... art is mutuality. The artist is both feminine and masculine, the male artist is fashioned internally, seized internally, by the women of all ages and climates that he creates or attacks, strips or sustains, renders violent or summons into sensuous beauty. . . . The same is true of the woman who . . . assembles into characters in fiction and poetry . . . invisible and visible arrows pointed at her innermost guilts, innermost longings and desires, innermost fears of eternity.

(Wilson Harris. "The Quest for Form")
In the preceding Chapters, I discussed in detail the quests for self-realisation undertaken by the female protagonists in the fiction of Patrick White and Margaret Laurence. Though comparisons and contrasts were made at each point in the study, an overview of them at this stage may clarify the common ideas underlying the works of the two writers even though they are presented differently.

The three major obstacles that the protagonists encounter in their quests are: (i) restrictions posed by family, (ii) by society in general and (iii) by institutionalised religion. The breaking of norms and the movement away from these restrictions formed the basis for discussion in Chapters One, Two and Three respectively. In successfully resisting the conventions, the protagonists are true to themselves. This quality distinguishes them from other women who are subsumed in their familial and social roles. The urge to know the 'real' self sets the protagonists in the path of self-realisation. The quest has both spiritual and psychological implications and these aspects were examined in depth in Chapters Three and Four. The quest also strengthens the sense of their own identities. It also distinguishes them from other people with no sense of self. White terms this polarity the Living and the Dead (incidentally, the title of his second novel). Both White and Laurence portray the contrast and conflict between the two categories which has moral and psychological repurcussions. Thus, the questing women in both the writers are spiritually and psychologically superior, though
they are far from successful in the social sphere. Their acceptance of society results from their acceptance of the spiritual and psychological aspects of the self.

The fiction of both White and Laurence is marked by a neat dovetailing of themes and techniques. In the Fifth Chapter, I discussed the concepts of "doubling" and "time" which highlight the themes discussed in the other Chapters, from the point of view of writing techniques. While "doubling" is a psychological concept which can be related to the idea of true/false selves, the concept of circular time highlights the entire process of self-realisation. Both the writers consistently show the relative nature of time and also of space. By projecting time from the present to the near historical past/ to the distant mythical/archetypal past, and by making "real" the inner and psychological time, both the writers attempt to portray time as a continuum and break temporal restraints. Similarly, by offering an entire range of perspectives ranging from the mythical/archetypal to national, regional and individual, the two writers diminish the distinctions of spatial reality. Explaining these ideas, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, in his book The Vedas, concludes that at the point of self-realisation, there is freedom from "the play of time and space" (102).

Almost all the ideas that were examined in the preceding chapters clearly reveal the premises that the two writers share. The individuality of the two writers accounts for the differences arising out of a common base. Through this, the essential androgyny of the creative mind may be established and it can be seen to transcend all barriers of sex, nation and culture.
Further, by viewing one against the other, a multicultural approach is available to the readers and writers alike.

The underlying similarities between the writers can be found in the following aspects: (i) the existential-humanist position occupied by the two writers, (ii) their deconstruction of social reality, (iii) the emphasis they place on psychic reality and (iv) the feminine mode of writing adopted by the two writers which offers scope for subversion. These aspects also help in an easy assessment of the individuality of the two writers arising out of the differences in their fictional methods of expression. In sharing certain preoccupations, the two writers collapse differences in time, space and culture.

Let us now consider the existential-humanist aspect in some detail. In Chapter Three, an attempt is made to study the presence of certain characteristics of Existentialism (freedom, choice and responsibility) in the works of White and Laurence. However, the nihilism associated with this philosophical system of thought is not found in the two writers. Further, despite their metaphysical insistence on self-growth, both of them are humanists. They may be termed humanists in their affirmative stance regarding the essential dignity of human beings within a complex reality. Though White and Laurence stress on the "individuality" of each person, they arrive at it through different means. Let us discuss this aspect in some detail.

