CHAPTER - THREE

THE COMMON GROUND OF FRAILTY

Patrick White's attempts at coming to terms with the strength that lies within the frail substance, Man.
'Souls unite in the face of violence, if only on the common ground of frailty

('The Tree of Man'. (Pg.247)

The frail substance, the imperceivable area of silence has been the creative artists material to build his imaginative strongholds within Australian literature. To populate the vacancy, the only visible reality, at the heart of the continent, has been the prime concern of these image makers. Given the quantity of barreness, as the continent offers, the imaginative creators attempt to fill it with a human soul in all its diverse, complex, realities. Creation lies at the heart of this continent, and in the vast space available resurrection seems a possibility. The lack lustre, colourless canvas invites projections of imaginative landscaping and therefore, the movement is from the fringe of objective experience to the centre of experience. Again, the vacancy offers room enough for every individual artist to evolve his own centre around which the subjective reality takes form. The vacancy becomes a permanent possibility of interpretation.

Initial response to this void within, as seen in the works of Patrick White, has been to transport this area to the terrain of the mind and attempt an exploration of this no-man's land. Each failed attempt continued to preserve, for the creative artist, his inaccessible inspiration. To a certain extent the interpretations try to identify a certain structure, to base their credibility as fringe dwellers. The dual task of imagining ones material to suit the evolving imaginative subject and the adequate colour scheme to emulate life as known in its variety, makes the Australian artists creation equivalent to the three dimensional art form.

Basic to Patrick White's artistic concern is the anxiety to break free, and therein lies transcendence, as it will be established through our scrutiny of the chosen texts. Breaking
free from organised, hardened forms, of social accountability schemes has been central to his mission, which is, to unify the pure essence of matter with spirit. Seeking support from his autobiographical text Flaws in the Glass (1981) the chosen line of argument will find its substance. The first move on the part of the author is to release his imagination from the set pattern of viewing the past, nostalgically as a convention unquestioned in its claim. Referring to Boyde Maistre, who he claims was his aesthetic mentor he observes,

He persuaded me to walk in the present instead

of lying curled and stationary in that over-upholstered cocoon of the past, refuge of so many

Australians then and now.¹

The present is populated with bodies that from time to time become variously significant to his concern. They move between the definitions, as external causes of sensory impressions, as cogeneries of sensible qualities. To relate the two, the body and the self, requires no regulated speech either, therefore, the language that sensed and created but never expressed is the strategy that he employs in his interpretation. His art takes its shape on the fragments of questions, best expressed in his own words as,

What do I believe? I am accused of not

making it explicit. How to be explicit about

a grandeur too overwhelming to express, a
daily wrestling match with an opponent whose

limbs never become material, a struggle from

which the sweat and blood are scattered on the
pages of anything the serious writer writes?

A belief contained less in what is said than in
the silences. In patterns on water. A gust of
wind. A flower opening. I hesitate to add a
child, because a child can grow into a monster,
a destroyer, Am I a destroyer? this face in a
glass which has spent a lifetime searching for
what it believes, but can never prove to be,
the truth. A face consumed by wondering whether
truth can be the worst destroyer of all.(Pg.70)

Particular to the Australian psyche, as represented by White, is not to invoke historical
considerations to help fix his intentions and the context. The repulsive ‘over-uphol-
stered cocoon’ is a constant reminder of the convict position, therefore, the keeping at a
distance, the historical past, is the new creation of history from present time with the
landscape as its intentional object. The vacancy becomes a metaphysical geographic
identity and to Patrick White, within its, vastness empirical distinctions lose substance,
such as the male and the female distinctions of a spirit. The freedom to live supported
by the strength provided by the dual characteristics of the spirit is essential to him, as an
artist, who admits.

What drives me is sensual, emotional,
instinctive. (Pg.81) (Flaws in the Glass)
The next observation specifies for the reader his perception of the landscape.

The ideal Australia I visualised during any
exile and which drew me back, was always, I
realise, a landscape without figures (Pg. 49)

Community and its programmed, noisy interference is an intrusion in his interpretation
of the self, that he identifies with the vision before his eyes,

In early manhood I began to see that the
external world was no other than the
dischotomy of light and darkness I sensed
inside me.

and

In spite of looking convincingly male I have
been too passive to resist, or else I
recognised the freedom being conferred on me
to range through every variation of the human
mind, to play so many roles in so many
contradictory envelopes of flesh. I settled
into the situation. I did not question the
darkness in my dichotomy, though already I had
begun the inevitably painful search for the twin
who might bring a softer light to bear on my
bleakly illuminated darkness. (Pg. 35)

The views expressed by White in recognising the passivity built into the male mentality, as against the dominant aggressive quality, is a description of the garrisoned mind.
within whose walls the human being recognises the varieties built within, and such a structured existence, erases the trauma attached to the activity of choice-making, to decide a role for the present. The darkness divides the self, in its chosen role, from the glaring brilliance of a world strongly established on its definitions of human life. Under the circumstances the vastness of the landscape becomes his complementary identity.

In this search for 'the twin to bring a softer light to bear on his bleakly illuminated darkness' are his novels which he refers to as his 'obsessive novels'. Giving expression to or constructing a life out of this darkness is basic to the activities undertaken by the protagonists. Placed within a temporality beyond ones control is the line followed by the first novel chosen for study, The Tree of Man (1956) In the building of a human settlement around the clearing first made by Stan Parker, White arrives at the juncture, of the belief that subjective capacities find form only with the growth of this physical universe, as they are not initial givens. It is the creation of a field, within which, time is evolved, to set it rolling, against which an internalised time marks the illumination of the subjective self to the matter of man. The clearing is, again, a space within which the cycle of youth and old age evolve and revolve, as expressed by White,

	Sometimes I think the difference between

old age and youth is that in the one a

person has come back and in the other some

hoped-for being is still expected. (Pg.25)

and in another instance,

	As I aged, my visits to what had been
the paradise of my childhood and youth became waking nightmare peopled with familiar figures deformed by time and arthritis. Everybody creaked..... The sassa fras I considered mine seemed to reject my intrusions; I was surrounded by a quizzical silence, watched by invisible birds..... What I sensed was not so much hostility as the indifference of a timeless landscape to human limitations. (Pg.29)

The paradox emerging out of these observations is, in the ascribing of sense and senselessness with every rearrangement of nature around him.

He knew that where his cart had stopped he would stop. There was nothing to be done.

He would make the best of this cell in which he had been locked. How much of will, how much of fate entered into this it was difficult to say. Or perhaps fate is will. Anyway, Stan Parker was pretty stubborn. (Pg.14)

The middle voice function of Stan Parker is a passive voice, giving place to the expressions of the supersensible, within which he is strategically placed. The basic position of Stan Parker is as an object inhered in an unknown matter. The unknown matter is the 'permanence of peace' that underlies every mood of surrounding nature. A unifying
force that is variously presented in the three passages quoted below. It is the ground for
the drawing of conclusions about the supersensible. These premises offer themselves
as matter on which Stan Parker builds his factual expressions of existence, which con-
tains within it the 'something' that is recognised as running deep within him. In the
beginning of the novel the objective space assures him,

'Ah, here the sun said, and the persistent
flies is the peace of permanence; all these
shapes are known, act opens out of act, the
days are continuous. It was hard certainly in
the light of that steady fire not to interpret
all fire. (Pg.14)

The fire here is the incomprehensible matter, with its assigned role to smelt form, as in
the recoiling process, and not destroy in the case of Stan Parker, but to give concrete-
ness to the abstractions within him. On the contrary the smelted thoughts, the frag-
ments of sensory perceptions of matter within the vacancy, unite for the young, objec-
tive forms of creation in the great floods that swell across the yet unnamed human
habitation. Familiar solidity, a feature of life becomes unintelligible matter in the flow
of the same. Motion arrests motion in the dissipation of certain solid features as pre-
sented in the following samples. To Stan Parker, the familiar and the family churn into
one in the large body of the deluge, erasing solidity.

... He knew the old woman in her apron and the two or three
younger women, and the long boy, the poddy sheep, the cows,
and the yellow-eyed hens, all with the common expression of
disaster, congregated on the last island.

