Chapter V

"The Cast of Contradictory Characters": The Fragmented Beings and Rapprochement

Lacking flamboyance, cursed with reserve, I chose fiction, or more likely it was chosen for me, as a means of introducing to a disbelieving audience the cast of contradictory characters of which I am composed.

What do I believe? I am accused of not making it explicit. How to be explicit about a grandeur too overwhelming to express, a daily wrestling match with an opponent whose limbs never become material, a struggle from which the sweat and blood are scattered on the pages of anything the serious writer writes.

Although an anglosaxon Australian on both sides, I am a sybarite and a masochist. Some of the dramatis personae of this lavantine script could be the offspring of my own psyche.

Most of the novels of Patrick White project, in various ways, the fantasies, speculations, anxieties and divisions of a complex inner life. The unplayed 'I' of The Eye of the Storm is examined under many guises/disguises. It is the twin brother, male/female, hate/loving, in The Solid Mandala, the artist—expressionist/representational, romantic/realistic, scientific/mystic in The Vivisector, the brother sister incestuous relationship within a family, the interaction of jealousy, frustration and domination of will in The Eye of the Storm and transsexual, transvestite, nun/brothel keeper, artist/ voyeur in The Twyborn Affair.

In each of his novels White attempts to arrive at what he calls "the core of reality. . . as opposed to the merely superficial." For White, the inner world contains the core of reality, an idea diametrically opposed to the modern
thought which tends to derive the inner world from outside arguing that it is secondary, dependant on the functioning of the brain. White turns the "paradigm inside out showing that the contrary is true. The psyche translates physical processes into sequences of images which have hardly any recognizable connection with the so-called 'objective' process."6 White's notion about the novel is quite significant in this connection: "The realistic novel is remote from art. A novel should heighten life, should give one an illuminating experience; it shouldn't set out what you know already, 7 This disjunction between 'real' and the 'unreal' gives his novels a grand unifying design which Patricia Morley describes as "the mystery of unity."8 Applying Jungian terminology, Peter Beatson, has tried to illustrate various dualities in The Eye of the Storm.9 But in White's fiction the range of dualities is very vast, the chief amongst them are those between mind and body, matter and spirit, male and female, the individual and society, time and eternity, the word and the flesh, the wisdom of silence and the folly of speech.10 Consequently, White's fictional protagonists are torn apart by conflicting claims:

'I am between two points in distance and each receding beyond reality, whether the Tibetan legend or the febrile voice of Mr Kipling rousing the public schools . . . 11

White regards his characters as vessels rather than solid entities, empty of meaning, lacking direction, mere social ciphers until they are filled with some experience. The
fragmentation of the character's psyche is reflected in some eccentricity, neuroticism, disfigurement, genius, violence of the will or feelings and ego. Some such abnormality marks the figure who projects the essential experience of the work. Because of the presence of such characters, in White's fiction, Geoffrey Dutton describes them as "freaks or fakes."¹² Those who are normal human beings, who live in the physical world without any turmoil are 'fakes' or 'dead' as Patrick White would like them to be called. Others, called as 'spiritually elect', are freaks or 'living'. Mrs Goodman, Fanny Parrot, Mrs Standish, Elyot Standish, Amy Parker, Belle Bonner, Mr Rosetree, Ari, Boc Hollingrake, Mrs Courtney, Flora Manhood, Garnet Roxburgh and Golsons are fulfilled and quite contented with their worldly attainments. Such people face no problems and seek no solutions. They people the pages of the novels everywhere. But Patrick White is not concerned with these characters. He has no sympathy for them and he caricatures them throughout. He portrays those who 'starve as they hanker after gold,' who are not satisfied with the world because of some inherent or acquired trait of their characters. The Twitching Colonial, Mr Trellick wants to understand the reality of India, Theodora Goodman does not marry and wants to 'see' the world, Arthur Brown is out to understand and experience the 'totality' through 'light and touch', Hurtle Duffield is in search of a resolution between his divided self—Duffield and Courtney and Eudoxia/Eddie, the Lt/Mrs Eadith Trist strives to establish his/her sexual and emotional identity.

Oscar Wilde once said: "those who go beneath the surface
do so at their own peril." But those who do are granted the
wholeness of vision. The quest of these characters may result
in conflict with society and alienation with the world and even
with their own persons. The tension between the present world
and the one visualised instinctively or intuitively becomes
difficult to resolve. The protagonist is attached to the world
and to his suffering. He must free himself from this attachment.
Identification with things keeps alive a thousand 'I's in a man.
These 'I's must die in order that a big 'I' may be born. But
how can these be made to die? It is at this point that the
possibility of awakening comes to rescue. "To awaken means to
realize one's nothingness." Another problem faced by the
outsider is that he realizes that the world is not what human
bourgeois surface presents it. It is a delusion, 'Maya' or
illusion. But the outsider does not know what he ultimately
wants. The process of achieving something higher and purer
leads to disintegration which is an essential part of the process
of seeking real life. It is the disintegration of the false ego,
the purging of dross exhibitionism of the self. Each of White's
characters experiences a breakdown of his false synthesis in
order to find a more authentic one. But if the individual
clings to his false self and refuses to surrender to the
transformative process, he is denied the self-realization or
enlightenment. This is what happens to Mrs Rappallo in The
Hunts' Story and Valdo Brown in The Solid Mandala. But the
characters who respond to the inner self may attain real life
through disintegration. Theodora and Arthur Brown establish
their true identity although they are sent to the asylums in the
end.

In White's fiction transformation from the 'real' to the 'unreal' is not achieved by the inner world alone. It is through a creative and life-giving dialogue between the inner and the outer, between the self and the non-self. Those who are spiritually dead in White's world "are not dead for any lack of soul activity, that goes on anyway, in spite of them, they are dead because they fail to make any meaningful connection with the soul. Those who are spiritually alive are such because they have sensitized themselves to the inner world and have married their consciousness to it." 15

It must, however, be kept in mind that White does not reject the outer world completely. His vision, like that of a traditional Christian, accepts the paradox that the spirit is incarnate in the flesh. It is necessary, therefore, for those who follow the inner dictates, not to forsake the outer world altogether, "but to return to it with a new insight into the hidden divinity." 16 A profound metaphysical and temperamental ambivalence runs through White's novels. The necessity of embracing the body is coupled, from his earliest books, with a deep aversion to it. In White's world the harmoniously integrated personality is one which reflects a balance between the promptings of the conscious, rational intellect and the darker powers of the unconscious, between the masculine and feminine aspects of the psyche. Androgynous motif marks the progress of the character to psychic wholeness and bisexual characteristics mark the endorsed characters of his novels. Theodora supports a moustache, Arthur plays a woman, Eddie changes his sexual personality thrice.
White's novels project two worlds—material and spiritual. They present two scales of values as the characters inhabit two planes of existence. His is the dualistic universe. Yet his aim is to assert the unity of all things. Dr Gowda feels that "Patrick White is writing on more than one level, the manifest and the real. Theodora Goodman and the youngman of the *Ham Funeral* discover that the mundane reality is important, more important perhaps than the transcendent world." The realization and acceptance of the duality of the world does not bring any substantial change in the physical world. It is only the viewpoint of the protagonist which undergoes transformation. As the transformation is instinctive the quester gets the primitive pleasure from a pre-intellectual area of experience. The pleasure rises into White's world out of the world of gooseflesh thrills, of innocent, uncritical experience of wide-eyed appreciation. These pleasures symbolise the inner maturity—the identity of the personality.

