represent, less dramatically perhaps, that power of love in operation on the lives of others.

Pearl, like Belle Bonner (Voss), is "big and gold", with thick hair that hangs and swings, "golden and heavy" (26). To the youthful and impressionable Theodora Goodman, Pearl seems as "fine as a big white rose" (30) whose very girth can move hills. Her whiteness reddens easily when she is moved to laughter; as she plunges, and glistens in the course of helping to prepare an evening meal for the Goodman family, Pearl seems to rise and overflow. Her appearance and manner suggest that she is "meant to swell, and ripen, and burst" (27). That Pearl is discovered "behind the bails where the nettles" grow (29) with a lusty Tom Wilcocks is not surprising; that the Goodmans dismiss her unceremoniously when the evidence of that meeting becomes apparent seems inevitable.

Years later, Theodora encounters Pearl again by chance. Pearl, still attractive, has coarsened; her life has become an endless round of public houses and appointments with "commercial" (121) gentlemen. Though, at first, Theodora blooms "under the kind rain of Pearl" (120), she finds herself yet unable to face those truths of the past that Pearl so openly speaks of "in her big white blotting-paper voice" (121). Pearl's own tragedy, the loss of her child and the degradation of self, are submerged in a flood of concern for the stick-like aunt, Theodora. Despite a hurried

---

goodbye, Theodora recognizes in "Pearl's warmth and kindness" her own need to do battle with that "great monster Self" (122), to seek out that humility that is lacking in her life.

Titina Stavridi's role ("Being Kind to Titina") in helping to give that same measure of enlightenment to a young Greek, Dionysius, is of no less importance.

The freckled young Titina with the "banana-coloured skin" appears ugly to Dionysius; he and his sisters, Agni and Phrosso, delight in tormenting the "thick and lifeless" (185) girl, scorning her awkward attempts at play, making fun of those "stupid, deep blue eyes" (187) that refuse to acknowledge pain of any kind. The mandalic-like "blue bead" (187) that Titina wears around her neck for protection against "the Eye" (187) does appear to ward off, at least, the evil of childish maliciousness. Despite her progressive withdrawal from those activities that engage the other children, Titina is moved to a profession of love for Dionysius who receives the news with a mixture of horror and terror.

Ironically, years later, Dionysius Papapandelidis does not run from the Titina Stavridi with the "exquisitely contrived face" (193) and candid blue eyes; instead, facing this older, attractive young "goddess" (192), Dionysius feels that he has become "the awkward thing of flesh Titina Stavridi used to be" (192). Her eyes now seem to hold "the truth" (193); in their moment of passion together on the deserted beach,
Dionysius senses that "the whole darkness" is moving "with her kindness" (196).

That Titina has already earned the reputation of "a little whore" (197) is, in itself, of minor consequence; Dionysius discovers the joy of love given freely. As Barry Argyle points out:

That a whore can love, is not an original discovery, but to the man who recognizes it for the first time, it is. The atmosphere of discovery, of innocence confirmed by experience, which White communicates so well and characteristically, makes the story valuable in a way his novels are. 13

Mrs. Custance (*A Cheery Soul*) must be included as one of that group of Accommodating Women, not so much for her prevailing charitableness of nature as for her honest efforts in making allowances for the indomitable Miss Docker.

Mrs. Custance's plan of inviting Miss Docker to make her home in their "little glassed-in veranda room" 14 is motivated largely by feelings of guilt. She questions the extent to which the fullness and happiness of her own life remain unshared. The absence of children in the house is wholly a result of surgical miscalculation; nevertheless, this fact only compounds the feeling that she and her husband are "too happy" (187), that they live unnaturally "quiet lives" (187).

Though the Custances try determinedly to do more than "just put up with" (199) Miss Docker, they find in time that they do not possess the patience or willingness to suffer the demands that Miss Docker places on them. Mrs. Custance's retraction of the offer to share their home

---

13 Argyle, *Patrick White*, p. 75.

14 *Patrick White, Four Plays* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), p. 186. All references are to this edition.
"with a third person" (204) seems more a statement of self-condemnation than a notice to vacate. The sense of failure lingers; she does not understand the nature of the love needed to accept Miss Docker on her own terms. Mrs. Custance is convinced that for this transgression she will "always stand condemned in any trial of goodness" (207).

