CHAPTER III

The Narrative Technique:
The Narrative Voice and Points of View

The process of elliptical, dramatic and descriptive presentation of Theodore Goodman's moral and psychological growth is depicted in The Aunt's Story. Besides, the narrative has an overall inward lyrical overtone. All this has been expounded with the use of interior monologues, multiple and shifting narrations, description of actions, presentation of the extreme fluidity of the flow of feelings of one character to another, and long and difficult passages of introspection.

The tone of the omniscient narration which makes up the major part of the narrative is informal, relaxed, probing and realistic. Of the easy and unforced tone of the narrative, the opening sentence itself offers an instance: 'But old Mrs. Goodman did die at last' (11). The tone here indicates a kind of a rapport already existing between the author and the reader. It is on this opening line that the artifice of the story is steadily built up.

The element of ease and familiarity is further strengthened by the use of 'connectives' as 'sentence - starters' in a third person omniscient narration. This helps obviate a formal stiffness in the narrator's tone. Much of the descriptive narrative starts with 'But', 'which',
'Because' and so on. An instance in point is the following passage where Theo ponders over death: 'But Theodora, talking of reason, drew in her mouth for her own oracular glibness' (19). The seriousness of the utterance is subdued with the use of 'but' here. This manner is repeated in the criticism of Gertie Stepper's notion about reading books: 'Better a girl than a man', said Gertie Stepper. No one never lived off gingerbread, which of course was silly, Gertie Stepper could talk rubbish... (underlined for focus). Here the omniscient narrator's heavy-handedness is lightened immediately with the use of the utterance, 'which of course was silly'. This must not be mistaken as an aside of the author before the reader, while shows young Theo giving vent to her thoughts. The entire burden of the narration hinges on the process of representing the inner mind of Theo. The author's use of what is technically known as the 'objective' technique, helps him to fuse his viewpoint with that of his characters who serve as multiple reflectors, very often the story is narrated in the third person. But the author completely subordinates his point-of-view to that of his characters. This is seen in the case of Jane Austen who often lets Emma shoulder the responsibility of the narrative stance. In the aunt's story the author is seen to seek coverage behind the mind of Theodora, so that when he describes the winter skies at Neroë, the description rings with the sensibility and perception which is Theo's alone: 'How white the skies were at Neroë, wintertime. For years she remembered the winter
skies, the pale watered silk, and sound coming from a long way, a calf, or horse's feet. A horse's feet, in winter, came up the road and over the bridge as steady as drums. The hesitation, the quiet, sober narration, and the description of the sound of horses' feet (which she had long anticipated) are clearly Theodora's, the author effacing himself behind the life-like personality of his creation.

The suffering and mystery that pattern the consciousness of Theodora is sensitively presented through the innovative uses of interior monologues with the third person narrator. This the writer has contrived with the use of free - indirect discourse, free - direct discourse, and the second person use of 'you' in a mixed narration. This is seen in the following passage where 'Mr. Goodman tries to dominate Theodora: 'No, no, Theodora,' crackled 'other ...' Hear, give it to me. As if it were a thing. But rather sit down ...' (25) (underlined for focus). Here is an instance where the use of free indirect discourse (FID) is discovered. In an unit of a kind of a mixed narration of what Percy Lubbock calls 'the pictorial and the dramatic', we have the utterance, 'As if it were a thing.' This is plainly not the act or narrating. It is nothing but Theodora's consciousness commenting on 'Mother's actions' and may be seen as what George Henry Lease calls 'dramatic ventriloquism.' In an expression of this kind the terseness of Hemingway's narration may not be gained; nevertheless, it effects a concision by substituting direct discourse, thereby not being strictly subordinate
to a verb of 'saying', 'telling' etc. Thus the use of I helps efface the authorial hand while providing an outlet to the protagonists' innermost thoughts, no matter how chaotic they are.

The use of free direct discourse (FDD) in an indirect narration has proved to be an effective means of expressing a disturbed and fragmented mind. Such an instance is seen when Theo walks down to the creek one day and lets herself be touched by the water there. Although we have heard presenting to us a sensitive pictorial narration, he uses a quick device to transfer the burden of the point of view of the splintered consciousness of the suffering Theodore. Part of the passage reads thus: '... she could lie in the water, and soon her thin brown body was the shallow brown water ... if earl drewne took off her clothes, Theo said, and lay in the water, the hillie would move, she is as fine as a big white rose, and I am a stick' (43) (underlined for focus). Here is an example of free direct discourse where the punctuation separating the direct narration and the indirect one is inconsequential. This use is widely popular in modern fiction as it is found to be appropriate for presenting an acutely troubled mind, keeping the author at a low profile even in an omniscient narrative passage. Thus a free and fluid passage between external and internal realities is established.
Another device to project the modern mind is the interposition of the second person 'you' in a third person omniscient discourse. This is a unique way of inserting the protagonist's deepest thoughts. Leonie Kramer has called this novel the 'most schematic, semi-automatic, explicit' in nature. Here, what really gives the reader's eye to the very intimate exchange between the conscious mind of the protagonist and its unconscious or sub-conscious reactions. This gives a direct clue to the intense thoughts that dwell in the innermost mind of the characters, with which the reader may often very easily identify and sympathize with. To cite one of the many examples, we have the second person use of 'you' in a third person description of Theo's life at Miss Spofforth's school: 'Life very soon became a ringing of bells, unlike the silent drowsing days at Heroë ... because nothing ever happened at Heroë, you could watch the passage of time, devote a whole morning to a falling rose '(51). At the start of the description, the author is the narrator, but soon we find the narrative voice changing and the protagonist entering into an intimate dialogue with the mind, - 'you could watch the passage of time!' This kind of narration may be contrasted with the self-conscious narrator - protagonists in writers like Virginia Woolf (e.g. Jacob's Room) where the narration is both stiff and formal in comparison with White's totally realistic and penetrating narration. White makes use of another narrative technique by which one and the same narrative piece is made to present simultaneously two points of view,
thereby helping to reveal the unuttered tensions of a character. The following passage is an instance in point: 'Not that mother ever had very much on her hands, not that you would notice.... To Mrs. Goodman everthing had a form, like bronze or marble (56). In this passage, Mrs. Julia Goodman is referred to once as 'mother' (where Theo is the narrator) and then as Mrs. Goodman (where the author is the narrator). White's use of a narration of this kind can only mean that time and again Theo's sub-conscious voice is allowed an outlet where we hear her innermost thoughts laid bare. In this way he tries to distance the authorial comment on the one hand and intensify the point of view of the narrator in the narrative on the other. The brevity of the instance gives her inner urges a quiet tone.

Some other minor techniques of the narrative style like the cinematic devices of flashback, fantasy, and montage have beneath them the all-pervading tone of the more frequent stream of stream-of-consciousness technique. This is perfectly in opposition with the author's business of revealing in full the complex pattern of Theo's mind. The story begins with Theo's reminiscences of Haroë, at the request of her niece, Lou. The first section of the novel is a narration in flashback. Here, White shows much dexterity in the planning of the narration where the narrator is often the grown-up Theo who guides the sensibility and perception of the third person omniscient narrator. This can be seen in the description of Haroë: 'It was flat as a biscuit or a cracker or a child's
construction of blocks, and it had a kind of flat biscuit colour that stared surprised out of the landscape down at the road (21). This is to be considered not so much as the author's narration as the projection of the working of Theo's mind at the given moment.

Further, it is of interest to note that in this way, although the adult Theo is often the narrator, the focalizers here are at first the child Theo, then the teenage girl, and lastly the mature aunt. This is shown in the different types of sensibilities that are projected in the different parts of the first chapter. At the beginning Theo, as a child, is depicted amidst the 'sunlight' and the numerous objects like the 'cloth of lino', the natural world of the 'big pink and yellow cows cooling their heels in creek mud', 'snowplow' cracked egg', and the 'disappearing snake'. This is a world of nature, of objects which a child knows and remembers most. In this way White successfully focalizes the wonderin, child's mind in the flashback about Heroë. In the same manner the focusing of the teen-aged and the grown-up Theodora has been done with equal success. This young girl, too, has no tic urges like any other girl of her age. But there is a difference, for while her friend wrote poems about 'love', Theodora would write a poem about 'rocks... of fire... river... fire' (56). Thus the narrator slowly prepares the reader for the violence that is to surface in the mature woman in the shooting scenes. Thus, through flashbacks and...
stylized mixed narration, the writer presents to the reader a succinct portrayal of the developments of Theo.

The 'Jardin exotique' is a section which develops most through dialogues. Here the use of several narrators is successfully put to use in working the dilemma of decadent Eutopia as well as that of the dissected mind of Theo. Often the reader finds everything spontaneous, quick and fantastic. This is perhaps in keeping with the dream-like world of fantasy created here. The characters speak not to each other, but at each other at times, very much in the manner of Beckett's characters. This can be seen in the following passage where the past and the present of Lyosha are placed on one single plane, and the general and Theo talk 'at' each other: "And yet you say that all is beautiful, Ludmilla... Poor Lyosha... Vergie... I suppose there was always the Victoria and Albert. 'I had mislaid my galoshes,' he said..."(133). This is an instance where both the characters talk, but each to her own self. This form is found convenient for revealing the tormented mind of modern man.

In the 'Jardin exotique' the cinematic device of the 'montage' has been put to advantage. For instance, when Lyosha Vergie starts talking to Theodora, there is often a transference of space or time. Often, one is seen to be at two different places at the same time. This is the use of space montage. For an example, there is the passage where Lyosha, who is talking to the two counterparts of Theodora (Ludmilla
and Jarvora), resumes a conversation with his aunt, Anna Stepanovna in 'Jaraay, Rossa'. Here, the past and the present coalesce giving a wide scope to the multiple narrators through conversations to reveal the fragmented mental condition of Theodora.

The primary object of the author is to project a credible world in his fiction. This is what White does with full confidence in The untold story. In his use of the third person narrative voice is found a sense of the objective world, while describing a highly emotional state of mind the author quickly turns from the abstraction of feelings to the concreteness of things. This can be seen when, for example, White shows Theo realizing the fact that the mystery which is in her is soon to be reflected in Lou. Here, White does not waste time in any explanations but shows her playing with the significant brass ball: 'Her hands protected not only the Indian ball, but many secret moments of reflected fire' (16). This way the evanescent quality which both share is objectified. As William Walsh pertinently observed: 'The novelist gives the impression of having ... an almost molecular sense of what is going on within us,' Thus the author uses significant examples from the objective world to disclose the subjective feeling of the character with perfect ease.

White is also seen to have had recourse to a description of simple, ordinary actions which betray a mental conflict. For instance, at the death of Mrs. Goodman, we have Theodora
going through the same confusion resulting from a sense of freedom and anguish at the same time, White tries to project her mental stress thus: 'Theodora went into the room where the coffin lay. She moved one hairbrush, three inches to the left, smoothed the anti-impassion on a little onrare prystelau ....'(11). The more detailed the description the greater the degree of anguish presented. This is what may be called 'nobody's point-of-view.'

