INTRODUCTION
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Commonwealth Literature and particularly, Commonwealth fiction has been and continues to be an area where the amorphous, the yet unsubstantiated, human patterns of thought and perception are finding a form for themselves. This project seeks to present an evaluatory exploration of the two segments of the colonial psyche, the insistence on the strength of the individual as a sustaining power and its extension, and expansion into the acceptance of the activating, omniscient power of metaphysics, as a crucial move in establishing this faith in humanism. The segments of literary works chosen from the region of New Literatures in English, have been carefully selected to put forth the research idea that humanism as the stabilising force, balancing the humours within the race, assumes its power and function only through the recentering of metaphysics within its body. The Commonwealth text, rising out of the ashes of the colonial experience, the victim of an upheaval, is a phoenix-like being, strengthened in destruction, and more coherent than ever in interpreting and imaginatively representing its experience of destruction, which continues its seismic tremors long after the actual collision. The much explored spaces within commonwealth literature offer themselves not merely as material for an identity formation, or settlements within Nature which in itself has offered a fresh theme to create 'geografiction', but, as a potential area wherein fresh forms of acceptance is visualised in the binding, well, of the spirit within the body of an eroded faith in human values.

1. Leer, Martin 1990 'From Linear to Areal: Suggestions towards a Comparative literary geography of Canada and Australia.' Kunapipi, Vol. XII No.3
In Jean-Paul Sartre's words.

'Mysticism suits displaced persons and superfluous children.'

'The anxieties of childhood are metaphysical'. 2

Belonging to an uprooted race, brought together for new identification marks and signs, the Commonwealth writer appeals to those edges and brinks or those lines of division between established knowledge and accepted norms, suited for times of apparent normalcy, for inspiration and material for the reformulation of images, symbols and myths to better define their frozen state, in the mid-course of a specific cultural pursuit. The dissertation has put itself together by working out its research substance from the novels written by three Commonwealth fiction writers, Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist, Arun Joshi, the Second-generation representative of Indian fiction in English, and Patrick White the Australian novelist who liberated the Australian-fictional theme from its persistent exploration of the convict background. The three novelists were chosen for their ability to monitor well, with well-trained foresight, to look ahead and recall from their dislocated memory, the essential imaginative inspiration, to regroup fragmented items of individual cultures, to achieve distinction within the over-simplification of a global culture.

The proposed research topic also found its ground in the regrouping, assimilating processes that work themselves out within these fictional creations. All the three novelists post themselves on the watch-tower stationed over a stretch of deadened humanity, specific to their region and time. They operate as isolated surveyors of the terrain which is a large area of scrutiny usually enveloping the universe as a whole, within which they gauge and measure the distance to be covered, in striking a balance between the powers. These novelists are the children of the evolving fictional world, therefore their fears are metaphysical, in the sense that, they clearly perceive the dislocation within humanism, as the removal of that area of possibilities, the abstractions, essential to thwart the dangers of rationalist fixations. Two poems by the Australian poet Judith Wright explain and represent the pursuit in specific terms. The first poem chosen called 'The World and the Child' is read as speaking of the third world novelist and his place within an established literary system, overwhelming and over-crowded, circulating, around his tutored being. To alleviate himself from the threat of obliteration, posed by a tradition alien to his origins, the convinced view projected is that the novelists attempt to explore regions that lie beyond the reach of the human imagination, as it is confined to exploring the objectified reality, of the superiority and complexity of the human psyche. To define a darkness that lies beneath all contrasts superficially arranged to define human settlements on the surface of the globe brings the third world artist on par with the universal creative artist. He visualises his role as a more competent one as he is the child of pain inflicted too deep, placed too close to the heart of nothingness and therefore to perceive the brilliance that lies within the darkness becomes an essential part of his quest. The naked eye trained to withstand the glare of objective reality now is trained to perceive the light within, thus transforming a va-
cancy from its absolute barrenness to an area of new discoveries.

This is the child. He has not yet put out leaves, His bare skin tastes the air; his naked eyes know nothing but strange shapes. Nothing is named; nothing is ago, nothing is yet. Death is that which dies, and goes no farther; for the mere dead he grieves, and grief has yet no meaning and no size.

.... What is the unresting hunger that shapes the soft-fleshed face, makes the bone harden?
Rebel-rebel, it cries. Never be satisfied.
Do not weaken for their grief; do not give in or pardon.
Only through this pain, this black desire, this anger,
Shall you at last return to you\textsubscript{2} lost garden. 3

The world to the third world novelist is, as the poem answers 'The Secret no man knows' and yet it suggests of 'some vast side'.

The 'vast side' rescues these novelists from the over-simplified life of a new breed of cosmopolitan centres in regions which functioned zealously as individual organisms, each contributing its skill and strength to the survival of the one unity. Therefore in the three novelists chosen for study, the exploration of this 'vast side' becomes crucial, it is merely a retraining of the inward eye to achieve that lost coherence and comprehensive body of thought. Comprehensive coming together of the dismembered third world individual is, as it is visualised by Judith Wright in her 'Vision'.