.....And the shiny horns of cattle swam and sank in the great yellow waters of what was no longer river. It was no longer river. It was no longer possible to distinguish the cries of men from the lowing or bleating of animals, except that the old woman made some protest to God before gulping at the water with her gums. (Pg.71)

and

He remembered things he had never told and forgotten. He remembered the face of his mother before her burial, when the skull disclosed what the eyes had always hidden, some fear that the solidity of the things around her was not assured. But in the dissolved world of flowing water under the drifting trees, it was obvious that solidity is not. (Pg.73)

Its the coming together of the two metaphysical stands, of Zeno and Heraclitus, where the argument centres around the state of motion and the motionless state. The motionless state, or the premise: , that nothing moves makes matter unintelligible, whereas the fluidity attributed to matter attributes to it, the possibility of intelligible comprehension, and within this fictional place of creation, instances and characters alternate between the two states, forming their empirical condition as a distinct possibility of retaining the near elusive solidity. The same situation unfolds further, Stan Parker's space for him.

As they rowed under the liquid trees, the sound of leaves
swishing, dipping into his wet skin, was closer to him....

As they rowed fragments of the still safe lives that are lived in houses flowed past. There was a chair with no one in it, there was a piece of bitten cheese, and letters grown spidery, and a hassock in blackberry canes, a hat with a drowned feather, a baby's chamber pot, a Bible open at Ezekiel. All these things came and went. It was the boat that was stationery. (Pg.73-74)

At the pre-stage of settlement, the fluidity of water arresting motion of life, making the past reside within the present reality, acts as the metaphor, which refers to the creative potential of imaginative energy trapped within Stan Parker. This particular energy to Stan Parker the individual, is the material of his comprehension of the Being as Being, in the Aristotelian sense. The description of Stan Parker's subjective self is,

He had in him great words of love and beauty, below the surface, if they could be found. (Pg.39)

A conscious reduction of motion, to cease to be as a being of substance and transform into that Being, to reside as a pattern of the larger design is better exhibited in the following passage, which is a description of a thunder storm.

He would listen to the sounds around him too, the thick endless murmurs from which a theme will threaten to burst, the one theme and continue to threaten. (Pg.42)

and

A great fork of blue lightening gashed the flat sky.
He listened to the drums of thunder, of which the first rolls shook the silence. The still stale air had begun to move. The storm came. It bent the garden....

Soon the land was shining whenever lightening opened its darkness. The torment of darkness, of lashing, twisted trees, became rather, an ecstasy of fulfillment.

The man who was watching the storm and who seemed to be sitting right at the centre of it, was at first exhilarated. Like his own dry paddocks, his skin drank the rain. He folded his wet arm and this attitude added to his complacency.....But as the storm increased, his flesh had doubts and he began to experience humility and the lightening which could have burst open basalt, had it seemed, the power to open souls. It was obvious in the yellow flash that something like this had happened, the flesh had slipped from his bones, and light was shining in his cavernous soul.

. . . .Standing there somewhat meekly, the man could have loved something, someone, if he could have penetrated beyond the wood, beyond the moving darkness. But he could not, and in his confusion he prayed to God, not in specific petition, wordlessly almost, for the sake of Company. Till he began to know every corner of the darkness, as if it were daylight, and he were in love with the heaving world, down to the last blade of wet grass. (Pg.150-151)

Prior to the unifying of rhythms within the individual and the empirical structure, the
world, the burden of his physical being is portrayed variously as.

Events had exhausted him. He had not learned to think far and in what progress he had made, had reached the conclusion he was a prisoner in his human mind, as in the mystery of the natural world. Only sometimes the touch of hands, the lifting of a silence, the sudden shape of a tree or presence of a first star hinted at eventual release. (Pg.49)

In an earlier instance of a thunderstorm the instant pleasure at the mounting tension in the atmosphere diminishes the significance that, for a moment, had held his face up to the unleashed aggression in its unwinding and reduces him to a 'thing of gristle.' (Pg.47) and at the instant when 'God blew from the clouds, and men would scatter like leaves' he is gripped by, what is described thus, as,

In this state he was possessed by an unhappiness, rather physical, that was not yet fear, but would have liked to look up and see some expression of sympathy on the sky's face. (Pg.47)

Yet again, in the fire which burns down the substance of Madeline, described thus far as ice: 'Madeline was ice. Her icy dress grew from her splendid body, and could have been no other (Pg.159). The diminished stature of the woman, releases the oppressive solidity that imprisoned a certain substance, a vital link with the larger forces that made meaningful the power perceived in the thunderstorm.

'There were veins in him of wisdom and poetry, but deep, much of which would never be dug. . . .
and

'The bones of his hands were his, and could better express the poem that was locked inside him and that would never otherwise be released.' (Pg. 29)

Madeline becomes synonymous with the stony substance of his physical being, in being the opposite of what he possessed within him. While his strength consisted of the mellow warmth of creation. Madeline and her circle stand as solidified cases or semblances of substance with an inhered hollowness such that 'they would remain a fragile metal that one breath of hate could twist.' (Pg. 160). It is the uncreative frames supporting their structures which make contact when the fire in its burning intensity creates a space of contact between its abstract power and the reducing shapes.

'It was not their flesh that touched but their final bones. (Pg. 180)

and

He was small and alone in his body dragging the sallow woman. (Pg. 180)

The 'sallow woman' in his life, Amy Parker, is the alienated being within the novel stationed as it is in the primary reality of human establishment as a putting together of the fragments within the human psyche. Amy Parker is out of the subject of her existence, which at the present moment is overwhelmingly filled with the incomparably superior reality, of which Stan Parker is only too conscious of. 'Actuality of being, unlike in the Aristotelian sense becomes a remote possibility for the 'ant-woman', who from the very first instance had,

.....begun to hate the wind and the distance and the road
because her importance began to dwindle. (Pg.27)

Whereas to Stan Parker 'the life' which 'was perhaps a distance of stones and sun and wind, sand coloured and monotonous....(Pg.26) is the recognised and accepted.....omnipotence of distance' (Pg.27) The dimension into which she finds herself, is an area where sense-experience, as known within the temporal reality, is yet to evolve as a way of life. Therefore she stands stationed within the mummified existence of her body. In the various instances of perception Amy Parker exhibits melancholy and discontent caused by her inability to form her centre around which the building of her particular universe could be made possible. The thunderstorm that had diminished Stan Parker's solid temporal identity, threatens to demolish her fragile sense of safety that she had built for herself in the house.

The woman in the house got up and closed a door, in an attempt to secure for herself an illusion of safety, if only an illusion.

Because the black clouds were bursting on her head.

... The wind began to bash the small wooden box in which she had been caught. (Pg.46)

The objective reality, the construction of objects for the widening of human habitation is Amy's idea of filling the vacancy. She continues to remain stationery all along her passage through time, the lack of words, of new words, to draw attention dramatically to the known but hitherto insufficiently noticed reality, fixes her as an object of the past.

If Amy Parker continued to sit it was because the rose is rooted and impervious. The big milky
roses nodded on the window frame. She was firmly
rooted in the past, as old roses are. This was her salvation
in the face of words, as she sat, and stirred and drowsed, but
could not move beyond her fate, even if her neighbour
waited. (Pg.121)

Amy Parker as a parent becomes more peripheral in ascertaining her specific essence. The objective, temporal reality of Durilgai on the other hand transcends its pre-verbal state and translates its language to suit the generations constructing a habitation out of the vacancy. It is a smooth transition of the subject in the comprehensive contact with its object. Amy Parker fails in making this contact where her touch does not disclose the mystery, which is crucial to the cognitive act. Hence when Madeline emerges, flaming, reduced to a singed, repulsive sight, her disappointment lies not in sympathy with the destroyed picture of perfection but of those tenuous strands of illusion that she had attached herself with, to this commanding presence.

Is this Madeline? Amy Parker asked without regret.

Her novelette was finished.

The vacancy within Amy Parker is the unalterable barreness that results in the restlessness Ray Parker exhibits in the early years. Thus illusion of solidity is the inversion the second generation carries as its meaning of vacancy. The literal meaning overpowers the metaphoric sense that had dominated Stan Parker's sensibilities. Within the recoil Stan Parker's middle voice function had found no comprehensive cohesive language
....his own consciousness was in conflict with the permanence of all that scene, of bees and grass, murmuring and bending, murmuring and bending. (Pg.187)

In Ray Parker the recoil is the repressive energy, that allows no power towards transvaluation or redesign, as he is a fringe-dweller like his mother, with waiting as the permanent reality. The past continues to hold the vibrancy of the present while the present is the inanimate object, arid and formless.

...the sound of rain and wind and spitting fire dispersed the illusion, of solid rain, of all solidity even.