Conversations make up much of the narration in *The Aunt's Story*. These are used to reveal characters and light up many hidden aspects of the story. For an example, in the lusty quarrel of Theodora's nephews, as they come to mourn the death of their grandmother, is projected their natural energy: 'George got a under in his eye', said young Frank. 'Shut up, Frank', said George, and blushed. 'You did! You did! ....(15). This casual rough and tumble of the children's innocent conversation highlights the affectation of their mother, Fanny, by contrast. For Fanny's attempts at speech reeks with artificiality and reads thus: "'It is not the sort of occasion', Fanny said, blowing her nose. 'But I took the opportunity. The boys must have overcoats. They grow so ..." But, '(14). White's use of conversations for an oblique purpose deserves attention. This is seen at its best in the 'Garden Exotique' where the conversations have an interesting pattern. They are used not so much for exchange of ideas as for the divulgence of the suppressed feelings before Theodora who is there merely to sympathize,
comfort, and accept, playing, as it were, the role of a spiritual adviser, we find her equally involved and familiar with each member of the Hotel du Midi. Theo's relationship with General Alyosha Sergie reads thus:

"But she knew, and smiled, because the world was a little crystal ball... 'But you believe in God', said Alyosha Sergei. 'I believe in this table', she said. 'A vulgar yellow thing that we have because we have nothing else.' 'But convincing', she said" (159).

This technique has enabled White to bring in a skilful use of different points of view. He has introduced a narrative voice which is easy and relaxed, while dealing with a subject that is tense and complex. In the close integration thus achieved lies the root of White's success in this novel.

In *The Tree of Man*, 'The simplicity of true grandeur' (9), is the significant tone in the narrative voice. Here, White has made his simple Australian protagonist, Stan, the centre of universal concern. For, in trying to narrate the story of this man, White stops at nothing less than trying to discover the origin of 'man' (9). In a way, he is presenting the life of man from scratch, in all its rusticity and primitivism. So, we have White narrating to us the story of the wandering Stan who stops at random in the Bush to build his home: 'The man made a lean-to with bags and a few saplings. He built a fire... It licked and swallowed...
the loneliness of the bushland are described thus: "Birds looked from twigs, and the eyes of animals were drawn to what was happening." This has the Idenic overtones of the Genesis. The terrible and rapturous feeling that the earth is just inhabited and that humanity begins to be born is clearly conveyed. Thus, the chorus, 'the man' raises a elevate stan to the status of hero. Thus, in 'the simplicity of true grandeur' of the bushlands, 'the man' serves not his place as if in Eden and the biblical tone is established.

The grand universal overtone at the beginning of the novel is carefully maintained by a narration which is distant and formal, sober yet emphatic, very often the novel has the distinctive quality of a history or a chronicle, with the use of lucid and vivid omniscient narration: "As the cart stopped, grazing the hairy side of a tree, the horse, shaggy and stolid as the tree, sighed and took root." Here the formal tone of chronicler narration is not easily missed. Also, the note of finality is loud and clear at the very beginning itself. This is further emphasized by lofty, almost aphoristic, utterances: "So the sharp dog looked." Even in the matter of descriptions the distancing effect (not to be confused with condensation) is never lost. This is evident in the following passage which describes stan: 'The man was a young man. Life had not yet opened on his face. He was good to look at; also, it would seem, good." Distance is achieved with a formal, restrained narration of this kind. Though this hesitant
an elevated position initially, now approaches the truer, closer self in him, so much so that the narrative becomes more flexible and less formal. Thus, in a narrative which again the critic calls the "straight writing," White describes his protagonist's lot.

The third person narration has much to add to the matter of flexibility in the novel which, in its turn, has inserted a more relaxed, informal voice to the narrative. But for the flexibility of the third person omniscient narration, the story of the calm and silent protagonist would not have been discovered wholly. Besides, Amy and Stan are too raw, too innocent, and too secluded to give away much to the reader without the guiding voice of the author at hand. On such occasion is, when Amy discovers the escape of the boy from the flood from their home. Her reactions read thus: "I could not explain that a moment comes when you yourself must provide some tangible evidence of the mystery of life" (97). Here the author is intellectualizing or intelligibly interpreting the situation for the benefit of the reader who is welcome to share the point of view which is of none but the author himself. What Amy feels is her sadness or her frustration, etc. Then White writes, "she could not explain ... mystery of life"; one must realize that the rustic woman, though longing for something more enthusing, cannot yet reach this level of philosophy. It is, therefore, White intruding into the narration and sharing an idea with the reader. Percy ... Otter considers this to be
the reason for the '.... unusual bravura in the way the
author keeps bobbing up in the novel'. 11 But Dorothy Green
calls the third person narrative in the novel a 'terrible
omniscience' by which she means that the role of the reader
is reduced to that of a 'reference librarian, looking up
symbols in the source books'. 12 Both of these are, however,
extreme opinions. The truth lies in between. The type of
narrative voice that White has affected here is latent in
the very situation. So, although we often have White interven­ing
or having a chat-en-tit with the reader, it is not as
a matter of habit but as a well-rewired technique that he
does so, for the manner here is integral to the author's na­tion in mind. As William White has aptly remarked, '[White's]
intention is sunk in the art, the will quite submerge in
the fiction'. 13

The third person narrative as used in this novel
facilitates analysis and explanation. There is a quiet
firmness and painstaking doggedness behind the explanatory
tone in the narrative voice. It is as if the writer took up
the all too impossible task of disclosing the unexpressed
consciousness of his silent protagonist and is bent on pre­
senting him in all his fullness. Consequently, the narrative
voice is slow, and often ponderous. The following passage is
an example showing how White uses a hesitant, and ex­lanatory
narrative to show moments in Stan's life when he is caught
in the conflict between belief and knowledge, and innocence
and experience:
When he was a little boy he had laid on a hard horsehair sofa and been carried through the books of the Old Testament on a wave of exaltation and fear. And now, brought to his knees, about to be hit over the head perhaps, a lightning flash lit his memory, God blew from the clouds, and men would scatter like leaves. It was no longer possible to tell who was on which side. Or is it ever possible to tell? ... Presently the man saw his wife running, her limbs fighting the wind and stuff of her own dress. Seeing her tortured into these shapes he did not know, and the drained, strange face, quite suddenly he felt that this was not the girl he had married in the church of Yuruga, and loved and quarrelled with, but he forced himself to stumble on towards her. To touch ... (47) (underlined for focus).

This is a slow, deliberate kind of a narration involving both the author and the protagonist. Here, a mere hint of a thought that may happen to cross the protagonist's mind is given maximum scope for elaboration. Further, the rhetorical question, 'Or is it ever possible to tell?' is a tiny prod from the author to develop Stan's line of thought further. This may tend to make the narrative rather heavy and almost clumsy, adding to it a slow languid quality. But it does serve the intended purpose of introspective narration and there lies its justification.

In The Tree of Man White has created a narrative style which grows along with the story. For, as we move on with
the development of Amy and Stan's story, we find them mature
in time. This calls for a development in the narrative, too,
and White is prompt to take the cue. The third person narra-
tion now no more merely describes the steady growth of the
story, it now presents the consciousness of the characters.
The following is a passage focusing on the consciousness of
Amy in her late years: 'Thinking back, she could not remember
having shared a secret with a living soul. Her eyes were
welled up inside her like lumps of lead' (185). Here, despite
the third person narration, the authorial presence is all
but ruled out. Amy, in her privacy, is seen to be reflective.
While she assumes the role of the narrator, the focalizers
are her realizations and her thoughts, that the reader may
before his eyes is Amy, brooding about herself. The compar-
sion of 'the soul', to a 'lump of lead' makes the narration
immediate, keeping Amy much in focus. This is a proven
technique in White's narrative art.

Nature plays an important part in *The Tree of Sac-
and it is again the third person descriptive narration that
White depends upon in presenting her in the novel. It has
already been seen that the narration is throughout slow,
elevated, and elaborate. There is not much of picaresque or
flamboyance in it. If there is any kind of breathless excite-
ment, it is to be seen in the power of the land. The descrip-
tion of nature takes on an elevated tone where land, time,
and nature together seem to truth in the rhythm that
continues.
The great trees had broken off, two or three fell. In a grey explosion, it seemed, The trees snapped and splintered. The yellow cloud hung just clear of branches, ascending, and turning, and the woman were flung against each other with the ease and simplicity of tossed wood. They lay and looked at each other, into each other's eyes, as they licked their hands with slow, rough system, as if he had discovered a new taste (48).

This is the description of the first lightning at the bush.

In the third person narration is vibrant with the terrible to be inserted and impatient in expressing the joy, and also the helplessness before the forces of nature.

The third person omniscient narration in the novel has helped the author to obviate any possible tension or artificiality that a long narrative often entails. There is a chameleonic quality in White's omniscient narration in response to the situations presented or described. For instance, he often uses a single word merely to complete his sentence in a passage: 'He brought the siles he had ard for logs, joy...'

(16) (underlined for focus), another practice in the use of very short sentences, almost as rejoinders to the preceding sentences. They are casual and often just stating a situation, and hence helping to rub off the unnaturalness of descriptions. For instance, 'His father did not deny God, on the contrary. He was the blacksmith, and had looked into the fire ...' 11, (underlined for focus), another significant variation of the use of omniscient description is the tendency to elaborate
and add adjectives and essentials to the core sentence
whereby it becomes literal and subsequently, this is another
way of releasing them into the narration and establishing
an easy rapport with the reader. The following is an instance
on point: 'The god of war... the father, the boy saw, was
essentially a fiery god, a guilty god, who appeared between
bolches, accusing with a horrid finger '(11) (underlined for
focus). This gradual elongation of an utterance has a marked
function here. It is seen as a device to accentuate the inno-
cence of the boy (young Stan) who apprehends the meaning of
'God' in degrees. This is a highly effective manner adopted
to project the consciousness of White's characters.

The use of exclamations in the third person narra-
tion helps ease the difference between the author and the
character. To take refuge behind a character's situation is
a sort of subterfuge for the author to keep up with the
narration. The following passage is a case in point: he
had sprung out, without unpleasantness, he was what you
would call a good lad, good to his mother and all that, but
somehow a separate being, oh! he has said .....' (12). This
is Stan's mother brooding over her son. White's usual formal-
tions are missing in this passage, here the narration is
getting through a kind of the consciousness of Stan's
mother. The story begins that an essence is given of the
true lives of the characters and White writes: '..... he
was what you would call a good lad, good to his mother.
all that ....' (12). Again, immediately after this we have: 'Certainly he had seen the sea, and the hurly-burly of it did hollow out of him a cave of wonderment and discontent.' (12). Now, this is white again, slowly, quite imperceptibly, slipping back from behind the consciousness of otherarker to his study table, and we have the beginning of a formal narrative. If perchance we tend insistently to nod acquiescence to the description white weaves out (although there is hardly ever the chance), he has the power to liven us up out of our nodding complacency by some brilliancy of his concentrated poetic narration: 'There was the sound of tin clatter, tea on tin, the dead thump of flour, somewhere water ran. Bird babbled, settling themselves on a roost. The young horse, bright amongst his forelock, and the young and hungry dog was there, watching the man. There was a unity of eyes and firelight' (13) (underlined for focus), nothing could be more stimulating in this kind of a pastoral narration. It is this kind of a power in white that holds us enraptured throughout his narrative details.