Feelings of guilt or social ostracism are not the only trials encountered by those women who seek to act in accordance with the forces that govern their own natures. For the young, innocent Meg Hogben ("Down at the Dump") or the idealistic Stella Summerhayes (Night on Bald Mountain), this process of accommodation means both a certain loss of innocence and suffering as well.

The thin, freckly Meg Hogben, dressed in her school uniform, appears as part of that formality one expects on such a solemn occasion as a funeral; "standing amongst the fuchsia bushes"15, her skin appears curiously green when the fuchsia leaves tremble "against her unknowing cheek" (281). Yet, Meg's eyes suggest a resistance to the apparent pattern of the moment.

For one thing, Meg truly "loved Daise" (287); she is filled with those recollections of the Daise Morrow whom few knew or cared to remember. She recalls how the mornings used to sparkle in which Aunt Daise ambled freely in her garden of flowers; she sees in retrospect how unlike the others Daise was, "not so frozen" (287), daring to do what seemed natural to her. Moreover, Meg's chance meeting with the young

15White, Burnt Ones, p. 280.
Ium Whalley provides her with an audience for those secrets hitherto expressed only in poems written to herself; his presence has the magic of transforming her imaginatively into protectress of a cabin filled with "fair-skinned, taffy children" (298).

Lum's parents are undoubtedly as "rough as bags" (301); Meg's brief acquiescence to Lum's advances are as much a defiance of that rigid moral code which has governed her from childhood as was Daise Morrow's acceptance of the derelict, Ossie Coogan. Later, stung by the bitterness of her mother's verbal onslaught, Meg's face closes "up tight, like a fist" (303), and she appears determined to protect whatever justly needs her protection. Though the Hogben Holden carries Meg back to that safer world of brick and plastic, Meg's vision of life extends beyond those boundaries; her too candid, grey eyes seem to have deepened, "as though to accommodate all she still has to see, feel" (307).

For Stella Summerhayes, too, life holds its promise of joyful fulfilment. Attracted by the silence and natural beauty of the mountain, Stella fails to see the underlying harshness and danger of that environment. Raised "in a Melbourne suburb",16 she experiences a new sense of freedom in being able to "climb and climb" (282) the grassy slopes in search of the "little ground orchids" (278) that grow wild on the heights; she ignores the sombre premonition of the old goatwoman, Miss Quodling, who foresees the time when Stella's goodness will be pierced as surely as one severs an apple in two.

---

16 White, Four Plays, p. 273.
Stella has confidence in her own ability to endure. She professes being "steel...in any emergency" (279), "the soberest, most careful person" (277) in the face of any danger; yet, her very name suggests that innocence and naivete which proves to be her ill fortune. Cast into the tempestuous household of the Swords, Stella becomes, in their eyes, more than simply a nurse; For Hugo Sword, Stella represents one with whom he can possibly resurrect those scattered fragments of a wasted life; for Miriam, Stella seems a more desirable re-embodiment of her own wayward daughter, Mary.

Stella's faith in life and strength of conviction are ultimately tested. Miriam's acquiescence to self-degradation and self-pity leads her to place great reliance on those positive virtues that Stella possesses; Miriam needs her, leans on her, confides in her. As well, Hugo, for all his cold austerity, is moved by Stella's naturally warm nature. He misreads her show of tenderness and in attempting to seduce her, discovers that her interest in him stems from his resemblance to her father; in retaliation for her rebuff, Hugo deliberately suggests that Stella's rejection of him is the result of an incestuous love for her own father. Thus, though both Swords are drawn to "the great good, the true simplicity" (336) of Stella Summerhayes, they ironically succeed in undermining and destroying the very source of that compassion and understanding they so desperately need.

The report of Stella's death on the treacherous cliffs of Bald Mountain is descriptive of some angelic figure departing from a flesh-and-blood world for regions of heavenly beatitude:
There she stood...against the light...From down below there was a rare glare around her. She was white...you would have said it was a statue...so stiff and white. (353)

The resulting decision of the Swords to accept the premise that "failure is sometimes the beginnings of success" (354) and to "try again" (354) to recapture that life they once had together is indicative of the powerful role that Stella plays in their lives. Her death is sacrificial, affording further substantiation to that philosophical tenet which pervades so much of White's writing: "Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone." (354)

For Stella Summerhayes, the burden of suffering is insurmountable; for women like Cissie Belper, the sudden shifts of fortune are borne resignedly as part of life's unpredictability.