Besides Stan Parker's obsession with the permanence within the wilderness and Ray Parker's 'sitting impotently......waiting and 'could not escape out of his own life. Nobody would take him into theirs' (Pg.381) state of existence; Thelma Forsdyke detaches herself out of the circles that revolved around her family. Solitude as that subjective state within the temporal design is related to the tale of Hamlet and the betrayal of Gertrude. The intertextual field created by the introduction of the dramatic incident reverts the poison to flow into Amy Parker's ears, as the vast distance that lay between the two individuals sparks this realisation in her.

Lives she realised, can only touch, they do not join.(Pg.434)

With Ray Parker's death, it is the removal of another object around which her being had evolved itself.

She was aghast at her own unreliable relationship with life. (Pg.446)

Alongside the sickening and weakening of centres of assimilation within her. Amy
Parker is also a witness to the silencing of the pure being in Bub Quigley by Doll, his sister, to terminate his aimless wandering within the vacancies of solitude. In the death of Mr. O'Dowd Amy comes into contact with the temporariness of life which alternates between time-bound moments of perineality and a drained loss of vitality.

All her words were strange, because she was hypnotised by the approach of death. She was looking into mirrors.

and

Amy Parker would have liked to bear some of this since she had been forced by her presence to have the courage, leaned forward and took her friend's hand, in which life was trickling still. And in this way their two streams flowed together again. (Pg.455)

While Amy Parker had been a resident of the internal weakening with no respite from 'the sickness' of solitude, Stan Parker's vision transforms the middle-voice into a multi-dimensional force of creativity, extravagant in its emerging liberation, with the slow dissipation of flesh from spirit. 'Deep eternity' perceived as flowing within, fuses with the individual, Stan Parker, still a part of the landscape that recognised the truth for him.

...Out there at the back, the grass, you could call it a lawn, had formed a circle in the shrubs, and trees which the old woman had not so much planted as stuck in during her lifetime... It was perfectly obvious that the man was seated at the heart of it and from this the trees radiated with grave movements of life, and beyond them the sweep of a vegetable
garden, which had gone to weed during the months of the man's illness.... All was circumference to the centre, and beyond that the world of other circles, whether crescent of purple villas or the bare patches of earth, on which rabbits sat and observed some abstract spectacle for minutes on end, in a paddock not yet built up. The last circle but one was the cold and golden bowl of winter enclosing all that was visible and material, and at which the man would blink from time to time, out of his watery eyes, unequal to the effort of realising he was the centre of it. (Pg.474)

The final centering of Stan Parker within his cleared land, within the vastness, affirms its own generative process and does to identify itself and its new combined strength transcending its dependency on endurance, which is the quality of Amy's identity. Thus it centrally and consciously affirms a decentering momentum, that releases it from the recoil, its power to will as a movement within its grasp. The recoil ceases to be a blind repressive force, energised by repression and culminating in a self-sickening recentering. A liberated movement of the recoil results in self-transformations creating conditions for its successors by recoiling away from its own quality and experiencing the effect of other qualities. The recurrence of 'deep eternity' is made possible for the generations to follow, as its evident from the following passages.

I believe, he said, in the cracks of the path, on which ants were missing, struggling up over an escarpment. But struggling. Like the painful run in the icy sky. Whirling and whirling. But struggling. But joyful. So much so he
was trembling. The sky was blurred now. As he stood waiting for the flesh to be loosened on him, prayed for greater clarity and it became clear as a hand, it was clear that One and no other figure, is the answer to all sums. (Pg.473)

Whereas Amy Parker and Thelma Forsdyke are tethered to the 'organised humility', preparing for a repressive social order better expressed as, 'the nastiness in the evolution of a synthetic soul.' (Pg.373)

...She might have soared upward on the note of release. But she could do nothing about her soul. The soul remains anchored. It is a balloon tied to a branch of bones. Still, it will tug nobly. (Pg.469)

Thelma Forsdyke's recognition of the spirit, or the transcendence, limited to her anchored existence, is well within the atmospheric systems of recognition.

'She enjoyed the rich purples of religion. Then her soul responded in like purple. (Pg.411)

End as not a finality, but as a beginning within the end is a knowledge that is carried on the young shoulders of a third generation representative who is within the time, when 'the distance is passed easy'. The poetry that lay deep in Stan Parker, with no adequate language in him to bring it to surface continues to lie trapped within the inheritor, now sealed in his impotency, the lack of solid achievements.

He was tortured by impotence and at the same time the possibility of his unborn poem. The crimson sky drifting on his face and the purple snakes of trees.

He would write a poem of death. Yet

He could not believe in death. Only in passing
through a dark hall, in which it is an overcoat that
puts its arms around him. Then death is faintly
credible because it is smelling of life. (Pg. 79)

And supported by Stan Parker's power to look through, beyond the familiar frameworks of life-styles, with the 'green shoots of thought' (Pg.480) the youngster is the affirmation of the truth that, 'in the end, there was no end' (Pg.480)
The recentering recoils, as the only possible alternative for a perfect union of spirit and self. It is a confirmed truth in Patrick White as expressed by him,

My spiritual self has always shrivelled in contact with
organised religion.... I have come closest to what one
always hopes for in Ayia Sophia, Constantinople, alone
in the Parthenon on winter afternoons after the
Germans had been driven out, in the Friends Meeting
House at Jordans, Bucks, in a garden full of birds,
in my own silent room. All of them moments which
remain inklings rather than confirmation. The ultimate
spiritual union is probably as impossible to achieve as
the perfect work of art or the unflawed human relationship.
In matters of faith, art, and love I have had to reconcile
myself to starting again where I began. (Pg.74 (Flaws in the Glass).

The vacancy that Voss hopes to make material to his exploration is a venture without
the power of presence, where identity control itself is transvalued in the recoiling pro-
cess. Thoughts in the particular context occur as images of 'trans' in the Neitzschean
sense, of the beyond, of space without presence. It is a ground where a play of meta-
SUPPLEMENTAL STUDIES

(a) THE CHROMOSOME COMPLEMENT OF THE BONNET MONKEY DETERMINED IN LEUCOCYTES.

(b) BIOCHEMICAL STUDIES OF URINE AND BLOOD OF BONNET MONKEY.
How much less destructive of the personality are thirst, fever, physical exhaustion, he thought much less destructive than people. He remembered how, in a mountain gorge, a sandstone boulder had crashed, aiming at him, grazing his hand, then bounding away, to the humiliation of trees and death of a young wallaby. Deadly rocks, through some perversity, inspired him with fresh life. He went on with the breath of life in lungs. But words even of benevolence and patronage, even when they fell wide, would leave him half-dead. (Pg. 18)

He assumes to be structured as a spatial form of the solid rocks that offer an identity to the vacancy of the desert as it is identified, here, in his isolation, a 'silence which is immeasurable like distance and the potentialities of self.' (Pg. 21-22) In the equations made by Voss the vacancy 'exists' because it is perceived by him and he 'becomes' or 'exists' by perceiving it. Temporal reality, and objects and objective perceptions that are items as known to man, transcend to become ideas that can both know and be known, as in this instance.

Mr. Bonner read the words, but Voss saw the rivers. He followed them in their fretful course. He flowed in cold glass or dried up in little pot holes, festering with green scum. (Pg. 23 Voss)

The irony operative at this juncture, which continues in the course of the narrative is that, Voss is conscious of the existence of something additional to and beyond his ordinary experience. But the recognition of this super-sensible entity, in the midst of
objective reality, diminishes his faith in his duality such that; at such times he was the victim of his body, to which other people had returned him. (Pg.26) Therefore he is transformed into a creature of darkness within the vacancy.

'What distresses me more is my own great folly in continuing like a worm, Frank, butting my head at whatsoever darkness of earth, once I have conceived an idea...... It distresses me that I cannot lay it aside with all its components and dependent difficulties, (Pg.44)

The Idea which occupied him like the 'granite monolith untouched' (Pg.44) is the primary substance and the supersensible entity. The hallucinatory journey undertaken across the potent vastness ejects God out of his system, as Brother Muller points out,

'Mr. Voss; he said with no suggestion of criticism,

... 'you have contempt for God, because he is not in your own image'. (Pg.50)

The Idea fails to remain static, transcending, to mean within the vacuous substratum, a changing subject, transforming to accommodate the material within the immaterial. Within the Idea, Voss becomes a solid subject with substance, and in the vision of Laura, Voss contoured by his Idea appears so,

'You are so vast and ugly', Laura Trevelyan was repeating the words; 'I can imagine some desert, with rocks, rocks of prejudice, and yes, even hatred. You are so isolated that is why you are fascinated by the prospect of desert places, in which you will find your
own situation taken for granted and more than
that. exalted. (Pg.88)

and

I am fascinated by you,........You are my
desert. (Pg.88)

Laura becomes the substruction to his idea, soon after, the distance makes their
hallucinatory existence a frequent reality. Synchronisation of the hallucinations, the
reality between 'shapes and smoke' gratifies the otherwise offcourse expedition, now
guided by the Idea itself and not Voss, the womb, which conceived the same. He
becomes an object in the now omnipotent idea. The Idea also transports itself through
the expedition and back on the person of Judd, who to Voss's envy is,

...a union of strength and delicacy like some
gnarled trees that had been tortured and twisted
by time and weather into exaggerated shapes, but
of which the leaves still quiver at each change and
constantly shed shy, subtle scents. (Pg.133)

While Voss resembles Christ on the cross, and the relentless Devil marking the tortures
on His frail frame, Judd is the Christ to be resurrected, such that Voss is further dimin-
ished by his strength, driving him deeper into the secrecy of his substance.