3 Wright, Judith 1990 - 'The World and the Child' A Human Pattern Judith Wright Selected Poems Angus and Roberts Modern Poets. Copyright in this edition Judith Wright 1990 Pg.27
He who once saw the world beyond the world,
So that each tree and building, stone and face,
cracked open like a mask before a flame and
showed the tree, the stone, the face behind it-
walked forever with that beautification. Waking
at night, against the blank of darkness, knew he
contained it; touched hand upon brow and in his
gladness cried, "I, even I!"- knowing the human
ends in the divine.

Pride, greed and ignorance- the world's three veils-
through them he walked and saw what lay beyond;
Saw what the human eye was meant to see;
and watched the greedy and the stupid fumble
in a blind fear with intellect and pride-
those blades that cut the ignorant hands that hold them-
So he was sad for victim and oppressor,
for crying child and brute with the slack mouth,
for schemer, clod and safe-respectable man
and all who had not seen what he had seen.
And yet these, too, moved in that second world
and stood up real behind the masks of hatred.
The very wound and weapon bled and glittered
as though both steel and flesh were made of light
and men the instruments in some high battle
where God incomprehensibly warred on God.
Wherefore he closed his eyes and hands, and prayed
Vision and action know their proper limits,
and knowledge teach him more humility. 4

The entire poem explicates the thematic experience that unfolds in the selected works of the three novelists. The unifying strand which lies as the major narrative vein is the conflict presented variously by the three writers, working its way towards the knowledge that 'Vision and action know their proper limits', and when it impresses itself upon the mind of the proposed character, humility sets in, with the metaphysical vision,

Variety comes into the picture with the exclusive cultural memory nursed by each individual writer despite sharing the common shock of the colonial experience. The colonial experience in this context, of humanism expanding to accommodate metaphysics, is the necessary release from the imposed definitions of individual cultures in an age of global assimilation where the individual is permitted to visualise the inner form, in full possession of his personal self. The traumatised historical background is in fact an expression of a new kind of deliverance from past forms. The fractured background breaks a path to the present alternatives which is initially a commotion of choices, of stations and stands. Unlike Wole Soyinka, who puts forth this rhetorical question, in his *The Interpreters*,

If the dead are not strong enough to be ever-present
in our being, should they not be as they are, dead? 6

Chinua Achebe and Arun Joshi explore the past precisely to transcend a typical Commonwealth condition of self-delimitation. The prime focus on cultural details is an attempt made by Chinua Achebe to locate the present point of centrality. The reflexive capacity of the inquiry made in his works allows the expansion to take place. The

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6 Soyinka, Wole 1965 *The Interpreters* Flamingo edition Pg. 7
current philosophical conclusions about metaphysical inquiry as a self-enactment, a middle-voice function, not self-delimiting but operating in a dual sense as expanding the meaning of End as both demarcation and an opening beyond demarcation is applicable to the works of both Chinua Achebe and Arun Joshi. Both artists operate under the premise that the present moment is an obliterated neutralised period. Therefore, from the neutral point, they counterbalance the death and decay of the present moment, by reviving links with a certain discontinued cultural memory. This creates the conducive atmosphere for the vital expansion to take place. The whole procedure is an inversion or reversal of a classical acceptance of the hierarchical placement of God's designs over man's fragile attempts at world-making.

The inversion in Achebe's works is located in his resuscitating a past complete in its pastness as discontinued memory, whereas Arun Joshi's fiction reawakens within a particular mind a suppressed or dormant influence specific to all cultural origins; it is in fact a recalling of the instinctive primeval strength within modern man who lies desensitised in his couched comforts of a modern civilization. In Achebe the new trends, in the midst of an exclusive African community designed to suit the Nature that binds it, can survive only by bowing to the traditions established within the landscape. The permanent possibility of interpretation for the New African generation is possible only by assimilation of both features, of the historical present within the historical past. But for an artist from the Indian scenario, where a range of cultural patterns exist within the strong fortress of a tradition, that has made it a habit to convert every collision with a new influence into an embellishment, the return is not to any one particular choice, but to the very essence that establishes this order. Therefore both artists, trek through the debris of mechanical manners of the twentieth-century world to arrive at this centre.
The study visualises the works of Chinua Achebe and Arun Joshi as not distinct bodies speaking about the expansion but as parts of that swing from humanism, as a specific concern for a lost set of values, designed for social living, to a disturbed co-existence of both consciousness, of different values within the many worlds revolving around and existing within a familiar scale of values. Besides making contact with a disconnected memory the emphasis is on recognition, of the multiplicity that lies within each moment and an individual's perception of this moment. Recognition lies as the basis of all literatures but it is specific to the Commonwealth condition as it represents a race whose native voice lay suppressed under the colonisers tongue. The recognition is a necessary step to find ones voice in the colonisers language, to recentre ones comprehension within the present moment and then make ones way back into the past to retie those severed strands of tradition and culture, link it to the present moment to add necessary variety, adventure and points of view to enliven a world of deathly over-simplifications.

