The Narrative Design

In *The Hunt's Story*, White has delved deep into the mind of a reticent young woman, Theodora Goodwin. He has shown how from her childhood, Theodora's ugliness of appearance estranged her from her relations and friends. Those who seemed to understand her, albeit imperfectly, like her father, the old man who visited her family for dinner, and the Greek musician, Koraitis, are soon lost to her. With deep sensitivity, White has traced the thoughts and fantasies of this lonely soul. For this purpose, he has divided the work into three sections. Behind the intensely passionate and deeply compassionate presentation of life, there lies a mastery of structural planning which accounts for the work's firmness and strength, and thus for its similarity with a reticule.

The basic structural pattern of the novel can be seen in its three main parts. The epigraphs to these parts significantly point to Theo's states of mind. The first epigraph, from Olive Schreiner, is about distance or isolation which forms, 'that solitary land of individual experience.' White has presented a neat and linear structure covering the first six chapters of the work and presenting through them the steady progress of Theo's life. The second part of the novel also comprises six chapters, and as
mentioned in the epigraph from Henry Miller, opposes fragmentation of reality. Both the parts are brought into coalesce in the single chapter of the third part. The last epigraph, again from Schreiner, contrasts madness with sanity, appearance with reality. Each of the epigraphs indicates the essence of each of the parts of the overall structure of the novel.

In the first part, the first chapter is an impressive explication of the mood underlying the novel. White does this by introducing a key statement: 'but old Mr. Goodman did die at last' (11). This is an abrupt utterance at the beginning of the novel, but it brings into focus a host of past situations. In fact, the statement implies the projection of a past that has now surfaced to the present. Taso's painful bygone days spent under the cruel dictates of her mother and her deep isolation (focused in the epigraph) are slowly revealed to the reader. As White shows her, now counting the moments of her freedom, he brings forth a sensitive mood which may be seen as an after-effect of the years she spent answering to the voice. But White introduces it here mostly to build up the beginning of the dominant mood of quiet suffering that pervades the work. This chapter is also important inasmuch as it projects the image of the 'aunt'. Simultaneously with the sister's children being brought into prominence, the novelist is busy working at this image. At the end of the
chapter, the author shows Lou, the little niece, requesting her aunt to narrate the story of Meroë, the latter's name. This gives a good start to the second chapter which begins the tale of Aunt Theodore Goodman and her life at Meroë. Thus, the first chapter succinctly lays out the foundation of the narrative structure of the work.

The gradual unfolding of the growth of Theo's life from childhood to maturity has been presented from the second to the fifth chapter in an undisturbed linear manner. Theo's childhood love for Meroë and her ties with nature are recounted with much feeling and poignancy. This follows the change of the young girl from the years of innocence to experience as she joins school and begins to respond to her surroundings which, however, isolate her. In due course, her father, Mr. Goodman, dies, and Meroë, the family estate, is sold off as Mrs. Goodman moves into town with her daughter. This is a point where a careful following of the structural format is needed.

White has a special meaning to convey through the organization of this particular part of the structure. Although the life at Meroë ends in the fourth chapter, White shows that the part of the novel which is named 'Meroë' is yet not over. The author has invested Meroë with much significance and it emerges as much more than a mere place name. It may first of all be seen as a setting
which sharpens the story of Theodora's suffering. Here White seems to imply that the tragedy and mystery of the ancient Egyptian Meroë (of which Theodora learnt in her early years from her father) and the black volcanic rocks that formed the surroundings of her home, have been unwittingly inherited by her. So, unconsciously to herself, she shares her muted feelings with Meroë, which can be seen as a symbol for her gory existence on earth. The part of the novel named Meroë is as drawn out as the course of Theodora's suffering and pain. Thus, White has planned the structure closely, bearing in mind the theme of suffering that he is going to present, what he has achieved is, in effect, a fine interpretation of the theme with the physical world in which the protagonist lives and moves and has her being.

The sixth chapter is a neat round up of the introduction made in the first. At the end of the first, Theo, answering to Lou's request to tell her the story of Meroë, says that 'there is very little to tell' (20). This starts the rising action of the novel. At the end of the sixth chapter, after White has presented the whole story of Meroë, we find a repetition of this utterance. The recurrence of the statement is significant, for it is with the help of this sentence that the first and the sixth chapters neatly encase the story of Theodora Woodman within them. The sixth chapter acts as an
en...
Theodora. The point of intersection represents the desire and sympathy that the adventurous Theo shares with the characters of her imagination. In a pattern which is as now as it is lively, Theodora's fanciful figures forth personages in different walks of life, each coming in contact with her and enabling her to enact a significant part in each of their lives as she tries to seek meaning in her own. The concluding lines of the epigraph to Part Two, 'the great fragmentation of maturity', are explained by the stage which Theodora enters into at the end with her cosmopolitan figures of fantasy: 'In the peace that Holstius spread throughout her body and the speckled shade of surrounding trees, there was no end to the lives of Theodora Woodman'(295). It must be noted that unlike the linear progression of the first part of the narration, in Part Two, the movement is sideways or horizontal, exploring the many facets of a single psyche.

'Holstius' is the third section, upon which the whole novel converges. The movements of the two parts meet and blend here. After the fantastic excursions of 'Jardin Exotique', this part is noted for its tenderness and maturity. In this, Theo's mood is once again seen to change. As she is shown stepping into America and reaching the Johnsons' place, the novel reaches the stage of reality and a mood of quiet acceptance is marked. For this projection, the author has made use of minimal incidents. He lays emphasis only upon
the figure of Holstius and the ruined house. Theodora is shown here to gain complete exaltation by a total annihilation of the great monster 'Self' before the figure of Holstius. This is effectively projected when white, disregarding all other incidents, concentrates upon the one relating to Holstius and Theodora alone, which is the final climax.

The lengths of the three parts also have been designed with care. Depending on the particular situations projected, the first two parts are lengthy compared to the third and final section. White has a distinct structural design in mind in doing so. The first part, 'Heroë', shows us the life history of Theo. White takes it up with care and tries to show us with choice details the growth of Theodora into womanhood, i.e. the change from innocence to experience, and this justifies the length of the section. The second part presents Theodora at the hotel near the Mediterranean in an imaginary 'Jardin Exotique'. This sudden surge of the fantasy requires an elaborate section where time almost seems to stand still. Theodora interacts with different people. Each of them is a figuration of her varying thoughts and imagination. So this section, too, is as elaborate as the first; for, after all, the author shows that Theodora re-lives a new life of fantasy and dreams in the Jardin Exotique. To 'Holstius' we owe the excellence of the work's neat organization. After the
complexity of design in the 'Jordan Maiden', 'collides' in conceptually simple, and over shorter in length. For
concentrated gravity in starting effect to the
existence of the whole novel, i.e. the author even makes benefit of all other considerations, her main intent, i.e.,
the search for utility to utility in total self-elimination at the end of dissolution: 'existence had none but bar
as small, her hand was in the ends of clothes, receiv-
ing house, ...' While considering, the author shows her
arriving at the final stage of her life when she seems to
have discovered the truth. That is when she declares, 'when
your life is most real, then you are most good' [67]. She has
introduced no further explorations or deliberations, for
any attempt to lengthen the chapter through elaboration
would totally negate the intense effect achieved here.

Hite has more such use of parallel patterns in
much of the units of the novel. In the first part, this
is seen in the advance of the two of her suitors for
Theodora's love and her reactions to them. She answers
Frank Carrott's feelings for her by the absurdity of her
shooting expertise. The second suitor is also treated
almost in the same manner. In both the events the
inner reaction to the convoluted of the world around
her, and almost reflects this. But she, ye are all
kinds of false social standards in keeping with her
own sense of truth and immediacy. Hite uses use of
these instances to project Theo's alienation in which 'no fellow footfall is over heard', thus giving a tightening grip to the section as a whole. In 'Jardin Exotique', however, the situations, though not really similar, yet work on parallel lines. We find no recurrence of incidents but the manner in which Theo interacts with the different characters is almost the same everywhere. In 'Holstius' is seen a single thread of action, and the question of similarities or parallelisms does not arise. In it is seen one concentrated and decisive line of action culminating in Theo's loss of sanity. These parallel patterns in each of the sections help the author achieve a concentrated brevity and unity which give its distinct stamp to the overall style of the novel. Theodora's attempts at suicide and her broodings on the issue of death and destruction have parallel patterns running through the three sections of the narrative design. The incident of her shooting down the little hawk is her first act of self-destruction as she steps onto the early stages of her years of experience. Her outing with Frank and Fanny was later recognised as a mistake and a total failure. Their company only accentuated the yawning gulf between her lonely predicament and their predisposition to pretence. So Theo tries to eliminate herself through the killing of the innocent hawk which she identifies with herself: '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 ....' There' laughed Theodora, 'it is done' (74). Her first act of suicide is thus completed in the fourth chapter of the first section. At the end of the same chapter, Theo experiences a second death. That is when her father dies. Somehow she then felt that she, too, died a second time:

'she was thin as grey light, as if she had just died, she would not wake the others. It was still too terrible to tell, too private an experience. As if she were to go into the room and say: 'Mother, I am dead, I am dead.' Maren has crumbled' (75). The above lines embody a solemn enactment of the second death of Theo. In the same way, in Chapter Five, of the same sections, Theo faces death for a third time. This is after the Jack Frost incident when she goes into the kitchen at night and takes up the knife, to avenge herself. 'Theodora took up the thin knife, very thin and impervious, from where it lay in the zinc light' (120). But she does not finally carry out her impulsive intent. She realizes that that action of hers would not actually 'cut the knot' of evil. So, 'she threw back the thin knife ...' (120). She seems to have 'almost touched death' and 'could see its eyelashes, pale as a goat's, and the tongue clicking like a bell' (120). But, in her self-denial, she has been able to destroy the 'great monster' self, which adds grace to her obsession with death. Thus, in the three parallel incidents, Theo's involvement with 'death' is
revealed, one must take care to see that these incidents are not just mechanical parallel patterns in the narrative. Each incident is significant in itself, as well as for the course of development of the narrative through the subsequent incidents. For instance, in the first episode, Theodora actively indulges in killing herself through the hawk. In the second, Theodora involuntarily experiences the trauma of death at the decisive end. In the third, the protagonist denies bloodshed and again consciously throws off the knife to kill her "self". It is perhaps in the third incident that Theodora is in full command of herself to obtain a kind of sanctity for which she was long yearning. Thus, these three parallel incidents clearly indicate the development of White's narrative design.

The same pattern gains in significance as it is discovered once again in the second part of the novel, as per the very concept of this section, the suicidal streak in Theodora is personified by Lisselotte, the wronged countess. So, she takes the knife and smashes her painting of the glass pagoda with its flaming bird. She then gives voice to the very broodings of Theodora in Part One: "We have destroyed so much, let us have not destroyed enough, we must destroy everything, everything, even ourselves. Then at last when there is nothing, perhaps we shall live" (175). This is what is done in the episode where the Hotel du Midi blows up in flames, destroying all the
ments of Theodora, Katina, amongst a few others, survives being not a part but an extension of Theo, personifying Little Lou. Thus, the parallel pattern of destruction in the first section is aptly taken up in the second. In the third, the same pattern may be seen in Theo's physical submission to the world. Here, the meaning of the same form takes a new turn. For, as envisaged in the epigraph in this part, called 'Holstius', the protagonist attempts 'not to nullify the self, but acknowledge the proliferation of selves and the conflicts and contradictions they entail.' This appears as a perfect culmination of the pattern under discussion in White's overall narrative design.

White has used these patterns of recurrent and parallel situations in the three sections to give the narrative a greater measure of coherence. This correspondence of the part to the whole is impressive, for example, in all the three sections, which are so different from each other, we find the 'aunt' image featuring distinctly. In the first part we have a direct reference to 'aunt Theo of whom the story is about. In the second section, the aunt image returns in the relationship of Theo with Katina. In 'Holstius,' it is Zack who recognises her as an 'aunt, possibly an aunt. These references are not accidental but intentional, the author's purpose being to present the story of a lonely soul in all its agony and intensity.
'crow' shows only the pathos of Theodora's 'life', but that is not all her story. To complete it, her fantasies need to be presented and that justifies 'Jardin exotique' where characters and relationships are wholly imaginary and are only vaguely suggested. But it is to be noted here that Theodora's mind is given full freedom and she is the one to make or mar her situations. So in her relationship with Katina, she is no longer the hesitant and woeful aunt of 'eroë', she is a strong and confident aunt fully aware of her responsibilities and her capacities. This is a point that illustrates how the author has succeeded in presenting the subtle mind of the protagonist through his narrative design. In 'Holstius', there is a further development in the aunt image. The reference there is brief and suggestive. Zack, the child of the Johnsons, is deeply attracted to Theo. Although very little happens, Theodora seems to have regained little Lou in Zack. In the first part, Theo thought that although she loved Lou, she could not hold on to her as she believed that 'there was no lifeline to other lives' (137). But in 'Holstius' she realizes that notwithstanding the loneliness of the soul, the possibility of the 'lifeline' still remains. Though a little insane, Theo here has a rich moment of illumination and self-realization. Thus the paradox of the aunt image is fully explored through the use of parallel situations in the three sections.
Another set of parallel situations relates to the projection of the 'father figure'. In 'Mercé', the father, Mr. Goodman is a good soul, but is weak, and does not have the urge to realize the quality of life he wants for himself, so his dreams remain unrealized; in the end... I did not see it (62). This is noted in his confession to Theo, who is seen to be stronger. As Patricia Morley has so aptly pointed out, even as a child Theo was actually 'guiding father' (14) and in 'Father's Quest' Theo represents the young and lively princess, Nausicaa, who conducts Odysseus to her father's court. This strength in her is realized in 'Jardian Exotique'. Here a distinct father-figure does not emerge, but it is Theo who assumes to herself this capacity as the head of the community at the hotel. As she soothes and loves and admonishes, she projects herself as a 'father' figure, however subdued.

In 'Holstius', however, the father figure looms large and clear. It is here that Theo finds her lost father, the remnants of the 'Man who was given his dinner', the General, — in fact, all those who were once dear to her. All these fragments combine to form a vivid figure upon whom Theodore can finally depend, and forget herself. There is more of such use in the work. For instance, the parallel use of the pensive 'Mercé', the imaginary hotel, and the dilapidated house of Holstius, represents the life of suffering, the life of fantasy, and the moments of reality or truth respectively.
Another significant set of parallelism is seen in the introduction of several suitors who make advances towards Theodore - Frank and Huntley of 'Medea', General Alyosha in 'Jardin Exotique', and Holstius in the last section. They suggest, respectively, the unloved life of Theo, her life of romance and fantasy, and her deep and pure love. These parallels show the same line in continuity that covers the novel to culminate in the vision of Holstius. What is striking is that this line is not impaired by the three parts of the novel differing substantially in format and organization. The perceptive reader will not fail to see how these parallel devices have helped to integrate the narrative pattern of the work so far as it presents a unified vision of life as projected through Theodore Goodman.

In the structure of the novel, the settings have their own place. White depends on them for unwinding his tale of Aunt Theo and the processes of her mental development. Its first important use in the structural framework of the novel is the setting of Medea:

No one ever debated why their flat daily prose burst into sudden dark verse with Medea in their mouths .... Only the hills around Medea had conspired with the name, to darken, or to split deeper open their black rock .... The hills were Medea and Medea use the black volcanic hills (21).
As already observed here (p. 23), Theo's mind was the black volcanic hills too, and also an extension of Faroe. With Faroe as the background, White has presented the girl as being as ugly and volatile as the volcanic hills and as sensitive and full of poetic perceptions as the very name, Faroe, implies. Within the first part of the novel, there are significant minor settings which convey its tone. For example, Miss Spofforth's school is a setting which shows the artificial confinement of the soul of Theo in the name of education (65-66). This sense of imprisonment is created once again against the setting of the Sydney house into which they move after Mr. Goodman's death (90-92). The scene under the ricot tree when Theo waits for the rain, is a picturesque setting where she anticipates the inevitable (83). The 'hot evening' when she waits for the 'red-moon to crash like a thunderous gong through the leaves' aptly creates the background of the scene when Theodora will be receiving the news of Frank's engagement with Fanny. The house of克拉克森(108) is an effective setting showing the artificial sophistication of the whole set-up which Theo rejects. But at the same time, the same background accentuates her affinity with Moraitis who is her compatriot 'in the country of the bones' (113). The setting of the garden with the 'Jardin Exotique', with the cacti spread all around and with the soft breeze blowing incessantly, lifts us to a point where we can explicate the phantoms of Theo's mind. In the
dilapidated house in 'Holstius' the broken boards and the battered forms seem to symbolize the stark reality of Theodora's entire life. It can easily be seen, then, that the author has made effective use of these various devices of the fictional narrative for intensifying the suggestive core of his work.