As in The aunt's story, the accounts of actions and situations in The tree of man also help reveal the consciousness of the characters. There are moments in the narrative when even the author is at a loss to describe in his own person his characters' feelings and sentiments, if he still persists, he may create emotions which read limp and artificial. It is on such occasions that the author quietly shadows his characters, he notes every tiny movement
and every single action of his protagonist and places them before the reader to interpret the meaning behind. In The Tree of Men, more than in the other works, this 'objective' technique is found to be extremely useful. For, it is in this novel that words seem to be most elusive for the characters to express themselves through. This is used most poetically when Stan wishes to express his deep love for his newly wed wife Amy: "I don't mean to tell her smooth things, that were not his anyway, he took her hand over the remnants of their sorry meal" (29). In this quiet move, Stan expresses much more than just his love, his integrity, his fidelity, the depth of feeling and his rock-like sure ort are all offered to Amy at the same time. Thus we find that as they milk and move about their farm amidst their daily activity, they express themselves quite adequately. It is their actions that bind them and actions again that give them away. So Stan knew right away that it was not him that Amy was awaiting when she stood with her straight hand held above her eyes (14). The description of actions is an effective device to keep the spontaneity of the emotion intact.

Conversational passages constitute a major part of the narration. These dialogues and conversations bear a realistic stamp of the typical situations of the farm. Whereas the descriptive narrative has been seen to be formal and yet discursive, the dialogues on the other hand are brusque and localized with a colloquial undertone. But what strikes us most in the novel is the paucity of conversation between the
protagonist and his wife. They seem to communicate more with touch than with words which make them awkward and distrustful: "'Well', he said, hiding his love, 'and what has happened? Anybody come?' 'Nothing', she said, diffident beneath her hat, and wondering whether she should offer some sign. 'What do you expect', she said, 'a steam engine?" (35). This passage gives us the impression of sympathy and understanding between Stan and Amy. But such incidents occur only in flashes and are very temporary and even then they hover merely on the physical level. Stan is obsessed with an inner perception which he knows he cannot share with Amy in spite of their close association for years. Often he is too engrossed in it to feel free to formulate them in words. Thus, the conversations are merely functional and do not reveal anything deep. It is the letters of Stan that help reveal a portion of his deep sensitivity and are more expressive than his conversations. Thus White is seen to use the epistolary narrative in which, in several letters, Stan lays his heart bare before his wife.

In this work also, White has adopted the stream of consciousness technique with much advantage for focusing the inner life of Stan Parker, particularly in projecting his silence. White has used this technique and allowed the narrative to unfold less in the unconscious than in what remains unspoken. In the incident of the flood, Stan realizes the seriousness of the situation long before his mates. The men go down to the river laughing and talking, but he is
different: '... 

It can now be seen from the foregoing paragraphs that the narrative voice in *The Tree of Man* emerges loud and clear through the writer's skilful handling of the narrative point of view, which gives a cohesiveness to different uses of the omniscient narration by which White has effectively brought forth the story of Stan and his profound inner tranquillity. The author has lucidly uttered what is in fact unutterable. The result is the majestic account of the deep possibilities that lie hidden in an inexpressive and ordinary Australian rustic and the 'inner unconscious drama of the soul ....' 14

*Voss*, which has for its basis the expedition of a German explorer into the heart of Australia, transcends the literal dimension of the story and delves into the realms of soul-searching metaphysics and psychology. Rightly per-
ceived, the expedition of Voss is a symbol of the explorer's search for his own identity. In this novel, white has expounded a new narrative voice which is at once reticent and super, surprisingly forceful and effective. The manner in which white has achieved this combination deserves to be studied in detail.

The omniscient point of view with the third person narrative voice is much in evidence here. The 'authorial point of view' adopted by the writer is seen in the explanatory tone, the discussions, languorous analyses and comments that make up the bulk of the omniscient narration. The highly potent tendency in white to intellectualize matters may be a result of this. Besides, the author has an uncanny insight into realms of a fourth dimension, which he shares with all of his characters in the later novels. The presentation of this world necessitates a kind of narrative voice which is easily apprehensible even when it is most subtle and complex. Thus, explanations and elaborations are all integral to his total design of reinforcing his deeply felt emotions and his strongly felt convictions. The use of white's explanatory tone is evident, to cite an instance, in the following extract where Voss observes the circular perfection of Judd's relation with the other explorers at Christmas: 'Watching from his distance, Voss remembered the picnic by the sea, at which he had spoken with Laura Trevelyan, and they had made a circle of their own. As he saw it now, perfection is always circular, enclosed, so that Judd's circle was enviable' (195). Here the
The author is explaining in detail a situation which the reader has already comprehended with the utterance, 'they were implicitly circumference of that grassy circle. Judd was the centre . . . .' (193). Similarly, an example which shows the deep psychological probings may be seen in the author's initial description of Laura and the workings of her mind:

Yet, here she was become what she suspected, might be called a rationalist . . . . She had read a great deal out of such books as had come her way in that remote colony, until her mind seemed to be complete . . . . But there was no evidence of intellectual kinship in any of her small circle of acquaintance, certainly not in her family, neither in her uncle, a merchant of great material kindness, and above all a man, . . . . (9).

The narrative tone of a prolonged passage like the above is primarily explanatory. The reader here is inclined to believe that the author is so intensely engrossed with his characters that he cannot leave them until every detail about them is laid bare. Moreover, the conception of his rare characters like Laura and Voss perhaps made him wary of their acceptance. At times, it is seen that the author's narration is an argument which vouchsafes the character's existence to the wondering reader. In addition to the explanations, there are the comments and the asides which are put to such use in this work. As an illustration, we have the author describing Voss' visit to the humble home of Judd: 'Walking on numb legs, Voss went over presently to the smaller hut. He had every intention of examining the woman as if she had been an animal.
he was enough \(145\) (underlined for focus), here the author comes forward to comment and communicate straight with the reader. Aside of this kind make the reader well aware of the author, thus bringing to the fore, the author-narrator point of view.

One can also detect a Dickensian tone in parts of the narration in "Josse. This is apparent in the declamatory, general introductions with which the writer starts his narrative. This tone should, however, not be confused with the distancing effect he created in "The Tree of Man." In "Josse, declamatory narration is brought in, neither in sympathy with, nor exactly in antipathy against, the protagonist, but a strikingly neutral voice is introduced, making the whole narration tend towards satire (or mock-epic). The Dickensian discursive tone is prominent at the very beginning of the novel. For example, in the description of Laura, White begins thus:

Few people of attainments take easily to a plan of self-improvement. Some discover very early their imperfection cannot endure the insult. Others find their intellectual pleasure lies in the theory, not the practice. Only a few stubborn ones will blunder on, painfully, out of the luxuriant world of their pretensions into the desert of mortification and reward. To the third category belonged Laura Trevelyan \(74\).

The elaborate introduction and the comments of this passage easily remind one of a similar manner in Dickens. White is seen to have adopted this practice frequently in presenting
the secondary characters like Rose, Judd, Turner, Angus and the like. In an account of Rose, we find White explaining thus: 'If the more sensitive amongst those she served on addressed failed to look at Rose, it was because her manner seemed to accuse the conscience, or it could have been, more simply, that they were embarrassed by her herlip'(7). While describing Rose, White has fully explained the situation and laced it most effectively with that quiet sarcasm and realism which Dickens never fails to present. The work, however, overrode any attempt at mere social satire. Ingmar Bjorksten has made a relevant remark in this regard: 'In spite of his dislike of superficial materialism of Australia, they were not so much described in relation to society they live in as in relation to each other and to nature.' Indeed, *Voss* transcends the bounds of satire in the relationship of Laura and Voss, and in that of Belle and the cabbage tree. So one reads about the radiant Belle thus, 'As she watched, so it was reflected in the face of the woman, who would return at last through the doorway of her own childhood, convinced that she was refreshed by the vision of the tree'(430). In fact, in *Voss* White approaches William Blake, the visionary and mystic. One finds him dealing with the same issues of the quest journey, of an unity in the fallen world, and also of humility, which form pertinent preoccupations in Blake. The Blakean overtones in *Voss* may be seen in La Mesurier's poem, 'Conclusion' which reads: 'Now that I am nothing, I am, and
love is the simplest of all tongues. Then I am not God, but Man, I am God with a spear in his side....' (237).

This metaphysical issue raised by the author is taken into deeper mythical perspectives by the relationship of Laura and Joss across the desert. While Laura begins to understand it and tries desperately to make Joss realize it, the mythical communion between the two takes place. The beauty of this relationship lies in the mysterious way Joss acquiesces to the struggling soul of Laura and bows to the Almighty, thus attaining salvation and godhead itself. This is the scale on which the narrative of *Joss* works, and it can be easily seen that in spite of having ironic touches, it is replete with more complex issues of the individual than what social satire singles out for its target.

The omniscient third person narration, although projecting much of the author's view, is yet moulded to retain an artistic effect. The qualities of immediacy and spontaneity permeate the texture of the narrative throughout. Moreover, White's manner is not as obvious as the manner of a writer like Thackeray. The artistic distance which a novelist is required to maintain is carefully observed all through. This is seen in the very first chapter of the work. The author-narrator effects a subtle change in the point of view by introducing a second frame of references which work together with the initial one:

'At times his arrogance did resolve itself into simplicity
and sincerity, though it was difficult, especially for strangers, to distinguish these occasions "(23). This may be contrasted with Voss' defiance of his parents when 'he thrust his boot upon the trusting face of the old man his father' (4). 

The two references start one wondering if simplicity and sincerity are just other names for pride and arrogance. The author leaves one alone to make the final judgement and thus saves Voss from being a book on conventional morality.

Similarly, Laura rounds off the novel by saying: 'Voss did not die ... His legend will be written down, eventually, by those who have been troubled by it' (448). One cannot easily miss the phrase, 'by those who have been troubled by it.' The reader is thus free to draw his own conclusion. No attempt is here made either by the author or by the characters to impose upon him any point of view. A point of minor detail like this enriches the work by imparting to it much admirable artistic finesse.

The apparently bleak story of Voss would have had little to hold the reader's interest if it were written by a lesser writer. But, thanks to White's narrative skill, the seemingly contrived relationship of Laura and Voss across the desert sands acquires a quality of rare romance and poetry. This has been achieved by the writer by a singular knack of identifying abstract ideas and thoughts with the use of a world of concrete objects. For instance, when Laura is distraught with desolation at the departure of Voss, White narrates her feelings thus: 'Wind and sea were
tossing the slow snip. dust of that same wind, now fresh, now warm, troubled the garden, and carried the scents of pine and jasmine into the long balcony *(122)*. Here the wind is an externalization of the tumult of Laura's mind. This, in a way, shows White's application in practice of T. S. Eliot's concept of the 'objective co-relative', conversational passages convey much of the narrative voice of the work. They are easy, simple, and natural, notwithstanding the subtle and complex thematic dimensions of the work. Additionally, they help project the characters in a realistic manner. An instance in point is the scene where Laura and Joss explore each other's innermost thoughts in the lean garden of the corners. The passage reads:

'And in my instance, what does your imagination find? .....' 'You are so vast and ugly', Laura was repeating the words. 'I can imagine some desert with rocks, rocks of prejudice, and, yes even hatred .....' 'Do you hate me, perhaps?' asked Joss, in darkness. 'I am fascinated by you', laughed Laura Trevelyan, .....' You are my desert!' 'I am glad I do not need your good opinion', he said. 'No', she said, 'God's opinion!''(96-98).