Within these movements of recentering the works of Achebe focus primarily on recording in the written form the newly recovered African voice. Therefore his is the first translating step towards the recovery of that middle-voice designed to function within the mindscape. And Arun Joshi attempts to recover, stationed within the exclusive atmosphere a language of silent perception, a communication heightened by sensations, denied within the synthetic relationships of the world known by him. The sensitive survival patterns of the tribal region and the protagonists search for a place within it, perceives spirituality as an exotic experience, therefore to name their search as a search for God, hesitates over a definite, conclusive admission. In the wide swing
from the search for values to the area from where they find their origin is covered in its entire length and substance by Patrick White. His works encompass the stages of development focused on by both Achebe and Arun Joshi. It is evident from his consistent narrative structuring, which begins at the beginning of the represented life and courses its way through to its end which always is a revelation of something thus far sought after, either consciously or unconsciously, therefore ceasing to be an end. The body records the failure of settlements, and the vacuous regions between relationships particular to the Australian landscape; basically, the narrative records its particularity in the ever present reminders of transience, shaping around the bodily failure, the successful transcendence from linear perceptions to the many centres of interpretational strengths lying beyond the well-trodden path from Life to Death.

From the West Indian lot of literary achievements Wilson Harris offers enough support in this regard. His works have been variously evaluated and one such evaluation perceives his fiction as creating a 'parallel possibility'. The opinion is formed around Harris's attempts at creating a Third World metaphor for a decentered structure, to break down the oppressive pressure of the victor and victim reality and the breaking down of classical realism to make this possible. The same when applied to the three writers chosen, moves in studied intensity from an emphasis on 'the stasis of the victor and victim' to the creation of a hope that promises to expel the realities of conquest.

7 The 'concept of parallel possibility, according to Sandra Drake, is a way to break the 'obsessive centrality' to attain a decentered system, and break the idea of history as the 'stasis of victor and victim'.
that Harris battled against to make re-visions a possibility between the solid structures of forced and mutual acceptance of a particular order. The close scrutiny of a specific and isolated history breaks it down to leave the options open, for the new formulations and possible flights of imaginative experience yet unexplored and untried, but not unknown. The unknown is acknowledge, which is the significant movement that has been closely tracked and studied in each of the texts chosen. The 'living, closed eye', a creation of Harris in his Palace of the Peacock and his comment about same, in his talk, 'Literacy and the Imagination' explains the substance and mechanics of the envisioned expansion.

The living, closed eye therefore is a verbal construct, but it is something sculpted as well. In the beginning was the Word, in the beginning was the language of sculpture, in the beginning was the intuitive/inner voice of the mask, in the beginning was the painted cosmos and its orchestra of darkness and light, the utterance of pregnant mask and sculpture-all threaded into the fabric of many presences known and unknown, sometimes there or here but apparently unknowable (however aloquent, however active). 8

In dismissing post-modernist's attempts at opining as a kind of game that lacks depth since it has discarded the unconscious, he insists on keeping ones narrative body open to a tradition of depth, 'which returns, which nourishes us even though it appears to have vanished, and that it creates fiction in the ways in which the creative imagination

comes into dialogue with clues of revisionary moment. The spectral burden of vanishing and re-appearing is at the heart of the writer's task.'

Coming to the particular works, and the patterns of supportive evidence which they have allowed to be perceived, one has to make this point clear, that, of three sequences of fictional representations, those that have focused their narrative attention on a social and historical detail insist on this expansion, in their overwhelming interest on the present, hard realities, without exploring the abstract possibilities in depth.

Of the individual authors chosen and their works, the dissertation has devoted its first chapter to Chinua Achebe's works, precisely for this reason, that he represents a race that has used the written form, to compile reason for the present generation, in their process of becoming. From a static state of blind groping after Western role models the African text presents itself as a being transforming changing and becoming, in the hands of this particular artist. His art and style have been described as being deceptively simple, and within the simple narrative style lie the spaces within his works that have allowed our explorations. African fiction particularly Achebe's works were initially, observed curiously to witness what seemed to be the dissipation of the 'myth of the noble savage'. Besides which, Achebe draws the attention of the Western reader and even a reader from the Asian background, comfortably nestling within her strong cultural background, by raising a distinctly refined new voice of Africa; in successfully becoming by transforming fact into a fable, as is witnessed in his two novels, better expressed as novels of memory. Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God are the two novels that startled the reading public of the world from their common aristocratic culture to their 'common culture'.

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9 Caroll, David 1980 Chinua Achebe. Macmillan Commonwealth writers series. London and Basingstoke, Pg.5
These two works suggest two ways of becoming with reference to the operative past, wherein Achebe uses art as the fire to resurrect the lost form of an African ethos, not as a complete image to be transplanted from the 'then' to the 'now', but to cast it across his race as the Hamletian shadow to rouse within them a certain consciousness about themselves. The resurrection of this past prominence, is both an attempt to bring about an awakening as well as to steady himself as an artist, who, in the presence of a cannibalistic present political set up, could sense the detachment developing within himself towards his own society. Soon after the writing of his second and fourth novels, No Longer at Ease and A Man of the People, Achebe had expressed his inability to write novels, as the present moment provoked intense disillusionment and the anger at the political massacre of all that was African in its dignity, well rested within the past moment. Caught within the context of his struggle against the new stereotypes generated amongst them, Achebe visualises the fiction form as an artistic endeavor for times of normalcy. In fact the chosen line of argument in one way answers David Carroll's question placed at the close of his introduction to his book Chinua Achebe (1980) which is,