The narrative structure of *The Aunt's Story* is complex and intensely involved although critics have orined that it is 'less elaborately organized' than the other novels. The author has shown here a purposeful stylistic dynamism. His intent being to depict the life of Theodora with all its stress and strain and complex inner pattern, the narrative is, naturally, so designed as to suit this purpose best. It is not so much the recounting of the external events of the girl's life for their own sake, as the depiction of her inner mind that is brought into prominent focus with much creative ingenuity. It is in relation to that alone that the external events find their relevance. Critics like John Colmer are rather critical of the structural lay-out of the novel. According to Colmer,

The ending is paradoxically too definite and too inconclusive, too definite in that the sanity insanity paradox is so prosaically wound up in the plot; and too inconclusive in that the working out of the major theme seems to require that Theodora's new wholeness of vision should be more closely related with the scene of her childhood in Australia.
A close study of the work, however, shows that there is little for the reader to quarrel about the author's planning of the narrative design. The paradox that Colmer discovers results from the painful experiences of a lonely woman who at long last regains a balance of mind only by trying to ignore the raving world. So, at the end, Theo gains in sanity through her insanity. White does not present this as a random statement but shows his protagonist going through the various stages before she finds herself in the said situation. Of course, the author has had recourse to ways which are rare and most symbolic rather than explanatory. It enhances the intensity of the paradox and cannot be exactly seen as prosaically woven into the plot. Moreover, the poetic and sublime truth incorporated in White's vision of the modern world precludes any impression of anything dull or dreary in the novel. The positive ending is an essential part of the structural planning, for, without it the basic pattern of the work would be jeopardized. The charge that the ending is inconclusive for being not closely related to Theodore's childhood scenes, does not convince. For America, the land to which Theo finally travels, has the kind of supple freshness and joy that Theo experienced in her childhood, at Merod. So, psychologically, she is back in her childhood scene in Australia for all intents and purposes. Secondly, with the spiritual transformation of Theo,
the author requires a new setting, virginal and unblemished. The new land, America, with its unbounded possibilities, its novel prospects, and its freshness is possibly the proper background for Theo. An elaborate attempt to explain here every part of The Hunt's Story would be unrealistic for the obvious reason, as the novelist has himself admitted, the structure of his novels, specially The Hunt's Story, may be sought in the compositions of music. We can compare the narrative pattern of the novel to the recital of a 'Khayal' - a form of Indian classical music. The first chapter lays bare the situation of Theodora Goodman, and her sense of alienation in the thick of social insensitivity. This is the 'alaap' where the stringest scales of the story are revealed. With the rest of Part One, we have the 'biestar' where the story is slowly eased out to the reader. The second part is the time for the 'tanas' and the 'boltenas' where within the range of Theodora's capacity we find her interacting, discussing, counselling and associating with various individuals. This fragmentation of Theodora Goodman's personality to form innumerable new compositions at the hotel is thus very successfully demonstrated. The Third part is the 'tihai', the calm after the crescendo like the effect of the second. Here the notes featuring the aunt are clearer, softer, and slower, auguring an end, an end of a recital. However, the end is not an end, but a continuity of the soul-stirring tune. Indeed, The Hunt's Story has an evanescent quality which makes its narrative incomparable to
anything solid or concrete. It is only in abstraction that its framework can be truly conceived—and if its palpable and tangible form and shape is to be found at all, it may be sought only in the scales and tunes of music.

But against the contrived significance of The Aunt's story, the pattern of the narrative of The Tree of Man appears to be rather loose. Some critics see it as an unmanageable piece of work, ill-conceived and badly executed. One critic has referred to 'its great sprawl, its episodic structures and the unevenness of its texture.' Another has called it a 'somewhat haphazard patchwork built.' Against such disparagement, some other critics have applauded the clear lines along which White shows the rhythms of life in this novel.

The Tree of Man is the answer to the pull that Australia always has had for White. In spite of all the European and English influences, it is his birthplace that acts as the shaping spirit in the creation of his vision. In this novel, White has attempted to 'discover the extraordinary behind the ordinary in the bags and iron of Australian life.' It is apparently a simple work about an ordinary couple, Stan and Amy. But within this seemingly simple framework of a family unit, there are intricate and involved designs through which the writer tries to explicate his vision.
The pattern of *The Tree of Pain* is basically simple and straight although appearing expansive and detailed. It is this simple plot that allows the reader to concentrate on the man and the woman. Following the pattern of the traditional pioneering saga, White begins his novel at the beginning. On the very first page we are shown Stan Parker clearing the bushland to build a place for himself. This is to be the focal point of the widening action of the growth of the entire novel which is a record of the ups and downs of Stan Parker's life from youth to old age.

The novel has four distinct stages forming the exposition, which correspond to the four stages in the life of the couple and also synchronize with the movements of the four seasons. The seasonal significance is noted at the very beginning. Soon after, Stan brings his wife, Amy, home, and they both enjoy the spontaneous joy and bliss of innocence epitomized by the spring. In their happiness, their present and their past become joyous memories to be cherished: 'All the riches of memory were recounted on these mornings' (35). This period of their life may be seen in the gaiety of the spring. The arrangement of the chapters in the first part shows White's skill in the planning of his narrative. In course of time, Stan and Amy become more experienced, and move with the society of the summer, 'a time of white dust and yellow grit' (103). Soon, however, failures and frustrations confront them as noted in the chapters of
the second part. But then, there are also the rains, quietening the soul and fanning fancies. The blast of summer is momentarily forgotten in the haze of pneumatic bliss. This is seen in Amy who is all too eager to react to her environment, to any change. After summer, white brings in the months of autumnal barrenness when Stan goes to war. The worst is brought out in the months of winter, the 'seasons of stubble and dead grass, when doubts did press up' (295). Winter shows Amy committing adultery and Stan losing faith as he '.... at the absent God' (524). Their children, Amy and Thesis, too, are seen to add to the gloom of winter, but with the end of winter, white shows that the worst is over with promises of the oncoming spring personified in little Amy, the grandson. Thus, a foursome seasonal movement forms the basic framework of the novel. This is perhaps what made Brian Forley view the novel as 'the orchestral movements of man's spiritual quest' and Ingvar Djoerksten to relate the 'symphonic structure' of the work to the four movements of 'innocence, experience, death and reconciliation'.

It is clear that the four stages are the basic pillars of the structural pattern of the work in which white has celebrated the rhythm of the natural phenomenon that goes on in the world, as seen in the passing seasonal changes or in the phases of the day that bring in the night. All this shows that the basic structure of the work is well-conceived and well-wrought.
In the explication of the inner lives of the characters in *The Tree of Man*, and in the discovery of the main idea in the novel, parallel patterns, recurrent incidents, contrasts, juxtapositions and the use of settings have been put to good use. As has been already noted, the chapters have a straight progression in keeping with the undeviating growth of Stan's story. A closer look, however, discloses arresting designs which add to the perfection of the structure.

The four major incidents, i.e. the storm, the flood, the fire, and the drought form an impressive parallel pattern. They are introduced not merely as arbitrary divisions of the pioneering novel, but also as phases in the life of the workers, adding to its epic quality. These incidents project the various odds that confront man at every stage of life. If the four seasons form the different experiences of man, the four major incidents emphasize and reiterate the essence of these experiences. They show that man has to suffer, and although he is liable to move away from the supreme power, his sanctity lies in accepting the goodness of the world and the omnipotence of the power. In this way, the four major incidents are distinct developments towards the anagnorisis of Stan's illumination which leads to the crisis of his life within the sprawling garden. John Colmer has aptly seen the 'structure of the novel' the contrast that is consistently developed between Stan and Amy's responses to experience.'
In other words, the juxtaposition of Amy's responses to Stan's, forms an important design in the development of the narrative. For instance, one finds Stan transfixed with the mysterious implications of the 'lightning', which, to Amy is a mere natural disaster (43). Again, when she could become thoroughly involved with her son Iay, Stan shied away from such affections (113). Thus, incidents multiply in which white is found to juxtapose Stan against Amy and vice versa to develop the narrative design. Juxtaposition is widely used by the author in depicting many other characters and situations, too.

The minor incidents and their manner of occurrence have also a definite pattern. This pattern helps to present and emphasize the author's vision in the novel. For instance, the misfortunes that assail Amy one after another (the loss of the child in the flood, the miscarriages, the death of the beloved cow, Julia, together with the departures of the Greek, Con, and the old German, Fritz) are the various occasions of her suffering. As she craves to possess and becomes lost in the labyrinth of what Indians call 'maya', she realizes that everything escapes her. Thus these incidents, spread out at intervals in the novel, form an impressive pattern within the basic structural format.

