CHAPTER IV

A CHEERY SOUL

Patrick White critically analysed the Australian society in his play The Season at Sarsaparilla. In The Ham Funeral, he mainly focused on the development of an individual. On the contrary, in the earlier play, he presented a cross section of the suburban ways of life. He continued the same in A Cheery Soul also, which has been set up in his favourite fictional suburb of Sarsaparilla. But, in this play, he approaches the society from a different perspective. Once again, in A Cheery Soul the plot revolves around an individual. But, there is a striking contrast.

With reference to theme, in The Season at Sarsaparilla Australian routine life style and their effortlessness to come out of the mediocrity are highlighted. In the present play, the Sarsaparillans’ attitude towards religion and their concept of spiritual and moral values are emphasized. Both plays are complementary to each other in making a complete and comprehensive estimate of the Sarsaparillans. J.R. Dyce rightly pointed out in his book Patrick White as Playwright: “A portrait of modern Australian suburbia from Patrick White would not be complete without its churchgoers and followers of good causes.” (69)
In the opening scene of the play two important characters, Mrs. and Mr. Custance are introduced. They are middle aged couple. Mrs. Custance is in her forties. But, she is unlike Mrs. Lusty and Nola Boyle. She is an agreeable, fresh looking house wife. Mr. Custance was around 50 yrs old. He was a bank teller. When he was introduced, he carried a newspaper. This reminds us of Clive Pogson, an ideal breadwinner of Sarsaparilla. The couple is introduced to set a background for the arrival of the heroine. The main character in *A Cherry Soul* is not a young man or middle aged couples, but an old woman, Miss. Docker. She was a 60 year old, oversized lady. When she first appeared in the play, she had dressed up and adorned herself with plenty of purple lipstick. She was an orphan. Since her caretaker breathed her last, she became homeless.

Mrs. Custance was a god-fearing and sensitive woman. In the opening scene, she narrated her husband an accident that she had witnessed. Their discussion continued with the day to day activities. Mr. Custance said he never felt bored and substantiated his point with the argument that after all life was uncertain. He casually referred to the accident, which killed the man. At this, Mrs. Custance became sensitive and advised her husband not to take such serious things in a lighthearted way. She wanted to be good and to do charity to those who were in need. She wanted to lead a selfless life. She suggested her husband to consider Miss. Docker’s status. His immediate response was “that
His wife defended Miss. Docker with the adjective, she was a cherry soul. She wanted to give shelter to Miss. Docker in their little glassed in verandah room. In return, she might help them in doing some odd household jobs. Mrs. Custance stated this point very politely and not in a demanding voice: “She could pay us back by helping with the chores. (Quickly) Not rigidly. I wouldn’t make a slave of her or anyone else” (C.S. 1.1.186). She pointed out that Miss Docker would have her own business to do. She would be very busy in babysitting and mending. They could hardly notice her presence.

Mrs. Custance indicated that if they had children, the condition might be different. They were childless because an operation was mistakenly done on Mrs. Custance, as she had occupied the wrong trolley. Mr. Custance regretted for not having sued. In *The Season at Sarsaparilla* and *A Cherry Soul* Patrick White presented the life from the domestic point of view. He never went into more serious subjects like politics. But, he made satirical remarks against the hospitals. In *The Season at Sarsaparilla* Mrs. Knott was taken to the hospital for delivery. Nola and Girlie discussed that when a person entered into the hospital, he could not even claim his teeth as his. In this play Mrs. Custance became a victim to the absent minded surgeon. White was not happy with the conditions that prevailed in the hospitals of Australia. At the age of four, White developed asthma. His health was fragile throughout his childhood. Later, he
was affected by rheumatism as well. He was dissatisfied with the condition and the kind of treatment provided in the hospitals of the suburb.

Mr. Custance conceded to the idea of giving shelter to Miss. Docker. He tried to mend a shelf for Miss. Docker, to keep her books. Mrs. Custance was happy that her husband was not selfish. The Custances thus, understood each other and respected one another’s feeling. They enjoyed their life together peacefully, in spite of their childless state. Thus, in the first scene the personal relationship of the Custances is portrayed. They were a devoted couple. They led a contented life. The car accident made Mrs. Custance realize the insecurity of life. In this uncertain world, Mrs. Custance wanted to prove that she was not selfish. Thus, Miss Docker’s arrival was due to an act of goodness. This goodness took form to eradicate their guilty conscience.

When Miss. Docker arrived, there was a sea change in the entire atmosphere. Her arrival in itself was electrifying. A car was heard approaching with a loud blast on the horn. It was Miss. Docker, who tooted the horn so loudly. She did it purposely so that, everyone would realize her arrival. When she arrived, her instant remark was: “Neat place they have got. (Pause) As a matter of personal taste, I’d have painted it cream and green.” (C.S.1.2.189) One could perceive a striking contrast in the tone with which Docker and Mrs. Custance expressed their ideas. Miss. Docker was very blunt. She never
cared about the other side, whereas Mrs. Custance was very polite and much worried about others’ feeling. Mrs. Custance hesitated to approach and welcome Docker. But, Docker just ignored her and went straight into the house to have a look at the house in amazement and surprise.

Mrs. Custance was shocked with Miss. Docker’s way of dealing things. Miss. Docker felt that actually she was very humorous and amusing her host. Thus, she was fulfilling her duty of being grateful. She promised to be friendlier by exchanging yarns with Mrs. Custance whenever she could find time. Mrs. Custance politely asked Miss. Docker to feel at home. She immediately responded that she would always feel at home and there was no need to worry about her. Miss. Docker was happy with the glassed in verandah, which was offered to her. Mrs. Custance was shocked to see Docker’s possession – tall boy, rocker and other furniture. Docker suggested to remove the pot-stand of Mrs. Custance’s mother to place her furniture. The tall boy was placed in front of the louvers. Mrs. Custance instructed her to adjust leaving way for air circulation. While positioning the tall boy, the book shelf was broken. Miss. Docker did not mind about it and commented that accidents would always happen. Mrs. Custance was worried about her husband’s reaction.
Miss. Docker explained that she was addressed as the most cheerful person. When one was dislocated, the situation would be different. And, she was gradually settling down. She could not stand the idea that was practised in the Custances’ household that meat was for men alone. She was not happy with men and their behaviour. She said that she would inform Mr. Custance about it, in detail, one day. Miss Docker very bluntly expressed her opinion, without bothering about the impact it would have on the listener. She found fault with the Custances for not pruning the hydrangea and using it to dry clothes. She enquired Mrs. Custance for her horoscope. When she said Virgo, Docker immediately pointed out that Virgo will always be in a state of anxiety and agitation. She never bothered about the effect her reply would have on Mrs. Custance.