'Can the novelist as a social reformer allow himself the luxury of acknowledging that wherever something stands, something else will stand beside it? 10

As a conscientious writer Achebe attempts to recentre that 'something else' beside the African psyche that strayed around the many Western options to an African identity. Another crucial space created within his works that permitted the research topic

10 Caroll, David 1980 Chinua Achebe Macmillan Commonwealth Writers Series, London and Basingstoke, Pg.29
to develop within their premises, is the fact that David Caroll emphatically states in his introduction to this book, with reference to the Igbo religion,

Igbo religion transcends local boundaries. It consists of three major categories of belief - the worship of the great public deities, the cult of personal gods, and the worship of ancestors. 11

The two ways of becoming utilise this aspect of transcending local boundaries, amongst the pressures of present conflicts, to fulfill the crucial demand that lay at the heart of the Igbo culture, which is, integration. To weave and integrate into what was believed to be the solid structure of their existence the Igbo's accommodated every considerable form of power, wherein the abstract was made a local reality, into that 'something else' that stood beside the present moment offering assurance of uninterrupted continuity.

Since Achebe's fiction represents the first voice of recognisable tones, the, chapter scrutinizes his works as the 'middle voice' function in African literature where tones of anger, impotence and fear of obliteration still continue to vibrate under strict control, amidst creative endeavors of writers from the same region. Integration assures one of objective concreteness, hence the first four works, mentioned above, attempt to, beside casting the great shadow of a lost dignity, create a fictional reality of the dislocated

11 Caroll, David 1980 Chinua Achebe Macmillan Commonwealth Writers Series. London and Basingstoke, Pg.17
political order through a mock-heroic representation of the same. In the last novel Anthills of the Savannah, the two objectified realities of a past fact woven into a fable, the memory well connected to the present, and the mock-heroic, representation of current ironies, level themselves out to a ritualistic recentering of past values within the unalterable human patterns of a contemporary African reality.

The chapter that has devoted its space for the scrutiny of Chinua Achebe's fiction is titled 'Masquerade Dancing: A study of the Rhythms of Humanism and Metaphysics in Chinua Achebe's novels.' The phrase 'masquerade dancing' is taken from Achebe's preface to the novel *Arrow of God*, included in his African Trilogy. The paradox involved in the simple narrative style of story-telling is the regular breaking down of 'the block-function' within each phase of the evolving African Society. To accept the new choice of an international place within the larger global community, the author, in representing an authentic picture of pre-colonial Igbo society has also made it public, the oppressive block-functions within the system that made expansion, both physical and mental an impossibility. To liberate the mind, through proper comprehension of the present moment is crucial to this writer. His willingness to present the same in his unbiased representation of his community, had shaped the initial critical appraisals of his talents. Basically the new cultured voice raising itself from the dark continent had drawn the attention of the reading public and the clear style of representing a state of oppression which crosses the limited scope of the coloniser, colonised relationship, for easy identification with the situation portrayed. Since Achebe is concerned with the present moment and the past is only the smelting fuel to re-order the present, this basic artistic concern has shaped the texts to comprehend the expansion of humanism which in the twentieth-century world, is a term that obstructed single-minded en-
deavor of building gigantic power structures, has fashioned latest criticism that clini-
cally observes the power of the language to hold the narrative edifice of the fictional
segment built around a collapsible theme of new affiliations against a tradition that
offered very little assistance in reclaiming or recentering its influences within the new
generation of Africans. Objective worth, in its multiple suggestiveness is crucial to
both Achebe the artist and the new eyes trained on his works. In his explanation of the
'Mbari', an Igbo communal enterprise in creativity, he claims,

"... art is the celebration of my reality; of art in its social dimension of
the creative potential in all of us and of the need to exercise this latent
energy again and again in artistic expression and communal, co-operative
enterprise."

This is a crucial move in not reducing the past influence into an exhibit within an
enclosure in the present moment, on the other hand it is an objectification of the mental
redirection of ones inquiries into the subjective sphere. The reading of the narrative is
not to trace where one influence dissipates to either end itself or make a new beginning
but to recognise the region within it where endlessness of all possibilities is inherent.
As the Mbari tradition reflects, in the centre lies the power that irradiates patterns of
survival to the periphery, keeping the human element alive in a mechanized world.

The recentering of African spirituality through the invocation of the Mbari, the void
created by Conrad in the heart of his *Heart of Darkness* is filled by the illuminating
influence of a lost order and the adequate placing of the hybrid second self within the
present era of identical destinies. It is as Luke Strongman says with reference to the

12 Achebe, Chinua 1990 "African Literature as Restoration of Celebration"
*Kunapipi* International Arts Magazine Vol. XII No.2 1990 Pg.3
new identification means,

Writing from the periphery is, in fact, writing from the centre, or rather that notions of centre and periphery are becoming increasingly redundant. As Les Murray puts it. 'I figure the centre is everywhere. It goes with the discovery that the planet is round, not flat. Every point on a sphere is the centre'. Apparent fragmentations are in fact the architecture of a rebuilding; it is the emergence of a new and rehoned cultural archetypes and mythologies. 13