Mrs. Cissie Belper of Happy Valley is a woman of simple and definite tastes. She enjoys a quiet evening in the dining-room, sewing with friends; then she is practising what she calls "economies" (127). Certainly Cissie takes great satisfaction in "labelling all her possessions" (316). However, she has a passion for dogs, and grants them the run of the house so that the rooms reek of their smell. Moreover, "her breasts [stir] happily" (129) to a rich, rasping cough brought on by her excessive dependence on cigarettes. Beyond these personal pleasures, Cissie's life is given over to an admiration for the financial wizardry of her husband.

When Joe Belper peremptorily announces that he has succumbed to "the miraculous behaviour of stocks and shares" (315), Cissie drops the

All references are to this edition.
Wedgwood sugar-bowl she is holding and gazes at the scattered fragments as though witnessing her own disintegration. Yet, the sight of her red-faced husband arouses compassion; the richness of her laughter eases the pain of the moment. Trust in her own self-sufficiency, assurance that they can "live on potatoes if it [comes] to that" (317), and reliance on a continuous "stream of narrative" (321) to carry one "out of the danger zone" (321) help Cissie Belper to re-establish definitive boundaries to her life.

For the "gentle, brown" servant girl, Aglaia, there is need for a different kind of resignation. Physically she is as strong as an ox; yet, her large hands tenderly brush Constantia's hair each morning. She suffers in silence the household gossip passed on by the older servant, Kyria Assimina; despite her innocence in the breaking of one of the precious glass goblets, she accepts unquestioningly the stinging slap of disapproval from her mistress.

Later, when Constantia falls ill, it becomes Aglaia's duty to care for the master of the household. So great is Constantia's passion for her husband, Philippides, that she suspects even the stolid serving-girl of some liaison with him.

After Constantia's death, Aglaia becomes Philippides' wife. However, as the visitor, Malliakas, learns, the marriage for Aglaia is motivated less by desire than by devotion. The crunching step and brown face still mark her simple peasant stock; her sense of duty remains her

18 White, *Burnt Ones*, p. 92.
strength, both as wife and as guardian of Constantia's love for Philippides. Only occasionally does "the rock" (100) of Aglaia's benevolence tremble under the weight of that uncertain future.

Love is a "vocation" for Elsie Parker as well. In spite of her plainness, she has become "necessary" to Ray Parker; her kind, flat face suggests an underlying compassionate nature, ready to receive and willing to forgive. Elsie's decision to accept Ray Parker's proposal of marriage is based, to a great extent, on a desire "to undertake something too big for her" (406). She considers happiness a relative state of being; even sorrow becomes "a happiness to be borne" (407) if one possesses the degree of humiliation necessary to shoulder that burden.

Elsie's convictions are soon put to the test. Ray's passion turns to loathing for this thick, submissive woman whose faith and innocence threaten to rob him of his identity. Though he hopes by marrying her to find someone to whom he may privately transfer his feelings of guilt, the whole idea seems "repulsive when offered as salvation" (408). His moods begin to vary from sullen passivity to outspoken defiance; finally, Ray vanishes, abandoning the square Elsie and the "delicate boy" (407) who bears his name.

Elsie endures. She remains dedicated as she always is to whatever she is doing; unlike Julia Fallon (The Living and the Dead) or Cissie Belper (Happy Valley), "statement, not narration, [is] her forte" (414). To the scrutinizing gaze of Amy Parker, Elsie seems at first too impersonal,

too unquestioning; later, Amy is aware only of that woman's remarkable fortitude, a quality desperately lacking in herself.