Mr. Custance was quite frightened to see Miss. Docker at first. Miss. Docker very carelessly spilled sugar and tea, while taking hers. She did not feel sorry for that; instead, she said that she would clean up things when she would feel more relaxed. Miss Docker’s presence was almost destructive. It destroyed the peace and harmony the couple had enjoyed. In spite of that, the couple was responsible for their own troubles. They had been leading a life of tradition. They were treading on the beaten path. They abided by the rules and regulations. They were the representatives of the Sarsaparillans, who conform
to mediocrity. This was the reason for their inability to adapt with Miss. Docker. May Brit Akerholt rightly pointed out in her book *Patrick White*:

Miss. Docker’s chances of being ostracized increase in proportion to the annoyance she cause and the uncomfortable feeling she rouses. The Custance’s weakness is their rules, the conventional and rigid form of life which cannot accommodate the Miss. Dockers. Their household and daily routines are turned upside down by the visitor, ..........(73)

Miss. Docker always criticized the whole lot of things that she came across. She found fault with the bright lights used by them. Mrs. Custance retorted that they had nothing to hide. Miss. Docker advised her not to reply in an unkind way and added that she was quite frank and she too had nothing to hide. After a while, Docker felt sorry for her words and apologized. But, she could not maintain the tempo. She fell back to her original note immediately. The three were at the table. She wanted to express her disapproval over the meat that was being consumed by Mr. Custance. Mrs. Custance offered Docker macaroni-cheese. She refused with the comment that she hated gluttony. Further, she added that the worst of all gluttony was meat. Mr. Custance did not mind her remarks and he continued eating. Docker enquired whether the meat was tender. He did not reply. She then found fault with his reticent nature.
Docker’s presence did not allow the couple to remain natural. They could not feel at home. Mrs. Custance was about to take and serve the mustards her husband used to eat. But, he refused to have. Mr. Custance never responded to Docker and remained always silent in her presence. She decided not to allow him like that. She criticised that Mr. Custance’s posture was not at all correct. He left the place in a tensed mood. Mrs. Custance almost became sick and took medicine. Actually, Mrs. Custance brought in Docker with the aim of doing good. But, Docker’s behaviour and act almost smothered her. May Brit Akerholt rightly pointed out in her book *Patrick White*:

Throughout the act Miss Docker’s well-placed sarcasm, whether designed or accidental, undermines Mrs. Custance’s sense of achievement in her role as a Good Samaritan. The result is that she vacillates between feelings of defiance and defense, while Miss. Docker’s moods alternate between gloom and brightness, both of which convey different aspects of her fight to retain her position in the household. (72)

All of a sudden, Docker decided to buy mutton the next day. Mrs. Custance replied that in their house, she need not buy anything. They would take care of her. She was not buying for her but to prepare a basinful of broth for Mrs. Apps. Docker’s presence sickened the couple. Mrs. Custance did not reveal
things. In spite of that, she tried to maintain her composure and added that that was a wonderful idea.

Mrs. Custance tried to substantiate her decision to give shelter for Miss. Docker. She commented Docker as a dedicated soul. But, Mr. Custance commented that Docker is a soul of bulldozer, and they were the ants. His wife advised that: “We mustn’t just put up with her. We must learn to love her. Then it will be different. “(Wondering) Or perhaps we don’t understand love”. (C.S. 1.4. 199) The Custances could not continue to be contended after Docker’s arrival. They were not casual. There was a breach in their routine life. They could not stop feeling that there was a third person in their house. Even when she was asleep, they heard her rubbing against the wall. Mrs. Custance could not respond to her husband’s romantic advances. She felt embarrassed. This was due to Docker’s presence. Apparently, Mrs. Custance wanted to be affectionate and kind with Docker. But, internally there was a rift. They could not adapt with the intruding nature of Miss. Docker.

Mr. Custance: Even when she’s asleep, you can seem to hear her rubbing against the wall.

Mrs. Custance: Don’t, Ted! That isn’t what I want to hear.
Mr. Custance: Sometimes when we’re in bed I could swear we’ve got a third person with us… (A stream of radio music is turned up from the veranda room. The CUSTANCES listen, horrified) (I. iv.199)

The Custances were very considerate and devoted couple. They understood each other and led a peaceful life. On the contrary, Miss. Docker was an orphan. Right from her childhood, she did not have any companion or a person to care for her. She had been leading a life of loneliness. When they had come together, they could not cope up with each other. The intruding nature of Docker became more obvious because, it disturbed their peace and relationship.

May Brit Akerholt very clearly pointed out in her *Patrick White*:

…scene opens on a peaceful moment with the Custances entwined on the sofa. But this picture of peace exploits the difference between the loneliness of the visitor and the togetherness of the couple, and conveys the tension between these two moods. … her disruptiveness is more ominous because of its effect on the Custances’ intimacy … (75)

The much expected outlet for their stifled feelings took form in the following scene. Miss. Docker had meddled with the tomatoes in the garden. Mr. Custance could not bear and angrily shouted at her. Docker could not identify the rationale behind Mr. Custance’s anger. She pruned the tomato plants and had done something good. Mr. Custance was very determined in
doing something to get rid of Miss. Docker. Docker overheard the decision taken by the couple. She remained, as if she did not know anything. Mrs. Custance informed her that they had booked a place for Miss. Docker in the Sundown Home for old people. They were too selfish, to share their home with her. She stammered many times before completing her message. She felt unhappy to send Miss. Docker out of their home. But, their life, peace and harmony were second to none in their view. Miss. Docker at a point of time felt sad. Suddenly, she burst into a dry sobbing. Soon, she recovered and prepared to face reality. She very quickly regained composure and finalized thursday to make a move. She never let her heart down. The spirit with which Miss. Docker accepted the blow was commendable. She never worried about the troubles. Instead, she got ready to face the next episode. On the other side, Mrs. Custance was worst affected. She wanted to safeguard her married life. And at the same time, she wished to do something good. Her effort, to lead a selfless life, became futile. Her conscience pricked her. She could not succeed in her attempt of being a Good Samaritan. May Brit Akerholt rightly pointed out in *Patrick White*:

“… when told that she has to go to an old people’s home, Miss Docker displays the indomitable spirit which makes it difficult for an audience not to have a measure of admiration for her, despite the feeling of relief for the Custances’ deliverance. (76)
Miss Docker in hat and coat had a last walk amongst the tomatoes thoughtfully. She exchanged few words with Mrs. Custance, sentimentally. She had decided to leave behind a China shoe, as a token of love for the couple. This heightened the sorrow of Mrs. Custance. Miss Docker consoled her, with the opinion that Christian kindness was a rare thing, and never too easy to learn even by virtuous people. Mr. Custance was happy over Docker’s departure and threw away the China shoe left by her. He very well understood the nature of Miss Docker. At Sundown Home, she would have started her next round. He commented: “She’ll be there any moment now. It’s only a stone’s throw. She’ll have started the next round. Poor devils! They haven’t a hope in hell!” (C.S. 1.7. 208). Thus, there was a conflicting feeling between Mrs & Mr. Custance. He was glad to be rid of the “rat bag”. Mrs. Custance could not enjoy her sense of victory, since it was marred by her guilty feeling. She felt that she would always be condemned in any trial by goodness.