Juxtapositions and contrasts are brought into present important issues. When "elektrin, the guest at Clastonbury, is juxtaposed against Amy and Stan, we know
that what has a definite purpose in mind. Madeleine has no active role in the story. She is presented as a foil against which Amy's longing for glamour and fantasy is exposed in the life of Stan, Madeleine is a passing fancy. Thus we see White using juxtapositions and contrasts to reveal the innermost thoughts and inclinations of his characters. Another effective and poetic use of juxtaposition is noted in the sixth chapter, where we meet with Amy in a strange situation. Mr. Gage, the post-mistress' husband, is crawling on the ground and looking up to Amy as she walks by almost as if he is dissecting her. Immediately, she is shown to meet with the debonair Tom Armstrong on the way. This sharpens her insatiable urges. As she returns home, she finds the stolid Tom sharpening a knife. His quiet inactivity, thus contrasted, brings to book the frivolous nature of Amy and her insatiable physical urges for possession. The 'Dowds form a striking contrast to the Farkers. If their callous drunken lives are presented along with the apparently more settled lives of the latter, we admire the Farkers for their industry. But behind the ostentatious exterior, the deep love of the 'Dowds mocks the seemingly righteous Farkers. Even the Quigleys stand by watching the Farkers break up. Joll Quigley is not a mother. But her love for her deformed brother, Bub, shows her tenderness. Joll and Bub may appear queer before Amy and her healthy baby. But in the end, the tie between them is stronger than what Amy can ever hope for with her child. Contrasted in this manner, Amy's loneliness
is heightened. In this way, juxtapositions and contrasts help to reveal the theme.

The use of setting is an important structural unit, for it upholds the theme in an effective manner. In *The Tree of Man* the setting is more or less uniform. The land with the tall, almost impregnable trees, forms the basic setting. It is just the right background to present Stan, who is not a mere pantheist, but an extension of nature itself. For Stan is 'a prisoner in his human mind' (49). It is in nature alone that he seeks release. He knows no way to commune with man as he does with nature. This is emphasized in the setting at Sydney, when disillusioned with his wife, he goes to town and behaves lowly, being out of his elements. At this point, one cannot ignore the use of the country-town polarity that features in most of White's works. The overt statement of failure of Ray, Thelma, and Amy are actually made in the unwholesome urban setting. So far as the setting of Blythbury is concerned, it is used to project the dream world of both Stan and Amy. It is of interest to observe that the life at the butcher's mansion is brought into the structure of the work, as a release for the inner fantasy of this ordinary couple. Madeleine, the guest with her evanescent charms, attracts both of them alike. But after their romantic urges are replete, the house burns down, destroying the world of their imagination. Now, it is with the backdrop of nature that Stan and the older and wiser Amy can sustain themselves.
Se, at the end of the novel, we have an exceptional setting; the world seems to be most young, fresh and simple. It is a vegetable garden presenting 'the austeres skeleton of cabbages and wands of onion seed' (474). In the midst of all this, Stan realizes that 'all was circumference to the centre'. It is at this moment that 'the gob of spittle'(476) becomes meaningful. Surprisingly it is at the same instant that Amy finds her 'nutmeg grater', her identity, by which she has to be 'left behind'. The impact of the last moments of Stan is received with greater significance amidst the barrenness of the surroundings. All this shows the effect to which the structural setting has been put in the novel.

The end of the novel, which has impressed many a reader, has yet been taken by some with reservation. Some critics find it a little too glib and smooth. Some have criticized it as an awkward and experimental book. Others see the closing part of the work as too consciously willed. But the structural climax in this novel must not be sought in the climatic moment of revelation. The ending is not a climax. It is a mere 'coda' by which the quest is renewed and continuity established. There is something that even the reader inherits, for the novel ends open-ended. This objective, non-committal and adds a new dimension to the story of Stan and Amy, and it becomes a universal issue. This adds to the artistic ingenuity of the structural design of the work as a whole.
To sum up, the sprawling novel is remarkable in the sense that it commences with quiet dignity. One cannot help praising with C. A. M. B., when he says that:

The strength of the *Idea of Man* comes not from the achievement of illumination, so much as from his blunderings towards it....

Notwithstanding the complaints of some critics about the elaborate size and expense of the work, there is nothing in it that can show any structural laxity. The splendid selectiveness and the capital exactitude with which the writer has planned the organization of the novel deserves to be recognized. Describing the grounds of the Parkes, White observes:

'There was little of design in the human originally, enough alone to form a plot of the wilderness' (476). This is applicable to the structure of the novel with a little modification. If a design has risen out of the wilderness, then it is this design in mind with which the writer has set out to present his sprawling narrative. The many incidents may appear to be cumbersome and unwieldy. It was in no really out of shape. It was the intent of the writer to show that at the centre of his edifice was the dilemma of a man who could not adjust himself to the world because of the uncommunicable mystery in him. All was 'circumference' to this predicament, to this centre. Nothing really matters except the constancy of the centre. To critical opinion pointing out White's looseness of structural design can hold aound
against this all-unifying vision and the masterly structural planning. If one feels unhappy with the slow movement of the novel, one should not forget that it is this vision that White investigates. If the end, where Ray starts a new beginning, appears to be an aimless affectation, it is because of our own inability to grasp the basic fictional design of the "mandala" or continuity of White's novels.

For *Voss*, White took up the story after reading contemporary accounts of Leichhardt's expedition and ..n. Chisholm's *Strange New World*. But it is much more than a mere reconstruction of the adventures of an explorer; it delves into the inner working of the mind of the protagonist, and other important characters, and the socio-political and psychological dimensions of the problems which face them. But this, the author has depended on an apparently direct narrative pattern. But a closer look reveals a complex design forming a kind of lattice work beneath it.

The story of the German explorer leading an expedition into the heart of Australia, can be viewed as a search, and it finds its close analogy with the search of the Holy Grail as well as with that of Bunyan's Christian. The novel has also much in common, structurally as well as thematically, with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Some critics have seen the work as a quest and a metaphor. The novel begins with *Voss* preparing for a search of his potential to assert it against the world, so he is found to be contemplating thus: "I am compelled into this country"(20) '.... But I shall lead
them eventually, he considered, because it is intended I shall justify myself in this way'. Voss is thus prepared to take up the challenge of proving himself. Brian Kiernan has aptly viewed it as a 'romantic voyage of discovery of the self'. Voss' expedition is a parallel to the spiritual search of Laura Trevelyan in Sydney. Thus the quest is not only an exciting issue, but it is also a determining factor in the three divisional narrative structures of the work; the linearity of the rising action and what follows later, in fact, depends largely on the idea of the quest itself. So it may be said that while in *The tree of man* Stan Parker travels through time, in *Voss* the hero moves through space.

The first part of the novel is structured along simple and direct lines. But the first few chapters comprising it hold much that becomes a part of the later sections of the novel. The first part is primarily introductory in character, presenting to the reader the details of Voss' preparation for the journey, the active participation of the Donners in the exciting project, and a close picture of the materialistic Sydney society. More importantly, it presents Miss Laura Trevelyan who forms an integral part of the work as a whole. Thus, in the preparation which is the rising action, these introductory elements form the 'exposition' of the novel. The unique relationship that develops between Voss and Laura in the latter two sections, begins in this, and
it forms what is technically called the 'aurora'. Also, in this part is noted the 'narrative hook', in the scene which shows the German sailing away in the upcomer leaving Laura and her cousin, Belle, extraordinarily distraught and penive (12l). This incident is calculated to create in the reader a keen curiosity for the ensuing events of which Laura, particularly, is very much apprehensive. Thus, in the simple delineation of the preparation for the journey, the perceptive reader discovers interesting interactions of units and designs.

Alongside the direct and uninterrupted account of Voss' journey as presented in the second part, run parallel designs which add to its already inherent density. The secondary parallel account is seen in the illogical relationship of Voss and Laura where we find Laura 'floating in and out of Voss' consciousness. The constant merging of illusion with reality creates in the novel a unique emotional poignancy. Peter H. Knox - Shaw aptly acclaims this singular way in which the 'shifting states of mind' are presented through the contrasts of the 'crystalline' and the 'yielding'. 