Sylvia Gzell may just as readily be speaking of Elsie Parker when she writes of Ruth Godbold (Riders in the Chariot): she "refuses to compromise her conception of the role of woman and wife, in spite of her husband's blatant infidelity and physical cruelty". Certainly, Ruth Godbold, in many ways, seems the most fully developed representation of the prototype, tokened by Arthur's mandalic dance, from which all other Accommodating Women take form. Combining the massive solidity of Julia Fallon or Aglaia with the implicit sensuousness of Daise Morrow or Belle Bonner, Mrs. Godbold reflects, perhaps more significantly, an innocence, generosity and acquiescence that align her, as well, with figures such as Stella Summerhayes, Titina Stavridi and Mrs. Judd.

As a young girl, Ruth Joyner quickly learns from a widower father, a hard-working cobbler, her "devotion to duty"; the eldest child of a large family, Ruth becomes "virtually the mother" (251) in the household, responsible for the upbringing of her brothers and sisters. Pleasures are simple, and a chance excursion to a nearby cathedral, its aisles reverberating to the chords of heavenly music, grants her, in addition, a rapture her father has never known. The impressions of that brief experience, conjured up by the "strength and solidity" (252) of the music,

---


remain to influence her long after the memory of the incident itself has faded. The Mrs. Godbold who seems like some "angel of solid light" (246) as she works in the cold, whiteness of a winter afternoon, her voice treating in song themes of "death, and judgment, and the future life" (245), is not far removed from that younger replica of herself whose impressionable mind fashioned terrifying images of "golden ladders" (252) extending towards arcing windows of fire and insurmountable summits.

Yet, Ruth's capacity to endure physical hardships which would leave many more seasoned workers exhausted at the end of a long working day belie her sensitive nature; instead her "normally pallid, non-descript skin" (254) begins to glow with the robust vitality and moist transparency of a "brier rose" (254). It is this aspect of Ruth Joyner, her dependability and solidity, that finally convinces Mrs. Chalmers-Robinson to hire Ruth as a new maid. Behind that flat, featureless face of the young girl, the older woman detects some substance that will not "give way beneath her weight and needs, like the elastic souls of human beings" (258). For Ruth, the memory of her stay with Mrs. Chalmers-Robinson is "the most significant phase of her independent life" (257). There, exposed to the foibles of Jinny Chalmers, Ruth first learns to counter human misery with compassion; there, too, Ruth Joyner first meets Tom Godbold.

Tom's decision to marry Ruth Joyner is inexplicable to him at the time. Certainly, he experiences a sense of oppression at that honesty which is "one of her prevailing qualities" (279); moreover, he
is almost frightened by what he means to her. Yet, he is convinced that the core of her being which he cannot reach will not "threaten him" (279), that he will eventually learn to understand her. Only Ruth is aware that her love is on two planes, one of which he may never reach; thus, she anticipates hardship, suffering, a denial of "the easy way" (282).

Life with Tom Godbold becomes Ruth's burden. His frequent periods of drunkenness, his vicious temper and his flagrant infidelity test the power of her love. She views her husband as "the weakest side" (294) of herself, and considers "it her duty to stay with him" (73). She comforts herself by praying that she will not be "corrupted by her own knowledge" (294); ultimately, she pins "her mind on ... flat surfaces and safe objects, not on her husband" (294). When Tom Godbold finally passes out of her life, Ruth weeps not so much for her own personal loss as "for the condition of men", (305) for all those she has loved; the tears that stream "down her pudding-coloured face" (305) seem instead "the pure abstraction of gentle grief" (305) offered to all those whom she can never reach with her love, whose doubts she can never "dissolve in words" (306).

Mrs. Godbold's willingness to bestow unhesitatingly her surfeit of love upon the pariahs of Sarsaparillan society is further evidence of her determination to bear the brunt of evil herself, to receive its "fist, if necessary, between the eyes" (236). She recognizes some affinity of purpose between her own aspirations and theirs: in Mordecai Himmelfarb's lonely search for redemption, in Alf Dubbo's desperate struggle for self-
expression, in Mary Hare's dogged pursuit of a divinity in nature.

Nevertheless, though the others achieve that personal vision only at the expense of life itself, Ruth Godbold lives on "through the tortures and deaths of the others", her "solid form fluctuating inside its glistening apron of light" (456).