In Act one, Miss Docker was presented as a poor, good and destructive soul. In the second act, the impression was further substantiated. She had been in the Sundown home only for the past three days. But, her presence was felt everywhere. She knew where the damp patches were and from where the bad smell came. Mrs. Hibble one of the inmates commented:
Mrs. Hibble: (wagging her head from side to side) Miss Docker! Miss Docker! Miss Docker! She’s only been here a couple of days and her name beats in my head like a gong. Miss Docker! (C.S.1.1.214).

Mr. Wakeman was a young, handsome clergyman. He was the rector of the Sundown Home church. He visited the home to see whether Miss. Docker was quite settled. The matron replied that she would never need any assistance. Mr. Wakeman enquired whether she was such a cherry soul. Matron smiled ambiguously and said yes. Her ambiguous smile indicated the negative meaning for the term “cherry soul”.

There were many old women in the Sundown Home. Mrs. Lillie was one of the inmates. She was an old lady, in her eighties. When she was young, she was very beautiful but, her beauty had been disintegrated now. She had been suffering from palsy. Another inmate was Mrs. Hibble. She was suffering from arthritis. She was bent and walked with a stick. Another old woman was Miss. Dando. She was a small, frail and elderly maiden. When she was introduced, she stole some sugar from the tea table. But, she could not complete it successfully. In the middle, she dropped and then retrieved it. Mrs. Tole was yet another inmate. She couldn’t communicate her ideas very clearly. Whenever she opened her mouth she uttered only meaningless words “ooh, mumma, mumma, mumma!” When she was introduced, she hovered.
around the coffee table. The matron guided her and poured coffee for her. Thus, the majority of the inmates in the Sundown Home were weak, old and infirm. They were not sharp. They were not prudent. They were in a state of disintegration. Their inability to comprehend things and feebleness was like that of a child. Miss. Docker arrived in the midst of these infirm and unprotected old women. Miss Docker possessed a form of shrewdness which helped her to observe and make use of other people’s weaknesses. But, here in the present context the weaknesses of the old women were actually a kind of strength. Miss Docker’s disruptive nature did not have any evil effect on these inmates. May Brit Akerholt rightly pointed out in Patrick White as:

Individually the old ladies are undiscerning and injudicious and, then, may be viewed as unprotected. … the old people have the paradoxical strength of the innocent, puerile mind which protects from Miss. Docker’s most dangerous weapon; her ability to expose people to their own vulnerabilities. The senility of the old is similar in effect to a child’s innocence and lack of hypocrisy. (80)

The only one that was most affected was Mrs. Lillie. In the past, Miss. Docker assisted the Lillies. Tom Lillie was affected by palsy. Miss. Docker nursed him. He passed away soon. Mrs. Lillie herself was affected by palsy. She wanted to forget the past. She came to Sundown Home,
with the hope to rest in peace. Miss. Docker’s arrival disturbed her tranquility. All the old women residing at home accompanied Miss. Docker. She was the center of attraction for the old ladies. Miss. Docker entertained the ladies. She brought her old photographs and exhibited them to the ladies. The photograph collection consisted of a few snaps that she had taken during her stay at the Lillies. While displaying the photograph, she gave her own comments about the situation.

Miss. Docker pointed out that Tom was too heavy to be lifted. He was such a big man. She wondered how Mrs. Lillie had managed to assist her husband, when he was affected by fits. Whenever Miss. Docker referred to the past, Mrs. Lillie’s palsy became apparent. She did not want her personal life to be publicized. Miss. Docker could not understand the feelings of Mrs. Lillie. She continued to boast about her helping nature. Docker claimed that she went voluntarily to help the Lillies. None invited her. She never refused assistance to anybody, who was in need of it. She was very much particular about highlighting her own goodness and attracting the attention of other ladies. On the other hand, she never thought about the state of mind of Mrs. Lillie. She did not analyse what her present condition was.

Mrs. Lillie was actually not satisfied with her past. She was married to Tom Lillie, who was considered hopeless. But, as a matter of fact, he was
handsome. Mrs. Lillie loved him very much. She was attracted towards his copper-coloured hair. Besides, being rude he had also been kind. Mrs. Lillie was extremely beautiful and a rich lady. He had lost every penny for the sake of her love for Tom. She recollected the past and how Tom was affected by palsy. She recalled the smells and stains of sickness. Docker was too proud that Tom depended on her in his palsy. The Lillies led a romantic life and had drunk life to the lees. Docker displayed a snap, in which the three, the Lillies and Docker, were together. Docker actually had her arm round Mr. Lillie. She presented the photograph as a memento to Mrs. Lillie. But, she did not accept it.

Before the arrival of Miss. Docker, the Sundown Home remained quite calm. But, Docker wanted to establish her cherry soul. She judged correctly that the inmates did not have high spirits. She was interested to play some games. With the aim of making the people lively and spirited, she displayed some photographs from her shoe box. Consequently, she wounded the feelings of Mrs. Lillie. But, she was not even aware of it. She continued her jubilation, by showing her own photograph. This was taken, when she was at a ball. She was executing some steps while dancing Charleston. While displaying her photograph, she carried out a few steps too. A few ladies joined her in the process. At this, Mrs. Lillie recalled a party that she and her husband had enjoyed. They danced Valse noble et sentimentale. Patrick White used a kind
of dramatic technique. Whenever the characters thought about their past experience, the happenings were enacted in a raised platform, a rostrum. White has successfully used this flash back device. Hence, the Lillies were visible, dancing on the rostrum Valse noble et sentimentale, when Mrs. Lillie recalled her past.