Here is a highly terse and planned dialogue in which we get not only an idea of the couple's feelings for each other but also an essence of the major part of the theme. For, Joss is indeed Laura's 'desert'. Their conversation has deep thematic overtones. This is made clear in the last sentence when Laura pensively reiterates that Joss needs 'God's opinion'. An instance like this shows White's capacity for finely modu-
lating the conversations for the purpose of affecting the narrative voice.

White has used many variants of the conversational form in Voss. From the gay social repartees (66) to normal everyday conversation (28), from the stringest workable talks (176) to conversations leading to mystical discussions (39), the range is indeed wide. But he has handled every utterance with perfect skill and nowhere is there any jarring effect to be felt. White depends on conversations to reveal certain narrative nuances. For instance, the contrast of characters of the volatile Belle and the deep and grave Laura is presented in a conversation that ensues between the two cousins and the servant Rose, after Voss sets sail in the currey:

"Yes, they have got away", said Laura, in a clear, glad, flat voice .... "Do you think Mr. Falfreyman is nice?" Belle Bonner asked, "From what little I have seen of him, I think exceptionally nice", her cousin replied, "not quiet". "He says whatever has to be said"..... "He is a man of education, I expect", said Belle, "not an ignorant colonial savage. Like us". "Oh, miss!" protested Rose. "But he is kind", Belle continued. "And kind people do not mind". "Oh, Belle do not chatter so!" said Laura. "But is it not true?" "All that you have said. Though beside the point." The three women watched the ship (121).

White has here contrasted the light insensible chatter of Belle with the tense and grave utterance of Laura. This conversation not only gives us the picture of the two contras-
ting personalities but also helps evoke the insurgency that ravages the soul of Laura. Laura witnesses Voss moving towards destruction amidst the cheer of all and is anxious with apprehension. White has conveyed this sense of gripping pain in Laura quite effectively through the above conversation. Any attempt to describe Laura's emotions in the author's own words (third person narration) would have impaired the poignancy of the whole scene.

Certain aspects of the dialogues like the author's explanatory tone in them, the pauses, the silences, and the non-verbal parts of a dialogue deserve close attention. White's sophistication in style shows itself in what he writes to narrate. Hansen, dealing with White's distrust of words, observed thus: 'Words are often related to human reason, which White consistently rejects in favour of intuition.' In the case of Voss it can be seen that although words do not baffle Voss or Laura, yet the narrative forms a pattern of silence, or words not used, as it develops. The strange relation that grows up steadily between Voss and Laura thrives with no words interchanged between them. Again in another instance when Percy faces the fear of estrangement from Laura, the supposed foster mother suddenly decides that she cannot take her. Laura shows no sign of her love for the child and the scene that takes place is presented in the following passage:
Laura could not answer. This is the point, she felt, at which it will be decided, one way or the other, but by some superior power. Her own mind was not equal to it. 'Will you take it, Liz?' Mr. Adbold asked, doubtfully. His wife, who was ruffling up the child's hair as she pondered, seemed to be preparing herself to commit an act of extreme brutality. The child did not flinch. 'Yes', said the woman, peering into the stolid eyes, 'he knows I would not hurt her. I would not hurt anyone'. 'But will you take her?' asked the man, who was anxious to be gone to think as he knew. 'No', said the woman, 'she would not be ours.' Her mouth, in her amiable, country face, had become unexpectedly ugly, for she had committed the brutal act, only it was against herself. 'Oh, no, no!', she said, 'I will not take her'. Getting up, she put the child quickly but considerately in the young lady's lap. 'She would have too many mothers' (313-314).

This sudden realization comes to Mrs. Adbold without any external suggestions or hints. Here it is silence and pause that speak and the lady cannot be deaf to the silent cry of the mother, Laura. In the same way, even Judd's mistake in using words or his confusion when he describes the death scene of Palfreyman as the end of Voss are significant. Here, white shows that once the intuition of Laura is confirmed by Judd, the details in words, are irrelevant. For she believes that her husband is already canonized (444). Thus, lack of words or the deliberate confusion in using words have their due importance in Uriah's narrative art.
The use of shifting narrators is another of White's devices. This is a technique to effect a disruption of the narrative through digression, where a new narrator picks up the thread. In *Voss*, the use of this device of narrative digression can be seen in the conversation between Turner and Hugus, or in Halfreyman's confession of his crime. There are innumerable other occasions of this kind in the novel. The authenticity of the narrative voice is thus heightened. It must be noted that a true concept of White's protagonist arises from the multiple viewpoints which counterbalance and support each other. This is a ploy practised largely by writers like Woolf. So Voss' character becomes larger than life as the reader relies not only on Laura's idea of him, but also on that of the members of the expedition. This 'piling' of perspectives effectively rubs off authorial highhandedness and infuses naturalness into the work.

Through an interlacing of direct and indirect narrative, we have White presenting to us a canvas of rare imagination and poetic beauty. So carefully amalgamated are the two narrative devices that they, by complementing each other, form the best style to project the story of *Voss*. For instance, a dialogue is followed by a third person narrative which is in perfect harmony with the tone of the former. In one of the imaginary moments when Laura accompanies Voss in the desert, we have the mixed narrative, following thus:
They rode along. 'I will think of a way to convince you,' she said, after a time, 'to convince you that it is possible. I can make the sacrifice.' Then he looked at her, and saw that they had cut off her hair, and below the surprising stubble that remained, they had flung the flesh from her face. She was now quite naked, no beautiful. Her eyes were drenching him .... (57).

Here, the compound sentence with the connective 'and' along with the respective short utterances coming up next keep the third person use subdued, while the narrative is focused on the converging couple alone. There are other devices in the use of the third person narrative by which White maintains the 'flow of his narration. This is seen in the author's use of exclamations in the middle of a passage of omniscient narration:

The young woman, who was most conscientious in her needlework, noticed how she had overstitched. 'In, dear (8).

The exclamatory phrase adds to the realistic tone in the narration. Now and then White makes use of the 'direct discourse' (a minor variation of the stream of consciousness technique) which helps an author describe the consciousness of his characters in the most suitable manner in the midst of his third person omniscience. So White describes the conflicting thoughts of Laura while composing a letter to Voss after her experience of a ball and we have him ordering his narration thus:

The young woman, whose stiff eyelids had been rose red and transparent by the unceasingly lucid light of morning, began to score the paper, with quick
slashes, of her stricken, scratching pen, oh God, she said, I do have faith, if it is not all the time.... (33).

All this shows that White is capable of affecting a number of deviations in his third person omniscient narration, thereby making it flexible and convincing at the same time.

White has used in his novel a narrative device which Patricia Horley has called the internal point of view. By this device, the author controls the reader's attitude towards the protagonist. This helps him lay bare the character's nature, resulting in a perfectly rounded characterization. Most unobtrusively, it maneuvered the progress of the narration, controlling every reaction of the reader. So, although we find loss an anti-heroic hero of a man, our attitude towards him changes in different situations. An instance of this is at Shine Towers (138) as also in moments in the thicket of the bushes when momentarily the author lets the explorer's soul come out of the throes of self-inflicted negation.

White has adopted in this work a few other devices that help him present his vision of the explorer in all its shades and fullness. The narrative developing in linear progression would have been insufficient to protect the idea that White has in mind but for the brooding thoughts, the fancies, the imagination, the flashbacks, the dreams, the hallucinations and the mythical visions that he brings into play interweaving them deftly into the framework of the
story. With the very first chapter of the novel, where the protagonist is introduced, we are given an insight into the workings of their inner thoughts. Laura most strangely begins to reminisce about her childhood:

Already she herself was threatening to disintegrate into the voices of the past. The rather thin, gray voice of the mother to which she had never succeeded in attaching a body... sleeping and waking, opening and closing, suns and moons, so it goes. I am your aunt Amy, and this is your home, poor dear, in New South Wales.... (12-13).

Thus the author presents Laura going down memory lane to relive her past which she remembers only partly. This sudden flashback is an important narrative technique in the work. It is pivotal to a number of speculations, and it answers some crucial aspects of the story. Laura's sudden remembrance of the days of her childhood may be seen as her weakness before the German. She is strongly drawn towards this man in whose 'greatcoat' she probably wouldn't mind snuggling into as that of her childhood 'captain's', to stop the void that threatens her at times. Laura might have sensed a meaning, a slender vision of permanence in the frayed ends of the German to make her recapitulate the illusion of the permanence she experienced when brought under the protective wings of her aunt. Thus the flashback shows the feeling of tender helplessness and anticipation that lurks behind Laura's mind as she converses with her guest. Besides revealing the semi-conscious being of Laura, the evocation of the past serves the practical purpose...
of revealing her childhood before the reader. Similarly, there is a reminiscent account about Voss also which shows how he escapes from his family to accomplish the feat of reaching godhead. Voss is also unwittingly and unconsciously drawn towards Laura, although he would be quite astounded by the mere suggestion. It is this feeling that makes him open up and recollect personal moments like those at the time of leaving his people. Finally he knew he must tread with his boot upon the trusting face of the old man. "It's true!" (14). This shows the cavalier treatment which the ex-lover has betrayed in leaving behind his father, who is less pondering over his position to attain this friend. But the purpose and nature are never clearly revealed. Human behaviour is a series of lurches, of which it is sometimes hinted, the direction is inevitable (14). Corp Voss is trying to find an excuse for his chosen path, almost as if he is unconsciously trying to make himself acceptable to Laura in spite of himself. But this is only in the unconscious which the flashbacks project before the reader. After this, flashbacks are not used except for an occasion where Laura recollects her encounter with Jack -lipper in her uncle's gardens, he remembers the incident at the picnic with Voss beside her. Laura is in a most uncertain position. He is repulsed by the physical love of Jack and Rose, the material world of Fr. Bonner and Belle, and wishes to walk along with Voss towards something more elevated.