"The Twitching Colonel" is a very early story by Patrick White which appeared two years before the publication of *Happy Valley*. Here we meet Trevellick, the twitching Colonel, the forerunner of a long line of visionaries in White's fiction. The Colonel has served in India and has got a glimpse of the metaphysical reality of life. He has, particularly, been impressed by the two images: Shiva dancing in the cinnamon grove (an image which White developed in *The Solid Mandala* and the *Indian Cobra*, "Climbing the rope to that which is out of reach" (p. 605)). On his return to England the Colonel is torn between
the two worlds—India and the Western world. India, for him, becomes the touchstone of truth... "just as images of Abyssinia, Ethiopia and Greece do for the characters in later novels."\(^{18}\) India becomes "the blue echo of recaptured thought" (p. 603). She loses her geographical identity and becomes an idea, a metaphysical entity, a state of mind and an idea which can provide lasting happiness, after breaking through the delusion or maya which is represented by the rational Western mind. The Colonel equates the British mentality with ignorance and illusion, "the illusion of greatness that lies in patriotic songs, British supremacy, and the stiff upper lip" (p. 604). White applies "a structural dualism representing the realities of surface and depth."\(^{19}\) Both the countries acquire metaphorical significance.

The Colonel, having once glimpsed the reality suffers a severe psychological crisis. He becomes a divided personality. The outer consciousness and the inner wisdom are turned against one another, "I am between the two points..." (p. 603). Hence the Colonel becomes alienated. David Tacey feels that "Colonel's twitch, his facial convulsion (p. 606) is, in reality, a symptom of a convulsion taking place at the deepest level of his being."\(^{20}\) Since he is off-beat and is surrounded by insensitive and uncomprehending people, he becomes an object of ridicule to the street urchins who follow him in London Streets. His landlady Mrs Whale (a suggestive name) looks at him with amazed curiosity. Colonel Travelling cannot reconcile with the outside world and the inner world is not realizable. It lives in him as a daemon,
and the daemon is personified as India. The entire action of
the short story takes place in the consciousness of the Colonel.
At times it appears to be a pure allegory. But White makes efforts to emphasize the actuality of the Colonel's experience in India with the imagery of Hindu conjurers, rope tricks and ceremonial elephants.

In "The Twitching Colonel" the Indian notion of Maya is shown to be the key to man's dualistic dilemma. It is to be found in the ideas concerning illusion and reality, psychological and physical, spiritual and material, good and evil, absolute and relative, subconscious and ego. The physical world and the bodily experience are a facade which must be pierced by the deeper mind in order to arrive at the genuine understanding. But the physical world does not give way so easily and the Colonel does not represent a merely personal predicament. His problem, at bottom, is collective, a reflection of our cultural crisis. The impediments created by the society result from its failure to understand the true reality. As Theodora Goodman and Arthur Brown are declared mad and taken to asylum, Mary Hare is shunned as the 'mad woman of Xanándù', Colonel Trevellick is a 'queer fellow' for the common people. When the Colonel tries to fuse the real and the imaginative worlds and is lost in a mystic/exotic dream of brown faces, rope acts, ceremonial elephants and the like, the atmosphere is pierced by the shrill cry of Mrs Whale, "Those niggers are not to be trusted an inch, they would stick a knife in your back like winking" (p. 606). It shows how the novelist telescopes both the worlds simultaneously. Transcendence is not possible by way of escape from the bodily
world, rather it comes through it: "dissolution of flesh is only way past the flesh."²¹

The story shows the struggle of the soul trapped within the human flesh, trying to pierce the layer of maya and recognize the inner essential reality. Trevellick is the first visionary, the lone individual, the person who seeks a personal solution to the problem of living within an insensitive society. By and by, the Colonel approaches the reality:

Only in dissolution is salvation from illusion, in dream perhaps that is shadow of death, or decomposition of substance, the frail symbol of reality which man clutches, holding himself from the throat, strangling himself through fear while denying suicide, that is man, that is also Maya, this imperfection that is man denying his shadow as day lengthens, as mind is restless with string yet afraid of sleep. (p. 607)

During his last days the Colonel's mind hovers over this issue. The tension of dualism builds up until at the end of the story he is finally destroyed by it, its tremendous force being reflected in the raging fire that sweeps through his dwelling place and consumes him as he dances upon the roof. But before his disappearance, he does succeed in having a vision through which he realises that the visible world is merely an isolated case in relation to the Universe and that there are many other latent realities.²² The result is a sort of psycho-expressionism where fragments of the actual and the imagined, the real and the unreal fuse together in a state of a psychic trance. The Colonel feels:

I am climbing rope or smoke and the flame smiles with the warmth of smiles that welcome, no longer the half guessed significance of smiles of wave, of rope, of the brown eye
of the jewelled elephants, as slipping effortless and without elegy the world dissolves . . . (p. 608)

Patrick White takes pains to show that the fire is a real occurrence with the help of circumstantial detail, the fire alarms, the smoke, the crowd of the sightseers watching from below. But John Colmer and Ron Shepherd find this fire to be as unreal as other fires in *The Aunt's Story* and *The Tree of Man*. In this story the fire becomes an apocalyptic symbol of release, a metaphor illustrating a particular idea. The connection with inner and outer meanings is made explicit in a further metaphor describing the significance of the fire to the Colonel and to mankind more generally. "This is what we lived for, to lose control, secretly longing to toss a match into our desires" (p. 608).

If Colonel Travellick is attracted by the image of Lord Shiva dancing in Cinnamon and the Indian Cobra, Theodora Goodman gets a glimpse of the outside, higher/transcendent world intuitively. The preservation of her 'quiet integrity' is dearer to her than the material comforts promised by a marriage of convenience. In *The Aunt's Story*, the most engimatic semi-autobiographical novel, Theodora is both female/male. She personifies negative capability in her highly developed capacity to live inside the consciousness of others. The price of her gift of psychic penetration is a fragmentation of her own personality—what normal world would call madness—but essentially a superior kind of unity and a precondition of an artistic insight. Out of the fragments of experience of her self and voyaging on the perilous seas of reality and fantasy,
Theodora comes to affirm her bizarre integrity. The beauty of The Aunt's Story is that it renders with painful immediacy the process of dissolution. It shows the solitary spirit utterly stripped, distraught and lonely. It is a journey described with the most tearing intensity of feeling to that "solitary land of the individual experience in which no fellow foot fall is ever heard."  

Like many of White's protagonists, Theodora's alienation is noticeable right from the beginning. She was brought up at Meroe, an old plain 'honest' house, surrounded by the ancient trees and hills of black rocks which had for all its beauty something marred and unpromising about it. It was called 'Rock-an - Ruin Hollow' by the neighbours. The prevailing note of her childhood was awkwardness. She was queer in her behaviour towards her 'heavily correct mother' and her sister Fanny who 'was all roses' (p. 27). She had a kind of "inarticulate intimacy with her father, in which there were moments of exaltation."  