White has made the union of the two questing souls plausible through his meticulous structuring of elements in the plot. He often suggests the subtle experiences by consciously linking events. This may be seen in the passages describing Voss' journey when Laura 'floats in and out of his surroundings (285). Besides, the contrasting worlds of Sydney and
the Bushlands are also put to continuous focus here by turns, thereby achieving as in some of White’s other novels, an admirable integration of locales for effecting the necessary unity of design. This dual pattern has been seen as a ‘binary structure’ by Karin Hanssen. It is interesting to note that this design which is identified in the relationship of Laura and Voss, and continues into the contrasting and dual worlds of ‘Sydney’ and the ‘Bush’, encompasses the relationships of the other characters too. The togetherness of Le Masurier and Voss, of Jackie and Angus, and of Salch and Ings are cases in point. This pattern also determines the final situation of Voss, by which, he attains salvation, through death, in the Bush. In keeping with the dual pattern in the work, Trevelyan is found to have an important function. He is the turning point between Sydney and the desert, a link between the world of dreams and reality, though she herself remains an enigma.

These dual combinations apart, there are also some subtle networks of triangular relationships which cannot be easily overlooked. The characters are seen to form different ‘trinities’. The three sons, Voss - Laura - and Percy (the adopted daughter), Voss-Harry-Frank (the explorers), Salch-Angus-Turner (the explorers) are some instances in point. The expedition, too, is a ‘trinity’ whereby we find two rival parties - one on each side of the lonely figure of the Christ - like Trevelyan. Thus, the use of the figure three, suggesting a Christian trinity, adds to the intricacies of the
structural organization and consequently to the thematic significance of the work.

In the second part, too, there are anecdotes and episodes which form a tertiary pattern of sub-plots. Alfredreyman's story of his life with his debauched sister, and the narration by Judd's wife of their ordinary life style are other accounts that add to the density of the narration in this section. This is further strengthened by a few other brief incidents that are recounted here, namely of Voss shooting his dog, Gyp (266), of Alfredreyman being killed (342), of Judd starting the mutiny against Voss, (345) of Voss being taken prisoner by the natives (365) and of Laura's terrible suffering in her strange sickness. Also brought into focus are the past and the present together. All this combines to present a sense of urgency, of hectic activity, a sense of ceaseless assaults upon a staunch explorer. However, as John Colmer has observed, there is no sense of haste, in spirit of the continual movement of actions between 'Sydney and the Outback' and the 'present and past' 17. In this movement, White has made the reader willingly suspend his sense of reality and look for symbolic representation of situations. The turning point or 'catastrophe' in this section is noted in the 'anagnorisis', namely, the scene in which Voss discovers his limitations in trying to assume upon himself the attributes of the godhead. This idea develops until Voss is beheaded, and this critical turn of events may be seen as
a 'climax' as well as a 'crisis'. As a 'climax' it shows the change that the fortunes of the protagonist undergo as soon as he realizes his own limitations. The death of Voss in the Bush and the sudden recovery of Laura in Sydney may be taken together to form the 'crisis' in the novel where the action of the narrative is seen to be most intense. This is how the theme, manner, and style coalesce in this section in perfect harmony.

The last movement of the novel is a projection of the externalization of Laura's vision by which Voss is canonized. Accordingly, Voss is seen to have gained 'true knowledge which comes of death by torture in the country of the mind' (446). The three chapters of this section bring out the story of an older Miss Laura Trevelyan. The fourteenth chapter places her in her new surroundings as a school teacher. In the fifteenth is shown a Colonel Hebden who rounds up another expedition to trace Voss. This is significant in giving an external representation to Laura's last pursuit of her beloved's soul. The colonel's failure as recounted in the concluding chapter brings out the final revelation of the truth of Voss. This part of the novel also presents all the surviving members of the expedition, and finally ends the story of Voss. But it presents no interaction among the characters, only a reiteration of known positions. As Judd, the convict, canonizes Voss in the drawing room amidst many diners, we find the story of
the German, which had started in a similar situation, come full circle. In the words of Hilary Haltay, *Jos* reveals a circular structure typical of White's novels. 18 So at the end we find Laura returning to the complacent society of Sydney which she never left in body. As Brian Kiernan has pointed out, the last chapter has more than a single purpose to serve. Firstly, it helps Laura offer the final summation of Voss' experience which is humanized by the element of failure involved in it. Secondly, it acts in the identification of Laura's heirs in Mercy, Topp, and Tingle in carrying on the so-called 'coda'. Finally, the reader finds Laura resuming her long suspended life. Whether she succeeds is uncertain, the very uncertainty a narrative stance of the author by which he leaves the reader guessing, 'letting interpretations multiply'. 19

The settings in the novel have been put to maximum advantage. One of them, Sydney, the newly established township in Australia, is the centre of gross materialism. It is used to project Voss, who abnegates all of it. He is seen, in fact, to make himself a part of the harsh natural setting of the Australian Bushlands. The author has built in the idiosyncrasy of the explorer through the description of the background of the land he explores. It must be noted that in *Voss* as also in *The Tree of Man*, the settings are made to carry the maximum burden of the narrative. The settings here loom larger than the dimension of a mere background, and
actively add to the qualitative organization of the text.
Precisely, one cannot recollect *Voss* without remembering
the crude Australian Bushland which the protagonist
explores.

A factor that lends the whole work its psychological
depth in the units of the work is the centrality of character.
This is already seen in *The Aunt's Story* and *The Tree of Man*.
In *Voss*, the author has adopted a unique method of using two
characters, Voss and Laura, to represent the body and soul of
a single entity which is the central focus of white's fiction
here, and in its continued presence is found the unity and
integrity of the structural framework of the novel. Thus,
art and attitude here meet in commitment and responsibility
through a stylized realization of the central character.

In *Voss* the author has presented a world of reality
and dreams, suffering and fantasy, in a surprisingly bare form.
Through the analogy of a journey, white has explored the inner
consciousness of man first by making him estimate his powers
and then realize his limitations. This story is thus elevated
from the particular locale of Australia to a universal level.
There is a simple sophistication in the author's manner which
is wholly attuned to his needs. The highly elastic nature of
the line of the narrative structure has enabled the writer to
bring forth complex issues with ease. In this lies the latent
success and force of *Voss*, for it is in this manner that the
author draws 'close to the core of reality, the structure of reality as opposed to the merely superficial.'

*Ridders in the Chariot* is about four characters of equal importance, each attaining the rare knowledge of the 'Chariot' in his or her own peculiar way. The story emerges from the manner in which each of them lives his or her life with an awareness of the image of perfection (the Chariot), and from the way they together struggle towards what brings man closer to a divine wholeness. This necessitates a structural framework to present each of the four lives with equal emphasis. Besides, it is also necessary for the purpose of the narrative to link each of these lives with the rest so as to effect the overall unity of design in the work. In achieving this, the writer has evolved a form that is complex yet correlative and has a largeness of scope suited to accommodate the wealth of significant details that the story entails.

White has designed this novel in the form of four parallel histories which present the lives of a crazy woman, Miss Mary Hare, a learned Jew, Mordicai Himmelfarbs, a saintly soul, Mrs. Ruth Godbold, and, lastly, a black aboriginal, Alf Dabbo. Working within each of these stories is the planned order of the four stages of the spiritual development of man, i.e. innocence, experience, suffering, and final illumination. However, the stage of illumination is only suggested, and not shown distinctly in any of the sections until the end. Viewed against these stages the work as a whole attains a kind of an
epic dimension in its scope. The sensitive reader will not
fail to recall, for instance, Dante who also presented the
different stages of being and experience leading to beatitude.
The four histories also depict the subtle myth of failure
that lurks in the consciousness of each of the chosen mem-
bers. Besides, a sense of contrast between good and evil,
which Mary Hara clearly designates as 'the two chains', under-
lies each section. Lastly, as the story unfolds the knowledge
of the 'chariot' which Mary acquires intuitively, Himmelfarb
intelligently, e.g., Godbold emotionally, and Elf Sutko imagi-
natively, the peculiar way in which this perception is attained
by each of the illuminati forms a kind of an organising
principle of the work as a whole. However, the knowledge of
the 'chariot' is not the only palpable link amongst them.
Being alive to the image of the chariot, the illuminati's
vision of life and their disposition become clearer and
more kindly, making them more humane, and bringin, them in
the words of Susan Moore, 'closer to a divine wholes'. 21
This is what truly binds the four. Thus, notwithstanding the
peculiarity of the form and situations related to the four
characters, the structural principle in each story is the
same. Also, the four stories, taken together, present a kind
of Dickensian extravagance. However, White is mindful of
achieving an essential unity among the different parts so
that the complex vision which the work intends to present
emerges in its fullness and not in fragments. The novel
reaches its climax at a point when the four histories con-
verge to form a single story. It is to be noted that the
Barbaparilla is the common locale for all the four stories.
The pattern created by the interplay of the four central
characters is carefully brought out by cross-references.
In each of the four stories, there is a marked movement in
the narrative from the adult present to the childhood past.