There was a striking contrast between Mrs. Lillie and Miss Docker. When Mrs. Lillie first appeared in the stage, she had a discussion with a maid. She did not go for tea. She was not interested in the routine mince collops, bread puddings and the coffee. She had lost interest in her routine. Day and night, winter and summer were becoming one to her. She was a distinguished old lady in her eighties. Once, she was a famous beauty but, now was suffering from palsy. She was a well-bred and civilized woman. While Docker was very blunt in her expression and behaviour, Mrs. Lillie was polite and refined. She endured sufferings. Mrs. Lillie disliked Docker’s unceremonious revelation of her past. But, she did not make any hue and cry. On the other hand, she was stoic and polite. Not only in the present, but in the past also, she had endured her sufferings. Her goodness proved to be her weakness. She came to know that her husband was of no hope. She was beautiful and rich. She could have opted for other means. She endured things in her life and lost everything for her love. But, she did not lose her spirit. She remained polite, composed and
made a dignified exit when Miss. Docker ruined her happiness. J.R. Dyce has rightly pointed out in his book *Patrick White as Playwright*:

> But Mrs. Lillie’s refinement and stoicism have been her undoing: her young husband’s physical beauty spoke too persuasively to her, so that she lost the whole world for love; her money, her position, her beauty, her strength, her health, everything but her indomitable spirit, her high-bridged nose, and the regard of her friends. (92)

Miss Docker continued to exhibit her treasure. She displayed a few photographs that were related to Tom Lillie’s last days. Simultaneously, in the rostrum appeared Miss. Docker and Mrs. Lillie on the either side of Tom’s bed. Docker was seen fanning the patient, as a horrible fly was threatening to land on the patient’s nose. In her enthusiasm, actually, she hit the nose of the patient, while fanning. Finally, Tom breathed his last. A funeral procession was arranged. Mrs. Pinfold, a sister of Mrs. Lillie, the Porteous two elderly, well bred, spinster sisters were present in the funeral. They were dressed in black and mourning for the death of Tom. The Porteous sisters were dignified friends of Mrs. Lillie. Their behaviour was in contrast to that of Miss. Docker. Mrs. Lillie was pleased over their presence. Though Mrs. Lillie was poor now, these rich friends had visited her. They respected friendship and were sympathetic towards Mrs. Lillie’s plight. One of the spinsters, Baby offered a
strong, good nip. While drinking, Mrs. Lillie left the mark of her lipstick in the glass. Later, she explained that as per the instruction of Docker, she had used the lipstick. She encouraged Mrs. Lillie that lipsticks would strengthen one’s morale. Mrs. Lillie advised others to be kind to Docker. With reference to Docker, her goodness was a disease. A car had been arranged for the funeral procession. Miss. Docker arrived and shepherded the mourners. She directed Mrs. Pinfold to get into the car first. Then, she allotted a comfortable place for Mrs. Lillie. She instructed the two sisters to occupy the collapsible seat, while she herself sat beside Mrs. Lillies. She appreciated the politeness of the young driver.

The rector Mr. Wakeman enquired Mrs. Lillie whether all arrangement were made perfectly. Docker volunteered and replied that she had seen to that everything was right. The plan was to have a service in the church and then to be moved to the crematorium. This flashback scene was enacted in the rostrum of the Sundown Home. The old ladies played the role of chorus and described the advancement. Thus, they rode to the funeral in a hired car. Their movement was interrupted by a cattle-dog. Docker commented that a few people were not fit to keep dogs. They had carelessly left their dog which caused nuisance to others.
The characters, who were assembled for the funeral procession, were equivalent in social status to Mrs. Lillie. They displayed fine manners and refined gestures. They remained calm and responded fittingly to the occasion. But, it was Miss. Docker, who exhibited and acted with a great show of energy. Her behaviour obviously contrasted with that of others. May Brit Akerholt rightly pointed out in her book *Patrick White*:

They are joined by a hated and breathless Miss. Docker, to whom a funeral, like any function is an event in which her usefulness comes to the fore; it is everybody’s right to enjoy a funeral. Her bustling figure makes a forceful contrast to the passive gathering of mourners who are, for the moment, victims of her painful talent for disturbing peace and order. (84)

All of a sudden, the vehicles were stopped. Mr. Wakeman and another man from the funeral establishment alighted from their car. They went near the signboard to read the direction for the crematorium. Miss. Docker could not endure this. She got irritated over their behaviour. Mr. Wakeman was a parson and actually, they had attended many funerals. It was a pity to forget the path and search for direction from the sign post. She remained in the car and shouted at Mr. Wakeman. There was no response from the other side. She could no longer withstand the uncertainty. She jumped down from the car with the
intension of setting things right. The chorus pointed out that: “When just as
suddenly as she had jumped out, the two men jumped back…in.” (C.S.2.2.227)
Miss Docker realized that the actual joke was against her. Before she could act,
the car doors were slammed and the funeral procession proceeded. She shouted
asking them to wait for a moment and gestured towards them. The enormous
car slipped slowly out of her control and gathered speed. She tried to attract the
attention of the other mourners. One among them was Mr. Custance. She
shouted and addressed their names. But, none stopped and picked her up. All
the cars were dedicated to their mission. All the mourners passed by.
Miss. Docker was left alone. She looked at the sign post, which read two miles
to Sarsaparilla, the friendly suburb. Miss. Docker had no other option but, to
walk all the way to Sarsaparilla.

One of the admirable qualities of Miss. Docker was her unconquerable
spirit. Whenever she faced defeat, she did not stop there. She overcame her
defeat and got ready to face the next. The point in reference was initially at the
Custances home. They decided to send her to the Sundown Home. She
accepted and prepared herself to face it. Similarly, when she was deserted by
the mourners, she did not lose hope. Instead her response was:

Miss Docker: I’d better be making tracks then … It’s not all that far …
and mostly downhill … (Wearily, starting to walk Back) I’ll be home
before you can say knife. (Trudging) Make meself a cuppa … tea…

(C.S.2.2.230)

On the contrary, the people of Sarsaparilla were not satisfied with Miss Docker’s goodness. Somehow or other, they wanted to evade from her. The Custances point blankly avoided her. Similarly, in the funeral procession the Sarsaparillans cleverly schemed against her and got rid of her. These examples very clearly portrayed the lack of courage in the Sarsaparillans. They could not face and adapt with the bustling presence of Miss. Docker. May Brit Akerholt very correctly pointed out in Patrick White that:

In the same way that Mrs. Custance’s resolution of evicting Miss Docker contains both victory and defeat, the whole community now displays a certain kind of courage which simultaneously signifies cowardliness, because it embodies the apathy and hypocrisy of a society which turns away from rather than faces its problems. (86)

Apparently, it appears to be the lack of courage on the part of Sarsaparillans to face Miss. Docker. They plotted very cleverly and escaped from her. They could not overcome her face to face. Miss. Docker was gifted with a kind of brilliance. The Sarsaparillans were worried about her constant vituperations. Miss Docker inspired a kind of awe among them. This was because of her brilliance. She had the talent of identifying the shortcomings of
the people. Whatever comments she had passed were true. People were frightened to face the truth and their shortcomings. Miss. Docker herself in Act II scene (i) pointed out that “Some are afraid of the truth” (C.S. 2.1.215). So, they designed various techniques to escape from her. May Brit Akerholt rightly pointed out in her Patrick White that:

It should be noted that her ability to create disorder in people’s lives is made possible because the observations on which she acts are based on vestiges of truth. The characters are susceptible to her exploitation because she exposes them to their own vulnerabilities and shortcomings. So, in order to sustain the safety of their suburban mediocrity, the Sarsaparillans reject the disruptive figure who threatens their equanimity.