Re-examination of influences has made this recentering of metaphysics crucial to the survival of humanism. In the first novel Things Fall Apart, Unoka the character who appears briefly, as Okonkwo's father, maintains this contact with the other, flouting present conditions of the Umojiian society. But Achebe within this novel is concerned with reinstating the past glory of his race and so underplays the vital space created for this study, by linking Unoka's distractions as the serious cause for the breakdown in Okonkwo's personal self, which is a deep fear of failure masquerading under the mask of absolute fearlessness, stretched to its incomprehensible limits as is proved in the Ikemefuna incident. While the two dominant segments are the old and new influences within the Igbo territory and the new affinities developing amidst various groups, the dramatisation effectively reports well this encounter, the personal battle fought within Okonkwo and the compromise struck by the community as a whole, that preserves African metaphysics for posterity to revitalize and re-energize. The same, within Arrow of God, a novel which once again is a segment of memory recovered, focuses at the outset on the political character and one man's imprisonment within his

13 Strongman, Luke 1993 'The Trans-modern Author: Five Contemporary Writers Kunapipi Vol. XV, No.3, Denmark, Pg.150
desire, to liberate himself from a prescribed role and local definitions. The core of spiritual strength within the Igbo stronghold is presented as limited to the sphere of submissive acceptance while Ezeulu represents the new race of the powerful inheritors of Africa's future. It is an extended parable that variously portrays, as an Igbo proverbial tale, the result of rebellion against one's own and as a universal parable presenting the defeat of a man who missed the ironies held in store for him by a God whom he thought he knew too well. Humanism as a preserver of rights for all human creatures under one canopy of global unity is rather intolerant towards the one-man personal preservation strategies carried out by Ezeulu. It also sets rolling the existential questions posed by our second novelist Arun Joshi, in suggesting overtly the presence of other codes of law percolating around the objectively acknowledged world.

The following two novels *No Longer at Ease* and *A Man of the People*, by focusing on the hard realities of a new state of too many choices and the complete unleashing of the political demon amongst a race which knew no kings, prepares the ground effectively for the expansion of the human set of values to accommodate the powers of infinite possibilities to acquire a well-matched weapon to down the overgrown monster of degeneration as is visualised in the *Anthills of the Savannah* and the personification of qualities that hitherto had resided in the body of a single protagonist, with his share of the tragic flaw, in the creation of more than the one primary character. The expansion is observed very clearly in the highlighting of Beatrice as the Priestess of Idemilli which later strengthens in the bringing forth of Elewa's girl-child who is significantly named Amaechina, meaning, 'may-the path never close'; thus bridging the gap between human concerns and other powers of control, exhibiting a determination to enrich the African story.
XIX

Chidi Okonkwo in his article 'Chinua Achebe: the Wrestler and the Challenge of Chaos' has this to say about Achebe's fictional creations as a counter attack foiling the continued civilising mission of the European masters of the savage elements in the African culture.

The central problem of Chinua Achebe's fiction is the perennial cycle of creation of order from chaos and the dissolution of order into chaos. This theme reflects Achebe's desire to use literature to contest Europe's disguise of colonialism as a civilising mission. By associating Africa with an absence of order, of soul, humanity itself, colonialists discourse had rationalised colonial conquests as a consecration of cosmos out of chaos, and thus invested the conqueror-as-Jehovah with absolute ownership right over the creation: (Pg. 83) 14

The pain of non-acceptance persists, yet the recentering of past essence of spiritual order, is the latent strength in Achebe's works which makes it possible for him to succeed in his mission, in verbalising his attack against the European masquerades. The refurbishing of African humanism through a metaphysical inquiry is well expressed by Ruchi Omi and Serequeberhan in these two quotations cited below, the first expression is that of Tsenay Serequeberhan and the second by Ruchi Omi,

In the name of universality of values, European colonialism violently universalised its own singular particularly and annihilated the historicity

of the colonised. In this context, western philosophy in the guise of a
disinterested univeralistic, transcendent al, speculative discourse-served
the indispensable function of being the ultimate veracious buttress of European
conquest.

and

........If we want to remain faithful to both reason and myth, to both science
and wisdom, we do not have to abandon our philosophical ambitions and
lock ourselves inside our man-made categories.... We must have an open
philosophy as found partly in existentialism. African philosophy finds here
a model of philosophical investigation which need not be tied to western
rationalism and which allows us to incorporate into an open wisdom both
the myth and science, both reductive and deductive reason and pre-rational
intuition. 15

'The protagonists shaped by Arun Joshi carry this one thirst within them 'to incorporate
into an open wisdom both myth and science, both reductive and deductive reason and
pre-rational intuition.' And to quote A- Ceasaire who says, in his 'Discourse on Colo-
nialism' by Joan Pinkhman (New York, M.R. 1974)

........between colonisation and civilisation there is an infinite distance. 16

To travel along this 'infinite distance' leaving the two static stations in their respec-
tive areas, and experience what is called 'pre-rational intuition' is the crux of Arun