The first section of the novel, dealing largely
with the story of Mary Hare, has an interesting interweaving
of the past and the present which places before the reader
the oddity and the abnormality of Mary's situation. The writer
here shows Mary going through the three stages of innocence,
experience, and suffering in her life. The last stage of
illumination is only hinted at through the rare knowledge of
the chariot and nothing is clearly drawn. He has also present-
ted the concept of the two chains of good and evil. This he
does by bringing in characters like the housekeeper, etc.
Solly, her fiendish friend Mrs. Black, and the so-called
nephew, Blue, who conspire against Mary Hare and all her
friends, the chosen ones. In her early years, Mary's own
family, particularly her father, is seen to represent the
'evil chain'. The issues are brought to light through episo-
des and epiphanies. The episodes like the one when she
curls up as a cog to feel what it is like to be one (2) and
the one in which her father shoots at the chandelier repulsed
by her ugly disposition (34) seem to be apparently unrelated,
but they are all in keeping with her unique character and her
life of intuitions which the author tries to reveal through this part of the novel. Epiphanies help reveal the essential nature of Mary's inner life and her supernatural experience of the chariot. The myth of failure is noted in her inability to conform to her social environment. Finally, in her rejection of evil and acceptance of Himmelfarb, T. Godbold, and God, she conforms to the character of the chosen one.

The section dealing with Himmelfarb is almost a complete novel by itself. It traces closely every stage of his material and spiritual development. The account here is more detailed and more direct than the first. White has here attempted to grasp the life-history of the young German. A flux of incidents makes up this section through which White tries to highlight every change and development of Himmelfarb's mind and body. Mordacai comes before the reader as a child, and the writer has kept us informed about him as he enters his teens, his youth, and finally, his manhood. The different experiences that he encounters in life stand for the phases of innocence, experience, and suffering. The recognition of the significance of the 'Chariot' which Himmelfarb comes across in one of the old books, is important in maintaining the symmetrical patterns of this section of the novel with that of the others. The myth of failure can be seen in Himmelfarb's inability to interpret the symbol of the Chariot to save his people. The evil chain, contrasted with the goodness of the Jew, is seen first in the depravity...
of his German torturers, and later, in the wicked propen­
sities of people like Mrs. Fleck, Mrs. Jolley and Blue at
Sarsaparilla. Having made the distinction between the good
and the evil and having chosen the former, Himmelfarb
approaches the state of divine wholeness. Thus, in
Himmelfarb’s story, too, White has had resort to the
parallelism of the major issues. This pattern lends the
narrative a coherent unity of structure in the midst of the
diversity in the different sections.

The section of the novel dealing with the story of
Mrs. Ruth Gedbold stands in sharp contrast to that present­
ing Himmelfarb’s life. As against the former, replete with
a number of exciting incidents, this part is rather bare. In
point of momentum also, unlike the former, it appears rather
staid. White has presented Ruth’s childhood of innocence
and her young years of experience in the ‘flat, fen country’
(23). After the gory instant of her brother’s death and her
father’s failure to understand her, Ruth moves into Sydney
as a maid of Mrs. Chalmers-Robinson. Here her period of
experience is seen to extend. White shows her life of acute
suffering soon after her marriage with Tom Gedbold, when she
moves to Sarsaparilla. Ruth faces failure in her losing
battle against the evil in her husband. From this point,
the husband emerges as the symbol of evil, and the wife
that of good. A plain and simple woman, Ruth experiences
the rare knowledge of the Chariot in her humble deeds done,
for instance to Mary (67) and Alf Jubbo (205), and her emotional involvement in the suffering of others. Here, too, the different stages leading to her illumination also have been neatly delineated by the writer. The fact that she doggedly keeps to the righteous path marks her as the Chosen One, thus enabling the writer to maintain the structural discipline of the four stories.

The last section in which White presents the life of Alf Jubbo is short, sharp, and involved. Alf also undergoes his portion of suffering and humiliation, gaining in experience and revealing his innocence until at the end he attains his knowledge of the chariot. His unrelieved loneliness distinguishes him from the rest of the Illuminati. He is lonelier even than Miss Marie who has at least the world of nature for her comfort. But Alf is possessed by some vague fancy about angels and chariots which almost chokes him, as he tries vainly to articulate it. He is more a passive spectator than an active participant in the spectacle of life, notwithstanding his link with A. Waldron and the string of whores. For him, life goes by, he does not live it. The author's deeply sensitive rendering of the painful fancies and experiences, both mental and physical, of the lonely aboriginal, is indeed touching. Alf, too, has a penchant for the good in spite of his dreary background. This conforms to the structural discipline of the work.
In *Riders in the Chariot* the action is opened with a conversation between one Mrs. Colquhoun and the postmistress of Sarsaparilla, Mrs. Ogden, about Ruth. Acting as an inciting force, it leads to an unfolding of the lives of the four unusual personalities. The histories form the exposition. The narrative hook is assuredly the 'mock crucifixion' while the section dealing with Himmelfarb's death is the precipit" and also the climax of the work.

Juxtapositions within the parallel stories form an engaging narrative design in the work. The contrast of a range of modes can be seen with each of the visionaries, and the theatrical types with whom they are compared. For instance, in the case of Mary, one finds her very well juxtaposed against Mrs. Hare, Mr. Hare, cousin Eustace, and finally, Mrs. Jolley. All these characters give relief to the figure of Mary by contrast in varying degrees. Himmelfarb is juxtaposed against his father and the German race that he does, and, lastly, against Mr. Rosetree. Ruth glows in contrast to insipid characters like her father, the pretentious Mr. and Mrs. Chalmer-Robinson, and, finally, her sinful husband. Dubbo is projected against the helpless Mr. Calderon, the superfluous Mrs. Hask, and the list of mindless prostitutes. As the Illuminati glow and grow in life-like stature, the contrasting props often evoke comic relief by their pretension, their errors, their jaded lives and parodic existence, while
has successfully given the fullest scope to his four illuminato to gain an elevated dimension with the help of juxtaposition of characters and situations in his narrative pattern.

Running unobtrusively beneath the four parts of the novel, there is an interweaving link which surfaces at different points in the narration. This is seen as it heightens the contrast between the paradisal potentialities of Ranaudo and the entry of positive evil in the form of Mrs. Jolley and Mrs. Flack. This kind of cross-reference is again seen when the story of Himmelfarb is interrupted after the death of his wife, Reha. Here, white has deftly woven the story of Mary Hare with that of the Jew. At this moment she is seen to disclose to him her preoccupation with the Chariot ('you knew about the Chariot then, and could not resist' (153)). This, in effect, suggests that Reha is imperceptibly replaced by Mary, who from that moment, becomes Himmelfarb's companion of the mind. The other occasions of this kind of interlinking are seen at sarsaparilla when the four histories converge. The nature of the convergence deserves to be analysed in full.

The actions that take place at sarsaparilla unite the four parts of the novel. The writer has skilfully contrived to bring the four main characters together in the first part of the novel itself, namely that dealing with Mary Hare. These four characters are like four pillars upon which the frame of the novel rests. sarsaparilla thus emerges as a
unifying starting point in the narrative, providing a kind of unity of place to the action of the novel.

Sarsaparilla gains ground again in the eighth chapter where the histories recede to the background and the linking anecdotes are seen to draw a pattern around the factory of Mr. Harry Rossiter. This chapter is important in the structure of the narrative as it starts the noted conspiracy of evil represented by "Mrs. Dolley, Mrs. Lack, and Plue against the good represented by the chosen four. This reaches its culmination, at the end of the novel, in the direct confrontation between the two forces i.e., in the act of the mock crucifixion.