(67)

The old ladies continued to have a look at the photographs of Miss. Docker. One of the old ladies Mrs. Anstruther felt very happy because she had lost all her photographs in a fire accident. Hence, there was no evidence of the happenings in her past life. She felt happy that she was not responsible for all that had happened in the past. But, Miss Docker had a contrary opinion. She did not wish to lose her photographs. It would be a great personal loss to her. This was the difference between the normal Sarsaparillans and Miss. Docker. They wanted to forget the past. But, Miss. Docker wanted
to remember her past, which actually enabled to lead her present. Miss. Dando asked whether she was going to show some more photographs or it was over. Miss Docker replied that if finished, she could start from the beginning. Mrs. Lillie could not stand it any longer. Already her personal life had been demonstrated publicly. She did not want it to happen, once again. She just bade good night and went into her room. Miss Docker’s collection of photograph, like her actions, proved to be destructible with regard to Mrs. Lillie. She wanted to forget her past. Mrs. Anstruther, Mrs. Lillie and the other Sarsaparillans shared this common attitude, which was different from Miss. Docker’s. May Brit Akerholt rightly pointed out in *Patrick White* that:

> In contrast the Sarsaparillans sentiment conveys a different view of the past…. Both statements portray two versions of retreat. Miss Docker escapes into the past, which she needs to recreate in order to sustain her present; the Sarsaparillans escape from the past in order to be able to exist in the present. (77)

Finally, Miss Docker showed her childhood photograph. Mrs. Hibble was disgusted to see such an enormous baby. She commented that Miss. Docker appeared to have swallowed the world. Her comment about herself as a bedwetting child made the old ladies to recoil further. She gave explanation for bedwetting as the result of parental discord. Actually, she
introduced herself as an orphan and now talked about parental discord. The Sarsaparillans tried to get rid of her. She led a kind of alienated life. In spite of that, she too belonged to the common humanity. She had the common collective unconsciousness shared by all. She brought down the curtain of Act II with her shriek and laughter at the elephantine joke she had made with reference to herself as a bed wetting child.

Act III opens with the old ladies of the Sundown Home. They felt uncomfortable with the weather condition. It was the spring season. Spring is the transition period between winter and summer. Still, they had to depend upon the woolen clothes. Their physique could not adapt to the changing weather conditions. They had to face skin problems. The spring season represents the ideas of rebirth, renewal and re-growth. But, the inmates were not in a position to welcome such a wonderful season. They were so infirm and weak that they were hurt even by mild weather. All the inmates wished to be in the Chinese room. There were billiard room, ball room and library. The library was meant to write postcards. But, they could not remember anyone known to them to send a postcard. They were in a state of alienation. They were isolated from the outside world. But, they longed to have connection with people outside Sundown Home. All preferred Chinese room because the telephone was placed in that room. Everybody anxiously awaited someone to make a call
to them. But, they had none rather than God. They went to bed with a prayer, supplicating to bless, protect them from cold and a frightful night.

In the next scene, Miss. Docker was busy with stamp collecting. Mrs. Hibble, one of the inmates, was with her. Docker told Mrs. Hibble that she was collecting stamps for the sake of collecting something. While they were thus discussing, the telephone rang. They guessed that it was the niece of Mrs. Jebb calling from Grafton. But, Miss Docker did not attend the call. Mrs. Hibble read from a journal that if a woman’s face had been covered with tiny wrinkles, she would have been a passionate woman in her life. At this, both of them surreptitiously verified each other’s face. Miss Docker mischievously made a call to Mr. Finlayson, the butcher. Actually, she had nothing to discuss with the butcher. She felt that his voice was rather manly. She wished to hear his voice. So, she made a call to him. Miss. Docker said, “Of course I’m silly. But it’s human, isn’t it?” (C.S.3.2.237). She could do things for fun. She could act rather mischievously and escape with the excuse that it was human nature. But, Miss. Docker demanded others to be smart and forthright. The mistakes of others appeared to be grave and serious for her.

Every Thursday, she had to visit Mr. Wakeman to mow the grass. She could not visit that week, because Mrs. Chambers, one of the inmates was not feeling well. In her sense of goodness, she felt it was her duty to nurse
Mrs. Chambers. So, she made a call to Mr. Wakeman and asked for excuse. Mr. Wakeman accepted her reason and commended her charity. He used the word “recommend” instead of “commend”. Docker could not bear this. She criticised that, “Never was able to express himself. Fatal in a parson”. (C.S.2.2. 238.) After disconnecting the call, she was reminded of the Bible study class. She enquired with Mrs. Hibble, who did not give clear information. Hence, she decided to make a call once again to verify the class timing. This time the phone was picked up by a young girl. She did not give clear information. Without even mentioning her name the girl disconnected the call. Miss. Docker could not digest the lack of politeness among people.

Mrs. Hibble knew that the Bible class was there and already Mrs. Watmuff and Miss. Perry had gone to the class. When Miss. Docker came to know about it, she could not bear it. She felt wounded that they had not informed her while going to the Bible class. The weak of the Sundown Home were unable to bear with Miss. Docker. Like other Sarsaparillans, they also evaded her. Miss. Docker had a misunderstanding with the mistress of the church choir. She called her as “a ball of ego”. No more had Miss Docker a place in the church choir. Mrs. Hibble wanted to provoke Docker. So, she enquired the details about the church choir. Mrs. Hibble explained that Mrs. Watmuff and Miss. Perry had gone to the Bible class. It was Miss. Docker, who usually provoked other people by hitting the nail on their
weakness. But this time, it was the turn of the other side. Mrs. Hibble basked by infuriating Docker. J.R. Dyce in *Patrick White as Playwright* pointed out:

Mrs. Hibble has sly pleasure then in rubbing salt into Miss Docker’s wounds by asking about the unfortunate break-up of the church choir, and by giving the information that Mrs. Watmuff and Miss Perry had gone off to the Bible class a couple of hours earlier, like the wolf in the story “The Three Little Pigs”. (94)