Indeed the pleasures he promised himself in learning to
understand Judd did seem illusory, for rock cannot know
rock, stone cannot come together with stone, except in conflict.
And Voss it would appear was in the nature of more fallible
stone, of nervous splinters, and dark mineral deposits, the
purposes of which were not easily assessed. (Pg.136)

The Idea in its play of difference, from being the solid substance within Voss and the metaphorical contrast to the substance within Judd, is a continuing presence, now representing, life worlds within the vastness. The black population that finally grasp Voss, is the 'world' or the experience of his idea, the sensory data that had differentiated, organised and formed the final dissipation of its form within the explorer. The process by which the final dismantling takes place is methodically traced in the slow progress made by the man through the undergrowth.

'For a short space the soul returned to his body,
from which it had been driven out by whips, and he stood there looking through inspired eyes into the undergrowth. (Pg.203)

and

.....it appeared that pure happiness must await the final crumbling, when love would enter into love,
becoming an endlessness, blowing at last,
indivisible, indistinguishable, over the brown earth. (Pg. )

Within the monarchy that resided in Voss, the Idea had escaped interpretation, and any form that threatened to soften its stony assurance was discontinued as a presence unwanted and in this transformation Voss builds his illusory substance, of the pain that involved in the partaking of a participatory ritual.

At night, though his body was sick with spasms of the dying dog. Until the continuous lovers felt for each
other's hand, to hear the rings chatter together. Truly they were married. He was tormented by the soft coat of love.

So he at once left it, and walked away. He was his former skeleton, wiry and obsessed. (Pg.267)

The aborigines and their world draws Voss as the willing sacrifice because in their social order religion is born out of ideas that encompass relationships with the physical environment. Voss becomes the snake whom Le Mesurier had visualised as entering Paradise, who is now sacrificed to the great snake, the comet across the sky. The area of the unknown is more extensive in the absence of synthetic social ordering. The religion that evolves itself in Voss, in this atmosphere, is dominated by a kind of latent power, the unexpressed obsession, the possibility of a cosmic disorder awaited by him.

The final dissipation of his Idea is expressed in this statement.

'Man is God decapitated. (Pg.364) Man, Idea in the design of the supersensible power is the truth that emerges as Frank Le Mesurier initiates sacrifice through his suicide.

Bracing himself against the tree, Frank Le Mesurier began to open his throat with a knife he had. Such blood as he still possessed forgot itself so far as to gush in the beginning. It was his last attempt at poetry. Then with remaining strength he was opening the hole wider, until he was able to climb out into the immense fields of silence. (Pg.)

In contrast, Voss's death is the anticipated end an objectified acknowledgment of the release that had been hitherto entrapped in his frame. The spirit that possessed him is the Idea, that had offered flesh to his frame and the deep eternal spirit was the vacuous atmosphere that had beckoned him all along from the empirical sphere.
...the great spirit by which he was possessed that would
sometimes look in from the outside, through his eyes but
which more often would writhe inside him, like wanning
life, or gush and throb, like blood of that spirit he would
never tell, because nobody was to know of it but himself. (Pg.421)
The quality inherited by Jackie from the ritual dislocation of Voss's Idea from his body
offers itself to,

...in lovely, opalescent intaglios, buckets of vomit, vistas
of stillest marble, the livers and lights of beliefs and
intentions. There was the crowned King such as he had
worshipped before his always anticipated abduction. There
was Man deposed in the very beginning. Gold, Gold,
tarnishing into baser metals (Pg.380)

A disjointed and disconnected recollection of the past in Judd creates the final fiction
within the work. Combining the unexpected death of Mr. Palfreyman with the anticp-
pated death of Voss he preserves for the living, the colours of wonder expressed better
in the words of Laura as,

'The blowfly on its bed of offal is but a variation of
the rainbow. Common forms are continually breaking
into brilliant shapes. If we will explore them. (Pg.447)

and her conviction that Voss still lives there in the country as good material for a legend
to be 'written down, eventually, by those who have been troubled by it.' (Pg.448) is the
final synchronisation of the abstractions that haunted Voss and which he had sought to
make material within the abstract reality of the Australian landscape. It is also the
synchronisation of the public bewilderment over this one man's obsessions. The survival of Voss as legend is as depicted in this observation, of butterflies in the wilderness.

Nothing had been seen yet to compare with their colours, opening and closing, opening and closing. Indeed by the addition of this pair of hinges, the world of semblance communicated with the world of dream. (Pg.259)

The legend serves as the middle voice connection, as far as the public confusion goes, it answers the question,

'What kind of a man is he?

....If he was already more of a statue than a man

they really did not care, for he would satisfy their longing to perch something on a column, in a square or garden, as a memorial to their own achievement.

They did moreover prefer to cast him in bronze than to investigate his soul, because all dark things make them uneasy, and even on a morning of historic adventure, in bright primary colours, the shadow was sewn to the ends of his trousers, where the heels of his boots had frayed them. (Pg.109)

In the individual perception of Laura, Voss the legend, finally brings close, that dream which had eluded her, as a living reality, described thus in this instance.

So a mother holds against her breast the head of a child that had been dreaming but fails to take the dream to herself; this must remain with the child and will recur
for ever. So Laura remained powerless in the man's dream. (Pg.298)

As the title suggests, Voss in his complete acceptance of his subjective reality covers the vastness, as the Idea diminishes within him, to loose its substance and merge with the large region of oblivion. The dissipation of Idea brings to shape an individual character who had no credible substance as a member of the earthly pursuits.

If the character of Voss was a 'skull with a candle expiring inside' (Pg.358) Hurtle Duffield in The Vivisector attempts at restructuring the refracted rays of light within the form of the chandelier, symbolising his dream, and the substance which he hopes to find in the vivisection of humanity, as he comes across it.

...as he stood underneath looking up through the glass fruit and flickering of broken rainbow, he knew all about a chandelier, from perhaps dreaming of it, and only now recognising his dream. (Pg.25 The Vivisector)

While darkness shrouded the vapourising being of Voss, Hurtle Duffield is in the forefront of the recoiling movement lost in his brilliance, enveloped in broken slices of light that eluded his grasp. The enchantment that lay in the Australian Continent, material for an explorer, is its intense preoccupation with regions, it rehearses the particular aspects, sideling overall representation. The region that disturbs Hurtle Duffield is the emblematic interior of the human frame, as a place of complex connections within which lay a place where the spirit can achieve complete sense.

He used to imagine the people particularly the ladies, who belonged inside such flimsy clothes. ( )

The fragments of light imprisoned within the pieces of the chandelier offer to the young artist a symbol to transcend the phase of non-creationist metaphysics to cre-
ationist metaphysics; as a state of existence of necessity, and is no more a pre-condition to his perception of life. It is a transcendence sought from discursive knowledge, implying imperfection. Here the imperfection implies the linear, judgemental, institutionalising of sensing as known to socially conditioned human beings.

Mrs. Courtney symbolises for him that quality of variation held in the instrument of light, promising room or space for the formation of his own pattern.

He was in love with how she looked, Each of her dresses was more than a dress a moment of light and beauty not yet to be explained. He loved her big silent house in which his thoughts might grow into shapes, they chose. Nobody, not his family not Mrs. Courtney, only faintly himself, knew he had inside, him his own chandelier.

