CONCLUSION
Despite Welty's demonstrable affinities with the South and with southern writers which a number of critics including Louise Westling have seen, being a southerner is at once the most important and the least important thing about Eudora Welty. She possesses the southern writer's sense of the past or feeling for the metaphysical, but her writing is never parochial. Her one story about the civil war, "The Burning" forces the same truth almost about any war. That is, Eudora Welty is historically minded without being antiquarian. The centre of her work is an absorption with the mystery of personality.

Eudora Welty's use of myth and fantasy in her fiction has always fascinated her readers. But an interesting feature of her use of these two tools of technique is that they lead to a depiction of the real world. The novel or the short story for Welty is bound up in the local, the real, the present, the ordinary day-to-day of human experience. It is significant, however, that she does not espouse allegiance to the photographic depiction of surfaces or appearances. Place, for Welty, is associated with feeling and her rendering of place shows a blend of the objective and the subjective, the precise and the atmospheric. A story like "A Still Moment" in which the naturalist Adubon, the brigand James Murrell, and the Evangelist Lorenzo Dow converge on
a remote part of the Natchez Trace shows Welty's historical consciousness, which partakes of personal visions and southern-rooted universal myths. Fiction, according to Welty, penetrates chronological time to reach our deeper version of time that is given to us by the way we think and feel. Miss Welty is concerned with time and place because they reveal character. She is engaged in the exploration of the mystery of personality in a territory showing the tenuous difference between dream and reality, irrational and rational, fantasy and fact. In a story like “Power House”, the fantasy image which Welty evokes, raises a heated argument about whether “Power House’s wife Gypsy positively is or positively is not dead.” The reader is not supposed to trust the mysterious assertions and denials of powerhouse, a tremendous human dynamo whose mode of being itself is fantasy. The facts of the case simply ceases to exist. The narrator of the story, assuming the point of view of white people towards the Negro Jazz musician, gives the impression of abandoning herself to the fantasy observed and created. In “Old Mr.Marblehall” through subtle manoeuvres in point of view, Welty shows the public attitude of Natchez, the “little party-giving town” to Mr.Marblehall suffering from a sense of boredom and insignificance. The attitude of indifference on the part of the town and Mr.Marblehall’s rebellious
reaction to this attitude of unconcern are the theme of the story which builds up a series of fantasy images of Mr. Marblehall making an effort to overcome his isolation. In fact, one of the salient features of the use of fantasy in Eudora Welty’s short stories is that her accounts which are essentially regional, are redeemed from provinciality by her talent for fantasy and the grotesque. Fantasy is further a mode by which Welty creates the interior of a mind and landscape in order to investigate the truth of the human heart. Welty’s distinction lies in her method by means of which she effects a reconciliation between the inner and outer worlds in a particular way. For Welty fantasy implies much of the factual and she employs it in order to reveal the heightened consciousness of man. For all her strange and dream-like settings, Welty never strays from the Natchez Trace which is in itself evidence of the sense of reality she conveys.

In her projection of the inner life, in conveying nuances of thought, feeling, and an inward atmosphere, and in the use of point of view, Eudora Welty may be said to owe a debt to Henry James, James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf. She works by means of a deep penetration of the minds and feelings of her characters. Nina in “Moonlake” reflects upon changing for a moment into – or slipping into – a Gertrude or a Mrs. Gruenwald. “To have been an orphan” is
one of her thoughts. Welty does not employ the stream of consciousness style as such, but in “The Winds” she approaches it in conveying the content of Josie’s dreams during the storm. She achieves a blend of interior monologue and dialogue, objective and subjective description, and fact and fantasy. Even such primitive characters as Livvie and Albert are found interesting character sketches. Ruby Fisher, Livvie, Old Mr.Marblehall, Phoenix, Clytie are all, “vessels of consciousness” in their own limited way. The world of Eudora Welty’s fiction shows how the deaf and the dumb, the old Negro hero, the travelling salesman are all “vessels of consciousness” because of their common humanity. Springing from a lyrical impulse, her stories reveal the display of a visual imagination and a penchant for seeing things in their connectedness. It is these characteristics of Eudora Welty’s writing which mark her out as one of the most prominent American short story writers.

In her presentation of the interior landscape of the mind, Welty creates moods as powerful as those developed by good poetry. Each story appears so distinctive that what is often ignored in her work is the formation of a larger social vision emphasized by the “closely interconnected stories” that possess the amplitude of the cultural history of the south but nevertheless depicting universal human
experience and emotions. While Faulkner portrayed the large outer world of historical action, Welty would poetically evoke the inner world of psychological nuance. Though historical personages occasionally figure in Eudora Welty's short stories and though a view of the cultural history of the south emerges from her writing, history more suitably performs in her writing the function of providing atmospheric verisimilitude. Thus we find Eudora Welty assuming what Henry James termed "the tone of the historian".

In the 1930s, the southern mind was torn between a golden agrarian past and a decadent present which lead to the formation of an industrial society. The conflict between the values of the life of the traditional south and the contemporary south created tensions and resulted in the Southern Renaissance.