White's works embrace two modes of thinking. As Kirpal Singh rightly points out, White combines the classical Greek position and "the existential exigency," (in Ron Shepherd and Kirpal Singh
ed. Patrick White: A Critical Symposium 120-1). While accepting the existential questioning of ethics and morality, White discredits the state of futility and meaninglessness that characterise Existentialism. White's working out of this thought is expressed in his belief, and as Kirpal Singh puts it, "not that the universe is meaningless because there is no God to sanction it, but that man is meaningless until he can transcend his geometric coordinates and behold the mystery of the universe" (Patrick White: A Critical Symposium 121). All the ideas mentioned above may be applied with equal validity to Laurence also. White's works may be read in two different ways. One, is to see the duality of the classical and existential elements in his thinking which set up a conflict of other oppositions as well. The other is to see the shift to the existential position from The Eye of the Storm onwards. An early adherence to this position may be found in The Aunt's Story as well as his two earlier novels. The fiction from Voss to Vivisector is not divorced from this aspect, but in them White combines the existential with metaphysical, mystical and religious frameworks. Failure to take note of the combination of the two trends results in critical attacks like the one made by Leonie Kramer about the validity of Mrs. Godbold's self-realisation in Riders in the Chariot. Further, the equal insistence on the two aspects results in White's portrayal of ordinary people capable of experiencing the transcendental aspects of life. This accounts for the gaining of vision by flawed individuals from The Eye of the Storm onwards.

Unlike White who maintains two different positions, Laurence maintains the existential-humanist position in all her works. In
her fiction, it has psychological and social implications, taking into account both the individual and the society. This has several ramifications in her novels. Firstly, Laurence is constantly trying to balance the amount of freedom one wants, with what one can get in society. In her interview with Bernice Lever, Laurence states that in a social process and in the interaction between individual and society, "there's so much circumstance or fate. There are always things trying to limit your freedom or limit your chances to survival" (12). Secondly, the quest for identity in Laurence's novels is "the archetypal quest for identity" shared by many English-Canadian works. This trait also offers comparison between Laurence and writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Edward Brathwaite, Derek Walcott and George Lamming all of whom are committed to a strong "sense of mission." As Clara Thomas observes, these writers attempt "to explore and illuminate the past of their peoples in order to bring a sense of dignity and continuity to the lives of men and women in the present" (The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence 189). Finally, Laurence carries this search for identity to a larger frame to embrace a nation's search for identity, the post-colonial search and on to the archetypal quest. To cite an example, Kenneth James Hughes in his article "Politics and A Jest of God" shows how Rachel's character can be read as "individual, as woman, and as the symbolic representation, the "type" of Canada in a process of transformation. Readers in other countries will readily see how Rachel embodies different aspects of their own post-colonial experience" (46-7). The same may be said of
Hagar who in the end becomes "everybody's grandmother" crossing boundaries of age, race, culture and nation. Thus, the underlying quest of the protagonists is an attempt to accept the past, and understand the present in order to shape the future. Arguably, this expanding movement from the individual outwards to embrace humanity at large, accounts for Laurence's creation of universal concerns within the space of an individual, regional, specifically Canadian identity.

Another concern which the two writers share is their attempts to deconstruct social reality. In Chapters One and Two, an attempt is made to examine the process of deconstruction of social reality by the protagonists seen in their questioning and rejection of accepted familial, social and religious norms. The deconstruction of male-dominated social conventions of marriage and chastity for women is accomplished through the creation of spinsters like Laura, Theodora, Mary Hare and Rachel and adulterous relationships maintained by married women like Elizabeth Hunter, Ellen Roxburgh, Alex Gray, Stacey and Morag. White further questions the validity of heterosexual norms regarding sex. This accounts for the presence of transvestites, homosexuals and lesbians in his novels. In Lord Gravenor's remark to Eadith in The Twyborn Affair, that "[m]en and women are not the sole members of the human hierarchy" (426), White questions man-made and socially determined attitudes and standards regarding sex and gender. White's constant striving for an androgynous state is evident in his use of the image of Tiresias.