This was what made him jangle and want to explode into smithereens. (Pg. 53)

Besides the desire to know the particular aspect of his being he covers space and his vision operates from a distant third angle, envisaging, the faltering course taken by the rest of humanity between the two definite poles of birth and death. Transcending epistemological realism, Hurtle Duffield stations his faith in the body of facts concerning microscopic structure of the world and every observation directs itself in compiling evidence to justify his belief that these structures are the true aspects of reality. It is an elemental exploration to bring to the forefront of the coil those aspects of experience that lie beneath the overt thus, curtailing a multiplicity of meaning through the magnification of the same reality.

A wind from the right quarter carried the smell of the
nearby zoo. He remembered how the keeper had allowed him to ride on the elephants' head; he remembered the lion with stream of yellow diarrhoea...he was afraid of some shapelessness smelling of lions and elephants. (Pg.38-39)

Mrs. Courtney's slipping into a similar role of unconscious animal suffering lends support to his giving shape to the shapelessness that smelt of lions and elephants. The shape emerges out of an accepted knowledge as the following instances exhibit. The first instance is a response to a query,

But Death? An elephant is such a gentle creature. Large but gentle.

Not always it isn't; he corrected. It can trample its keeper, without any warning, and rip with its tusks. (Pg.41)

and

Mothers and Fathers, whoever they were really didn't matter; it was between you and Death or something. (Pg.55)

The feline suppleness that Mrs. Courtney's form assumes dramatises for him the passage to the shape of Death and endorses the presence of this shape, distanced as it is in objective reality, as an element of the totality perceivable only in his vision, such that He wasn't going to destroy a vision by introducing anything real. (Pg.64)

and

Mrs. Courtney'.....had begun to whimper like a
little child, her lovely face crumpling into
an old rag. She looked as though she was
about to creep on all fours to make herself
long and thin like some animal children were
tormenting. (Pg.36)

Displacing the ordinary from the extraordinary is crucial to his patterning, the structured oppositions are made mobile to replicate life hitherto acknowledged as essentially secondary to objective verification of reality. The clear distinction of his dual function, within these oppositions is presented as,

Then the green door puffed open and he smelled
the smells of ordinary life. (Pg.65)

and

Then the grey descended inside you......

The Chandelier had gone out in him. (Pg.66)

The extreme, sensitised, consciousness of the interior and exterior, now mobilised in his perception, transvalues itself into the objects of fixed value of representation.

He filled his lungs excited by his own
expanding body, his almost power over
flying cloud. (Pg.85)

and

There were stone steps, the moss so thick
in places his feet felt they were trampling
flesh.' (Pg.85)

and
As the long wads of ink-blotted clouds
passed overhead, unravelled, then matted,
thicker than ever, the garden though
stationery, was slowly being poured into
fresh, coldly boiling forms. (Pg.84)

Hurtle Duffield as a self-conscious being capable of critical appraisal of his experience
and action arrives at his own structured oppositions, of his wish to be recognised as a
different person with a secret life and yet at the same instance not partake or share in it.
Art is born out of a deliberate arresting within him as his special secret and as a never
to be tapped knowledge in the hearts of the ordinary, thus he is transformed into Sid
Cupples's bell-possum.

Sid laughed and laughed at his memory of the
bell-possum but Hurtle was struck cold; by a
Vision of himself, the last possum on the earth,
tinkling feebly into a darkness, lit by a single
milky eye.' (Pg.109)

The particular dimension that dominates over his acceptance of the external forces of
interpretations immobilizes him from continuing in the unity of his strange perceptions. The strange condition of mixing together these oppositions of Coded conduct
and the webs of interpretation attached to his immediate influences, soon to recede into
a historical capacity, balancing him precariously on the scale of life, as in this instance
of illusion constructed out of his narrow perception of reality.

The sheep Eldred killed was hanging on the post,
as in life, except that in dream he hadn't killed. only
skinned it. Maman was there dressed for dinner. She was wearing the spray of diamonds in her hair. She was crying horribly, while busy too. As she pulled the guts out of the sheep, the heart bleated through the open wound; the blood shot over the tails of her sables; it clotted amongst the sapphires.

Where is Rhoda she kept calling. I am looking for Rhoda she hurts me so. Maman by now was the colour of the skinned sheep, its beautiful cave of green and blue, her blood lips opening like the heart itself. Help me, Hurtle, she called.

While he could only stare at the strange beauty of the scene.

(Pg.106-107)

The cavern of green and blue is that area of vacancy that eludes any ideally admissible interpretation, and in the other instances quoted below Hurtle Duffield is the resident of this cave and continuous to buckle under the pressure of the diverse possibilities that pass him by from this location. The region fascinates as a freshly drained object of life, soon to disintegrate under the assigned rules of death.

The half darkness through which he was climbing seemed to be developing an inescapable form: of a great padded dome, or quilted egg or womb......(Pg.165)

and

a patient black-polled bull giving at the knees,

blood gushing from spongy nuzzle, as he went down under the axe. (192)

The narrative evolves its conflict around his role not merely as a vivisector of humanity
but also of divinity, termed as God within the region of human thinking, and as he contemplates about God, reminded amongst the dead and their spirits at the battle field. 'God is 'the black-polled bull giving at the knees'. Just as Voss's God was one with a spear in his side. Similarly the two languages within, is not merely the language of Duffield or the Courtneys but the fluctuating distancing, and a yearning for life, as 'his ghostliness is found yearning after life's' great tawny sprawling body.' (Pg.172)

He stood in the street, the two languages he knew fighting for possession of him. At the worst, though brief moment, when it seemed unlikely he would ever succeed in communicating through either tongue, he heard himself. (Pg.124,125)

The women who cross his life, offering themselves to his dichotomy, are the substance-subjects through whose physical frame he stabilizes his faith, that 'he might never be able to pin down his own insights, let alone convey them to others' (Pg.143)

Crucial to his development are the letters written to him by Mr. Courtney during his days of illness. Their relationship vibrates at a harmonious pace because both share the longing to be removed from mundane activity to regions which spell of absolute freedom. Hurtle longingly seeks for 'a moment of total silence and light' for clear communication and his step-father yearns to enlist in the Flying Corps because,

At great heights, in perfect isolation, I think at last become truly free, and would have no fear of crashing.(Pg.174)

It is a reoccurrence of the chandelier image, the promise of concrete identity in isolation; it also decides for Hurtle the role he plays in the midst of human relationships.
....total love must be resisted; it is overwhelming.

like religion. He certainly wasn't religious: he was an artist. (Pg.177)

Hanging overhead, over his decisions, to play the role he wished is the nagging doubt

which is,

....he could break away at any point, if he chose, as he

had done already in his life. Or had he? Had the breaks

perhaps been chosen for him? (Pg.183)

The paintings creating themselves in his head begin to appear on canvas during his

relationship with Nance Lightfoot. But his artistic vision visualises her, caught be-

tween the Wrestling match, 'to recreate the body as he saw it without the feel of flesh.'

(Pg.199) The end product, as he envisages, is 'vegetable in form and essence' and like

all human vegetables she was offering herself to the knife she only half suspected.

(Pg.200)...

Each relationship crystalises for him a worthy artistic piece but at the same instance it

daes up as a reaffirmation of this impression that human frame is an object meant for

slaughter. His analysis of existence without his artistic ability is in terms of light and

colour. The prismatic quality of the physical shell within which the imagination swells

and swirls is best captured in this segment.

'Suddenly he had begun to live life for which he had

been preparing, or for which he might even have been

prepared. At the end of the year of watching, of blundering

around inside an inept body, of thinking, or rather, endlessly

changing coloured slides in his magic-lantern of a mind, the
body had become an instrument, the crude blurred slides were focusing into what might be called a vision. (Pg.209)

Along with his first spurt of creative energy he makes a move to build a dwelling place on a metaphorically suggestive spot. 'On the edge of a gorge' (Pg.216). At Ironstone, in his 'misguided shack' (Pg.217) amongst the bush he attempts to find apt shades of light and colour to the life which is excellently captured in this observation 'a flickering of deck-chair stripes on colourless ladies.....' (Pg.215).

The dependency of human life on art and artifacts for distinct identity and brilliance is the evidential transition to faith in human strength. The strength that lies within this human frame is its ability to preserve through art the quick decaying reality of human existence. As an intensely sensitive character, the inbuilt gangrene constantly reminds him of its presence even as 'he could feel the sweat running down his ribs, probably rotting the seams of his shirt.' (Pg.215); At this juncture Patrick White lowers the narrative down to the level of local reality that demands particular survival techniques specific to the tempered local mindset; where, somewhere as a hazy spectre Stan Parker's efforts are reflected in Hurtle Duffield's attempts to settle in a landscape that was a vacancy suggesting, destruction and regeneration.