That depiction of Mrs. Godbold by Alf Dubbo as one of the Four Living Creatures encompassing his "shyly offered" (490) rendition of the cryptic Chariot gives credence to the belief that Ruth's role in life is truly "as a kind of saint" (520). Fashioned solidly in paint, she appears as though done "in marble, massive, white, inviolable" (490), not unlike that mandalic interpretation of Dulcie Feinstein danced by Arthur Brown in The Solid Mandala. Like Dulcie, Ruth Godbold remains very much rooted in the world of the living; thus, she only darkly senses the nature of all that has occurred. Her feet are still "planted firmly on the earth" (527); only a rare few are privileged "to perceive that she also wears the crown" (527) of saintliness.

The characterization of Ruth Godbold perhaps most clearly illustrates that predominant quality common to all those women deemed Accommodating: a capacity for uniting opposites. That symbolic mingling of "dark music" and "white notes" is never more unmistakably evident than in the plodding figure of Ruth Godbold, "flat of face, thick-armed, big of breast, waxy-skinned" (71), yet stirred by a faith that has all "the glory and confidence of fire" (247).


23 White, Solid Mandala, p. 256.
CONCLUSION

The critical comment written about Patrick White and his work during the span of more than two decades clearly shows the existence of two opposing schools of thought. Those who find fault show disapproval in a great number of ways ranging from total rejection of the man and his work to conditional acceptance of a particular novel. Proponents of White are equally eager to sing his praises. Thus, his style has been cursorily dismissed as "illiterate verbal sludge", and soundly applauded for its poetic "strength and sensitivity"; the writer has been condemned for showing a "distaste for the common experience of human life", and almost simultaneously commended for being "concerned primarily with people and their stories"; his achievement has been challenged as the product of some "reformist vision gone bitter and sour, frustrated, made angry, and thus trivialized", yet lauded as the gift of "brilliant and wide-ranging comic insights". There is a certain irony generated by this dichotomy of response, since the works of Patrick White are themselves governed by that very principle of diametrically opposed forces.

5. Peter Shrub, "Patrick White: Chaos Accepted", Quadrant, 12, 3 (1968), 19.
White made it quite evident, in referring specifically to one of his novels, *The Tree of Man*, that he felt a personal hatred for "The Great Australian Emptiness" with its "march of material ugliness" blighting the landscape and fostering apathy in "the average" citizen. The *Tree of Man*, he related, developed out of his desire not only "to try to suggest ... every possible aspect of life, through the lives of an ordinary man and woman", but also "to discover the extraordinary behind the ordinary, the mystery and the poetry which alone could make bearable the lives of such people". Certainly, *The Tree of Man*, through its characterization of the protagonists, Amy and Stan Parker, exemplifies those forces of opposition at work, in what Manfred Mackenzie refers to as an apocalyptic "conflict between two powers of good and evil"; Amy's pursuit of bodily pleasures and her ceaseless struggle to encompass all people and things within the safety of her own possessiveness contrast with Stan's search for those hidden influences governing himself and the natural world.

This conflict between the forces of a binding materialism and spiritual release pervades the work of Patrick White. It represents one of those facets of what Vincent Buckley calls White's "Janus-faced view of reality". We find it translated into the characterization of the

7Barnes, "Novels", 98.
8Ibid.
10Buckley, "Novels of Patrick White", p. 419.
early novels, in the contrasting motivations that give momentum to Sidney Furlow and Alys Browne as they search for happiness in Happy Valley, and in the opposing roles played by Connie Tiarks and Muriel Raphael in the life of the young, impressionable Elyot Standish (The Living and the Dead). We see it too in the person of Theodora Goodman of The Aunt's Story, whose discovery of that moment when "life is most real" means a denial of all those objects and memories that once afforded her a comforting reassurance in her own measured existence. In Riders in the Chariot, the forces of good and evil are given objectivity in character; the struggles of Mary Hare and Mrs. Jolley, of Himmelfarb and Blue, of Alf Dubbo and Hannah, of Mrs. Godbold and her husband all reflect an underlying conflict between those who ascribe to the view that "the mind is the least of possessions" and those seeking "the extraordinary behind the ordinary". The explorer Voss (Voss) is himself the battleground for these opposing forces; he must learn that in negating the supremacy of his own ego and in accepting the humble truth "that he is not God, then he is nearest to becoming so". Finally, the twins of The Solid Vandala represent those forces of contradiction; not only are Arthur and Alido physically dissimilar, but also they possess natures that are strongly antithetical. Arthur's quest for simple truths is balanced by Alido's pursuit of personal acclaim.