She is disturbed by her father's reference to another Meroe in the black country of Abyssinia, another and ideal Meroe behind the actuality she loves. These references and also those of Homer which her father makes enter into her consciousness make her aware of a world other than the real in which she is doomed to live. As a result, Theodora is oppressed by a weight of sadness that nobody would lift "because nobody would ever know that she was shouldering it. Least of all her father, who was thick, and mysterious as a tree, but also hollow . . ." (p. 26). What engages the attention of others, including Fanny does not interest her.
Theodora's condition is comparable to George Fox: "And I saw professors and priests and people were whole and at ease in that condition that was my misery, and they loved that which I would have been rid of . . . their minds are in bondage . . . and they are brittle and changeable and tossed up and down with windy doctrines and thoughts." At school she becomes a "long dark slomackky thing in the striped dress" (p. 74). She is conscious of "the distance that separates" (p. 51). Negation becomes a routine in her life. In the contact with some persons (the Man who was given the dinner, the enigmatic Syrian pedlar, or lou, her little niece) or things like the filigree bell Theodora has moments of illumination. This is because things do not, like persons, protect themselves by keeping others at 'a moral distance'. Theodora identifies herself with the little hawk who 'tore and paused, tore and paused' at the belly of the dead sheep. It is during such moments that she learns to relate herself with the real world:

She walked outside a distinct world, on which the grass quivered with a clear moisture, and the earth rang. In this state, in which rocks might, at any moment open, or words convey meanings she stood and watched the syrian go. His silence slipped past. The hills settled into shapelessness. She was left with the trembling of her knees. (p. 30)

Now Theodora is convinced that she can never 'overcome distances'. She becomes an outsider in the world which is not congenial to her type. This is the stage when she feels she cannot live without Moroe, the other world which she has glimpsed intuitively. Faced with the crushing duality of the world, Theodora is torn apart, she makes an effort at self-destruction to get rid of the illusory world. On an expedition with Frank
Parrot, her suitor, Theodora is torn "between sexual desire and a growing awareness of his brutishness." She notices the hawk, (perhaps the same hawk which tore the body of the sheep and identified her with it) and longs for a hawk-like freedom in the world of beauty. Frank Parrot shoots and misses. Theodora is caught in a vortex of emotions. She wants to release herself from the mundane world through suicide, even a symbolic suicide:

Theodora had begun to laugh. She knew with some fear and pleasure that she had lost control. . . . Now she took her gun. She took aim and it was like aiming at her own red eye. She could feel the blood beat the other side of the membrane. And she fired and it fell. It was an old broken umbrella tumbling off a shoulder. (pp. 70-71)

Theodora apprehends that this is no solution at all. Patrick White's imagination is complex like that of Blake's which involves not only body, but also emotions and intellect. Like Blake, he knows the importance of body as it is only the portion of soul discerned by five senses. Body has its place in imagination and imagination is the instrument of self-knowledge. 27

By the end of chapter one, Theodora realizes that she has within her "a core of evil . . . that is altogether hateful" (p. 121). She apprehends her mother to be responsible for this which makes her hate her mother for whatever she had done to Theodora during her last illness. As she prepares to kill her mother, Theodora recognises the absurdity of the act. After all, her mother acts only in accordance with her nature as Theodora acts according to her own. She recognizes that the
freedom obtained through the murder would cost her all the
cherished memories and associations:

'But this, she trembled, 'does not cut the knot.' She
threw back the thin knife, which fell and clattered
on the zinc. . . . 'It has been close.' (p. 123)

To obliterate that core of evil, Theodora thinks of turning to
religion or philosophy, "I should begin to read Gibbon, or
find religion. . . . But words whether written or spoken were
at most frail slat bridges over chasms . . . so it will not be
by these means . . . that the great monster-self will be
destroyed, and that desirable state achieved which resembles,
one would imagine, nothing more than air or water" (p. 128).
Since words are not enough and religion provides no answer,
Theodora must find her own way, she realises that since "there
is no life-line to other lives I shall go; said Theodora, 'I
have already gone.' The simplicity of what ultimately happens
hollowed her out" (p. 132).

The first chapter shows the gradual estrangement and the
widening rift between the two worlds, the world of reality and the
one of imagination, intuition and instinct. Because of physical
limitations, Theodora is bound, to live in the real world, much
against her wishes. She fails to enter the world of the spirit,
which is her real home i.e. Meroe, the one in Abyssinia or
Ithaca, the native place of Ulysses. At first, Theodora rejects
the idea of the second Meroe, but in time, it becomes 'a dim
and accepted apprehension lying quietly at the back of the mind"
(p. 24). Under the tutelage of her father and Moraitis, the
Cellist Theodora associates Meroe in her imagination with
Greece, the birthplace of European civilization and with Ethiopia, where Christianity persisted in its pristine form. Naturally, Theodora, who was touched in her childhood, by lightning, the same fire which melted and ran altogether in the time memorialized by the outcrops of black, volcanic rock, wants to be one with that mysterious land through her escape from the present world, a wasteland of Europe. She is troubled by the 'illusion of reality and the reality of illusion.' The search for oneness of being or totality of personality is a recurrent theme in Patrick White. If "The Twitching Colonel" resolves to strip himself 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, and whereas Miss Hare meditates until she discovers what is at the Centre and enough of her is peeled away, Theodora decides to reach out for deeper experience. In her quest for pureness of being she wants to attain a condition of complete simplicity (costing not less than every thing) or the knowledge which the particular character requires in order to make his life bearable, to make it allowable for interpretation and to remove its chaotic appearance. Theodora goes forth on a journey which is symbolic of her spiritual discovery. Whereas Voss is the explorer, Theodora is a "traveller wandering in the old and the new world." 

Parts II and III of the novel present the Odyssey of Theodora which has been enabled by her mother's death. The self can now move towards its ultimate destruction. The residents of Hotel Du Midi live most of the time, far removed from reality.
Here, the 'great monster self' reigns. Theodora meets Alyosha Sergei Sokolnikov who claims to be the General when he is only a Major. Mrs Rapallo, an American emigree, exists in the vicarious blaze of her daughter's glory as Principessa dell' Isola granco (who simply does not exist). Here is also Whetherby, a poet cum remittance man, and the decadent Lieselotte, deserted by a husband who is perhaps a German Count. They live at each other's mercy which passes for love. The central part of the novel is portrayed as a fantasy world where all the characters are different aspects of Theodora's fragmented personality. Their faces, whether Katina Pavlou, or Sokolnikov, or Mrs Rapallo or Whetherby, "are only slightly different aspects of the same state" (p. 108). She is male as well as female. Her moustache stands as a central symbol of her ambiguous sexual identity which she keeps on changing quite frequently. It is not enough to accept that Theodora is in concord with all the residents of the Hotel Du Midi. In fact, she gains her actual identity of the person who looms out of his fellow resident's memory. For a moment she becomes Alyosha's dead sister, Ludmilla or the Greek girl Katina's beloved aunt. Katina Pavlou's insistence that despite both pain and unpleasantness, it is better finally to know, echoes Theo's youthful determination to know all the implications of experience including sexual experience.

By the end of this section Theodora realises that all these are living in the world of illusion. When the General feels that he is finally exposed, he tells Theodora:
'Oh, illusions are necessary. It is necessary to accept. I shall tell you a secret. Incidentally, I was a Major once. Also a Colonel perhaps...'(p. 236).

