The novels of Patrick White (1912-1990), the Australian Nobel laureate who was awarded the Prize in 1973, have been widely hailed as much for their content as their style. They have rightly drawn much critical attention from competent circles, particularly in his own country. As a result, the various aspects of his works have come to light, and the reader today has a much better understanding of the world of his fiction. White's style also has been subjected to close scrutiny, and a number of significant books and articles have been brought out on the subject. Mention may be made, for instance, of Peter Beaton's *The Eye in the Mandela* (1976), a full length study, 'which is offered as an interpretative scheme that has emerged from close and repeated readings of the novels.' The work is noteworthy also for the analysis of White's style that it provides. Besides, the works of John Colmer (*Patrick White*, 1984), Karin Hanseen (*The Wapped Universe: A Study of Imagery and Structure in Seven Novels by Patrick White*, 1984), and Caroline Bliss (*Patrick White's Fiction*, 1986) are found to be of much help in a study of White's style. Among other writings on the subject, Hilary Haltay's paper 'Language as Energy, Style as Rebellion, Syntax as Technique in Patrick White's Antipodean Prose', at the 6th Annual Conference on Commonwealth Literature and Language,

A host of other critics also have written on White's fiction, including its style. They are Harry Hoseltine, Barry Argyle, Brian Kiernan, Veronica Brady and a few others. Patricia A. Morley's *The Mystery of Unity: Theme and Technique in the Novels of Patrick White* (1972), provides an elaborate discussion on each of White's novels, 'with a view to bringing out its essential unity as a work of art.' Here the use of White's imagery and symbolisms have been exhaustively studied. Harry Hoseltine's article, on 'Patrick White's Style', in *Quadrant*, 7 Winter (1963), is helpful as an initial approach to his prose.

Notwithstanding the works of the above critics, much yet remains to be explored in Patrick White's style. Such aspects of it as the overall narrative pattern, the narrative
voice, the points of view, imagery and symbolism, ambiguity, irony and humour, preponderance of some select terms in particular works, the poetic undertones and the prose have not been studied in detail. Or is there so far available, to the best of our knowledge, a comprehensive study to show the growth and development of the writer's skill with regard to his various stylistic devices. In the present work, chiefly expository in nature, an attempt has been made to examine some of the features of White's style in his manifold creative context in detail, viz., the narrative design, the narrative technique (including the narrative voice, points of view etc.), the poetic qualities of the works (i.e., the imagery, the symbolism and so on), and the shades of meanings of some of the select terms. The expectation is that it will help a better understanding of White's art and vision. The emphasis has been laid mainly on the hitherto unexplored functional application of some of these stylistic elements.

The work is based on a close examination of the above elements of style as reflected in five select novels. They are: *The Aunt's Story* (1946), *The Tree of Man* (1956), *Voss* (1957), *Riders in the Chariot* (1961), and *The Eye of the Storm* (1973). They have been so chosen as to represent the different stages of White's career. *Voss*, which stands in close proximity to *The Tree of Man*, has yet been included in this study on consideration of its unique quality which is so different from that of the other novel.
For the convenience of treatment, the work has been divided into seven chapters of which the first is devoted to a general survey of style in fiction - its characteristics and the part it plays. The second examines the narrative pattern of the novel, and the third, the narrative technique and points of view. The fourth chapter examines the poetic qualities of Patrick White, an exceptionally sensitive writer. The fifth chapter examines in detail the shades of meaning of some select terms which may be taken as pointers to the writer's vision. The sixth chapter is devoted to a study of White's prose, and the last chapter, the conclusion, is drawn on the previous chapters. The notes and references follow immediately after each of the chapters.

For the purpose of the work, the following works of White's works have been used:

2. The Tree of Man (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1950).

The Penguin editions of these works are also available.

The number within parenthesis at the end of a quotation indicates the page number of the work under discussion.

For the preparation of the format, the MLA Style sheet has been followed.

Ranjita Chaudhury