13Farnes, "Jovels", 92.
14Ibid.
White appears to adhere unerringly to this Yeatsian-like doctrine that posits all human life as a mingling of opposites. The fact that so many of his characters are involved in a search for meaning or in some kind of self-exploratory journey seems to substantiate this view. Erich Neumann has described the early stages of man's struggle for psychological identity as "fragmentary" moments, necessary phases "of world-experience and self-experience" creating "tension at the expense of wholeness";\(^{15}\) White, as well, seems concerned with the efforts of man to shape some meaning out of the events that comprise his own kaleidoscopic existence.

Many of the frustrations encountered by those characters engaged in this pursuit of meaning spring naturally from what White himself sees as the forces of opposition:

in which the mind is the least of possessions, in which the rich man is the important man, in which the schoolmaster and the journalist rule what intellectual roost there is, in which beautiful youths and girls stare at life through blind blue eyes, in which human teeth fall like autumn leaves, the buttocks of cars grow hourly glassier, food means cake and steak, muscles prevail, and the march of material ugliness does not raise a quiver from the average nerves. \(^{16}\)

In the face of such a formidable and ubiquitous foe, success is measurable only in terms of "the amount of suffering undergone".\(^{17}\) The counter forces of love, humility and intuitive knowledge seem phoenix-like, taking form and gaining strength from that very wasteland which threatens to destroy them. White's novels, plays and short stories reveal these contradictory


\(^{16}\)Barnes, "Novels", 98.

forces in operation, each struggling to gain ascendancy and to establish a pattern for human relationships. However, it is not necessary to look beyond Happy Valley in order to uncover the rudiments of conformity, apathy, cold intellectualism, ugliness and materialism.

The name Happy Valley is a misnomer. There, people drift "almost unconsciously through a dark silence" in which their "united bodies" are "a luminous point",\(^\text{18}\) or spend their lives "going round and round the small circles of habit" (269). There, too, one discovers a passion for things, marries to be "one up on Daisy and Fred" (36), or cringes in fear because "Mrs. Ball said to Mrs. Everett said to Mrs. Schmidt" (230). In Happy Valley, man is "by inclination static" (115); with a vague and melancholy Sunday face, he grows accustomed to staring "from the windows at the outside world" (193). Alternatives are simple: one either fornicates and drinks or reservedly tries "to avoid unpleasantness" (62). The bridge club or the library meet the needs of those who demand a taste of culture; the choice entails cultivating a "reputation of being pretty well read" (39) or learning to play bridge because it is "a social obligation" (37). "Induced by human contacts in a small town" (191), hatreds become relentless. Those who seek to lead their own lives in quiet isolation from the common herd are the natural victims of any public or private persecution. They are made to suffer by the very fact that they dare, in some way, to think or behave differently. Often, the weight of social disapprobation is not so much the result of an external pressure as an inner conditioning. Frequently, personal happiness has to be

\(^{18}\text{Ibid.}, p. 164.\)
sacrificed to social convenience.

Happy Valley establishes the pattern for the Barranuglis, Paradise Easts and Sarsaparillas that follow. The Furlows, Moriartys, Quongs and Steeles are the predecessors of those Bonners, Rosetrees, Pogsons, Jolleys and Flacks who flood the suburban communities and see to it that everything is "nice, even if you pay the price". Nevertheless, even in Happy Valley there are other forces at work. In the tender though illicit union of Alys Browne and Oliver Halliday, the joy and warmth of true love flourishes for a time in that spiritual desert. Despite the ultimate victory of conscience over desire and the eventual separation of the lovers, the bond of love remains unbroken; its strength is something "which no passage of time or external pressure [can] destroy" (294).