Critics have often seen this crucifixion as the culminating point in the diversely structured and multi-faceted novel. It is not to be overlooked, however, that this act is important in that it is merely an externalization of the clash between good and evil that exists and vies for supremacy against each other constantly at Sarsaparilla. This mock-heroic scene can at best be accepted as a symbol. And if at all this episode is acknowledged as a climax, it must be supplemented by another, viz., the death scene of Himmelfarb. For, if the evil is epitomized by the act of the crucifixion then the good in the novel reaches its height in the death scene. Here the four Illuminati are seen to come together with a feeling of common good. More importantly, it is in this scene that all the characters reach the final
stage of illumination in their lives. Mary, Mrs. Jolley, and
Himmelfarb are seen to glow with their inner illumination.
The last of the four, Dubbo, who has been fumbling for this vision
and is hesitant all the while to face it (perhaps because of
the vast difference of the reality around him and his imagina-
tion) is also convinced, at the end, of his inner perception
of the ultimate truth of the chariot. His vision and his
creative energy now concentrated, he begins to paint his
terrible picture of the 'Chariot' and the 'Four Living Creae-
tures'. In fact, in the creation of the painting, one can
discover the fullest expression of the painterly instinct
end imagination of Dubbo. His apprehension of the chariot,
his feelings, his emotions, and his imagination are all born
to overflow finally at the death scene. Every line and the
picture have become incomparable. This, therefore, is the
climax of the mystery of things in the chariot. First captured
in a painting of the two Marys and the dying Christ, and finally
resolved in that of the 'Chariot' and the 'Four Living Creatures'.
Thus, the crucifixion and the death scene together form the
climax towards which the different parts of the novel move.

Despite their profusion, the details in the narrative
are dealt with precision and skill. The life of each of the
characters is carefully realized. Also, the relationships of
Mrs. Jolley and Mrs. Flack, and that of Mrs. Flack and Blue are
shown in detail. Even the suicide of Mr. Dostrean has been
worked out with deep insight through his different meetings.
with Himmelfarb. The points of detail are sharp and clear and are made to combine characters and situations appropriately within the overall context of the narrative.

The last chapter showing Mrs. Godbold on a walk to Xanadu is important for conforming to the 'coda' of continuity that characterizes White's novels. All the others of the Illuminati die but Mrs. Godbold, the humblest and the purest, remains to usher in a new era of loving kindness around the new place that rises up on the ruins of the old. This may be said to be similar to the ending of Shakespeare's tragedies where an important character is made to survive and serve as a link between what is just over and what is about to come — surviving, as it were, as agents of continuity in the eternal human flux of life and death.

The complex pattern of the narrative has led some critics to view it as a 'jigsaw puzzle, and a sacred mosaic.' But neither of these two opinions seems to be justified. It would be more appropriate to call it an artistic collage featuring different histories of different people, brought together to form a pattern for a single story, with a single theme, and on a single plane. Minor lapses of detail or emphasis become obliterated in the skillful handling of the whole of this intricate collage. One cannot but agree with Brian Kiernan as he prophesies that Riders in the Chariot, 'will emerge, finally, as the most impressive, coherent and inspiring expression of White's unique qualities as a novelist.'
The *Eye of the Storm* is built up round the figure of Elizabeth Hunter, a bed-ridden octogenarian. Circumscribing this focal character, is a number of other characters whose actions are all related to this rich lady at her deathbed. Among them are her three nurses, the solicitor, the housekeeper, her two elderly children and the others who all seem to recondition the pattern of their lives in relation to that of Mrs. Hunter. The narrative also enters into the inner lives of all these characters. Further, it handles with perceptive skill the subtle psychological and mythical dimensions which form a part of the totality of the woman's character. The straight narrative structure of some of White's novels like *The Tree of Man* or *Voss* is not here. Thanks to the complexity of the issues involved and the multi-dimensionality of their nature, the approach to them is also complex, but clear, and free from haziness. Critics have held diverse views about this work. Ingmar Bjorkstan has seen all of White's novels including the present one as 'Chinese boxes' or 'mazes' which are not 'clear nor simple to get through'\(^{24}\), at the first glance. However, a deeper reading removes the maze. This is true of the present novel also. While talking of the complexity of *The Eye of the Storm*, Susan Whaley has drawn our attention to the many other literary forms constituting what she considers as its 'amorphous mass'.\(^{25}\) For, in the same novel, as in the earlier ones, she has discovered an assortment of 'dramatic', 'poetic', 'musical', and 'artistic' allusions. What is worth mentioning is that although these
assorted elements do figure in the novel, the superior intuitive artifice of White raises it much above an 'amorphous mass'. To see how the narrative gains in wholeness through these different parts is to gain useful insight into White's artistry.

In consonance with the significance of the title, there is a clear concentricity of design in the narrative. The beginning is seen as a climax towards which the action develops till the end. As Mrs. Hunter lies in her bed, she is impatient for the morning: 'Oh dear, will it never be morning?' (9). This longing for the morning or light can be taken to imply the longing for illumination which she attains at the moment of her death. The continuous circle is the basis of the structural planning, and the story is seen to take shape within it. The central figure in it is, of course, Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter in her room at Moreton Drive in Sydney.

The narrative structure of *The Eye in the Storm* has been viewed variously by its critics. Peter Bateaston has seen it as a design in which there are, '... wheels within wheels, Elizabeth Hunter being in the centre of a public mandala in the present and a private mandala in memory,' 26 William Walsh has viewed it as an organic growth, from a 'call of centre' having 'an organic biographical line of movement rather than a plot.' 27 All these readings present to the reader useful insight into the work's narrative design. Of all these opinions that of Bateaston appears to us to be most sound.
Indeed, the novel has two movements. Also, the analogy of the solar system satisfactorily explains the all-encompassing nature of the multifarious moves and designs of the work. Mrs. Hunter is a planet, rotating on her own axis and also controlling the movements of the satellites around her. Each movement is independent and yet related to each other by a definite discipline ingrained. It is all the more interesting to note that Mrs. Hunter, too, has to conform to a hidden energy, much like the sun, which finally illuminates her and lends meaning to her life and death. In this, no laxity of design appears, even when Mrs. Hunter is shown to recede into her own private thoughts. We are not the least surprised when Basil, Dorothy, or the nurse have so much else to do when they are supposedly present to attend to the ailing lady. Each character circumscribes his or her own orbit, each different from the others, but each movement is concentric to the mother figure. This structure also provides free scope for minor characters like Col. Bandoe and Snow Tunk who may come intermittently into the horizon without really changing anything of the original system. It is not Mrs. Hunter alone who may attain benediction from the unseen power. There is the possibility that all the other characters also may learn to attain that state of 'Grace'. The central as well as the minor characters are actually all under the aegis of the omnipotent brilliance of the hidden power. This lends credence to this particular planetary structure in relation to the theme of the novel.
White depends on the two major movements in the novel to discover the life of Mrs. Hunter. The first enables the author to recast the past life of Mrs. Hunter through her dreams and memories. Her husband abandoned, flinty youth, and unfaithful marriage are brought into focus here. In the second, white is seen highlighting the present condition of the octogenarian lady, threatened by the viciousness and greed of her elderly children. Here white deals largely with the exploration of the mind and actions of the old lady’s son and daughter. However, in this part of the novel, too, the author depends largely on the personality of Mrs. Hunter who silently rules the lives of so many although she is seemingly inactive. Thus, in the two major movements in the novel, Elizabeth Hunter is seen to feature with equal importance, and it is through these that the story of *The Eye of the Storm* is presented. The inciting force of the novel is in the preparation of Mrs. Hunter for her children’s arrival. The intermittent dreams, soliloquies and fantasies in which the aged woman indulges, build up the exposition. The narrative hook is in the children’s devious plan to move their mother to Thoroughgood Village. The peripety to in their journey for a brief while at the countryside with the Macorys reveals to them the meanness lurking in their vulturing ambitions. The climax is in Elizabeth’s second spiritual communion with the swans as she dies most unglamourously (in the eyes of the world) on the commode.
Within the macroscopic design of the novel are units of microscopic patterns which have much significance in its structure. Of these, one is seen in the planning and the execution of the chapters. This point has been studied in detail by David Kelly. According to him, "White uses chapters to light up thematic relations between incidents which might otherwise seem unrelated."

We often find unconnected incidents grouped together in a single chapter, mostly in Chapter One. Here the meaning of the theme is discovered not in the consecutive grouping of the incidents but in the pattern which such incidents project. For instance, the first chapter, which introduces the story and sets the burden of disclosing one by one the main characters, novel in a certain concentric pattern. It is to be noted that this chapter is structured on a single basic issue, i.e., 'betrayal'.