Dreams, too, have a significant role in working the tension in the narration. As White himself wrote in a letter...
in 1973, "I don't know about influences... but also rely to a great extent on what you refer to as 'dream material'. Dreams disturb the mind of Voss as he enters the threshold of his expedition at the Andersons' place. For a reason unknown to him, the dreams of Laura begin to pervade his very being. Even in his dream Voss rejects her, remaining true to his will power, but in spite of that she comes close, sharing his being and his knowledge, and he finds throughout that Laura is smiling (143) beside him in his trials. After that Voss knows that his fate lies in his acceptance of Laura as his wife and so writes to her about it. When Laura agrees, Voss experiences a new sobering quality in his life where his wife is his silent companion. But Laura begins to exist not merely in his dreams. She is there as his fancy, his hallucination, his imagination, still pervading his total being. For she is not just his mute devotee, but, she is his paramour, his loving wife who is not there to exalt him but to protect and love him. Voss recalls their closeness at Snug's picnic, as he watches Budd celebrate Christmas. At that instant Laura emerges and,

Then he noticed how her greenish flesh was spotted with blood from the same sheep, and that she could laugh at, and understand the jokes shared with others, while he continued to express himself in foreign words, in whichever language he used, his own included. Lauraraithian understood perfectly, all the preliminary of what was next. It would be quite simple, mumble, as she saw it; and they would eat the meat with their hands, all of them, together.
But Voss cannot understand any of that and when Laura thus feasts with Judd and the others, she seems to be reprimanding her 'husband' for not being able to be 'humble'. What follows about the relationship of Laura and Voss is a wonderful expression of romantic and poetic imagination. The souls of the two communicate, and the union is more satisfying than even what Donne might have conceived in his 'marriage of the mind'. Apart from its ethereal benignity, this relationship is significant in the narration, for Laura is Voss's soul, his inward conscience. Every time that Voss is able to accept humility, his pride gets the better of him and then Laura wishes to intervene. However, Voss is still relentless and '... he was despising what he most desired: to peel the whale bone off the lily stem and bruise the mouth of flesh '(213). Thus he does not yet accept Laura as the saviour of his soul although he does allow her to soothe him in his moments of stress. However, Laura's attempt at changing him is equally strong and she comes to Voss everyday he commits an act of self - danial like killing Syp, his pet dog. At this moment Voss is shown to be only being aware of Laura's existence, to merely mention her in passing, for he cannot really look up to her after his brutal act. So Voss simply shrugs off Laura's disapproval thus: 'If Laura did not accept, it was because Laura herself was dog-eyed love '(267). At this point, in spite of the third person narration, it is Voss who projects this view. Thus we find
Laura soothed Voss, loving him, and reprimanding him all the time along his journey, while maintaining this relationship steadily with dreams, illusions, and fancies which haunt Voss throughout his expedition. Laura's sickness is a nicely dramatic development in the narrative, for it shows her frustration at being unable to do more for Voss than to pray, with every missing moment and is aware that he is unchanged and that his end is imminent. This makes her write with fever and helplessness. In the meantime, Voss realizes his folly and turns upon Laura to soothe her for the last time before he dies. And as she does, growing together, and loving, so sore was so scrofulous on his body that she would not touch with her kindliness (383). As Jackie cuts his head off, Laura knows that the inevitable has happened, but before that Voss has finally bowed down. The instant her fever breaks and she begins a normal life again: 'O God', cried the girl, at last, tearing it out. 'It is over, it is over'(395). This is the moment that she has been waiting for and thus both are saved.

The tension of the narrative is well maintained in this section. It is surprising that in spite of the macabre incidents narrated, there is no sign of melodrama. A sense of urgency sustains this part of the narration and raises it to a level of tragedy, notwithstanding its apparently ironic background.

The telepathic relationship of Laura and Voss may be said to be presented by the effect of montage, especially film montage. White does start his plan with a view to projecting this section through the cinematic device, but soon the
entire concept seems to cross the bounds of clear thinking and develops into an emotional and highly complex psychological issue. White uses montage in The Eye of the Storm, too, and we realize that in Voss its use is delicate and very subtle. Although the work has been conceived on the broad basis of an exploration, the poetic beauty of the narration about this intriguing relationship subdues the technical details and presents it as a thing of joy. The epistolary narration in Voss has a vital role to play. The very fact that letters (except for the very first ones) are written only to smother unreadable to the poetic poignancy of the relationship of Laura and Voss, besides, the letters also reveal the mind and help narrate the progression of events. It is by devices like these that the various levels of awareness are reflected and brought home to the reader, the story of the explorer being the mainstay of the entire projection.

In Riders in the Chariot, each of the four tales which constitute it has its distinct narrative voice. As in the case of the narrative structure of the work, here, too, there is a perfect coalescing of the 'voices' at the end, reflecting the thematic unity of the work as a whole.

It is mostly the omniscient third person narration that features in the work. The very concept of the story calls for an editor or a reporter, who is an overall spectator and who has what Percy Lubbock calls the 'seeing eye.' This
facilitates a free movement for the author whereby he is not only supposed to know about everything at the same time, but can also plan the narration in the ideal way. As Waugham puts it,

The author ... concerns himself with one set of persons and series of events, and then, putting them aside for a period, ... concerns himself with another set of events and another set of persons, so reviving a flagging interest, and, by complicating his story, gives an impression of multifariousness, complexity and diversity of life.21

However, the essence of the multifariousness in the novel is never allowed to degenerate into a chaotic or cumbersome narration, thanks to the writer's dependence on omniscient narration and conversations, and the use of the stream of consciousness technique.

Omniscient narration has been put to effective use in *The Riders in the Chariot* to introduce Miss Hare at the beginning. A prolonged and determined third person voice deftly begins the story by first taking up the tale of Mary Hare.(7) Miss Hare has also brought into focus the Godbolds, particularly Mrs. Godbold, the second of the Illuminati. Besides, he has presented the setting at Caraparilla in the same passage. This piece of third person narration has also established a sense of easy familiarity with the reader. For instance, when he writes that 'the bristly cut blackberry bushes ... suggested that the enemy might not have with-
drawn, (7) at the very start of the work, he takes for granted the reader’s knowledge of 'the enemy'. This is a kind of engagement of the reader with the narration, a sharing of knowledge and secrets, and it makes him easily responsive to the narrative, and all doubts about artificality are shed. A similar effect of immediacy has also been achieved in the passage which describes 'Miss Hare's relation with Mrs. Godbold': 'It did not matter that much would remain unexplained. It did not matter that neither had looked at the other's face, for each was aware that the moment could yield no more than they already knew. Somewhere in the past, that particular relationship had been fully ratified (6). This is primarily a descriptive passage where the element of abstraction plays an important part in bridging the gap between the author and the reader. Although this relationship (that of 'Miss Hare and Mrs. Godbold') is described for the first time the epanalepsis, 'It did not matter', makes the passage create the feeling in us that White is only repeating and stressing something of which we are already aware. This once again negates any sense of artificiality and distance, and makes the third person narrative sound more personal and informal. It also introduces a closeness which automatically elevates the authorial tone.

It is in the form of third person omniscient narration that the author presents the actions of the characters with perfect ease. The significance of each of the four lives
emerges not so much from their interrelationship as from their individual actions and conduct. Here the third person use suits the writer best in bringing them to focus. For instance, Horbort Hare's repulsion for his ugly daughter is presented thus:

Then Horbort Hare took the foul by its surviving drumstick, and flung it through the open window, where it fell into a display of perennial phlox.... Then Horbort Hare took a loaf of bread, and flung it after the boiled foul....ow her father went after loading, and shot into the chandelier....(54).

Here is an account of the eccentric behaviour of a father who cannot reconcile himself to the ugly look of his daughter. The anger, the bitterness, and yet the helplessness could not have been better expressed than through this statement of his violent action. Any representation of direct abuse in its place would have been unconvincing and theatrical in effect. It helps the writer make the reader see the situation from his point of view, and thus a kind of personal closeness between the two is effected, and the possibility of a neutral stance is obviated.

The use of the third person narrative leaves scope for adding on to the writer's statements. It is often seen that notwithstanding his proven narrative skill perfected over the years, White frequently intervenes to explain characters and situations. This is perhaps because of some
suspicion in him that his ideas will not be fully accepted by his reader unless they are explained at length. Close reading of the following passage will facilitate a clear appreciation of this point: 'Mary June would remember how she used to listen for the footsteps on the stairs. Very firm, rather heavy, relentless, they had seemed, until time and familiarity drew attention to the constancy of those sounds' (64). Here we find the author first presenting to the reader Mary's situation, and then slowly viewing it in terms of a subtle, elevated abstraction, giving it almost a philosophical cast, 'until time ... sounds', thus inviting the reader to share his apprehension of Mary's state of mind at a given point. The slow depiction in the third person narration is intended to serve this positive purpose of presenting deliberations and emphasis. The following passage where White describes Mrs. Jolley going on a visit to her friend, Mrs. Flack, provides an instance in point:

Several afternoons a week, after putting on her gloves and not with eyle-veil!, Mrs. Jolley would not exactly go, she would proceed, rather, to her friend's residence at Sarsaparilla ... so Mrs. Jolley would continue on her way, ... to Mrs. Jolley would proceed, smiling at the ladies in the windows of their brick homes. She might correct the position of a seam or two. Then she would be ready to arrive (72).

The third person narration of the above passage, with repetition and elaboration, enables the author to say into the intents of the dubious Mrs. Jolley. Conversations at this
stage would prove to be too stifling and the first person use would rob the essence of the jocular mood. But now, the author as the third person omniscient narrator, is both a spectator and a critic, and this peculiar character enables him to maintain, at the same time, an assumption of a neutral stance, a sense of distance, as well as a sense of closeness.

The writer has brought in some other subtle variations of this technique which help make the narrative flexible and controlled. The story of the novel, as is clearly seen, necessitates the maximum use of omniscience. The author has had to put to use all his verve and power to lend it an animating force and a spontaneous sway. There are passages where the author comes close to the character but does not merge with it. We have an extract reading thus:

But Miss Hare was sad rather than afraid. She could not answer questions. Questions are screws that drill down into the brain. She looked at the bucket of grey water, from which the woman's mop was spreading ineffectual puddles. The woman whose three daughters' husbands had built with bricks, boxes in which to live, so childish. For the brick boxes of the daughters' husbands would tumble like the games of children. Only memories were indestructible, so Miss Hare snorted — she was bored, besides, with Mr Jolley — and went off into the passages of Xanadu (46).

The passage shows the author slowly permeating as it were into the conscience of Miss Hare so much so that he almost becomes,
but does not quite become, very. This is necessary for main-
taining the artistic imperative of authorial neutrality. The

The guiding stance 'we must not shrivel...' reminds us that
the author is the narrator after all. On the other hand, 

White has adopted a different technique in presenting
himself. The figure of the Jew in the most majestic of

White's creations, for he has presented through him the indi-

vidual behind the statistics of gas chamber victims. As a
result, we find a close identification of the writer, with
the character. The narrator's voice is all but silent in the
sobriety of the flow of Himmler's quiet thoughts:

'Himmler hesitated. Human gestures were so moving in
the reign of Sammael that for one moment he felt weak enough
to accept. If only for Feha, who would not, he realized at
once, have left without him '(144). The passage presents

Himmler pondering over the wisdom of giving up his belief.
The writer slowly lays bare his thoughts and imperceptibly
loses himself in the delineation of the workings of his mind.
Thus we see White's handling of different narrative skills
to give the best and the most vivid rendering of his story.
The third person narrative in the novel remains quite un-
intrusive and yet interesting, being perfectly modulated
to the particular situation of the person involved. So, it
is seen that the authorial tone varies from person to person.
This is seen at a point in the narrative where White describes

a situation featuring Hannah, the prostitute. The narrative
reads: 'Oh, the powder made her cough. She was what they
called allergic, that was it. She was that soggy. All athletically, open pores, she was that sick (362). The omniscient narration here has successfully depicted the jaded world of Hausman to the reader.