Alys Browne and Oliver Halliday are precursors for those who aspire to a different set of values. They learn that, in spite of the suffering they incur in attempting to "shape time" (322) to their own needs, "the returned theme" is larger (319): inevitably, "there is nothing that can destroy, no pain that is final" (498). This struggle for self-identification is re-enacted and the lesson re-learned in subsequent works by Patrick White. It is reflected in the awakening of Elyot Standish to the realization that his life is not without meaning, that in uniting as he does "the themes of so many other lives" he can at last "recognize

19 Patrick White, *Four Plays* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), p. 79
the sickness and accept the ecstasy". It involves, for Voss, a denial of the "royal instrument" of his own will, and an acceptance of those principles expressed by the poet Le Mesurier: "Now that I am nothing, I am, and love is the simplest of all tongues." For Himmelfarb, too, it means a life-long battle with that "arrogance of the intellect which separates him from redemption". Out of the garbage dumps of Barranugli and Mungindribble rise figures like Lum Whalley or Alf Dubbo, eager to pursue more independent and complete lives. From the oppressive and prosaic suburban settlements issue ardent youth whose lost innocence is replaced by an expanded awareness of life, a new "warm core of certainty", a firm belief in life's natural cycle that begins "over, and over, and over. For ever, and ever, and ever." 

Such a deliberate balancing of contradictory forces in joint operation is an integral part of White's fiction. The novels, in particular, establish and develop this pattern, each in microcosmic completeness; with the reappearance of this concept from novel to novel, the writings collectively take on something of macrocosmic proportion.

With each subsequent publication by White, critics and reviewers have

---

21 Ibid., p. 287.
22 White, Voss, p. 288.
23 Ibid., p. 287.
24 C. Roderick, "'Riders in the Chariot': An Exposition", Southerly, 22, 2 (1962), 68.
26 White, Four Plays, 176.
become more aware that his "achievement is seen not merely in any one masterwork but in his whole development". In this respect, White, by continually proposing "the wholeness of experience, asserting what A.D. Hope calls in another context 'the synoptic view'", seems indeed to be working towards his own "mandala vision, in which all contrasts are reconciled".

Certainly, within the novels themselves, there is great emphasis placed on the cyclical nature of events as they affect the lives of the characters. With Happy Valley "the form of the book is a broken circle". The dulled relationship between Hilda and Oliver Halliday is replaced for a time by a more passionate union as Oliver and Alys Browne discover through one another new meaning to their respective lives. Circumstance and conscience bring an end to this spring and summer love; for both, there is a reluctant return to that winter of discontent with which the novel so symbolically begins. White uses the cycle of seasons in The Tree of Man as well, though he stresses a different order, beginning not with winter but with spring. As the title indicates, White views man as a tree in that he must eventually wither and die, "to be reborn only insofar as a new generation, a new tree of man, must inevitably spring up". Thus, in

27 Buckley, "Novels of Patrick White", p. 426.


30 Dutton, Patrick White, p. 11.

the young grandchild who wanders among the trees of the Parker homestead, "putting out shoots of green thought", we detect again that pattern of aspirations and struggles which so consumes the life of Stan Parker.

Both The Living and the Dead and The Aunt's Story present characters trapped within the circle of events that govern their lives. Elyot Standish and Theodora Goodman manage to escape; however, for each it involves a complete break with the past. Elyot, recalling all that has happened to him during the course of his life, ultimately rejects the further imposition of that "tyranny of a personal routine"; as though awakening from a bad dream, he is determined to carve out a future for himself in which "there is no fixed point", no "reservation of time or place". Similarly, Theodora, having painstakingly subjected the sum total of her achievements to careful self-analysis, decides to relinquish the prescribed "reasonable life" for one dictated by the very flux of nature itself; only in such "a state of multiplication and division" can Theodora hope to encounter true permanence. A successful completion to the lives of both is dependent upon their acceptance of what Manfred Mackenzie calls "teleological sequence, a redeemed temporality"; by denying the constricting pressures exerted under measured clock-time and by re-defining themselves in terms of cyclic processes, they gain a truer sense of purpose for the lives they lead.

33 White, Living and the Dead, p. 334.
34 Ibid.
35 White, Aunt's Story, p. 278.
With *Riders in the Chariot* and *The Solid Mandala*, White enlarges his vision of humanity to include not only those struggles of the individual to achieve self-identity, but also the forces governing man's very existence. Such a comprehensive view often takes on "mythopaeic, even religious" connotation.