15 Okafor, Fidelis. Univ. of Nigeria 1993 'Issues in African Philosophy Re-
examined' International Philosophical Quarterly Vol. XXXIII No.1 Issue No.129
March 1993, Pg.98
Kunapipi Vol.XV No.3 Pg.156
oshi's thematic endeavour. It is similar in its assertiveness, shared with Achebe, therefore, the middle-voice function within Arun Joshi's fiction distinguishes him from his peers who devoted their fictional contributions to keeping the tempo of unity beating as the pulsing rhythm carried over from the Independence Struggle to the post-Independence India. They, as most pioneers, enjoyed the integrity of mature political leadership and the fine mixing of a variety of influences generated by Indian art forms. The encounters with self was backed by a deep knowledge of ones tradition but Arun Joshi belongs to that generation, the second generation, of post-independence writers who could not draw in with ease new influences as complacently as his predecessors because he belonged to a world where particular local identities had been smoothened out by the shrinking world that was accessible to all identities. Therefore his questions about men and existence are not supported by a prior knowledge of the answer to these queries. The narrative, hence meanders through his imaginative interpretation of a reality that exists oblivious of their existence in its body.

Consciousness of other alternatives in the wake of total acceptance of the present state of affairs, resides in the prime character who becomes the isolated individual burdened by his awareness and yet over burdened by questions that needed a location to express themselves to allow comprehension to enter into the otherwise complacent world of incomprehension. Humanism, in this context, interprets itself as the freedom to exist within an individuals composition of reality. Most critical appreciation of Joshi's works explore the deep-seated confusion existing within modern man, who is in fact 'collective man' in search of his individual choices. It is a conscious narrowing of horizons, to arrive at a personal horizon. Joshi merely attempts a curious exploration of spaces within existing humanity around which the human community carried out its
apparently normal activities. With reference to Freud, C.J. Jung makes this particular observation,

"He was a man possessed by a daemon—a man who had been vouchsafed by an overwhelming revelation that took possession of his soul and never let him go... He felt he had the key to the murky abysses of the possessed psyche."

Joshi alternates this idea of possession between the 'collective man' within the large community and within the protagonists themselves who are either possessed by this daemonic desire to taste the other side of life or are in possession of that key that would perhaps let them out of this perpetual darkness of uniformity in the objective world. By marginalising themselves the protagonists seek to view the world as 'uncentred', pluralistic not in the worldly sense of many varieties in one, but as an acknowledgment of the powerful energy centres within and around us. But, they also avoid looking in the eye of this power towards which they gravitate, choosing localities both geographic in dimension as well as relationships. Thus for most part of the time they are haunted by a faceless individual. Locale begins as the important requirement in this quest and the suggested truth is that, this is not a place of settlement, only the conducive atmosphere from within which the inner disturbance, the other alternative, could be contemplated.

To bring in V.S. Naipaul into the picture is essential at this juncture as he is one writer who has had the courage to transcend boundaries and make explicit his preference. In his flight away from the mimic men of this world, the narrator of The Mimic Men is emphatic in his choice-making which is perhaps why the novel is a retrospective view of what life had been, the trauma of breaking free. But, here the choice lies within the

CHAPTER 2

STUDY AREA
the all prevalent reality. Som Bhaskar of The Last Labyrinth is the one character caught in the thick of the Chaos lying in him and Billy of The Strange Case of Billy Biswas escapes this chaotic reality to the 'more elemental complexity' only to be brought down cruelly. In the last novel The City and the River, Arun Joshi, like Chinua Achebe, is able to contain this chaos within a technical turn of the narrative by not assigning to any one individual the status of the protagonist, but by studied stratification, of the locale, the characters, the dilemma, creates a space for the mysterious to mingle with the simplifications adding complexity into the uniform function. The emphasis is on sacrifice in this novel in the Kierkagaardian conception of the individual, who according to the philosopher,

.....is the category through which in a religious respect, this age,

all history, the human race as a whole, must pass......' 19

Despite the individual chosen as the host for this passage, Arun Joshi veers away from the sense of transcendence as a turnabout within this world, and makes his way towards that 'hidden inwardness' that lies within the individual himself.

Arun Joshi's novels are discussed in the second chapter of the thesis under the title 'Wanters All-A Hostile Twin Consciousness and the Monologue of Silence in Joshi's novels. 'Wanters All' is a phrase taken from Joshi's novel The Last Labyrinth as it explains the outcry around which is placed the many layers of questions and possible answers to the overall picture of dissociation and disorder. In the wanting lies the dynamism of the narrative. The protagonists representing the twentieth century Com-

monwealth individual make that turn about to avoid the 'public' coming together as it was merely a machinery that dismembered the dignity of the 'single individual', through its many methods of alienation, mediocrity and areas demanding depersonalization. Hence there is a conscious diminishing of the civic self within them, such that, the personal self is complete to the opening out of the religious self within. Having discovered the quality of this hidden inwardness, the protagonists, variously, exhibit their desire to fully function as a social concept. The unverifiable character of the present moment and its constant threat of obliteration persuades the writer to dramatise the entangled consciousness of modern man.

The chapter traces the many areas within the novels which pose questions about what lay in the region beyond the familiar. Yet the novelist willingly suspends movement, preventing them from transmigrating in the first four novels. The last piece of fiction, successfully makes this cross over in a studied artistic mould such that it remains a fictional reality divorced from the real, as it was perceived. Anup Beniwal in his critical review of The City and the River calls it a 'politico-allegorical satire.'