All these different or alternating points of view in the third person narration, helps in unholding the story in all its totality. J.R. Burrows has pointed out that this kind of a narrative is used to the best advantage in the novel.22 The four illuminati project four different points of view and in their perfect amalgamation lies the essence of the narration of the work as such.

The conversations in the novel have been so designed as to help the writer get into the skin of his characters, white is capable of achieving different variations in their use, keeping in mind the reader’s right of access to the inner world of the characters and their situations. Also, now and then, the dialogues sound like monologues but it is not to suggest that the narration is stilted as a result. Rather, it proves to be an effective means for projecting the psychological and metaphysical undertones of the story.

To assess the use of conversations in riders in the Chariot it is necessary to examine them from the very beginning. The post mistress says to Mrs. Coknchool about Mary Hare: 'I cannot deny that Miss Hare is different' (7). In this kind of a so-called, non-committal answer, the reader
learns to accent Mary as one who is not too ordinary a creature. The narrative voice in the introductions is well modulated to the prattle of Mrs Jolley, the housekeeper, juxtaposed against the silences of Mary. Besides, through the former's probings and her curious questionings, Mary reveals much of her cast which would have remained unsaid in other circumstances. The following passage reveals this:

'I can just imagine you and your mum,' Mrs Jolley said, and laughed. 'Living here amongst the furniture, like a couple of mice'. 'Oh, there was Peg, too, and William Mackin.' 'Yes who?' 'I can't remember her name ...' 'And who was the gentleman you were speaking of?' 'William was a coachman, he was very deaf.'

Thus, the conversations, well adjusted to the movement of the story, help bring out introductory information with ease, while perfectly attunes the conversations to the particular characters concerned. This is seen when, for an instance, Mary's prattle appears childish as the young and innocent girl dares her cousin Justice declare that he did enjoy his dance with a Miss Nantill. "Oh", she begun, 'I shall go away if, you would rather, ... 'How you hated it' she said, 'The dance with Miss Nantill. I am sorry ...'. In this passage, behind the childish naivety, there lurks a sixth sense which shows that Mary here is no ordinary child but one who intuitively feels before she actually knows. Thus, conversations reveal the inner reality.
of the characters, Mary's uncanny sixth sense is shared in a different way by Himmelfarb, too. The truth of their common knowledge is seen in the following passage: "And the Chariot," he asked, 'that you wished to discuss at one stage? Will you not admit the possibility of redemption?" 'Oh, words, words,' she cried, brushing them off with her freckled hand. 'I do not understand what they mean.' 'But the Chariot,' she conceded, 'does exist' "(155). In this passage we realize that without any preamble Mary enters into a very close and intimate discussion with Himmelfarb about the 'Chariot'. This shows the slow surfacing of the hidden affinity that lies between them. Moreover, the above conversation clearly distinguishes between the character of the comely and impulsive Mary, and of the learned man of letters, Professor Himmelfarb. In Mrs. Godbold's quiet exchanges, we read a silent command and dignity. The humble manner of speech glorifies her. This is seen at the death bed of Himmelfarb in her tiny bed, where she silently tells command: "Then Miss Helen sat up, as straight as her 'out, body would allow. 'His feet,' she said, 'are cold ... 'Yes', Mrs. Godbold could not evade it. 'But you shall warm them' "(432). Thus in her terse, matter-of-fact utterances we discover a depth of wisdom and knowledge. This is how it brings alive his characters.

Dialogues that deserve to be called monologues abound in Aiders in the Chariot. In them, we find the characters talking on different wave-lengths or in such
a way that the talks do not exactly mean an exchange of ideas or information. For instance, when Miss Hare converses with Mrs. Jolley, it is not an exchange of ideas, only an expression of her feelings. Often, both seem to be quite incapable of grasping what the other wishes to convey, so distant are they from each other in their experiences. In one instance when Mrs. Jolley kills her mistress’ pet snake, the following conversation ensures:

‘Ah’, she cried at one, ‘You’ve killed it ...’ ‘I’ll say!’ Mrs. Jolley blurted ... ‘You killed it!’ Miss Hare protested and mourned... ‘And so you killed the snake.’ ‘That is not killing,’ said Mrs Jolley, pointing the spade. ‘That is ridding the world of something bad’ (82-83).

In this passage, the two characters are seen talking to each other but Mary has gone into a world of her own, casting the cruel Mrs. Jolley aside. The latter tries to reach her but the only response she gets is her silence and the sight of her ‘freckled, horrible hands that looked so tender and ludicrous’ (63). In the case of Alf Dubbo also, we come across a similar use of conversation on the occasion of Alf’s landlady disposing of his prized painting of the Chariot for some money, we have the following conversation:

‘But Hannah cried, ‘All the good money? ’ she blubbered. ‘And what is old paintings? We only done it for your own good.’ ... ‘Yes, Hannah,’ Dubbo agreed. ‘You are honest, if anybody is’ ”(358). Here we must be on guard lest we be taken into believing that Hannah, the landlady, has convinced
White uses a very distinctive stream of consciousness technique in *Hirers in the Chariot*. This is seen in its indistinct, lurking quality. Although flashbacks do occur in the tale, the narration reads more like a true story about four historical figures. In the element of reality is seen to dominate over fantasy or emotion to a large extent. Each of the four stories is treated with singular straightforwardness and clarity. In the case of Mary Hare, the past and the present intermingle to make her present more intelligible. So far as the other three are concerned, after a brief look at their present position, their past is given the required focus. There are no sudden juxtapositions of the past and the present in their case, thus presenting straight lined narratives. But it is of interest to note that in moments of crisis or heightened feelings, the four figures come together. This is clearly seen in the rock
The crucifixion scene (433) and at the time of Himmelfarb's death (436-439). This helps impart to the narrative about the four Illuminati with their common knowledge of the "chariot," a close-knit organization. The very theme of the novel thus involves a supernatural quality, revealed by the stream of consciousness technique to the best advantage. While first introduces us to this element in the novel by his focus on objects. William Walsh has made a pertinent remark in this regard when he says: "Throughout the novel the nuclear life of objects has an extraordinary importance. ... Objects help to make palpable the most fleeting of metaphysical experiences and they give weight and solidity to a narrative concerned with what is mysterious and difficult." To, Mary is shown to have an association not with the children of her age but with sticks, pebbles, skeleton leaves ... hollows of trees, and the cellars and attics of Xanadu (24). These objects tell the reader that the tale ends not in them, but always through and beyond them. If, in the case of Mary, the objects are in the world of nature, for Himmelfarb they are the words in the books, for Ira, Godbold her workaday objects like her washings, and for elf, the couch of his paint. The repeated mention of these articles evokes in the novel an atmosphere of mysterious sobriety.

The use of the stream of consciousness technique is again observed in the epicsanics described. With an easy, third person narration, White suddenly presents a picture
of a situation which creates a clearly mysterious mood. This is what he does when he writes: 'The urns on the terrace were running over, she remembered, with cascades of a little milky flower, which would shimmer through darkness like falls of moonlight. But at that hour the light was gold, or so rec'd (23), (underlined for focus). The above passage describes Mary's recollection about one memorable evening when she felt closest to her father, as John observed the light turning 'gold' on the terrace. Here is a plain example of 'rite invoking a strange situation in which the father and the daughter are wholly lost. No other instance of the kind is seen when the sick Mary Hare is nursed by Mrs. Godbold in the manner Mary de Bantis looks after the ailing Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter. As they talk to each other, Mary Hare suddenly discloses her knowledge of the Chariot. 'Mrs. Godbold, too, responds with her silence. This is clear in the following passage: "'Gold,' Miss Hare mumbled. 'Champing at the bit, did you ever see the horses? I haven't yet, but at times the wheels crush me unbearably.' 'Never,' complained Miss Hare. 'Never. Never. As if I were not intended to discover.' (67). Thus, although Miss Hare prattles on, her companion is fully aware of the meaning of her rambling. As for the reader, he would be stupefied by such intrusions were he not aware that this is an epiphanic vision of Mary shared by Mrs. Godbold, a kind of interruption admissibly affected by the stream of consciousness technique. In the case of Himmelfarb, his revelations involve a situation which is partly knowledge, partly imagination, partly hallucination, and fractionally
an epileptic fit. Thus Himmelfarb's 'path of inwardsness' presents to him,
the most cerebral approach - when spiritually he longed for the ascent into an ecstasy so cool and green that his own desert would drink the heavenly moisture. Still, his for - head of skin and bone continued to burn with what could have been a circlet of iron ... he could only struggle and sway inside the column of his body. Until he toppled forward (136-137).

This description deftly presents the intensity of illumination that descends upon Himmelfarb with his readings with which he became greatly engrossed sometime earlier. If Babo is the spectator throughout the novel, Colmer rightly calls him the 'seeing eye.' His final enlightenment comes in observing the spectacle of the death of Himmelfarb, which he recreates in a painting with the scarlet of his own blood, after which he dies. Although the narrative at this point is fairly straight, the psychological and mythical processes involved in the creation of Babo's paintings which are in fact explorations of this 'pre-speech level of consciousness' lend it a quality which approximates the stream of consciousness technique. Therefore it is the use of this technique that helps Alf capture the sudden inspiration from the scene of Himmelfarb's death. It is thus evident that the acceptance of this technique by the reader enables him to apprehend the many developments in the minds of the four Illuminati which an ordinary narrative cannot be expected to do as well.
It should now be clear that the narrative voice in the novel is sensitive and evocative and significant for the situations involved which, in turn, help evolve a notable flexibility and ease, notwithstanding the complex subject at hand. William Walsh has rightly maintained that, 'The four main lives through which the author's vision is transmitted ... are shown with that creative authenticity derived from the marriage of absolute fidelity of observation to imaginative power.' In this lies the maximum effectiveness of white's narrative voice in the work.

In *The Eye of the Storm*, white seems to have come nearest to saying what he has felt behind the creation of all his works. In doing so he has depended primarily on the stream of consciousness technique which includes in its fold a number of other minor stylistic devices like flashbacks, dreams, fantasies, random thoughts, montages, and the like. He has also depended upon the third-person descriptive narration, dialogues and conversations, and the use of what is called the narrative within a narrative, through all of which the narrative voice emerges loud and clear.

The stream of consciousness technique in the novel not only covers the major part of the narration, but it also deals with significant turns of the story. The writer has shown remarkable skill in its use by bringing in brilliant and subtle interweaving of reminiscences of the past with an
awareness of the present, with it he introduces succinct flashes of dream juxtaposed with reality. All of it is presented through the juggling of the speech order and a special use of the indirect interior monologue. Also the efficient montages (namely, the place montage and the time montage) admirably serve White's purpose in narration which, as Walsh has noted, is 'not to offer an explanation but to recreate an actuality.'