'The bush never died, it seemed, though regular torture by fire and drought might bring it to the verge of death. Its limbs were soon putting on ghostly flesh: of hopeful green, as opposed to the ash-tones of a disillusioned maturity; the most deformed and havocked shrubs were sharpening lance and spike against the future. (Pg.216)

Meaning attaches itself to the colours and yet at the same instance throws light on his
inadequacy to respond to emotional urge, an inherited impotence. Caldicott, the dealer, who collected artifacts in the vain hope of discovering a work of art, to be found and recognised, is repulsed by the shack on the edge of the gorge, which represented itself as a 'gulf between art and life at its most repulsive.' (Pg.218) On his way back from Duffield's shack Caldicott rushes with an urgency to escape the scrub and its primal threats, as Duffield watches him impotently despite the urge to assist him in his escape but his impotence stations him, immobile, seething with rage that leads to discovering segments of his elusive being.

.....he was demonstrating against an emotional state of his own, which had unexpectedly given birth to this plume of transcendental glass.' (Pg.220)

Soon after he takes an objective look at his outer shell, his body, restrained within physical structures due to its physicality. Seeking ways of finding a way out of it he experiences the turmoil which Stan Parker transcends while translating the rocks of the terrain into his homestead. The first incision he tries to make through the familiar is explained as,

As intensifying golden light was dusting the pelt of that lean animal his body. Stroking scratching it, he was so detached, it owed him nothing, but its captivity under a roof. His tactile mind was the part of him he cosseted: encouraging it to cut through the webs of dew, to find moisture in the slippery leaves, the swords of grass, before the sun had sucked it up.' (Pg.221)

Language of intensity used by Patrick White, traces the reversed procedure of a self-
vivisection by Hurte while attempting to reach, that life force which, from its identity as blood from the beginning of the narrative to its present status as 'formless medium' eludes his grasp,

....he returned to the attack on those giant rocks with which he was obsessed: to dissect on his drawing-board down to the core, the nerves of matter; but pure truth, the crystal eye avoided him. He the ruthless operator was in the end operated on, and he flung off, foaming and dry mouthed from the austerities of black and white (Pg.221)

A self-portrait which forms a part of every one of his paintings is the area on which he hopes to throw maximum light upon. The exercise of vivisection performed on rocks, which at this stage symbolises his being within the lean animal, his body', sharpens and intensifies 'the reflections of his thinking. ' (Pg.228). The exterior constantly erases its orderliness and in a reflection of reality, a photograph, he sees himself deformed 'Or was it distorted? Just as you distort appearances to arrive at truth.' (Pg. 229).

His role as vivisector arrives at this segment of its meaning, denoting deformity, as a natural entity and distortion as an artistic endeavor. Accordingly the role of the Divine Vivisector and the Divine Destroyer are, both, parts of his 'larrkin self', (Pg.235). His attempts at fair exercise of vivisection of others and himself is an attempt to reach, to collude with knowledge about existence, stretching from the inner to the outer, in his case. In his self-portrait, again an expression to transcend 'the window which prevented his closer approach to the outer world.' (Pg.237) is a dual expression merging influences from the past to the present form.

'However much of a coarse, thickest moral scavenger the
present showed, a lyrical onamist of the past hadn't been altogether suppressed. Here he had caught the two of them in flagrant delight in his own unlikely body. in print.' (Pg.237)

His choice of glass and the painting board is essential for the battle between his honest and dishonest self the antonyms introduced into a world of a God who 'could not have been entirely honest' (Pg.235) in creating the world.' 'The Doppelganger', a painting. an attempt at self-portraiture is the honest representation of the false image, a figure caught between the 'necessary and the unknown' (Pg.242). The colour scheme that occurs to his mind as 'reckless purples' for preconceived or 'premeditated thoughts and 'pools of virulent green' spread over the brooding segments of his thinking.

Nance Lightfoot exposes his obsession as not The Truth but as what he chose to like to believe as the truth. Fully conscious of her plight in his hands, as object of his experiment, soon knocks the wind out his minute sense of achievement and sends him back on his roller-coaster ride, plunging back into defeat and failure when the realisation strikes him, he seeks to revive the battered confidence by uniting body with spirit as evident in this expression 'we shall soothe each other back into our actual bodies.' (Pg.248) His failure to colour his past where perception was keen, in appropriate colours, as his thoughts record,

...All his past was splintering; he had never been able to catch it in its true prismatic colours: the colours of truth-as he saw it. His only true achievement was his failure.......(Pg.242)

The accident which sends Nance Lightfoot crashing to her death at the bottom of the gorge, on the one hand, momentarily crushes out of shape his desire to leave (Pg.237)
'proof that he existed for others' and on the other hand leaves him the survivor, again a
witness to the 'full-stop of suffering' with 'the inspiration withheld from him.'
(Pg.252)
The next movement is to another corner, a house which Patrick White describes as one
that suited the Australian instinct, placed on the edge of social activities, a house in
which he hopes to 'work in, and die in.' (Pg.258) As a metaphor, the house which has
two entrances, opening out into two different streets, offers Hurtle Duffield, the means
to escape when in need and also to observe similar patterns of individual lives lived
along two different lanes, encrusted in his isolation, situated on the vertex. Diminished
eyesight makes him wonder about God and His place in other men's lives. In a conver-
sation with Cecil Cutbush, a character later translated into his painting, he confesses his
preoccupation with the 'Divine Vivisector' who in the eyes of Cutbush, struck a balance
between men's Cruelty and their brilliance. The character of the two streets or the two
faces of his house, too, like God's design complemented each other, such that 'one
taken away might have upset the balance: together they made what was neces-
sary for his fulfillment and happiness. (Pg.262) His impaired vision further intensifies
his isolation and the external sphere of activity views him as one,

.....who was not old of limb or feature, but who must have
been born older than any of them could aspire to be. So
they preferred to avoid situations in which they might be
reminded of their inability to solve his queer conundrum. (Pg.265)

Within the house, between dual life lines, his character alternates between his double
identity as 'Courtney and Duffield as is evident from this observation.

.....'It was Courtney not Duffield, who mooned his way
back to the upper rooms......(Pg.268)

At this juncture, the objective world holds much significance to his creative urge and his detachment from it is his inborn inability to grow with the world, as he is born an adult with a pair of eyes meant to cut-open people who passed him by during his lifetime. His relation to the known world is with the seeming permanence that shrouds the truth, of decay. It offers itself as a concrete promise to his desire to print, preserving for him 'its visual aspect' (Pg.267) Death transforms itself from that offensive, smell of putrefaction, to an abrupt loss of contact with the present, stilling his artistic endeavor; more so, as a rude interruption to the completion of his vision.

....what if he ever died in his sleep, leaving a skeleton pythoness with a rag or two of imperfect flesh? If he thought about death it was usually in terms of work unfinished, and for this reason, he found death terrifying. (Pg.270)

Olivia Davenport's intrusion into his settlement amidst life leaves him with a sense of insecurity and rage as she presents his paintings as her possessions, and hence 'her mind cutting into his'. (Pg.279) Reminiscent of Voss's death, Hurle Duffield examines this new female authority in his life as another beast for slaughter.

Here was another one, he saw, offering her throat to be cut, but by a more tortuous, a more jagged knife.' (Pg.281)

and

The most he could do was cultivate his own ungraciousness while remaining in her power, for she had got possession of that only important part of him: his paintings.'(Pg.282)
If Boo Davenport occupied his present as the regulating power, threatening to possess his only medium of coherent expression, Rhoda pursues him as his artistic inspiration, in her deformity. Between "their conspiring bodies" she slips in as a creature, caught midway between life and death. In his imagination he visualises, her as a dead bird, 'with the same sickening pliability in those of the dead chickens.' (Pg.289)

Olivia Davenport resents the cruel representation of Rhoda, just as she is disturbed by the painting of the grocers perversion committed against the levers behind the lantana bush on a moonlit night. It is evident from the two representations of observed truth, that he is only capable of reflecting in them the cruelty which life seems to have sown all along his path.

'It isn't the grocer who predominates, or the unfortunate lovers. It's really a painting of the moon isn't it? Why have you made it so vindictive, when it should be gentle and reconciling?' (Pg.291)

To this query Hurle Duffield, from his diminished stature, as 'a handsome dissipated, middle-aged man making excuses for his weaknesses' responds.