In terms of events viewed from without, Theodora's movement through life, to this stage, is a descent as she becomes progressively subject to delusions and her sense of direction fades away. But the readers' inward exploration of the turns of Theodora's imagination yields the knowledge that her movement is a progression into richer and fuller experience and into a deepening and widening sense of the true nature of things. When Theodora knows the reality of the world, she writes to Fanny, "the time has come to return to Abyssinia" (p. 256). The fire, which burns down Hotel du Midi along with its residents, is just metaphorical. It shows that Theodora has glimpsed oneness and does not need any more of experimentation. She might have been neurotic but her journey, far from being a futile retrogression of insanity, turns out to be a determined and successful confrontation of old problems in new contexts. Social circumstances offered her only indeterminate role of an Aunt, one who is neither inside nor outside the family. But this journey has enabled her to find her true self. In the imaginative sense, Theodora returns home, an Odysseus, aware of the incredible variety of human sorts and desires and beyond that of a great generative force that runs all together, creates a unity beyond all divisions. It is a power of the physical sort, pure heat and power of human imagination. It works alike in the widest reaches of time and space and in the respondent sympathies of an aging, spinster with a diminishing grip on reality.
In her journey through the United States, the purely physical world, Theodora experiences the moment when the 'great monster self' is completely destroyed. "Through humility, simplicity and suffering, she is able to identify herself with something beyond the world of sense." White shows the supremacy of the inner world: "Although she was insured against several acts of violence of personality, there was ultimately no safeguard against the violence of the personality" (p. 260). She tears the papers, gets down at a waywide railway station and even changes her name. The difference between the two worlds crumbles down and, through humility, simplicity and anonymity, she establishes a meaningful relationship with the Universe. Mrs and Mr Johnson are the last emissaries of the physical world who strive to retrieve Theodora from the deserted cabin in the pines. But Theodora insists on staying as "she firmly intended that this game for the soul of Theodora Goodman should be finally hers" (p. 281). Now Holsitus comes. He is purely an allegorical figure and represents all the aspects of Theodora's personality. Through Holstius, White asserts that transcendence is to be found in the mundane, that there is no difference between the two worlds, that the wisdom lies in accepting both of them and that the duality exists because we live in a world of illusion or illusion of reality. During his second visit, Holstius tells her how people will come for her: "Of course, you will not be taken in by any of this... But you will submit" (p. 278). Theodora is reluctant to let go of the past. Thus, Theodora Goodman ultimately realizes that "the ideal she has sought is within
the actual." She has, in Evelyn Underhill's words, established "a certain harmony between the created self and... reality..." She has realized that what is multiplied and divided is nothing else but the oneness of the world.

The ending of *The Aunts' Story* with the reconciliation of the dualistic world has not been relished by various critics because of the last scene where Theodora is taken to the asylum in the end. Cecil Hadgraft feels that "we are left with the conclusion that Theodora abandons sanity to find happiness." Brian Kiernan says: "If we see Theodora sympathetically (as we must see) and perceive with her the inauthenticity of modern life, we should still want to ask, with Lionel Trilling, whether such transcendence amounts to any thing more than a great refusal of human connections." For John Colmer, the meaning of *The Aunts' Story* turns on "the paradox that only the mad are sane." As if anticipating such a criticism, White appended the epigraph to the last part 'Holstius': "When your life is most real, to me you are mad." White warns against the hazards of talking in this vein. The man who was given his Dinner asks: "Who's crazy and who isn't? Can you tell me that?"

It is true that Theodora Goodman is sent to asylum, but it is quite ironical against the background of Holstius's advice to submit and not to submit. David Tacey argues that the "Wholeness of the individual is madness to a diseased, soul-denying society. The opinion that Theodora is clearly schizophrenic at the end of that story is itself an expression of that very diseased attitude which White is trying to root out." Theodora looks
crazy to the spiritually dead world which wants to live on the surface and anything inner or deeper is beyond its comprehension. The doctor, who takes charge of Theodora, pointedly refers to her disease as **Lucidity** (time of sanity in madness, quiet in turmoil and fevers). In the light of this diagnosis Marjorie Bernard's quip seems apt: "The world is arraigned, not Theodora." 42

Theodora's state of wholeness is symbolized by the black rose upon her hat, "The hat sat straight, but the doubtful rose trembled and glittered, leading a life of its own" (p. 287). The rose is the mandalic symbol of wholeness suggesting that Theodora is steadfast in her convictions despite the doubts expressed by the world.

The duality, which troubled the minds of Colonel Trevellick and Theodora Goodman, finds bodily manifestation in *The Solid Mandala* through the twin brothers-Arthur and Waldo Brown. Although Arthur is further fragmented within himself, yet the main conflict is represented by the two different persons. The twins are themselves the divided parts of one person and the tension which divides and unites them dramatises the disturbance within man himself. They act out that impure mixture of love and hate which is both a condition of the relationship of every human being to another and the condition of the attitude of the individual to himself. For V. A. Shahane, 43 Waldo and Arthur are little saints who aim at becoming complete men, conquering the chaos of the self, the predicaments of double consciousness. Their mutual problem is, the fragmentation of identity, the
divided self or the gulf between self and shadow, and it is the totality they seek to bridge the gap between the two fragments of their being. The fragmentation is psychological, almost Jungian in the sense that it articulates the complexities of the twin consciousness. The novel deals with the problem of cosmic chaos and the need to project upon it a moral order. Brian Kiernan feels that the assumption that not fully normal have, through their simplicity of being and lack of ego involvement, a precipience denied to the normal is central to The Aunt's Story, apparent in The Tree of Man and Voss, and prominent in Riders in the Chariot through Miss Hare. This assumption is brought to the fore in The Solid Mandala and is explored through Waldo and Arthur who represent conventional rationality and extreme self-awareness and an intuitive and heightened consciousness respectively. Such a reading stems from White's supposed anti-intellectual stance, which is perhaps not a correct assessment. Waldo's knowledge may be faulty, bigoted, narrow and perverse, but it is necessary for a "complete grasp of reality as is Arthur's morbid and childish fascination with his orange marbles." In fact, White does not simply reject reason and intellect out of hand. "I don't reject reason but I think intuition is more important." Throughout his novels, a series of recurring figures such as divine fools, the artist, the nun like spinster, the Wordsworthian child constitute a spiritual elect and are constantly shown to be gifted with understanding and insight. It simply shows the complexity of the theme of The Solid Mandala and points to the fact that only a vague reconciliation of the two aspects may be
possible. There can be no clear cut answer. In the first part of the novel, George Brown, advising Waldo about the use of public lavatories, says: "You can develop, well, a technique of balance (emphasis added). And avoid a lot of trouble that way" (p. 78). The symbolism may seem absurd or distasteful, but George Brown means much more than what the words convey. An image of George Brown is quite significant in this respect. On their last visit to the bank, Waldo [as a child] noticed their father looking out from the cage in which he stood (emphasis added). It is, in a way, a variation on Theodora’s realization, to submit and yet not to submit.