In 1940s, a new breed of young writers – Eudora Welty, Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, Flannery O'Connor, Madison Jones, Reynolds Price, to name a few, have entered the southern literary scenario. They studied the conflict between the old south and the new south and the changing face of the south left then confused. Each of the writers tried to bring about a balance in their own unique
way. Eudora Welty tried to surmount their impasse through a portrayal of personal relationships based on love and understanding.

Eudora Welty’s novels present a panoramic view of the universe of southern women but this does not mean that her novels present only half the picture. Men are always there who have their own role to play in the novel. Her stories portray individuals, families, and sometimes even whole communities. Set in intensely southern surroundings, her characters are southern in nature, be it in their pride, their family or their community.

Human spirit is the same whether it belongs to the South or any other part. It seems to have survived many dark ages. The eternal human spirit survives despite all the horrors of the world. In the words of Barbara Carson ‘Welty’s holistic vision allows for the human experience of separateness, individuality, and conflict and all the pain and triumph associated with these. It also, however, suggests that those who exercise another way of knowing, beyond analysis and discursive thinking, will see that there is no such things as separateness: every part belongs inseparably to a larger whole. From this perspective, boundaries blur – between the human and natural
Welty's main concern is with human experience, from life to death.

In *Delta Wedding*, her exploration of human life through the Fairchild family is a remarkable one. Fairchilds present unity, togetherness and strong family relationships. One message comes out loud and clear in the novel: the family bonds are held in the highest esteem and are assigned the greatest value by every member of the family. In times of provocation what comes forth spontaneously is not the individual strength of its members but the strength of the whole family. This shows the love and devotion among the family members. They look at each other with little starts of love and understanding. Family concretizes the human relations. It is an all pervading unit of society.

*Delta Wedding*, a joyous celebration of life, is well brought out by the author. The plantation family is a microcosm of the collective society of the Delta. Welty believes that the concept of place is as primary as plot or character. Elmo Howell links Welty in her concern for place with a host of other southern writers, all of whom have learned to depend on the history and characteristics embedded in the soil of the South. The place means the concept of home in Welty's
fiction. She explores the vitals of region and dexterously manages the sensitive balance of nativity with universal appeal. She has staked her own claim in that Mississippi country; and because of the strength and originality of her creative imagination, she has also made that country uniquely her own; attached it to her Mississippi place and its times, past and present and securely placed it in the timeless and universe realm of art. John Edward Hardy says about *Delta Wedding*, ‘It has most characteristically developed that sense of symbolic particularity of things, of a place and a time and people which can make the good regionalist, the most universal artists or novelists at any rate. It is the most ‘one’ – whole.’

Welty explores the truths of life with a sense of totality. In *Losing Battles* she designs human condition as specific and explicit. She transcends the local materials without too obviously showing her transcendence, narrates the art of universal moral circumstance. Basing on the theme of reunion of Granny Vaughn-Renfro-Beechem family of Boone country she subtly discloses the human predicaments. Boone country is a poverty-stricken place in which the very question of survival is at stake.
In *The Optimist's Daughter*, the pathetic life of the widow after the death of her husband is moving. Like Laurel, many widows are humiliated and ill-treated by society. Laurel McKelva Hand, the protagonist of the novel, brings several familiar concerns of the novelist like the mystery of the private and public self, the attachment to home, the absorbing love and separateness that forms the core of human relationships. The novel mainly revolves round Judge McKelva, his second wife Fay, and Laurel his daughter, and Becky, the first wife of Judge and the mother of Laurel who is remembered by Laura in her memories. McKelva came to New Orleans from Mt. Salus to enable Judge to consult an eye specialist who decides a date for his operation. Fay is furious for not consulting her before fixing the date, as she is more concerned about her inability to go to the carnival than her husband. Laurel who comes home craving for love and for being with her father is repelled by the crude behaviour of Fay. Laurel's attempts to save her father fail and ultimately it results in his death. Though Fay and Laurel stay together, there is no communication between them. Laurel recalls the past, her brief marital life, her mother and her death. After her father's death, she feels that she has become rootless and displaced. In contrast to the large families of *Delta Wedding* and *Losing Battles*, it is a small
family with parents and one child that is depicted in *The Optimist's Daughter*. Numerous relationships have an effect upon this nuclear family which is explored by Laurel Hand. This family does not conform to the sustaining group nor does it bind its members to the ongoing culture. Eudora Welty depicts the same type of troubled, destructive, grotesque family relationships, whether it is in a large family or in small families.

Welty's optimistic philosophy of life is drawn from the careful observation of the whole world. Welty establishes that the past is indispensable for any person to grow but at the same time she asserts that attention should be paid to the future. Every human being has to care for the past, present, and the future. Southern people have a rich past and it is the very basis of their future. Roots are more important. The author explores the life cycle moving on the wheels of past-present-future. Though the past is alluring, the future is also important for any human being to survive. Welty's settings in these three novels, the Delta, the Boone country, Mt. Salus are small scale worlds. The people in these regions have common traits. They herald both regional as well as universal truth. The characters speak of omnipresent human nature. Family, the fundamental unit of society, is extensively dealt with by the author. She represents the southern
family which in turn gives us a panoramic view of the family of the world in general. She represents a wide variety of characters – black, white, rich, poor, young, old, married, unmarried, eccentric, grotesque, neurotics, mentally challenged, and thus she covers the whole gamut of human experience.
References