'You know the way it is' - he answered in a subdued, blunted voice - 'the life you lead-you don't lead it- it gets thrust on you, and carries you in a direction it's difficult to alter.' (Pg.292)

The burdened artist is not weighed down by merely his artistic inspirations welling within but walks with a metaphoric deformity on his back, a hunched-back, slave to the truth, that he is no more than the brush which is held in the Divine Designer's hand stroking his course through a small segment of predestined Time. Aware of this fragil-
ity, the world of human societies appear at their farcical best to his eyes, such that they transmute themselves into creatures of baser intelligence, fitting them into their appropriate form.

.....there was the old, slow, swollen-veined, heavily tactical
train of tortoises, moving their arthritic necks in the direction of
the conversation they were making: some of them relatives-reversed,
theoretically loved-old barristers, doctors, heaviest of all, the graziers,
and old lipstick ladies who forgot what they had begun to feel, but
continued bravely throwing in Galsworthy, Aspsey and Our Pioneer
Families. All of them tortoises, when not elephants, sometimes a stiff
flamingo, but old: some of them on sticks, some with signet ring
eating into skin-cancered hands. (Pg.296)

Temporary power of creation and a smug feeling of satisfaction at re-arranging predestined forms and roles, offers itself as an opening to view the placid exterior, into the interior cluttered with opinions unsuitable for the external prearranged patterns. In an interruption, caused in the midst of Boo Davenport's guests, the sight of a young girl going through a bout of epileptic attack, the cross-section of responses-expected, withheld, camouflaged, clash with his own expectant denouement of the unusual stripping of human dignity before him.

'For an instant the possessed one glanced at the only
other of her kind, and they were swept, and united by
sheet lightning, as they could never have been on the
accepted plane.

She looked at him, and he saw past her green-sickness
and menstrual torments into the hazy future of a bungled marriage and hushed up attempt at suicide. If his had been the right knife, she might have planted it there and then in her turnip flesh, in front of an audience, and risen laughing from the death which obsessed her. (Pg.299)

His docile outward demeanor is his inability to achieve the strength the women in his life seemed to wield over life, hence, his artful representation of diabolically divaricated representations of the life around and the role of women in it offers the power to dictate through art the reality which subjugates him, as is evident from the two responses felt and spelt, within and to an external audience.

"He could have strangled Olivia. As he approached her he could have shouted: I am what matters; without me the painting couldn't happen, and you and your kind would have that much less to babble about. Instead he said humbly" You're right, Boo; but the painter's only human after all, and uses human means to disguise his shortcomings. (Pg.303)

In the course of a battle between degenderising himself, to be in control over the germinating artistic tendencies and the threat of putrefying flesh, the human malady that spells of termination, is registered as

God the Vivisector

God the Artist

God. (Pg.307)

Means of reaching beyond what lay within his powers is not his immediate concern but
to bring the one recognised identity from the beyond within his power, offers him immense energy to fulfill his hopes. Besides God, the unalterable aspects of his life are his 'childhood and 'the revelations of light' (Pg.307)

As a foil to the power exuded by Olivia, Madame Pavloussi offers herself to his vivisecting instrument and his first impression of her appearance is,

.....her miraculous dress was worn with an odd air,

not of humility-fatality.' (Pg.311)

and

In fact Madame Pavloussi, standing in front of him, continued looking dazed, if not frightened, by the possibility that she was intended as a sacrifice. While there flickered briefly through his mind an image of himself trussed on a gold plate, threatened by a knife and fork in her small rather blunt hands.' (Pg.313)

Life, to Hurtle Duffield is the Biblical artful representation of deception, the asphyxiating coils of the serpent. His artful representation of Rodha beside the tripod-bidet, figures under the title 'Pythoness' interprets itself as 'the octopus thing' to Hero Pavloussi, into which image he plans to cast her on his canvas. His relationship with Hero Pavloussi relegates physicality, that which is absolutely important to the temporal love of the western pattern of relationships, to the background. It is evident in the two admissions.

'Physical love, as he saw it now, was an exhilarating steeple chase in which almost every rider ended up disqualified for some dishonesty or another. In his aesthetic desires and their consummation he believed himself to be honest; and in his desire to worship and be renewed by someone else's simplicity of spirit, he
was not forsaking the pursuit of truth. So he was falling
in love with Iero Pavloussi. (Pg.322)

and

her grainy flesh made him regretful for the pure soul
of his invention. (Pg.327)

In a repeat session of interpreting the painting 'Lantana Lovers under Moonfire' he
measures human misdeeds as a poor imitation of what the Divine Destroyer showers
from above. In the scheme of the universe his role is limited to the mere aping of the
larger design.

'I met the bloke one evening on this bench. He had something
rotten about him, but only slightly, humanly rotten in the light of
the Divine Destroyer. I mean the grocer's attempts at evil are childlike
beside the waves of enlightened evil proliferating from above; and he
usually ends by destroying himself.' (Pg.336)

The steady decline of human significance a necessary demoralisation to preserve the
race through artistic reflections continuous. A step by step stripping off the layers of
civilized barricades of strength is attempted through even a common place activity
such as getting into a car.

'They were fitting themselves into the car as the
chauffeur stood holding the door. Obstacles imposed
on them by their formal lives and rubber disguises
made them crawl and wriggle. (Pg.339)

In the form of Soso, Iero and Cosmo Pavloussi's adopted child he re-encounters his
past in which he had exchanged hands between two sets of parents who had fixed a
value on him like the painted objects. Soso is caught between her dual identities as Alice and Soso.

'I felt sick with apprehension for his innermost core for one of his most precious secrets, and for Alice-Soso's fate which to some extent matched his own. (Pg.345)

The image of 'the miscarried child' (Pg.345) initially associated with the departing Hero, on her way back to her husband, and in between their farewell gestures the image is reattached to highlight his impression about 'the pure soul'.

....but nothing develops as conceived: the pure soul, for example, the innocent child, already deformed, or putrefying, in the womb'. (Pg.349)

Observing the world from 'that side' (Pg.338) of the Divine Destroyer, Hero and Hurtle Duffield share with young Soso her horror at the sight of a bag full of cats intended for death by water, and within their adult world, Hero reacts,

God-God is cruel! We are his bagful of cats, aren't we? When God is no longer cruel many questions will be answered.'

and

'Why-yes I could have saved the cats by giving an order after he had left. But I am myself also condemned, as I sit waiting in the house, and the drowning do not care about the other drowning.'

...Their indecently resigned struggles inside the bag must have been observed and judged from a
distance by a shaggy god from under his black heavy eyelids.' (Pg.352)

Villainy associated with divinity keeps fused the physical and abstract notions that offer concrete value to reality and its artistic representations. In a half-conscious state, a necessary precondition to imaginative energy, the method to his powers is comprehended by his glazed mind:

'Neither sleeping or waking: it had been one of those moments when you half-consciously watch the slides, experience is fitting into the frame of a dissolving mind; such a slide, perhaps, would best convey his conception of the drowning lover-cats' (Pg.353)

The destructive end of life draws them deep into, as the novelist phrases it, 'their undemanding skins' (Pg.353), a temporary promise of completeness and continuity, like the sack meant to kill, as a case of deceptive protection and as a compact space to perform the final rites of death. Struggling through his mental sack is the idea grown out of external reality, until it take slow shape on canvas entitled 'Infinity of cats.' The metaphoric sea into which Hurtle Duffield's conscience suffocates is his bitterness against the deceptions of his past-life

'Smells of sea lettuce of sea of putrefying bait of motor-boats haunted his nostrils. Pa Duffield returned, not to protect, but to assist at his destruction. Don't go near the water son you never learnt to swim. I can learn can't I not to drown. Better not trust the water. The flannel with discoloured buttons made Pa look scraggier, more distrustful. Nobody likes to rear a kid an all for
nothun. Or a five hundred quid. Pa himself veins blue in his knotty hands, was helping tie the neck of the rack. This is for love Hurt.

so lie quiet damn yez all of you love cats.' (Pg.354)

The putrefaction amongst human relationships, at this juncture, is the corruption of what was tutored as faith in parental love and caring. The stark, shocking revelation of the dark, cold, continent of deception lying silent within this area of life-giving warmth.

...status and importance which made God unnecessary Speed after reducing your flesh, leaves you on equal terms with the natural forces which have replaced him. It was exhilarating at least.' (Pg.365)

Diverting God of his significance only brings back with vengeance his dependency on His goodwill to fill him with a certain brilliance that he longed for. But as Patrick White phrases it, in describing another mundane activity, he has to suspend himself willingly to 'reliable chains' in anticipation of this moment.