Arthur and Waldo have inherited the duality partly from their parents and partly from their own natures. Each of the parents in his/her limited way is a good person, each is a failure, each inadequate for the strains put upon them. But each also, is an integral whole, "complete human creation, and this quality in the two Brown parents receives from the author the respect it deserves. The Brown parents live a "dumbly disparate life, balancing in the air, just their hopeless aspirations, their painful memories, their present disappointments, their insoluble problems with the twins." 47 George’s influence however, is deeper. Rejecting his parent’s baptism George makes pathetic attempts to replace it with culture. The Greek pediment on his house and his interest in the Greek Myths explain this attitude. But the trouble with George is that despite his admiration for classical myths and legends, he is sceptical about their truth and relevance. "... dad would read them the
Greek Myths. While pausing every few weeks, to remind them: 
"none of them is real, none of this is true" (p. 223). He 
denies the myths their chief constituent, the life of imagination 
which penetrates beyond the palpable fact and explores 
territories which can constitute a civilization's collective 
consciousness. The topographical influence also shapes the 
Brown brothers. George tells Arthur and Waldo: "There is too 
much, you boys, reared in the light of an empty country, will 
never understand. There aren't any shadows in Australia. Or 
discipline. Every man Jack can do what he likes" (p. 160). 
The Australian life, physical in its energy and philistine in 
its taste, the outcome of the man's struggle against heavy 
physical odds, has left an indelible impress on the lives of 
the twins. This, however, does not mean that the twins remain a 
simple extension of what they were. They are never just the 
effects of antecedent causes. At some point, they are open to 
a person's bias or his choice, deliberate or implicit, or his 
disposition or his intention or his response to others. The 
relationship of the twins is "genetically determined in the 
profoundest way but its final form is the product of the 
purposive will as much as the prophetic genes."  

It is in the context of their house (Arthur describes it 
as nest and Waldo as pit) that the boys develop their afflicted 
natures and their ambiguous and cloudy relationship. Born as 
twins, both are destined to live together in their childhood, 
youth and old age. They are almost two halves of the same being, 
two aspects of the same person, living apart and yet together,
physically, mentally and spiritually. They appear to be mutually complementary and yet contradictory. Arthur the 'dil' a single short with defective intelligence and speech, is blundering and blubbering in physical action. Waldo is intelligent but born with twisted inards. They had to call a doctor to sort out the twisted inside of Waldo. He has all the gifts that Arthur lacks. He is sharp, educated, with a taste for the intellectual life and works on a fragment of a novel, 'Tierisius, a Youngish Man.'

For a long time, after every one realised, she [mother] persuaded herself that Arthur was some kind of a genius waiting to disclose himself. But Dad was not deceived, Waldo even less. Waldo didn't believe it possible to have more than one genius around. (p. 35)

Another aspect of the duality between Arthur and Waldo is that Waldo is an intellectual, a man of the spirit, whereas Arthur is a man of the body. He has been described as a lumpy, shambly, big and spongy, a 'big shameful lump' (p. 39) and a palpitating lump of flesh (p. 271).

Waldo and Arthur are, in fact, in the tradition of doubles. They are "comparable to the opposition of Voss and Laura Trevelyan, recalling Dostoevsky's use of the double in Raskolnikov and Ivan Kramazov, and Yeats's concept of Mask." Their twinship suggests that each is inadequate, half of a divided personality, that they are Platonic twins seeking a lost completeness. Waldo's emotional repression and sterile intellectuality contrasts with Arthur's spontaneity and imaginativeness. Waldo tries to control and shape life most obviously through his writing and to fulfil his escapist
fantasies, but he fails to establish relationships with others. Waldo constantly examines himself in the mirror, engaging in the only relationship which increasingly becomes possible to him: an incestuous relationship with himself. He carries to extreme his natural bias: man is born with that of a solipsism. Experience seems to him always a violation of his enclosed perfection, 'an assault on his privacy.' His sexual experience with Mrs. Poulter is that of a voyeur, his closest relationship with his mother is a perverse wearing of her dress after she is dead.

In fact, Waldo's tragedy, therefore, is that his very passion to protect the self works against the one reality, he is capable of accepting, his own. The isolated individual goes numb since individuality does not consist in a set of characteristics contained within a particular skin, but in connection, in growth and elaboration of connection. The fact remains that when you cut off a man and "isolate him in his own pure and wonderful individuality you haven't got the man at all. You have only got the dreary fag end of him." Arthur, no doubt, succeeds in having relationships with others. He loves people and is loved in turn. He has "asexual relationship with Dulcie. Even her mother admits her need of him, "oh Arthur," she cried, "I do not know how we can deprive ourselves of the pleasure of seeing you." It is precisely because Arthur does not see evil in others. Of course, in Arthur's case, this refusal to see evil is marked by a "stronger Edenic strain, by the beauty of child's yet unopened apprehensions lingering in the 'half-man adult.' 'To the pure all things are pure,' one can see the relevance of this adam to the unsaved soul of the child." It is this childlike
innocence that gives Arthur the ability to see things in their primal shapes and colours with the eyes of wonder which he shares with Myshkin. He loves the animals and wants to write a Greek Tragedy about a cow with a still-born calf. As a child, on a voyage from London, he had climbed the ship's railing to catch the orange disc of the sun and had heard the groaning and tinkling of invisible icebergs in his dreams.

Arthur's reading includes *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Upanishads*, *Alice in Wonderland* and books on Buddhism. It is against this background that Arthur's quest for totality is to be understood. At the heart of the novel is the symbol of the Solid Mandala, the symbol of totality. It houses the indwelling spirit of God. The primary quality of this totality is its synthesising power, its capacity to create order out of chaos. The chaos is psychic. It is to be found in the psyche of Waldo and Arthur. It is this spiritual chaos that is being controlled and shaped by a new sense of order. What and where is that order? What is totality? What is wholeness? These questionings, probings form the very stuff of Arthur's quest.

As a boy, he collects some marbles with him, out of which four marbles have been his favourites, permanencies and sweethearts. The presence of these marbles or mandalas urge him to realize the nature of the world and the nature of totality. He rubs the marbles and scrutinizes them for some deep knowledge. Arthur consults Ralph's Encyclopedia to know the meaning.

This does not satisfy him. He begins his round, for thinking, for perception of truth, for understanding this
totality. His search for "the meaning of solid Mandala constitutes one of the significant strands of Patrick White's art of fiction." The thought of the mandala becomes an obsession with him. The very thought of the mandala excites him like some talisman. He knows that Waldo would never understand. His effort to seek help from Dad is sorely frustrated when Dad, quite theatrically, reads out from a dictionary:

Totality is 'the quality of being total'

He looked at Arthur

'That is to say,' said Dad, he could not clear his throat enough. 'It means,' he said, 'that which is whole.' (p. 240)

Arthur, the 'dill', realizes that no outside help — neither the encyclopedia nor Dad, nor Waldo can explain to him the meaning of the word. He has always been sceptical about the relationship between 'words' and 'reality.' He now wants to experience the meanings of the words. He tells Waldo, 'I forget what I was taught, I only remember what I've learnt' (p. 248).