The hostile world thus far encountered now has an identified nucleus, the political area of darkness, within every third world country. By doing this the bleak featureless search of the protagonists in the earlier works is given a definition, bringing them to a surface reality, prepared in the Indian epic mould, moving towards an identifiable positive conclusion to this incomprehensible search and finally clearing the space for 'the Nameless One' to occupy the centre and in such a studied fashion that it is a clear rejection of the realistic novel. The body of Joshi's novels are in a sense a reinstalling faith in the Indian tradition and culture and the optimism with which it takes every

challenge that comes its way, only to strengthen itself with the threat.

In the absence of such assurances literature that grows out of Australia has a distinct advantage which has been variously portrayed as the area of challenge, the ultimate test to human strength, a void that stubbornly remains a void. With the fringe strengthening itself as concrete human habitations, the vacancy becomes the symbolic representation of the metaphysical in the body of the tangible reality. Going by the space taken by this region of abstractions, it is not surprising that a writer like Patrick White should place religion at the heart of his creative enterprise. The country called Australia, in his conception is a sub-society, and devaluation of the human substance is his strategy in reallocating this space of powers within the human patterns, to recognize the continent within the human country. The authentic within the synthetic is what holds Patrick White’s attention.

Veronica Brady’s assessment of the Australian landscape is,

Australian space seemed to threaten the body, appearing as its obdurate antithesis, as fate or necessity. There is a sense of belonging, this is a place in which one can get lost and die. The land is also a kind of 'end of the world', named in Tourmaline—an end of European notions of humanity and of the humane as the Other which disables rather than enables human communication....

it becomes a comfortable journey through his fiction to explore 'the humane as the :r' as he has a God's eye view of the proceedings within the human characters and frame is merely a well-attired piece of putrefaction. Hence his style is, as Brady

Brady, Veronica 1994  Caught in the Draught On Contemporary Australian Culture and Society. An Angus and Robertson Publication Pgs. 120 and 134
stretching and often distorting vocabulary, defying expectations and disrupting syntax, all in the attempt to speak what is really unspeakable, what you do not know but know, to name what he understands to be beyond names and explore reaches of experience about which language, of necessity, remains silent. 21

The savagery that lies buried under the studied manners of the social being, man, is the demon against which he pitches his fight while the cruelty that lies within the aboriginal community is accepted as the mystery of Nature which has multiple means of balancing the negative and the positive within its body. Patrick White’s works offered themselves to the research project willingly as it is the same intention, a recentering of the mysteries, the naming of the one unnameable that lies at the heart of these writings. The third chapter space provided for Patrick White’s writings is titled, using a phrase from his novel *The Tree of Man*, 'The Common Ground of Frailty: Patrick White’s attempts at coming to terms with the strength that lies within the frail substance, Man.' The four novels selected for study are, *The Tree of Man* (1955), *Voss* (1957), *The Vivisector* (1970) and *A Fringe of Leaves* (1976). The choice was made by the variations they offered in throwing themselves open to this study. For instance, *The Tree of Man*, by placing Stan Parker, the protagonist, within the small clearing in the bush-country, does not focus on the small frail man growing into the absolute power over the landscape, as it is in the case of the American hero, but, as the Australian equivalent of Adam, Stan Parker, settles in, the ‘other’ becomes a recognisable segment within; with the antithetical, the complexities of human relationships surface and detach what was

21 Brady, Verónica 1994 *Caught in the Draught* On Contempory Australian Culture and Society. An Angus and Robertson Publication Pgs. 120 and 134
otherwise a part of his natural composition as a Natural being. In the case of Voss, he is, as is often referred to, as the dark force within a human community of simple folk: grows out to be that patch of dark disturbance within the larger body of this other which is the continent itself. Voss, to borrow an African idiom, is the little bird nza who challenges his own chi, heady with his assumptions about his ability to conquer the challenging power. Recognition of the hinterland is brought about through Voss's defiance of the same.

The Vivisector offers itself to the study by the self-appointed interpreter of human visions within him, contrasted by the objective reality in its drabness, in the character of Hurtle Duffield. His curiosity is to know what is within this human animal, despite the larger exhibition of suffering. In the slurring of the final impression of the incomprehensible colour indigo, as 'Indi-god' the metaphysical recentering is perceived. The minute detailing of options clustered within the vacancy, swings before his minds eye as the chandelier, once impressed upon his mind in his childhood. The refocusing is made possible within White's works as he takes into account the personal Time within the development of the protagonist, from childhood to adulthood, pitching it against historical time, which streams through as consciousness weak in its strength, in the wake of a larger impact, of the self with the other.

A Fringe of Leaves, in the shaping power of the Edge as that potential ground of self-knowledge, civilizes, not in the known sense of civilization represented by large townships, but the human within the inherent region of violence, both physical and metaphysical. It is tempering of the violent frustration, sustained by illusions, that is witnessed in this novel, a conditional humbling of the authentic spirit in the presence of a human lot, the aborigines. The darkness of the survival needs in Nature humbles within Ellen Roxburgh the new flutterings of culture. In her comment about the novel,
White's view of Australia, then, is a kind of frontier, a place of disorientation, a place of the mind for the testing of communal values which must therefore be confirmed or repudiated. What is in question in the crisis which occurs here is not just personal identity but the nature of humanity itself, and in the series of comparisons that A Fringe of Leaves sets up civilisation seems just as demeaning as Aboriginal Life. (Pg.149) 22

In the predictable uniformity of violence, as it presents itself in the two segments of the represented, the final battle of the 'daily wrestling match with an opponent whose limbs never become material' is won by Ellen Gulluyas who settles within the same as the complete being in full comprehension of the recentering of the Other, the spiritual being within her.