The relationship of the four figures of *Riders in the Chariot* becomes increasingly important. They learn, by contact, of their common vision; they come to realize, as well, the necessity of that bond in the fulfillment of their own desires. The individual condition is not enough. Man possesses both the power to destroy and the capacity to love; he is unable to resolve this dichotomy alone. The four "come together paradoxically at a moment of death"; only then, having denied the separateness of their existence, do they "know how to live life". Their final convergence and mutual involvement in a scene forming "a re-enactment of the deposition from the Cross fuses them into a unity which is given visual representation in Alf Dubbo's painting of the riders in the chariot".

*The Solid Mandala* examines that same need "for love and humility in human relationships". However, the unifying vision is no longer found in an externally imposed Christian symbolism; instead, it is made an

---


intrinsic part of the total narrative structure of the novel, in the form of

the light-imprisoning, solid mandala itself, Arthur's favourite glass marble, which becomes by the end of the novel, the image, lucid and mysterious, of the depths and contradictions of human nature in every condition: as it exists in the community, in the family, in a pair of friends or lovers or brothers, or in the single individual soul that Waldo and Arthur together compose. 41

That Arthur’s glass mandala should be chosen by White as possessing the power to reflect the many composite facets of human existence is, perhaps, novel; the fact that it illustrates the concept of a harmonious conjunction of opposing forces is not. From "The Twitching Colonel" to The Solid Mandala, White has been concerned with building up a "multiple vision" which both reflects universality in particulars and illuminates "the particular by the light of the universal". 42 Through recurrent themes and symbols, this vision supports a belief in a dual world "that is composed of both spirit and matter, which, though separate, are capable of being fused the one into the other". 43 Nowhere is this belief more evidently displayed than through White's characterization of women. He parades before his readers a host of fictitious females who exhibit extraordinary powers of perception, yet tempers the impact that such beings have on their respective societies by weaving them into a narrative involving other women whose values are more rooted in worldly


43 Heseltine, "Patrick White's Style", 72.
interests. He brings face to face hard, bitter women motivated by
goals of personal aggrandizement, and those who seem willing to stand
patiently by suffering without rancour.

It may well be that "White's greatest gift lies in his power to
create the female character.""44 Certainly, over the years Patrick
White seems to have carefully rounded his fourfold vision of women into
something of an archetypal pattern, so that his depiction of the female
role appears remarkably complete in total design, suggesting, as does
Arthur Brown's mandalic dance, that he has truly fashioned "the passion
of all their lives."45

44 James Stern, "Patrick White: The Country of the Kind", London Magazine,
5 (June 1958), 56.

p. 257.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


——. "The Novels of Patrick White", in G. Dutton, ed.,
13-426.

Burrows, J. F. "Archetypes and Stereotypes: 'Riders in the Chariot' ",
Southerly, 25, 1 (1965), 46-68.

———. "Jardin Exotique: The Central Phase of 'The Aunt's Story' ",
Southerly, 26, 3 (1966), 152-173.

———. "Patrick White's Four Plays", Australian Literary Studies,
2 (June 1966), 155-170.

———. "The Short Stories of Patrick White", Southerly, 24, 2 (1964),
116-125.


Gzell, S. "Themes and Imagery in 'Voss' and 'Riders in the Chariot' ",
Australian Literary Studies, 1 (June 1964), 180-195.

Herring, T. "Maenads and Goat-song: The Plays of Patrick White",

———. "Odyssey of a Spinster: A Study of 'The Aunt's Story' ",
Southerly, 25, 1 (1965), 6-22.

———. "Self and Shadow: The Quest for Totality in 'The Solid Mandala' ",
Southerly, 26, 3 (1966), 180-189.

Heseltine, H. P. "Patrick White's Style", Quadrant, 7 (Winter 1963),
61-74.

Jung, C. G. Psychology and Religion. New Haven: Yale University

Loder, F. "'The Har Funawal: Its Place in the Development of Patrick

Macleay, J. "The Gothic Splendours: Patrick White's 'Voss' ",

MacKinnon, M. "Apocalypse in Patrick White's 'The Tree of Man' ",


Shrubb, P. "Patrick White: Chaos Accepted", *Quadrant*, 12, 3 (1968), 7-19.