The attacks by the writers on religion is not an attempt at creating a Nietzschean world where 'God is dead,' but a world of
a mysteriously silent God whose voice is *subsumed* by empty rituals and customs. While White allows his characters to choose between various religious thoughts, Laurence seems to work within a range of reactions to Scottish *Presbyterianism*. Despite adopting different ways of projecting the resistance to conventional religion, both White and Laurence seem to share a common view regarding the difference between religiosity and *spirituality*, in their exploration of ways of worship different from what the orthodox churches offer and in finally seeing conventional religion as another binding, restrictive factor for women. Thus, in *Riders in the Chariot*, Mary Hare who is more a nature mystic and who has no use for the Epistles or the Church of England services, is a positive character capable of self-realisation, while Mrs. Jolley and Mrs. Flack who attend Church services regularly, are in fact evil.

However, White and Laurence differ in a major way in their attempts to deconstruct social reality. White consistently demythologises the popular Australian myths by describing them as contributing to "The Great Australian Emptiness" through his characters (weak fathers vs *mateship*, strong women against the patient women waiting at home while men spend their lives outside in glorious feats). White's fiction may be seen to move beyond the oppositions discussed by G.A. Wilkes in his book, *The Stock-yard and the Croquet Lawn*. The two stereotypes in the title set up "the antithesis of the genteel and robust, the refined and the crude, the old world and the new" (4). White condemns the *middle-class* Australian *philistinism* which lays emphasis on "men
of steel, coping with the rigours of existence" where "intellectual pursuits are unmasculine" (Wilkes 144). This, perhaps, is the reason for White being termed an "un-Australian" writer. Furthermore, his satirical portrait of the typical Australian suburb, Sarsaparilla and critical portrayal of conforming individuals only support this criticism. However, the breaking of norms is not so much an attempt to question and redeem the society that is depicted (though this may be the implicit aim of White), but to project the psychic/spiritual reality of the individuals which is in opposition to the existing social reality.

Like White, Laurence is highly critical of the superficial bourgeois norms of the Manawaka society. In presenting accurately the changes taking place, even while presenting the familiar landmarks, Laurence makes Manawaka a living community. She shares this trait with writers like R.K. Narayan, William Faulkner, Stephen Leacock, Robertson Davies and Alice Munro. In creating a dynamic town, Laurence emphasises the role of place as an identity marker. Although Laurence subverts the norms of Manawaka, she seems to rely more on the need to adapt and re-appropriate existing norms. A very good example of this is her treatment of the Metis in her Manawaka novels. Hagar convincingly echoes the popular view of the Manawaka society about the Tonnerres who live on "the wrong side of the tracks" of the town. For Rachel, it is the town's distinction between natives, settlers and immigrants that explains the difference between her and Nick. For Stacey and Vanessa, there are brief moments of questioning of norms in their relationships with Val and Piquette.
respectively. In the **Morag-Jules-Pique relationship, there is a culmination** of the need for unity and communication **between the settlers and** the natives. What begins as the difference in the **use** of language between Hagar and John, **Bram** and Lazarus Tonnerre, ends in **Morag** accepting the songs and tales as heritage. Through the tales and songs, Laurence creates an identity specifically Canadian and regional. Yet, it is not narrow parochialism, for the attempt here is to project something that is **common** and necessary to humanity at large. While White emphasises the need to acknowledge the aborigines and presents them as spiritually superior, there is no portrayal of the integration of them within his social scheme.

The use of myths may also be seen as an attempt to discover things mythical/archetypal and to enhance the presentation of the individual. This leads us to the question of psychic reality, for the archetypal is but a collective **manifestation** of the unconscious psyche in Jungian terms. The psychological implications of the guests are examined in Chapter Four.

The first step in the quest for a psychic reality involves a movement away from society, which results in alienation. The positive aspect of alienation is the objectivity it gives the artists **and** their characters, to view the societies they condemn. As Jack Lindsay points out in his article "The Alienated Australian Intellectual," alienation in this context is to be understood "in the simple sense that they feel quite outside the thing they describe; they are cut-off and view the **idiot** scene from the other side of the asylum-wall" (49). However, this
**objectivity** results in quite different things in the works of the two writers. In Laurence, because of a strong sense of place, **myths** and heritage, the objectivity heightens the effect of self-realisation by placing the individuals within a larger national/**mythical/archetypal** framework. It enables Laurence to cross the barriers of narrow parochialism and **nationalism**—for she uses the very same barriers to shape a new reality from old. However, the case is quite different in White. Since, the locale and characters are not immediately recognisable as Australian by most people, the novels seem to project a matrix which is purely a landscape of the mind, sometimes combined with a mystical aura. White also attempts a psychological realism different from narrow nationalism or social realism. Further, White's alienation lands him in what Kirpal Singh calls "an interesting **paradox**" (119). While White's novels transformed Australian literature from being the offspring of dreary journalism, they have not represented the Australian character in toto. The way out of the paradox may be effected by considering White's vision within a larger framework of the psycho-spiritual quest of humanity at large.