The third scene of Act III is a short one. In this scene, Mrs. Wakeman, the wife of the rector, found fault with Miss. Docker. She accused Docker of pruning the crimson glory to death. Docker defended herself that she had pruned the rose with good intension. She tried to rationalize the fading of the flower as a natural happening and was not because of her. Mrs. Wakeman could not accept, as they had no scientific proof. Miss. Docker commented that Mrs. Wakeman was a bit unorthodox. Actually, this short scene has different layers of meaning. Miss. Docker’s act of pruning the tomato was the reason for the rift between her and the Custances. Mrs. Wakeman also had found fault with Docker’s act of pruning the plants. Miss. Docker pruned the rose plants with good intensions. But, it had spoiled the flowers. Similarly, she wanted to reform the Sarsaparillans by winnowing the undesired qualities in them. Psychologically, recognition, appreciation and encouragement motivate people
to perform better. Actually, people crave for recognition. Critical comments that resemble Docker’s will only discourage and will make people to lose heart. J.R. Dyce pointed out the idea rightly in Patrick White as Playwright:

The scrupulous and the sincere are likely to be so distressed, and need encouragement rather than ill-advised criticism in order to give of their best. Mr. Wakeman’s visit certainly adds to the allegorical dimension of the act and of the play generally. (87)

The next scene takes place in the rector’s study room. Mr. Wakeman was at his desk. He was tired and discouraged. His wife was seated beside. She was in her thirties. She was an earnest young woman. She was devoted and rather old fashioned. Both of them discussed the parish matters. Mrs. Wakeman pointed out that the offering by the Sarsaparillans to the church had considerably increased. But, the rector was not happy. They just offered and were not regular to the church. Though they gave more, their attendance was very poor and deplorable. They were almost buying their way out. Mr. Wakeman was distressed over this. He wanted many souls of Sarsaparilla to visit the church. On the contrary, they found only excuses. He felt discouraged and distressed.

Mr. and Mrs. Wakeman were made for each other. She understood her husband’s worries and came out with a solution. She would like to get up
earlier and would go from house to house with the purpose of winning them over. He felt that her wife was not strong enough to cope up with the extra effort. But, she felt that she was strong enough and could make things up. Mr. Wakeman only wanted his wife to help him, when he was short of words. He suggested another option for attracting the Sarsaparillans. He would like to use Miss. Docker, one of the pillars of the church, to bring souls to God. But, Mrs. Wakeman was not in favor of the idea. Her response was “And pillar may bring it down.” (C.S.3.4.242) She was prudent in her estimation about Miss. Docker. He advised his wife to be kind and not to speak ill of Miss Docker.

The discussion between Mrs. and Mr. Wakeman revealed the state of mind of the Sarsaparillans. Patrick White has made severe attack on the loss of faith among the Australians. Rich people were ready to buy their way out of their church. The situation had so disintegrated that like hawkers, church representatives had to go from house to house to make the people realize their responsibility. Actually, the rector and his wife were God-fearing, serious and sincere. They were ready to stoop to any extent for the sake of church. They were scrupulous and followers of good causes. While thus discussing, Miss. Docker arrived.
It was Thursday and it was Docker’s turn to mow the lawn. She had brought a gift, a balaclava cap, specially made by her. She had presented the cap to protect Mr. Wakeman from the bad weather while, he was on his way to church from rectory. After handing over the gift, Docker was about to leave for mowing the grass. Mr. Wakeman started to write the sermon. Docker had something to discuss, she hesitated. She enquired Mr. Wakeman whether she could say something as a friend. Though not interested, Mr. Wakeman allowed her to express her opinion. Actually, Miss. Docker had a very clear idea about herself. She said that she could say things frankly. That was the worst feature in her. She could only see the naked truth; not only that, she expressed that also. But, in the present situation, Docker said that they two had been friends. It was not so bad to hear things from a friend’s mouth. Mr. Wakeman very generously replied that if a friend could not advise means, none could do. Now, Miss Docker took advantage and very confidently started to express her opinion. She very bluntly stated that the trouble with him was that he was not a good preacher. This was a very serious weakness for a clergy man.

Mr. Wakeman did not expect this kind of open attack from Miss. Docker. He could not keep his nerves under control. He got disturbed. He could not face the situation. He moved a few things in the table and then expressed his regret over the weakness that was pointed out by Miss. Docker. She did not stop there. She continued her criticism without understanding its
effect on the rector. She commented that he could not give his heart and soul while preaching. He very submissively pointed out that she would be the better judge than himself with reference to his weakness. She further continued that his sermons were rather old-fashioned and lacked subtlety. She added that she was expressing her opinion not without the sense of regret. She was not in a mood to leave the rector. Moreover, she told that his sermon did not inspire the congregation. Mr. Wakeman yielded and replied that he had no answer for her accusation. Even now, she was not ready to give up. She observed that a clergyman should have answers for everything.

Miss. Docker tried to substantiate her stands with the comment that someone had to tell the truth and she had done that. Mr. Wakeman struggled and answered that truth was always hardest to bear. At a point of time, Docker caught a glimpse of something which caused pain in her. She further explained that it was her nature: “A person can’t always resist her nature. That’s something that’s given to her … too”. (C.S.3.4. 246)

She wanted people to understand her nature and adjust with her. But, she did not have the heart to bear with others’ weakness. Mr. Wakeman almost collapsed. Miss Docker noticed his state and decided to leave for mowing. While leaving, she reminded him about the gift the balaclava cap that she had made for him. The present was like a consolation prize to the looser. Already,
she had done the damage. Miss. Docker offered a gift, gained a vantage position and then started her attack. J.R. Dyce in *Patrick White as Playwright* rightly pointed out that:

Miss. Docker’s symbolic offering is a cossetting balaclava, which later is seen as “a perverse and ugly rag made by a man to throttle with”. It conveys her interest in prayer “as protection” and, like a Greek gift, is a preliminary to her intention to dominate the rectory and the church. (95)