The feeling of 'betrayal', as revealed in several situations, is an important aspect of the theme. To start with Mrs. Hunter is impatiently waiting for the arrival of her children. But the very fact that they come only to grab her property is a kind of a betrayal. After the author presents Elizabeth Hunter with her night nurse, Mary de Santis, he makes her retreat to her past. In her reverie we find her guilty soul pondering over her many betrayals in life. In the first place we find her talking about the dolls which she dealt with in a cruel faithless manner in her childhood (12). The line of recollection moves into her youth when she
betrays the deep love of her husband by her illicit affairs. Even in her relationship with her own children, she is not free from guilt, for she betrays them by neglecting her duties towards them. Moving to the present, with Mrs. Hunter waiting for Dorothy, the issue of 'betrayal' is even further emphasised. The latter herself is a victim of betrayal as her expectations of home coming are turned into a mockery by the customs officers (47). Next, Mrs. Hunter's nagging fear of her daughter's intentions is betrayed as she loses control over herself and wets her bed, on Dorothy's arrival. The story of the lovebird(58) that Mrs. Hunter tells her visiting daughter ends in a note of betrayal. This projects the inner fear of Mrs. Hunter about a betrayal of her children and their vicious plan for getting rid of her. At the end, when Dorothy weeps over the plight of the sacrificial platypus, white ably shows how the so-called protected may be betrayed. This doubly emphasises the fear that threatens the rich lady at her deathbed. Thus, these various incidents, placed in close proximity to each other, help the reader arrive easily at the implied meaning in the work.

Parallel incidents also have their place in the framework of the novel. They help accentuate the theme of the text and give the story a closer organic unity and a deeper meaning. The most evident one of the parallel structures can be seen in the interactions of the employees of Mrs. Hunter with her son, Jasil. Here, each of them wishes
to give vent to his or her inner frustrations by a secret relationship with him. The housekeeper, Mrs. Lippmann, and the nurses, Sister Badgery, Sister de Santis, and Sister Manhood all join in this depravation in different ways and in different degrees. But their parallel significance cannot be overlooked. These parallel incidents successfully draw out the unreal or hollow life of Sir Basil. They also, very delicately, explore the workings of the inner thoughts of the women behind the starched aprons and masks of kindness and professional efficiency.

The paradoxical structure has been put to much imaginative advantage in presenting the two opposites that inhere a character. This is shown in White's presentation of the complexity of the character of Elizabeth Hunter, and her nurses. To cite an example, in Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter we are presented with an extravagant, wily, frivolous and cruel woman. Her riches and her selfishness have rather alienated her from the people around her. Otherwise she is very much like any other ordinary human being. In fact, the evil in her makes her appear more human, compared to the good but flat protagonists of the former novels. It is perhaps this feature that makes White come nearest to his vision, in his work, The Eye of the Storm. The concept and the picture of the reality of Sydney and also that of life in general are nowhere better portrayed. Mrs. Hunter making her arrogant demands presents a picture of any other spoilt octogenarian
lady in one of her worst moods, but it is she alone who can 'endure' the storm in the Brumby Islands. This gives a multidimensional quality to her character and elevates the whole concept of this woman. The flashbacks, the dreams, the intervening narrations and anecdotes are used to bring about a rounded character of Mrs. Hunter. It is through these elements that White slowly breaks through the crude external reality and steps into the overwhelming spiritual realms in her. So we have the brief but forceful scene of Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter entering into the mystical experience of the eye of the storm. In that moment of supreme peace and abandon, the distinction between man and nature is wiped out. She offers soaked bread to the birds. Their reaction to her is unique: 'When they had floated within reach, the wild swans outstretched their necks. Expressing neither contempt nor fear, they snapped up the bread from her hands, recognizing her perhaps ... [as] an equal' (410) Thus, this ordinary woman with her endurance attains enlightenment. It is this idea that White seems to have been toying with all along but has not been able to express as well as he does in *The Eye of the Storm*.

In discussing the structure of the novel the element of the polarities demands consideration. In White's novels, the locale of the story is structured on two places, namely, the towns and the bushlands of *Australia*. This gains maximum importance, specially, in *Voss*. But starting from *The Aunt's Story* and *The Tree of Man* to *Riders in the Chariot*, the
polarity in the locale of the dramatic action is not to be overlooked. In *The Eye of the Storm*, too, the contrasting presentation of Kudjeri and Sydney, Brumby Island and Sydney, is significant. It is in Kudjeri that Elizabeth realizes the true essence of love by nursing her ailing husband. It is, again, in the wilds of Brumby Island that she attains the benign state of togetherness with nature as she enters the eye of the storm. The town symbolizes stagnation of the soul. Thus the polarity in the structure of the novel's setting has important thematic relevance.

The main emphasis in *The Eye of the Storm* being on the inner working of the mind of the characters, the formal pattern of the work needs to be examined with care. Often an incident, apparently inconsequential in the organic growth of the story, may be found on deeper probing, to be of much significance in discovering the realms of a character's mind. Two such episodes are seen in the context of Flora Manhood. Her outing with Col Pardoe, or the very character of Pardoe itself, have little to do with the organization of the novel. But the incidents are important for they reveal Flora's indecision. Again, Snow Tunk and the orgy at her place can no way help the progress of the story towards the climax, but they assist in discovering the goodness of this young nurse under the hard facade of her exterior. Thus even the minor appendage is a necessary one.

One important point to note in the narrative pattern of this psychological novel is its apparently static format.
Nothing much really happens. Besides, the main protagonist is continually seen in bed, suggesting apparently a static in the growth of the story. But the range of psychological and philosophical wanderings of the mind that Mrs. Hunter is subjected to, more than compensates for her incapacitated position. The story develops not so much in the external actions but in the steady growth of the meanderings of the mind. It is actually only a means to explore the minds of the different characters. After every thought is analysed, every wish laid bare, and every dream externalized, White brings the story to the inevitable climax, the final exit of the dying Elizabeth Hunter, and the story thus comes its full circle.

The clear outline of the concentrated form of the work, however, may seem to be blurred at times by a profusion of incidents and situations. The most significant incident in the novel, when Elizabeth Hunter experiences the 'eye of the storm' at the Brumby Island, but its importance seems to be lessened by other scenes described with equal feeling and intensity. For instance, the death scene of Bill Hunter when Betty realizes how depraved she is and how that 'For a moment or two she dipped her toe in hell' (199), is no less gripping. Similarly, in the ritual of Mary de Santis, with the sleeping dawn in the garden, is portrayed a moment of deep feeling: 'A dew was falling, settling on her skin; vertical leaves were running moisture; trumpets of the evening before had
furled into crinkled phallicus; grass was wearing a bloom
it loses on becoming lawn. Encouraged by the rites of inno-
cent sensuality in which she was invited to take part, she
ore a leaf, sucked it, finally bit it to reach the
juicy acerbity inside" (202). In extracts of the nature
mentioned above, there is a suggestion of some revelation,
an intense struggle for becoming. Although it is clearly
shown that 'Grace' is bestowed upon Elizabeth alone in the
Drumby Islands, we cannot ignore these other incidents of
almost equal intensity and consequence. This tends to
diminish the concentrated importance of the main incident.
It is perhaps because of such lapses that Dorothy Green has
remarked that 'the meaning it [the novel] conveys is distor-
ted or obscured by undue emphasis on some of its parts.'
Without rejecting her opinion, it must be said that this
lapse ought to be overlooked in a writer who is known for
his unbounded creative potentiality and dynamic productive
energy. So, the impression with which the reader closes the
book is that of an idea of a narrative form which is equal
to if not better than the ones discussed.

White's conscious art is obvious in the planning of
the narrative pattern. A three-part structural design is
clearly seen in his major novel. In *The Aunt's Story*, the
design is plain in the three distinct parts of the novel. In
*The Tree of Man*, too, this triptych movement lurks behind the
four broad seasonal divisions of the novel. For instance, in
the initial confidence of 'tan, in his vulnerability before the raging storm, and in his final belief and illumination in the 'gob of s'ttles' the reader traces the echoes of the three stages of The Aun't's Story. Of course, one must own that this pattern is subdued before the more forceful movement of the seasonal cycle. In Voss, again, the threefold design comes to the fore and may be seen in Voss' former complacency, the journey through the desert, and lastly, his return to God by acknowledging defeat before God. The binary structure that runs through the work adds novelty to the pattern. Riders in the Chariot, in the words of Beatson, is 'a vast triptych'. The left side is prominent with Mary Hesse's Xanadu, the centre composed of the Infernal Pit lit by the fire from the gas chambers, Alf's Fiery Furnace and Himmel-farb's burning house. To the right is seen the chariot of redemption. Apart from this pattern, the salient design of the work represents an artistic collage where the lives of the four Illuminati are brought into bring light to the meaning and worth of life. The Eye of the Storm is best seen in the pattern of a solar system, where Elizabeth Hunter is in the illuminated centre. The three stages found in the former novels may also be traced here experienced separately by Mr. Hunter and her dependents in their respective spheres.
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