He, therefore, decides to know the meaning of totality through 'touch' and 'light'. In fact, Arthur wants to reconcile the duality between the two halves, Waldo and Arthur. Waldo, with his intellectual inclinations, depends upon the physical or surface meanings of the 'words', whereas Arthur, who is 'physical', wants to know the hidden meaning of the words, by experiencing them instinctively. This is the central paradox of the novel. It is explained by the novelist in three epigraphs to the novel.54

The quest for totality gets fused with the quest for the meaning of the marbles, the solid mandalas of Arthur. Their fascination for the child in Arthur is no small part of their
significance and he offers them to those whom he deeply loves as the greatest gift. And he surmises that the world is another mandala. The sanskrit word 'Mandala', denoting the ritual or magic circle used in lamaism and in the Tantrik Yoga as an aid to contemplation, is used to signify the self or totality. Traditionally, the Mandala's two hemispheres are related to each other as representations of opposing moral or spiritual principles or forces. Paradoxically enough they also complement each other and so form a bilaterally organised whole. 55

White locates the novel's basic tensions in the relationship between Arthur and Waldo, the two hemispheres, denoted by crimson and green of Arthur's Mandala. The nature of each of these characters opposes and complements that of the other and, so a composite moral pattern is created in the togetherness of Waldo and Arthur. "Like the structure of the mandala, the moral structure of the novel is bilateral." 56 Jung's influence on Patrick White is quite obvious. Arthur's marbles are four in number: one is blue, the other gold, the third contains a combination of crimson and green. While the fourth, most treasured by him, has no distinguishing colour but is identified by its knot. The number and the colours of these marbles help us to identify them with two of Jung's notions of the philosophers' stone. 57 The concept of quaternity, according to Jung, is closely connected with the alchemic problem of squaring the circle which, in turn, was supposed to lead to the discovery of the philosopher's stone. According to Jung, the rotundum or the round thing was in possession of the magical key which
unlocked the closed doors of matter. As is said in The Timaeus, only the demiurge, the perfect being, is capable of dissolving the tetraktys, the embrace of the four elements.

The novel, split into four chapters, emulating the classic mandalic yantra, is also structured around four characters—Arthur, Waldo, Dulcie and Mrs Poulter, whose significance is analogous to the four cardinal points of the mandala. This quadratic arrangement of the characters suggests a totality in the novel's quest for a pattern. Arthur unconsciously tries to play the demiurge and wants to resolve the tension and experience the much sought after totality. When Arthur dances his Mandala, he ritually brings the four together around a centre that represents oneness.

It is this mystic dance, then, that declares the dazzling vision of the novelist. Arthur might have unconsciously, in a frantic fit, experienced the oneness of the world and resolved the duality in the world represented by the tension between the two brothers, but he fails to communicate it in words, probably, because of his inability to associate the words with their true meaning. The marble symbolism does anticipate the final outcome of the novel. Arthur gives one marble (blue) to Dulcie and the other, (golden) to Mrs Poulter. He offers the colourless try to Waldo. Waldo does not accept it and the marble is lost ultimately. Arthur keeps the coloured marble (with crimson and green colours) to himself. The interpretation is quite clear. The loss of the colourless mandala symbolizes the fact that the final vision of identity will elude Arthur and that it is not
possible through ordinary modes of understanding and rational approach. The two colours—crimson and green—of the whorled marble remain distinct till the end.

Arthur, no doubt, achieves for himself a degree of grace through his ardent love which embraces even animals and things. Dulcie and her family hold Arthur in high regard. After Valdo's death, Arthur considers himself to be the murderer:

"After Valdo died—after I killed him—I ran away." (p. 310)

Mrs Poulter pacifies him:

"You did not kill Valdo, Arthur. Valdo, do you hear? was ready to die. He only took such a time dying." (p. 310)

She tells Sergeant Boyle:

"This man would be my saint," she said, 'if we could still believe in saints. Nowadays.' She said, 'We have only men to believe in. I believe in this man.' (p. 314)

But these protestations of love and esteem for Arthur by other characters cannot reduce the uncertainty about the realization and insignificance of the success in his quest. Valdo dies of his own hatred and perhaps commits suicide. Arthur is taken back 'home,' the 'happy home.' He does not find any solution to his quest for totality or wholeness. About his failure to apprehend totality or inexplicable oneness, Prof. Iyengar aptly comments:

In The Solid Mandala, the twin Valdo and Arthur clearly embody intellect and instinct (intuition) respectively, and there is a visible and obtrusive duality, a dissected schizophrenic personality a chilling twoborn actuality and the whole drama of the novel is the search for completeness and integrity and the catastrophic failure to attain it here and now, 'on this bank and shoal of time.'
But for a momentary ecstatic fulfilment in the dance episode, the novel ends on a dismal note. The quest remains unfulfilled perhaps because Patrick White intends to capture the pattern (change, recurrence, growth and decay) memorably and rhythmically in creating the lives, completed if unfulfilled, of the twins. The last line of the novel: "thus she [Mrs Poulter] turned to do the expected things before re-entering her actual sphere of life" (p. 316) suggests the incessant flux of life despite the tensions and dualities.

Patrick White himself considers The Aunt's Story, The Solid Mandala and The Twyborn Affair to be his best novels. All the three have been described as autobiographical. As in his life, so in his fiction also White has been faced with the problem of sexual duality factually and metaphorically. He himself was a victim of sexual ambivalence which, "helped me drive me in one myself," and gave, "me insights into human nature, denied ... to those who are unequivocally male or female." Cynthia Vanden Driesen notes that in White's fiction the harmoniously integrated personality is one which reflects a balance between the promptings of the conscious rational intellect and the darker powers of the unconscious between the masculine and the feminine aspects of psyche. Theodora is a 'bloke in skirts' and the intervention of Holstius, an animus figure, is instrumental to her attaining the psychic balance. Laura is obviously the anima figure in Voss's progress. His dream of swimming, joined at the waist to Laura, suggests the psychic wholeness which he seeks in his relationship with her.
and explains the consequent development of the 'feminine' in him. Guided by his wife, Himmelfarb abandons the masculine way of intellectual enquiry in favour of faith and devotion, the pure path to the vision. He appears at last as a figure of the hermaphroditic Adam.

For Patrick White, sexuality does not merely mean the bodily intercourse between male and female. It means much more than that. Female and male figures have often been equated with anima and animus, inner and outer aspects of personality. White also believes that both the elements are to be found in every individual.

He projects this aspect of duality in some earlier novels, but in The Twyborn Affair the presentation of the various aspects of the self, in at least three guises, makes it clear that the novel is not so much description of the world 'out there' but the exploration of the mind of the protagonist. In the first Part of The Twyborn Affair, Angelos Vatatzes has characterised Eudoxia as 'some kind of mystic' (p. 97) and her whole life consists in a mystical-cum-aesthetic quest for self realisation. In her embodiment as Eudoxia she makes a note in her diary: "the real E has not yet been discovered, and perhaps never will be" (p. 79). In the brothel, Eadith is again chastened by her own realizable desires" (p. 322). Commenting on the effective handling of the theme of search for emotional identity, Blamires holds that it is "an extraordinary achievement we have shaped such a subtle, convincing and disturbing novel on the theme of a transvestite's search for emotional identity."
Dr Shyam M. Asnani opines, 'This same pursuit [sexual ambivalence] propels the triple protagonist into a maelstrom of experience ...'66 The message of the novel is conveyed through Eadith in the IIIrd part of the novel during her conversation with Ursula about Gravenor:

... Eadith replied, 'I love Rod and for that reason would rather remain his friend.'