Leaving aside the debate about the Australianness or Canadianness of the writers and the much debated question of regionality versus universality, the emphasis placed on the psyche by the two writers has some interesting implications to the mode of writing evident in their works. Many of the techniques used by the writers bring out vividly their ideas on self-realisation. Two such techniques are examined in Chapter Five. It is interesting to note that the concept of doubling projects the distinction made by the writers between **inner/outer**
realities, true/false selves, which may be extended to embrace oppositions such as male/female, self/society, spirit/matter, mind/body etc. Likewise, the search for identity may be equated to, what S.H. Vatsyayan terms, as "the search for lost time" (A Sense of Time 33). The search for time can be traced in the reliance on memory by almost all the protagonists. The narrative techniques used are the flashback and flashforward modes. If the search is extended to that of selfhood (devoid of usually available identity markers like family and society), then the time-scale is universal, involving collective memory which is archetypal in the Jungian sense. Thus, the search moves outward towards social/national markers and correspondingly inward towards personal and collective unconscious which are repositories of myths.

Nearly all the techniques used by the two writers tend towards one destination, i.e., the feminine mode of writing. Though both the writers are not radically feminist in their concerns, their writing is 'feminine' in the sense in which Helene Cixous uses the term. Before discussing the feminine mode, it is important to clarify the fact that feminine is not equated to women and masculine to men. This clarification is important because we are dealing with writers of two different sexes employing similar modes of writing. The first aspect of this mode can be traced to the use of subversion by the writers which was discussed earlier. Both the writers use, what Veronica Brady calls "the mode of introversion and passivity, the mode of Narcissus and of Orpheus, exploring the world by means of the
self" (in Who is She? 178). These elements correspond with the elements Freud identified with the feminine—"narcissism, passivity and masochism" (Brady 186). The narcissistic elements may be traced in the quests of the protagonists in search of themselves and this is reflected in the narratives through the use of mirror images (discussed in Chapter Five). The passivity of the questers is revealed in their acceptance of the cosmic, suprapersonal and things beyond intellectual grasp. For Elizabeth Hunter, the "gift" of grace is given notwithstanding her many weaknesses. For Morag, it is not her reason which provides solutions to the riddles of life and art, but her intuitive understanding of the flight of the blue heron and Royland's acceptance of his loss of magical powers. The masochistic element may be traced to the pervasiveness of suffering in the fiction of White and Laurence. The realisation of one's sins and guilts and atoning for them parallels the confrontation of one's shadow in Jungian psychoanalytic terms. It also refers to the acceptance of one's body, one's frailties and omissions. Both White and Laurence emphasise the need for a state of "silence, simplicity and humility" combined with intuitive powers. The feminine mode may also be found in the use of circular time which proceeds infinitely and in the reliance on myths, dreams and archetypes.

So far, we discussed the frames which provide structures for the fiction of the two writers, viz., their existentialist-humanist position, their deconstruction of social reality, their emphasis on psychic reality and their use of the feminine mode of writing. Such common foundations lead to certain conclusions: the androgynous nature of the creative mind and the multicultural
perspectives available to writers and readers alike. While androgyny enables writers to cross the barriers imposed by sex and gender, the multicultural method enables the readers to inscribe ideas characteristic of a culture into texts of other cultures. In this thesis, the Vedantic ideas accessible to the Indian readers were inscribed into Australian and Canadian texts. Further, the use of the multicultural method offers scope to transcend confines imposed on the readers and writers by nation, sex, culture or age. Combined with the interdisciplinary mode, this method paves a way for the development of post-colonial criticism away from merely thematic studies. Such studies were essential to start the process of reading post-colonial texts. However, the formulation of new models of post-colonial critical theories is aided by experimentation such as the present study.