With sufficient evidence offered by the three writers chosen, the title of the dissertation gains its full import as, 'A Dynamic Spectrum; The Vital Expansion of Humanism into Metaphysics: A Study of fiction by Arun Joshi, Chinua Achebe and Patrick White.' The title suggests a movement, a forceful upheaval, an exhibition of 'life', within the mechanical, cross-visioned confusion of the Commonwealth situation. The upheaval showing signs of 'life' here used to connote sensitive perception of human life, is visualised as the regulating force to contain the perpetrating cannibalism, both within the cultural chaos of a Commonwealth reality and the literary representation of the same. It also refers to the varying levels of loudness within which this energetic force, instrumental in the centering of the new identity communicates this viewpoint. The research topic

22 Brady, Veronica 1994 'A Properly Appointed Humanism: Australian Culture and aborigines in Patrick White's 'A Fringe of Leaves,Caught in the Draught' On contemporary Australian Culture and Society. An Angus and Robertson Publication Pg.149
In complete agreement with the latest repositioning is the critic in Veronica Brady who justifies her approach to criticism in her work *Caught in the Draught* (1994) introducing the book as,

> This is a collection of essays by an 'old person'. The kind of questions I am concerned with are traditional and not very often asked today, questions about value, about meaning and purpose, even some of them about 'God' -whatever the world may mean. Our culture in general, and literary subculture in particular, is shy about these questions. Contemporary criticism is usually more 'scientific' and theoretical, more self-reflexive, more modest and more ironic. 'meaning is a suspect term and 'humanism' if not a dirty word, is at least a sign of intellectual slackness and possibly also class complicity. (Pg.1) 23

The mechanical detachment of clinical criticism has generated an immense amount of violence which does not overtly explode bodies in its destruction but attacks the very ells of a literary text into a state of paralytic shock. Hence the study is a careful erusal of this being, the Commonwealth text, studying it for the evidence it offered in racking the dynamic, vital expansion. In this search a poem by Furnley Maurice called *Echoes*, included in Manning Clark's *Sources of Australian History*, is quoted in set-ted segments, as a final, complete expression of the binding idea that identifies this

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Brady, Veronica 1994 Pg.1 *Caught in the Draught* On Contemporary Australian Culture and Society, An Angus and Robertson Publication.
hesis and the writers chosen for study. In resuscitating the country, Australia, into responding to their call, the poet's voice transforms into the representative voice of the race called Commonwealth Writers.

I have returned into my land of day. And lo; it is not light;
And she who claims my homage is betrayed. I went to furious fighting in far lands. To slay the beast that followed her with leering eyes. But surely he sailed past me on the night wave and piled my land in silent ruin cunningly.

...... while I protected your body

No one remembered your soul..............

Furnley Maurice, bemoans the loss of his country to the 'alien words' which hover around her lips, reducing her responses to 'mumbles echoes of things half comprehended'; and the oft repeated refrain is,

Is it your heart that changed, Or from the things I have suffered,

Have I acquired new vision?

and the new vision is the realisation that,

I have returned into a world of shadows
I have returned into a land of echoes,
A thin-drawn filament of echoed impulses,
smothers your gleaning spaces.

In his final plea, he strikes in a desperate note,

Australia, speak!

Surely you have not died in such a little while
why will you taunt me with your silences
that make all sacrifice seem vain?
XXXII

Speak in a voice of your own. 24

The necessity of lowering that fourth wall that stifles the inner voice of a country as a Being is what these writers attempt at and what has offered body and soul to the project.

Within the strength permitted by my limitations, this project has found its words to figure the thoughts generated. The means of organising the thoughts well within the parameters of the chosen theme was made particularly worthwhile by the steady and distinct progress made by these texts from the deflationist stance through the proper use of fictionalism over the primitive modal language, by reducing its wide variety to a single identity. The chosen narrative mode of intentional interpretation' made possible, the expansion of humanism to permit the centering of metaphysics, as its core to achieve, that universal unification of value-concerns amidst the paraphernalia of cultural identities. Added to this mode is the double imaginative projection of the protagonists within the subject and conflict of the texts, which in turn is an effective means of drawing in participants from various cultural backgrounds to telescope their imaginative participation within the power of the story, the Commonwealth story in this case.

The study has been an exploration which has thrown open options that had thus far been closeted within specific requirements of tradition, which in its course had elevated humanism to a pedestal only to be used sparingly as oratorical-support material. But with the rethinking of metaphysics as the soul within the body of humanism, the survival of human values is a definite possibility within the contemporary global situation, and the introduction of novel themes within the literary terrain, perhaps, could ease the oppressive exploration of darkness and its Mephistophlean ways within man, is mind and his domain.

4 Clark, Manning 1957 'Echoes' Sources of Australian History OUP, gs. 603-605