Ursula looked startled as she studied the implications, 'I've always felt friendship, to a man, is something from which women are excluded, just as woman can only rely on a woman as her friend. None of those abnormal relationships, of course.'

'True friendship' Eadith decided after wiping off the cream and most of the hateful magenta lipstick, 'if there is anything wholly true—certainly in friendship, come, I'd say from the woman in man and the man in a woman'. (pp. 359-60)

The handling of the complex theme in the novel has evoked a mixed response from the critics. When Patrick White first returned to Australia he hoped to "make the people of a half-savage country a race possessed of understanding."67 The first two novels, Happy Valley and The Living and the Dead depict Australia as a sterile and barren land. The later novels show some promise of the attainment of "the state of silence, simplicity and humility."68 But as the 'Great Australian Emptiness' pressed on him and by the time he wrote The Tyburn Affair he was of the opinion that to be an Australian is to have been born without the requisites for grace (p. 133). Grace, the overreaching grandeur, is the only thing that ultimately matters for White. Coupled with this feeling is the sense of history which has dominated the protagonists of his fiction from The Living and the Dead
(where a little Jewess is waiting for the train for Germany) to Eddie in this novel, a decorated Lieutenant of the First World War and the victim of the Second. Eddie Twyborn who had inherited emotional sterility, and feeling of hallucination from the events of history is also the son of Mrs Twyborn, a lesbian, who has led Joanie Golson into what she calls 'that other life.' David Blaimires notes that "Eudoxia/Eddie/Eadith's whole life is a quest for his mother, a determination to come to terms with an obscure controlling power to throw off its mesmeric effects and become its equal."69

Obviously, this quest is a variation on those of The Aunt's Story and The Vivisector. In all the three novels, the central character moves between the two sides of the world and the two sides of the self searching for something lost in the beginning of the physical existence. But in The Twyborn Affair, the disintegration of personality remains in the flux without any tangible progress. The centre of the self "fails to hold and the main character falls apart into three characters who take up a section each."70 For Manly Johnson, the novel takes up the theme of rebirth in line with its predecessor, A Fringe of Leaves. The theme of rebirth first appears in the term 'twyborn' of the title. Rebirth is then converted into a structural device consisting of the three parts of the novel corresponding to the sequential 'lives' of the protagonist.

As the novel opens, we see the central character as Eudoxia, young, magnificent, in her pomegranate shawl, and exquisitely formed except for oversized feet and a flat chest. She servis
as a mistress to an aged senile Greek, Angelos Vatatzes, some forty years senior to Eudoxia. The reverie-like life of Emperor of Byzantine is slightly disturbed when Mrs Golson, the amorous partner of her mother's lesbian activities, feels attracted towards young Eudoxia. The couple runs away, but exhausted by the trials of the journey, Angelos Vatatzes dies leaving his mistress the legacy of his final words: "I have had from you, dear boy, the only happiness I have ever known" (p. 126). We know nothing about him till we find him aboard an Australia bound ship as Lt Eddie Twyborn, a handsome, much decorated soldier, whose father is a prominent Australian Judge, and favourite of the ladies on the ship. His visit to his parents is disastrous as there is nothing common between them. He finds everyone somehow broken. The marriage of his father and mother is a facade, a social ritual performed by the two existences lacking any deep imaginative capacity. Eddie wishes he could take himself as seriously as his father required or that the judge might have understood the greater seriousness of coming to terms with a largely irrational nature" (p. 160). The medal won by him offers him no comfort as he tells his mother: "courage is often despair running in the right direction" (p. 133). The situation makes it quite clear that Eddie Twyborn is out of place and thinks of "taking a job, as a labourer, more or less, hard physical labour, on the land, and in that way, perhaps, getting to know a country ... I have never belonged to" (p. 161). He goes to the sheep station of Lushingtons but finds no lasting comfort even there. Once again, the female in him comes to the fore when he develops an
affection towards Greg Lushington that he can no longer feel for his father. Eddie’s warmest feelings are evoked by Peggy Tyrral, the motherly housekeeper, who finds a daughterly image in Eddie. His heterosexual involvement with Marcia Lushington, despite his enjoyment of their 'moment of shared lust' (p. 225), becomes a "physical strain to return the passion expected of him" (p. 224). Later, in a swimming scene, he excites Don Prowse, who, in a drunken anger, rapes Eddie. On a subsequent occasion, he contritely allows Eddie to take his revenge on him sexually.

This analysis shows that Eddie is troubled because of his uneasy relationships with the members of male or female sex. He is at home neither with homo nor hetero partners because of the sexual ambivalence in him, like his creator. Eddie Twyborn is neither male in male nor female in male guise. He is sometimes male and sometimes female:

I can’t remember being much worried by the evidence of sexual ambivalence. I indulged my sexual inclinations at an early age. What disturbed me was the scorn of other boys, not for my sexuality, which they accepted and in some cases enjoyed but for a feminine sensibility which they despised because they mistrusted. It is much the same situation when predominantly masculine men despise women for subtleties the male lacks, while making use of their sexuality."

As no emotional or sexual satisfaction is possible in Australia, the scene now shifts to London before the Second World War.

We find our hero at Mrs Sadith Trist, the madame of an exclusive house of prostitution at Buckwith. Worned with antique jewellery, attired in the black flowing gowns, sometimes trimmed with cock's feathers, heavily powdered in tones of mauve, described as
half-bawd, half-nun, Eadith moves through London's best society, carries on a non-physical relationship with an aristocratic gentleman [Gravenor] and panders to all the depravity humans can devise." Eadith considers her vocation as that of an artist. What she delights in is the spectacle: "its reflexions, its melting colours, the more material quarters, the more or less material girls, she brings together, each skilled in one or the other modes of human depravity" (p. 322). Although she enjoys worldly success—money, powerful friends, luxury, a degree of fame—yet the heroine Eadith Trist/hero Eddie Twyborn finds her/himself out of place:

... she could have cried, in fact, she did let out a yelp or two, for the actuality she had been grasping all her life without ever coming to terms with it. On reaching one of the lower levels of dilemma, she would fart at her own reflexion in the glass ... fall on the bed, ruffling her body hair; heaving and sobbing, and if favoured by images of orgasm, perhaps drop off for an hour or two. (p. 324)

During this section of the novel, Eadith gets no satisfaction and the pressure of the disguise remains troubling her. The only moment of confidence and hope comes when Lord Gravenor brings his nephew to the brothel to be initiated into manhood. After being seduced by one of Eadith's girls, he tells Eadith: "What I find at Backwith street interests me aesthetically, and for its perversity, morality. But it doesn't rouse me physically ... I can't take part" (p. 400). Then Mrs Trist herself initiates the boy into the mysteries of sex.

This scene is reminiscent of two earlier occasions when Eufóxia gets the satisfaction from Angelos's legacy: "I have
had from you, dear boy, the only happiness I’ve ever known” (p. 126) and Peggy Tyrrell tells him, "it’s the girls that I miss out ‘ere. Never the boys. Not that you isn’t a boy . . . but different" (p. 185). Madame Eadith Trist finally resolves to move out as she finds no resolve to her sexual ambivalence. This conclusion is anticipated:

I settled into the situation of sexual ambivalence I did not question the darkness in my dichotomy, though already I had begun the inevitably painful search for the twin who might bring a softer light to bear on my bleakly illuminated darkness.