In *The Eye of the Storm*, Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter is shown recollecting her glamorous past as she lies bedridden. For half the novel, it is an excursion into the past. The pattern of her situation has also shaped the form of the narrative. Flashbacks of prolonged duration more or less make up the entire narration. These are either detailed or partial, according to the different moods of the protagonist and the varying needs of the story. They may be in omniscient narration or in dialogues. The flashbacks do not feature in the consciousness of Mrs. Hunter alone. Every major character dwells in his or her past at one time or the other bringing into focus the salient features of their lives. In fact, the narration in this novel takes the form of an intricate collage where the figures, stripped bare, lock inwards in turn. 'Say we, they are all, in the author's own words, in their different ways, looking for 'a calm in which the self had been stripped, if painfully of its human imperfections' (29). In the process, each of them projects the human predicament of boredom and alienation with all their commitments of unchecked egocentrism and
depravity. The narration thus revolves round the disjointed consciousness of a senile woman whose chaotic reveries and recollections, need a close and sensitive reading to discover the underlying unity of the work. For it is through the experience of the turbulence of the storm that Mrs. Hunter can realise the eye, the sternal calm, thereby stressing the importance of a chaos of the dimension of the one she had faced.

The elaborate flashbacks hold before us Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter in her true colour. We find her committing adulteries with Arnold Hyburg, the solicitor, and Athol Treve, the politician, simply to appease her fancy. The account is mostly in the third person narrative although sometimes the third is replaced by a second person 'you'. This provides an introspective, self-analytical approach, an apt device for White's purpose of projecting a guilt-ridden, pleasure-loving woman. The following excerpt is an instance in point: "You had never recognized your own lust; you hadn't often been troubled by it. But it exists" (92). This is how the narration of Elizabeth's affair with Athol Treve is punctuated with her own random thoughts. The most tender flashback of Mrs. Hunter is the one in which she reminisces her stay with Alfred during his illness. This is a sustained account without any interruption. The narration is made up of past conversations in such a way as to make it instinct with the present and to preserve admirably some flavour of their delectable days, it is also marked with a slow movement
where both the husband and the wife ironically realize a passing beatitude as they count the days for their final separation:

He laughed: they were united in a moment of such understanding she went and knelt beside his chair and started desperately kissing his hands, it was as close as they came to physical desire during those last weeks, but the hands remained cold and yellow (174).

This is a section of the flashback that acts as a source of ethereal beauty for the bedridden woman and bears some similarity with her experience of the storm at the farm's island. The flashback of the holidays in the island is an important device to show that when bereft of all covers of civilization, Elizabeth becomes a part of nature and experiences the afflatus which Dorothy just misses. She relates her experience thus:

It was the island I loved, Dorothy. After you left I got to know it. After I had been deserted — and reduced to shreds — not that it mattered: I was prepared for my life to be taken from me. Instead birds accepted to eat out of my hands. There was no sign of hatred or fear while we were encircled... but saved me was noticing a bird impaled on a tree ... I think I was reminded that one can't escape suffering (395).

The third person omniscient narration in an elaborate flashback is a useful device in White's narration. It comprises into it dreams, fancies and rumination. Dreams play an important part in the technique to show the stream of consciousness,
In a letter in 1973 White explained his heavy leaning upon this technique:

I don't know about influences ... but I also rely to a great extent on what you refer to as 'dream material.' By this time I find myself often wondering whether something has actually happened, whether I have dreamed it, whether it is an incident from one of those waking dreams, or perhaps some incident from one of my books.

The flux that cascades over the mind of the static Mrs. Hunter is highlighted by the haunting dream-like atmosphere frothing over her consciousness. This may be seen in the following utterance which is the beginning of a flashback: "... when she was moaning deep down while standing outside one of the many envelopes of flesh she could remember wearing. He was looking at her sleeping husband. He certainly wasn't dead, only unaware of the other lives she was leading ..." (26). This continues into the flashback featuring Mrs. Hunter with her husband, Bill Hunter: "He liked her to ride through the paddocks with him. Even when they rode out together, he was not aware that she had never been the person he thought her to be. Not even when his full calf in its leather legging brushed so close the stirrup-irons clashed ..." (26-27). The same passage in the third person narrative also leaves ample scope for philosophising: 'That left a long stretch of responsible years, ... while an inkling persisted, sometimes even a certainty descended: of a calm ...' (29). The intervention of the direct speech in a detailed flashback is not
uncommon. Here we hear Mrs. Hunter saying: 'I am superficial and frivolous... there is no evidence, least of all these children that I am not barren' (23). This emphasizes the heightened moment of self-searching. Mrs. Hunter has the realization that she wasted all her life, and now craves relentlessly for the kind of salvation she had once visualized in the eye of the storm. The third person narration in a flashback gives free play to such interruptions of the direct speech to give vent to her recurrent preoccupations.

It is in the short fragmentary flashbacks that we can see the intensity of the trepidation that overawes the octogenarian woman in the hands of her selfish children. The novel, we have noticed, begins with Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter under the ministrations of her night nurse, Sister de Santis. Barely do we proceed through the first few pages when we find the narrative sequence breaking down. In the middle of an innocent chatter with the nurse, Mrs. Hunter suddenly begins to re-live her past: "This actual morning old Mrs. Hunter opened her eyes and said to her nurse, 'where are the dolls?"' (12). Through this momentary intrusion of the direct speech, for the first time in the novel, we are introduced into the phantom world of Mrs. Hunter which never quite leaves her alone. We are also made aware that she is afraid, insecure, guilty of passing unwrims which she cannot forget nor gracefully bear up. Time and again we find her retracing her steps into the
past, perhaps in an attempt to redress: 'My father had
given me a hundred dolls, think of it—a hundred... I
tore the leg off one' (12). In the first person narrator,
Mrs. Hunter, haltingly holds up her own picture, showing
us her cravings to possess and to destroy. Such a break-
down of the continuity of time is seen intermittently
throughout the narration, but the method is never quite
the same, there being a slight variation every time. In
the two passages already quoted, Mrs. Hunter is not wholly
oblivious of her surroundings. For, unconsciously though
it be, she has in her mind a hazy audience. This is seen
when the Princess de Lescarbans, none other than Dorothy,
comes to visit her ailing mother for the first time, and
witnesses her wetting her bed. This incident may be inter-
preted as her nervousness at the sight of her scheming
daughter. Her action may even be viewed as being intended
to slight her daughter's arrival. Mrs. Hunter narrates this
section by making Mrs. Hunter tread into her past whence
she expresses her nonchalance thus: '... for the moment
she would not have to think what to talk about to this
stranger; ... She signed and said, 'You'll have to go
into the nursery, Kate, play with the dolls' (49). Here
Dorothy becomes the uninteresting but nevertheless unavoi-
dable Kate Nutley. At this stage of the narration, Mrs.
Hunter forgets all connections with the present, and what
we have before us is an external analepsia in which the
flashback relates an incident which has started before the
point from which the primary story begins.
Thoughts about her children full Mr. Hunter with visions of her nearing end. The narration, too, reflects her forebodings. What began as a conversation with Sister de Cantis develops into a dialogue with her own mind: 'I know my mind is a shambles - you're at liberty to tell me, Sister. . . she only experienced murder ... Poor Lilian - my other Nutley' (164). Having learnt of her children's plan to transfer her to Thorogood village, Mr. Hunter becomes visibly nervous. Her fears indicate her total confusion.

She loses all sense of proportion, and stumbles clumsily into her past: 'my nurse was so unkind to me ... or, was it Kate Nutley's nurse? I can't believe - we could afford one' (294).

The minutely related flashbacks in the consciousness of Sir Basil focus his life. It would not be perhaps proper to call it a full one as it is a life of several disappointments which he considered to be inevitable in life - 'something we've got to expect the moment we put our mouths to the nipple' (115). In his attempt to find himself, he tries to act Lear, but in vain. Basil's unfilled life is also seen in the form of a non-play that projects his life with his two wives, Sheila Sturges and, after her, Lady Mid. Imogen is his daughter only in name, for it is a Jottomley who fathered her. This frustrated life finds its expression in the flashback of his overnight stay at Bangkok. As he swims through the orgies of the night,
we get slices of his erratic life intervening. His frustra-
tion fills him with a need to find himself a device which
he tries to realize by writing a play (rather a non-play)
with the collaboration of itty Jacka. In another detailed
flashback we find how in a diabolical setting they both hit
upon the idea of the play. Jacka reiterates Basil's own
ideas when she says: 'There's nothing one can do. Isn't it
natural... that some should die for others to live' (749).
So armed with this excuse, or the supposed cause, Basil lands
in Sydney to try to expedite the death of his mother.

Dorothy de Lascabances also has flashbacks as she
broods in Sydney awaiting her mother's death. Her conscious-
ness is not capable of bringing into focus anything more than
her broken marriage and her once shattered ego in the Benny
Island. with an insecure childhood and wary adolescence, she
had grown up only to hope for salvation through marriage.
Odd as her aspiration was, her disillusionment with the
parvenu prince was greater. So, it is this that persistently
pre-occupies her and as she thinks things over, we get an
account of her alienated life in the flashback about the
French family. The detailed account of the holiday of the
estranged Dorothy and her mother with the Warmings forms an
important point of narration. It shows a Mrs. Hunter who can
transcend everything, including the disturbing Professor
Edvard with whom she flirted momentarily, to witness the
eye of the storm. But so far as Dorothy is concerned, it
merely acts as a vital incident where her mistrust towards
everyone - at life itself - reaches its peak. Thus these
detailed flashbacks also accentuate her worthlessness and
hence aggravate her rootlessness.

Dreams form an important device for presenting
the consciousness of Dorothy. Her dream about Mr. Jyburg
during her stay at the club, so shocking and debasing,
shows her own perversion. It also shows the darker possi-
bilities in her nature. For if she is capable of contemplat-
ing death for her mother, she is equally capable of
incesting with Mr. Jyburg, almost a solicitous father-
figure. In the dream narration we note an unpunctuated
passage. It is an apt way of showing the disjointed, dis-
integrated thoughts compiling together to form a dream.
This may be noted in the following: 'In Father Father she
wanted to cry for what he had suffered she was only consoled
by the touch of milky legal silk (25). Similarly, unbroken
flashbacks also occur in the consciousness of the nurses and
through them the reader is made familiar with their past
years of youthful ambitions and the attendant ups and downs.

In adopting the stream of consciousness technique,
white uses montages, namely, place montages and time montages.
We find Mrs. Hunter fixed at the same place, her bed, while
she moves in time and discloses important details of her life.
The thought of her son coming to visit her deathbed makes Mr.
Hunter suspicious and wary. Her mind becomes full of filial
betrayal, and she recollects now in her own life: 'Father
was expecting his daughter to read Browning to him as usual, when there she was dawdling beside the river of drowned dolls ...(100). This kind of journeying through time to identify the present with a similar past is what can be rightly called time montages.