Mr. Wakeman collapsed completely. He lost his confidence. He prayed to God and expressed his inability and supplicated to guide him in the right path. Mrs. Wakeman entered the rector’s room with a news. She noticed his attitude and faltered. She came to convey the message that Mrs. Challenor’s boys were affected by measles and would not attend the Bible class. She noticed the difference in Mr. Wakeman and left the room. Mr. Wakeman soliloquized his inability to communicate. Although the world was bright and colourful, there was darkness inside him. He could not convert his ideas into words. He tried to learn things through experience. He felt dejected over his own impotence. He felt that even the crimson rhubarb was more articulate than his confused mind. He had nothing to offer except his divine love. Mr. Wakeman resembles the young man of *The Ham Funeral*. The young man thought about his own self, his failure as a poet, and his inability to find out the essence of life. Later,
his Anima pointed out that this weakness was the reason for his failure as a poet. His egocentric and the narcissistic nature were exposed to him by his Anima. Similarly, Mr. Wakeman brooded over his weakness and did not analyse the ways and means to overcome it. In the soliloquy, while expressing his inability, the words flowed spontaneously. He had the ability to communicate. But, he was not confident enough while delivering his sermons. J.R. Dyce rightly pointed out in *Patrick White as Playwright*:

> His sermon on his temptation belies his claim to be without words: the words are there to express his despair; what is lacking is his own response to the helping power. In this respect he greatly resembles the poet of *The Ham Funeral*; the good is beyond the self in both cases. (95-96)

Mr. Wakeman after having ruminated over his inability opened his eyes at the balaclava cap. He opined that nothing was truth and truth was actually an ugly rag made by man to throttle with. In a state of agitation, he picked up the cap and threw it into the dustbin. Mrs. Wakeman came in and was depressed to see her dejected husband. Her love for Mr. Wakeman was genuine. She wanted her husband to be happy and was ready to undergo the suffering for him. She understood the cause of his suffering by looking at the balaclava cap
in the dustbin. She picked it up and replaced it in the desk. Both decided to be confident and overcome the difficulties.

In the next scene, Miss. Docker tried to assemble as many number of souls as possible for church attendance. First of all, she persuaded the old ladies of the Sundown Home. But, they avoided with various reasons. Miss. Dando was not comfortable. Mrs. Watmuff had sent her coat to the dry cleaners. Mrs. Anstruther had become almost deaf. Miss. Perry had troubles with her water. In common, they had joint, voice and eye problems. With reference to these ladies the reasons might be acceptable. But, the reason told by other Sarsaparillans were not ingenuous. Miss. Docker met Mrs. Custance once again. She promised to attend the church. Still, she felt guilty for not having fulfilled her responsibility as a Good Samaritan. She promised to bring her husband to the church. Mr. Lickiss had sunday alone for cleaning his gutters. Therefore, he disagreed to come to the church.

A few children between the age of 5 and 10 came for the Sunday prayer. Even they identified Miss. Docker. She had become a notorious figure. But, they pretended to be ignorant about her. Their parents had already warned them about Miss. Docker as a scourge. The first boy told that his father did not come because he had to attend to the carburetor problem. The second boy mentioned that his father was absent because the church was too small. Their mother was
busy in cooking. Thus, the Sarsaparillans were not sincere and serious about the church and prayers. Miss. Docker appealed to God to bless the innocent children, who came as a proxy for their parents. The children came to church not because they were very religious. They would be receiving money for attending the church. Their parents bribed them to go for the church. The Sarsaparillans did not guide their children and teach them moral and ethical values. They did not enlighten them about the religion, religious practice, and ethics. On the other hand, they misdirected their children and developed in them the illegal habit of bribing. May Brit Akerholt rightly pointed out in *Patrick White*, “…that the core sincerity and truth is missing in Sarsaparilla, and thus missing in its Church.” (91)

In the next scene, the action takes place in the church. A few members came to the church. There were two elderly couple the Bleekers and the Furzes. The Bleekers were shopkeepers and the Furzes owned poultry farming. When Miss. Docker entered the church, they were already there. Miss. Docker wished them good morning. They were very weak and infirm. They were almost deaf. Miss. Docker entered into the church and prayed. She pleaded God to help her, so that she could help the helpless. She felt that the entire burden of helping them lied in her shoulder. But, she was quiet shocked at the huge number of people she had to help. She already had the required strength and she prayed to God to inspire her to use her strength for the purpose of good. May Brit
Akerholt in *Patrick White* pointed out that combination of strength and humility is as important to life as the union of body and soul. Miss. Docker had the strength, courage and a lively spirit, but humility was absent in her. She was very blunt and audacious. On the other hand, the one who need to be strong, Mr. Wakeman was humble and polite but lacked the strength and vigour. Mr. Wakeman’s weakness was self destructive. But, Miss Docker’s weakness destroyed every one she had encountered with. The worst affected was Mr. Wakeman.

Mrs. Wakeman told her husband that along with the two old couple three children were present. Mr. Wakeman was not happy with the number of people assembled. He was intimated that Miss. Docker was also present. Mr. Wakeman felt guilty for the poor attendance. He apologized for dispersing the congregation by his poor sermon. He supplicated the God to fill him with words. So that, he could enlighten at least the few who had gathered. Mr. Wakeman came and started the prayer. The Bleekers and the Furzes were deaf and could not follow him. They discussed among themselves for the page in the Bible from which Mr. Wakeman was delivering his sermon. Mr. Wakeman himself lacked self confident. He lacked the courage and confidence in himself and in God which was of great importance in a clergy man. J.R. Dyce in *Patrick White as Playwright* pointed out that the blind Mr. Wakeman led the blind and deaf Furzes and the Bleekers.
The blindness of the elderly couple had ironical implications too. They were physically deaf. They were also deaf to the sermon of Mr. Wakeman and to the commotions created by Miss. Docker. Their physical infirmities were the reason that limited them from participating in the sermon with the real spirit. Though the Sarsaparillans were able and had eyes and ears, they remained indifferent towards religion and God. They were spiritually deaf and blind like the Bleekers and Furzes. Mr. Wakeman’s sermons were meaningless for them. May Brit Akerholt rightly pointed out in *Patrick White* that:

Their physical affliction heightens the sense of non-communication and indifference and illustrates the limitations of Sarsaparilla and its unwillingness to remove its blindfolds in order to become involved with life.” (93)

The situation became still worse when congregation uttered their prayer in the mode of traditional litany of Anglican Church. Mrs. Wakeman started with her beautiful prayer. She prayed for her husband. She was ready to undergo any pain and asked God to give the needed strength and relieve him from his sufferings. Mr. Bleeker prayed for honest customers, who would pay on the first of the month. He requested God to protect him from mortgages. He was just having a small business firm and requested the Almighty to protect him. Mr. Furze requested God to make the Egg Board to treat them good.
Mrs. Furze requested God to protect her cabbage from white butterfly. The children requested that the prayer need to be over as soon as possible. Mrs. Bleeker prayed to God to stop their leaking roof. The requests made by the Sarsaparillans were extremely funny. They could not surrender their ego and worldly wishes in front of God. Christianity in practice means the dedication of life to the unselfish service of God and man, by remembering the ideals of Jesus Christ. The Christian renounces worldly ideals such as self-advancement, personal or family ambition, the accumulation of money, or the enjoyment, for their own sake. They seek first and in all things God’s kingdom and His righteousness. On the contrary, the prayers of Sarsaparillans only highlight their selfishness and materialistic attitudes.