Eadith’s encounter with Lady Golson leads her on to her quest for her mother and they meet on a bench on the Embankment. It is the mother who takes the initiative and scribbles on the fly-leaf of her prayer book: “Are you my son, Eddie?” And the answer is, “No, but I am your daughter Eadith.” Eadie continues, “I am so glad, I’ve always wanted a daughter” (pp. 422-23). It is followed by the authorial comment, “The searchlights had begun latticing the sky.” Finally, Eddie Twyborn tells Ada, “My frivolous self will now go in search of some occupation in keeping with the times” (p. 427). Soon after, Eddie Twyborn is killed in the London blitz of the Second World War.

The inconclusive ending of the novel has baffled many scholars. John D. Besten writes in his review Article, “In all White’s previous novels there is a theme of some significance. The Twyborn Affair does not seem to have such a theme and one wonders why White wrote it.” In fact, the trouble arises when the scholars want to study the novel for philosophical themes, which was never White’s intention. In Memoirs of Many in One, Patrick White asks, “But haven’t I set out to rise above
ordinariness?" White's obvious preoccupation is the exploration and articulation of the dual nature of man.

The key to the mystery of The Twyborn Affair is to be found partly in the title. It contains not only an obvious reference to the dual sexual identity of the protagonist but also to the medieval Greek Epic, Digenes Akrites (Twyborn the borderer), a tale of a hero who combines Greek and Arab ancestry, a bringer of peace who guards between the two races. White probably conceives his hero as a borderer between the two sexes and one who is in the quest for his proper place. The epigraph from Jorge Luis Burges throws light on the novelist's intentions. No satisfaction is possible in manly male or womanly female. The duality could not be resolved through Eudoxia/Eddie/Eadith's long quest. He is "someone with nothing on but a bandaid." The inconclusive nature of duality of sexual ambivalence seems to have been accepted by Patrick White. That is why the experience of the triple protagonist "leads to no sure calm, no still centre of the storm. For, like the writer of the autobiography the central character of The Twyborn Affair remains sexually ambivalent, ever an expatriate both in human relations and whatever country he resides." It seems that Patrick White, once again, fails to resolve the duality or does not want to impose any artificial solution detrimental to the nature of the novel. It is also because White is not an old fashioned writer but a novelist in the exploratory tradition of Dostoevsky, Kafka, Celine and Sade. He is what Susan Sontag would call a high risk writer.
a freelance explorer of spiritual dangers, who makes forays into positions on the frontier of consciousness and reports back what is there.

Quest for emotional identity becomes all the more complex in Patrick White's novels as many of his fictional protagonists are fragmented personalities. It is the result of White's vision of human imperfection. The characters are imperfect in nature because of the genetic and environmental effects. Sometimes, the fictional protagonists are influenced by the visitation of vision and the realization of the other world. White's own cast of contradictory characters, sexual ambivalence and uncertainty has further fragmented his protagonists. The fragmentation, duality or emotional chasm finds expression in various ways. Colonel Trevellick, a split personality is pulled apart by the opposing material and spiritual forces represented by England and India. Theodora Goodman is fascinated by the idea of Meroe, the country of the black fire. The idea becomes an obsession and results in neuroticism. Voss and Himmelfarb, in their quest for Godhead, are estranged from their own personalities. Hurtle Duffield's predicament stems from the monstrous deal in which he is sold like a horse. Arthur and Waldo are at once contradictory and complementary to each other because of their being twins. The tension in the duality of Ellen Gluyas and Ellen Roxburgh is characteristic of the dichotomy between the two aspects of the same personality. The metaphor of sexual ambivalence of the transvestite. Budoxia/Edoia/Mrs Trist, likewise, illustrates the
basic tensions in human nature. Alex of *The Memoirs* appears as a nun, an anonymous shoplifter and a star in a theatrical company in order to discover the reason of her presence on earth. The spectrum of tensions, dualities, anxieties and contradictions has been examined by Patrick White in various guises.

The protagonists' struggle to resolve their tensions results in further fragmentation and disintegration. Their attempt to destroy the great monster self alienates them from society and from themselves. Trevellick's twitch expresses his inner convulsion and makes him an object of amusement and mockery. Theodora's is an odyssey from the innocence of Australia through the corruption of Europe to the physical world of America in search of emotional identity. Arthur Brown spends the whole of his life in his quest for totality. The theme of a transvestite's search for emotional identity has been explored in a judicious, moving and extraordinary way by delineating the central character's predicament.

In the exploration of the dual and contradictory aspects in the personality of his protagonists, White strives to arrive at the core of reality as opposed to what is ostensible, superficial. It is the inner world, according to White, that contains the core of reality and it is through the interplay of both—the real and the moral that the "mystery of unity" can be perceived. The artistic vision of White does not rule out or undermine the existence of the outer world. He accepts the paradox that the spirit is incarnate in the flesh. In
his fictional world, the harmoniously integrated personality is one that succeeds in striking a balance between the promptings of the rational conscious and the darker, inexplicable and invisible powers of the unconscious. The androgynous feature can help man progress to his wholeness or totality of being. The presence of the heterosexual characteristics in his characters endorses this view.
Notes and References


2 Ibid., p. 76.


7 McGregor, op. cit., p. 219.


15 John Colmer, op. cit., p. 73.

16 Peter Beatson, op. cit., p. 47.


21 Ron Shepherd, op. cit., p. 30.


23 Epigraph to The Aunt's Story, taken from Olive Scrineir's The Story of an African Farm.


33 Ibid., p. 284.


37 Brian Kiernan, op. cit., p. 32.


41 David Tacey, op. cit., p. 38.


44 Brian Kiernan, op. cit., p. 93.

45 Kirpal Singh, "Patrick White: An Outsider's View," A Critical Symposium, op. cit., p. 120.


48 Ibid., p. 123.


51 V. Y. Kantak, "Patrick White's Dostoevskian Idiot": The Idiot Theme in The Solid Mandala, p. 170. I am indebted to Dr. Kant for the off print of this article.

52 Patrick White, The Solid Mandala, op. cit., p. 238.

53 V. A. Shahane, op. cit., p. 56.

54 There is another world, but it is in this one.

      Paul Eluard

      It is not outside, it is inside, wholly within.

      Meister Eckhart

      ... yet still I long for my twin in the sun.

      Patrick Anderson


60 Brian Kiernan, op. cit., p. 101.

61 Patrick White, Flaws in the Glass, op. cit., p. 20.
62 Ibid., p. 154.


64 Patrick White, Flaws in the Glass, op. cit., pp. 154-55.


69 David Blamires, op. cit., p. 126.


72 Patrick White, Flaws in the Glass, op. cit., p. 34.

73 Shyam M. Asnani, op. cit., p. 100

74 Patrick White, Flaws in the Glass, op. cit., p. 35.


76 Patrick White, Memoirs of Many in One, p. 76.

77 My suspicion is that in Heaven the Blessed are of the opinion that the advantages of that locale have been over rated by the theologians who were never actually there. Perhaps even in Hell the damned are not always justified.

Jorge Luis Borges
78 Epigraph from Diane Arbus, "Sometimes you'll see someone with nothing on but a band-aid."

79 Shyam M. Asnani, op. cit., p. 97.