White is often seen using indirect interior monologues to dramatize his vision. This is different from a soliloquy in the sense that it may or may not be dramatically or thematically relevant to the story and is not spoken aloud, being the mere working of the protagonist's mind at different levels of consciousness. In them there is a lurking indolence and often the subject and the object are barely pronounced. It is rather a close and very private expression of the protagonist's stream of consciousness. We find White making use of it when the young Mrs. Hunter is paired off with the politician, Ethol Strave, at her affluent friend, Gladys' party. As Elizabeth sits across him trying to assess the stranger, soon to turn into her paramour, we find her having had resort to indirect interior monologues. Although bare and insufficient, it nevertheless exposes her deceiving mind: '... never employ or trust a man who hasn't a worker's hand' (91). So, in the midst of a narration, Elizabeth Hunter is seen to start a dialogue with her own mind. This kind of conversation with one's own self is once again noted, when in the middle of the dinner, better sense is shown to prevail upon Mrs. Hunter and she is in two minds as to leave it or not. The conflict that occupies her is clear: '... you would
have liked to slip away, but couldn't, even accepted a
summon. Gladys so civil, and Idrey wanted to show you
were Japanese prints not he bought: he had always
bought something '(S3). Indirect interior monologues are,
therefore, useful for delimiting the stream of consciou-
ness. We find White making much use of it in his narration
where thoughts exceed actual action. Though the main blank
of the narrative in The Eye of the Storm is the stream of
consciousness technique combined with a recapitulation of
the past in the form of flashbacks, there are other peri-
pheral devices also that together make up the whole. Though
less striking, they are nevertheless important devices to
delineate the primary story. They include descriptive narra-
tion, conversation, and the technique of a narrative within
a narrative.

In the descriptive narration that marks the move-
ment of the primary story, we find ample use of the third
person narrative of the present situation. The device effects
much flexibility and agility. Its nimble movement obviates
the possibility of the intrusion of the authorial tone. In
the matter of depicting an emotion, we often find White, as
shown in the other novels discussed here, identifying the
sense with a concrete object. For example, speaking of the
inexplicable tie that binds Elizabeth to the night nurse,
de Santis, White writes: 'They inhabited a world of trust
to which their bodies and minds were no more than entrance-
The moment of oneness between the two is described to show that everything is obliterated in the knowledge of mutual acceptance and an ethereal bliss. So, the transience and insignificance of their physical existence is completely equated with 'entrance gates'. Further, in the same passage we read: 'the nurse might have wished to remain clinging to their state ... if one had not evolved ..., a belief - no, it was stronger: a religion - of perpetual becoming ...' (11). This passage does not have the stamp of an ordinary third person narrative. The hesitation, the re-phrasing and the ultimate identification of the state of perpetual becoming is more a cinematic representation of the mental working of de Santis' mind than mere descriptive narration. The authorial dictates in White's narration are very cleverly eliminated through thoughts generalized into ideas. So one finds "any de Santis contemplating: 'This ruin of an overindulged and beautiful youth was also a soul about to leave the body it had worn' (12). In the same way, relief is also sought through exclamations. When White describes the worn, vulnerable and impressionable de Santis in her night hours, he does not hold back the reality, which he shows thus: 'a bed-pan ... sprang at the high priestess, stripping her of the illusions of her office, the night thoughts, speculations ... few had ever guessed at, and certainly, thank God, no one shared ...' (14). The entire passage might have had a very different effect upon us had it not been for the expletive 'thank God' with which the 'author -
reader's distinction are buried in a mood of common empathy. The author stops narrating and starts conversing with the reader. Another brilliant use of the third person descriptive narrative which completely camouflages the authorial dictates may be seen in a passage where Elizabeth Hunter ruminates over her past critically. In a subtle and unassuming manner White writes: a passage where the focalizers change. The passage is: 'in some ways it was an advantage to be what they refer to as 'self-blind.' She had always seen too clearly, it seemed' 14). Reading the above line we realize that it is the old woman in bed who becomes the narrator in spite of the third person use. The focalized is at first the old Mrs. Hunter but it gradually changes and the story focuses on the younger Elizabeth.

A descriptive narrative in the third person is often used for situational descriptions, for explanatory, discursive, introductory and also for suggestive purposes. White uses it for all these purposes with marked skill in The Eye of the Storm.

The role of the dramatic narration in The Eye of the Storm cannot be overemphasized. It has manifested itself in situational presentations in the use of dramatic presentation and in dialogues. They help heighten the drama of Elizabeth Hunter's life. This can be seen in the presentation of her childhood days with the Atleys (17).
White's power of situational presentation can be seen in the manner he announces the arrival of the Hunter children to their mother's deathbed. The first entrance of Dorothy is carefully dramatized. Dorothy may not be running towards her mother for any filial affection - but she does run to find something or to regain something, which may be her lost childhood. That may not be any better than her present, but that is something which she can call her own.

Sir Basil's presentation is a well prepared move. Keeping in tune with his theatrical air, Mrs. Hunter is all made up for her son: 'Elizabeth Hunter all but transmuted loll'd in a delphinium silver bliss' (115). The narrative takes an ironic turn when we see that the entire set-up is inverted. The mother dresses up for her son. But the effect is monstrous and garishly bizzare. 'Darling - what a home-coming!' (115). Basil cries out to Elizabeth as he sets his eyes on her and we know it is only a line from one of his plays.

Sir Basil's conduct shows much of the elements of a drama. His search for self-realisation by play-acting, his mannerisms, and the illusions which such a life holds are highlighted through sections of dramatic presentations in the narrative. It is for Sir Basil a kind of escape from reality and the nagging awareness of his dismal failures.

The dramatic narrative is often delineated through dialogues. In the short conversational exchanges, an entire
idea may be evolved or a whole issue settled. Mutton has rightly acclaimed white for his "... delectable gift of epigrams which seem to grow naturally out of his style, a style where short sentences flash light emotion." It is through short and direct speeches that the characters interact, and from the interaction rises the drama of their lives. The kind of conversation that is used dramatizes the inherent emotions of the characters. A very minor yet impressive point emanates from the conversation of Mrs. Lyburt and Mrs. Hunter:

"Does my husband love you?" Mrs. Hunter pursued, "I hardly think he did," Mrs. Lyburt answered; in fact you know he didn't." "Yes, I am the one - Mrs. Hunter stirred ..."Arnold - does he treat you kindly?" "He's an honourable man, and I'm married to him." "Oh, Lai, does he love you?" (516-517).

Here, Mrs. Hunter tries to probe into Lai's private life. All the while, there is an undercurrent of suspicion in Elizabeth's tone as she tries to cross-examine her, although she herself has had an affair with Lai's husband, she is not sure whether she has really possessed him. Her friend's composure disturbs her complacency. This is an instance to show how short dialogues are effectively used.

The narrative within a narrative has a dramatic relevance in a novel. But in The Eye of the Storm this technique is used in a limited way. Most of the secondary narrations are grafted into the primary narration by means
of flashbacks. So we have the accounts of the characters' past lives, the account of the holiday at the Warmings, and Flora Manhood's outing to Naomurra through flashback. It is only when Mrs. Hunter once tells the tale of a pet-bird of a certain Mrs. Hewlett that we come nearest to this approach. But this narration is more important for its symbolic interpretations, and does not actually merit discussion in the context of the narrative, although it is in fact a very limited example of a narrative within a narrative.

The above discussion shows the author making efficient use of a number of devices and techniques, conventional as well as personal, to bring home to the reader the situation of the ailing woman. Through his narrative, White gives us more than the mere outline of the event. He emphasizes and amplifies attitudes and depicts characters.

The narrative is more concentric than linear, and for the right reason. Often it gives the reader the impression of floundering in an abyss very much in the manner of the protagonist in her actual life. But the narrative is never loose or discursive. It is a complex organization, and thanks to the writer's skill, the position of each character in relation to the central figure, is clearly fixed. As observed at the beginning, it is primarily a presentation of a vision and the focus is naturally on Mrs. Hunter. The whole fabric comes alive, and so naturally,
but the artist's hand is rarely seen. Here, one is tempted to recall Joyce's oft-quoted words where he says:

The artist, like the God of Creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.

It is this kind of an artist that greets the reader in _The Eye of the Storm_.

A confident narrative technique qualifies the fictional style of White from the days of his early career. After having completed _Happy Valley_ and _The Living and the Dead_, the author shows a marked proficiency in the art of narration in _The Aunt's Story_ where he displays profound skill in the dramatization of Theodora Goodman's lonely quest. What impresses the reader is the use of the stream of consciousness technique giving breath to what is inexpressible. In all his novels, White has put his narrative skill to the best advantage of presenting the peculiar predicaments of his protagonists. In _The Tree of Man_, White has had resort to a languorous explanatory narrative to impart the very stolidity of Stan Parker and his flounderings through the maze of experiences to realize the essence of the mandalic truth. The crisp narrative in _Voss_ is remarkable for it gives a palpable presentation of the German explorer and his megalomania. The handling of the hallucinations and dream sequences reveal a new dimension
of the author's hand in the use of the techniques of the narrative. These give a unique touch to the interplay of the relationship between the hero and his beloved, the famous Laura Trevelyan. *Biars in the chariot* is one of the most complex of White's works, reflecting as it is with mystical suggestions. Besides, the intertwining of the four apparently unconnected lives of Aramis, Cagliostro, makes the reader regard it with reservations. Thus, preoccupied with the apparent discrepancy, scholars have often ignored the effective handling of the 'picture' and the 'drama' in the work. The keen sensitivity with which White draws up the details of the four lives surpasses the works of many great novelists.

The novel presents a super blend of fiction, history, myth and mysticism, a combination which demands a highly responsive reader to truly appreciate the twists and turns of White's narrative art. In *The eye of the storm*, White's narrative is bereft of any meditation. In a tone which is clear, sensitive, keen and creative, the author urges the reader to answer to every nuance of his narrative technique. So, one finds himself journeying through the past and the present, the dreams and the fancies, the soliloquys and the conversations of the characters with utmost ease. In this sense, it is the most achieved through most demanding of his novels.
It now emerges clearly from the foregoing discussion that Patrick White makes use nearly of the same set of stylistic devices presenting the narrative voice and his point of view in each of the five novels discussed here, but he applies them in such a way as to reflect the peculiar situation of each of the novels and its characters. As a result, no two presentations are alike, and the reader hardly gets any sense of repetition and monotony. It is thanks to the writer's deep creative insight and uncommon artistic sense that such an effect has been achieved.

Notes and References


5. Rimman-Kenan, Jhlonith : Same as note 2, p. 110.
5. Kramer, Leonie


7. Jalsh, William


9. Lubbock, Percy

10. Same as note 3, p. 147.

11. Thomson, A. N.


13. Ibid.

14. "Gyle, Barry


16. "Mar, Barry


18. Jalsh, William


20. Tracey, David


19. Walsh, William: Same as note 7, p. 3.

20. Lubbock, Percy: Same as note 3, p. 117.


23. Walsh, William: Same as note 7, p. 56.
24. Joholmer, John
    : Patrick White

25. Humphrey, Robert
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      the Modern Novel
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    : Same as note 7.

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