The rector, Mr. Wakeman, who had to lead the people in the path of the Almighty, was himself in doubts. He was not strong and confident enough to guide them. He was very sure that words would fail him in the middle of the sermon. He would be judged and criticised by Miss. Docker. This was going to happen very soon. He was clear about this. So, he prayed to God to have mercy on Miss. Docker, the instrument of judgment. Mrs. Wakeman loved her husband in spite of his weaknesses. She found the image of God in her husband. Miss. Docker prayed to God to have mercy on her. It was God, who had directed and given her the power to find the real personality of the people. If she was going to judge means, it was God’s wish and not her own intention.
In the process, she too was feeling wounded. Mrs. Wakeman found God in her husband’s image and Miss. Docker in her own. Thus, both of them indulged in the act of blasphemy. As an epilogue, once again the congregation reiterated their prayers:

Mr. Furze: O Lord, the Egg Board ….

Mr. Bleeker: O Lord of justice, Woolworths and supermarkets are driving us out!

Mrs. Bleeker and Mrs. Furze (in unison) Dear Lord, we cannot talk like our daughters-in-law. Do not let them laugh at us.

Little Girl: Please God, why can’t we sit down more often in church? I pray there’s ice-cream pudding for dinner. (C.S.3.7. 255-256)

Mrs. Wakeman empathized with her husband and was ready to help by providing the words that he would be searching for. Mr. Wakeman instructed the congregation to follow the hymn number 240. Miss. Docker was annoyed over this and immediately objected the rector’s selection. Already, she had chosen and informed him to have the hymn number 54. In the middle of the sermon, she loudly shouted that “54! I told you!” (C.S.3.7. 256) This was more than enough for the struggling Wakeman. Miss. Docker’s presence was a great hindrance for him. The other side of the scene was pathetic. The old Furzes and the Bleekers could not follow, what Mr. Wakeman was telling.
Mr. Wakeman, Mrs. Wakeman and Miss. Docker together sang the hymn. But Miss. Docker’s voice dominated the others. When Mr. Wakeman climbed the pulpit, he stumbled. Miss. Docker almost rushed for help, but, he corrected himself. Mrs. Wakeman could not withstand her husband’s clumsiness. Somehow, he managed and started his sermon.

Mr. Wakeman sorted out his notes and with some triumph started the sermon. He had decided to talk about sin. He was going to talk not about ordinary sin, but the sin of goodness. His address was not about ordinary virtue but, militant virtue. Miss. Docker could not understand things. She criticized that Mr. Wakeman was not only terrible as a preacher, but he was a man of confusion. He elaborated his idea that we do often pride ourselves on virtue. We normally boast about our virtue until, it turned out to be ugly and absurd. He tried to explain some details about the humble persons. He took pumpkin as an example to explain his ideas. Miss. Docker intervened and collapsed his thinking process. She found fault with the object, the pumpkin, which he had selected to explain his point. Mr. Wakeman just ignored and continued his explanation. Miss. Docker was determined and accused that Mr. Wakeman had picked the wrong example to explain his ideas. Mr. Wakeman persevered and continued his explanation. But, Miss. Docker was so powerful and did not allow him to continue. Mr. Wakeman lost himself, he felt that he was blinded
and fell down with the prayer to God to protect him from the power of darkness.

The Furzes and the Bleekers were not in a position to understand what was happening. Actually, Mr. Wakeman struggled and collapsed. The deaf couple could not comprehend the situation and appreciated the sermon of Mr. Wakeman. Patrick White had portrayed very clearly the condition of Sarsaparillans and their attitude towards religion. People were completely indifferent towards the religion and those who came for sermons were there just for the sake of attending. They lacked the real interest. Their prayers were too personal and selfish.

Miss. Docker did not have any rights to interfere in the sermon. But, she assumed the role of a judge and found fault with Mr. Wakeman. The rector was unable to realize his weakness and could not overcome the power of darkness. He was not confident in, the all powerful God and ultimately in himself and lost his life. That afternoon was a windier one. Miss. Docker did not face a windier day like that. On the way, she saw a stray dog. She invited the dog and wanted to be friendly with him. On the contrary, the dog wetted her nylon. After Mr. Wakeman’s tragedy, Miss. Docker had a wounded conscience. So, she felt that the dog had judged her. One of the Sarsaparillans misunderstood and asked why she was judged by God. Actually, she had uttered dog, but he mistook the
word for god as he was drunk. She realized that the pun in the word, the dog is ‘God’ turned around. She never understood other people’s feelings and expectations. She just went on judging and criticizing people. Now, she was judged by a stray dog.

The idea that she was judged by a dog came to her mind. But, she did not bend her mind into the thought deeply. Her understanding lived only for a short time. She quickly regained composure and returned to her own nature of supremacy. She told that: “Well, my friends will all be wondering where I am. They’ll be waiting to dish up dinner. (starts on her way)” (C.S.3.8. 264) The Sarsaparillans did not want to be judged. They did not want their weakness to be exposed. Thus, they avoided reality and existed in a state of delusion. Therefore, they schemed and avoided Miss. Docker very cleverly. They did not have the heart to take care of the poor, unfortunate Miss. Docker. Her state of isolation did not rouse compassion and kindness in the heart of Sarsaparillans. They were ready to pay for their sin. They even evaded themselves from the activities of the church and religion. The church in itself was in a poor state. The rector who had to lead the congregation lacked confidence and vigour. People who were to be humble were vigorous. Thus, they lead a life of their choice. In the end, they wanted to forget everything they had done and felt happy to destroy the evidences that reminded them of their past. May Brit Akerholt rightly pointed out in her *Patrick White*:
In the final analysis everyone stands judged. In their rejection of Miss. Docker, the Sarsaparillans fail to look into their own heart to find the compassion to understand and accept ‘the poor unfortunates’, to whom they themselves belong. … A cherry Soul ends on a note of bitter despair, as the delusion of life goes on endlessly, irrevocably. (96-97)

The Sarsaparillans’ attitude towards religion, the mindset of the do-gooders, and the people’s lack of compassion had been explicitly portrayed by Patrick White in *A Cherry Soul*. The attitudes of the Australians in general with reference to the above mentioned points and the attitude of the church goers in particular had been realized in *A Cheery Soul*. The next chapter analyses the mindset of the Australian intellectual community with special reference to *A Night on Bald Mountain*. 