....He could help neither of them, and must resist anyone else's entry into that void in himself which would blaze eventually with light, if he was to be favoured again.' (Pg.370-371)

A physical journey to Perialos on the steamer acts as an appropriate metaphor to his dual existence and pace at which his mental energy copes with perceived truth and conceptualised reality.

'The steamer functioned at two speeds: one for the immediate foreground; the other for the passive distance on which they might never make an impression. (Pg.379)
A similar progress of ideas on two levels occurs as Hero and Hurtle Duffield make their way upto the Church of St.John. The funeral procession and the corpse on the bier enact life's purpose for the artist's eye. Life represented as it is, achieves its meaning or purpose in escorting Death through Life, it is one long funeral procession within which the ritual and the rituals of life are enacted where the physical structure is the only definite proof for Life's presence in the scheme of Living. The fragile physique assumes enormous significance in its defiance against putrefaction, Death's agent. It is also a comment on definite demarcations as forcing local, cultural identities that exist on the physical assurance, once again, of the frail substance.

'The procession flowed towards them. They were caught up in the forked stream of kerchiefed women, and men walking on a curve which criticized the two foreigners. Then came the Church, bearing banners, and emblems in gilded wood. The tattered priests and their tallow-face acolytes intended-the two lost souls to participate in the mystery of which they were the guardians. The object from which this emanated was even halted for an instant: when the strangers caught sight of a very old woman on a bier, heal lolling on a lace pillow. Though still convincingly a partner to life, she was at the same time removed from the living herd trampling around her, for the corpse, with the yellow, pleated mouth and hair dressed in a kerchief identical with those of the live women......(Pg.382)

In another instance of caught between polarities of solid identities Hurtle Duffield and Hero stand still in a certain kind of Death by inacceptability and inevitability.

'They led each other back, trampling through the artichokes
and tomatoes. They were caught between the purple cast, which would never open to them, and the burning west, the blaze of which they mightn't be strong enough to endure. (Pg. 389)

His relationship with Hero Pavloussi clarifies for him the inner world as his only reality, reliable and staid in its exclusiveness. Human relationships at this juncture of his scrutiny is a vacuous state of mere mindless copulating bodies burdened by benumbed emotions. In privacy of the inner world distances physical contact from the experience allows itself, as a malleable substance to be moulded into a new being.

.....the only life he could recognize as practical was the one lived inside his skull, and though he could carry this with him throughout what is called the world, it already contained seeds created by a process of self-fertilization which germinated more freely in their natural conditions of flaking plaster, rust deposits, balding plush and pockets of dust enriched with cobweb. (Pg. 391)

The quality of his faith in human capacity to run a course of creative energy parallel to a God who created only to destroy, is of the kind not designed to serve a social purpose, of enriching an empirical quarter. Human concern is practised as a private art, removed away from any demands that brought in formalities grown out of personal needs, of certain power pockets within the organic folds of human societies. Restraint is seen as a feature of external reality, where human achievements sped around morbid tracks with the enclosures of a gallery of predictable human responses. Pre-arranged order poses an enormous challenge to the artist in him, while orderliness introduced in the minds through the civilising procedure dispenses with considerable ease. But when the
need to communicate his visions to the glare of the external sphere grows unbearable. He is unable to generate a compact vocabulary, an essential tool to boost human confidence, and depends upon his painted expressions to illuminate and illustrate the illusory impressions. Thus his imaginary association of impressions stands in the wings waiting for its turn to be filled out in the canvas, as in this incident, of the little golden hen.

....All this time a little golden hen had been stalking and and clucking round the iron base of the cafe table......
The warm scallops of her golden feathers were of the same inspiration as the scales of the great silver-blue sea creature they—or he at least had watched from John of the Apocalypse, ritually coiling and uncoiling, before dissolving in the last light....Hero half-directed her attention at the hen' but what he could visualise and apprehend, he could really only convey in paint, and then not for Hero. The distressing part was: they were barking up the same tree. (Pg.392)

The incommunicable gap where words fail to unite thoughts, generate an empathy to participate in the felt impressions is captured in this observation which with metaphorical import fixes Hurtle Duffield to his art that now seems more and more structured than a via media to reach the outer circle.

'The golden hen flashed her wings; not in flight;
she remained consecrated to this earth while scurrying through illuminated dust. (Pg.393)

The Hero Pavloussi episode, in his life turns him to seek truth in still objects around him and hence his painting titled 'Furniture'. As he confides in the painter Mothersole Hero Pavloussi's vivisection analyses her as one who used him as an 'instrument of
self-torture .....who 'had to degrade herself for being unworthy of her husband-God...like
the paintings which 'die like anything else...' (Pg.402 & 404) A new segment of his
being comes alive with Hero's agonising death and just as the narrative re-enters present
time through a recapitulation of past events in a conversation with Cecil Cutbush, he
prepares himself for another phase of human contacts by being 'born again by the grace
of Mothersole's warm middle-class womb.' (Pg.405)

While battling all along to masterGod's creative artistry he now experiences self-
germination embedding within his mental womb an inspiration to capture the illusive
embryo that successfully eluded identification.

'......he was fidgeting to create this child. Or more than one.
Or many in one. For after all there is only the one child:
the one you still carry inside you. (Pg.405

In a frenzy of surrealistic images of past reality, his personal point of view, of
observed phenomena interlink to secure this idea of an unborn child within the walls of
his mind.

....the cancer glowed inside the monstrance of Hero's womb
as the wooden saints of Perialos raised her up the sea coiling
and uncoiling round the foreshore in its ritual celebration of
renewal. How could his unborn child fail to stir amongst these
miracles of the risen dead?

Withdrawing into a state of stillness by his slowing reflexes he seeks after the mys-
tery of pure being, of unrealized possibilities' in children's eyes.' (Pg.411) The final
admission of what he had sought all along is drawn out of the artist-' in his dated clothes .
and corroded mask.' (Pg.413)
Kathy Volkov, the thirteen year old neighbour sharing with him 'a divided soul' part Scottish, part Russian, becomes his 'spiritual child of infinite possibilities' (Pg.422). The child in addition to Rhoda who is employed as a moral force or booster of his conscience' (Pg.443) each a part of his comprehensive plan, and kept a secret from the other, elevate him from his 'creative impotence.' (457) As he confesses to Rhoda later, Kathy becomes the instrument which could, in his words,

.....tie the end of my life to the beginning. I think, in that way - rounded - it might be possible to convey what I have to. (Pg.450)

The expansion of his impotence, the specific cause, the beginning, which standing in its isolated past as an established reality for the present is expressed in this observation that finally presses out of his mind the colour that fused the beginning and the end together.

.....as for the furniture of Rhoda's life: the photographs of Harry and Maman in tarnished Asprey frames; the three castered chair now propped on a child's alphabet block; and the iron cot with the pseudo-child's form of its owner almost visible under the Indian Counter pane; these were the more articulate of Rhoda's spiritual demesne, or opponents of his will to create in his old age children of unprecedented beauty. His incestuous foster mother and crooked sister would hardly have understood a work of art like Kathy Volkov. As for Harry Courtney, he should have been the brutal minotaur concocted by legend. Whereas he was in fact the gentle bull-man who submits to his women's darts and even dies of them, out of respect for the rules of the sport. Harry would have understood as much as the hull
understands the motives behind the pole-axe. But Harry could
no more be conjured up from his 'telling likeness', than Kathy
would materialize out of her first promises. (Pg.459)

Besides Kathy, Rhoda, his first inspiration breaks through the pain behind his paintings
as 'horrors less horrible if you've created them yourself.' (Pg.516) Once out of the
practical extensions of space' (Pg.540) Hurtle Duffield makes those connections which
had eluded him from within it. Besetted by the disconnectedness at every aspect of his
life's illusions, as in the particular painting of the monstrous child which transforms
itself to symbolise the unborn child within him.

'There was one drawing in which all the women he had ever
loved were joined by umbilical cords to the navel of the same
everous child. One cord, which had withered apart, shuddered
like lightning where the break occurred, yet it was the broken
cord which seemed to be charging the great tumorous, sprawling
child with internal or miraculous life....Superficially the cord was
reminiscent of a day string of bryony waving from a English hedge.

It was only when he began to consider its deeper implications that
his body would tingle painfully as though from an electric shock.
Was he the child who still had to expect birth? And what of death?
(Pg.519)

The vast disconnected fragments of his psyche, 'while his body protested while the will
drove...(Pg.564), the final colour that emerges out of his encounter with Death on the
Sidewalk is 'indigo'. The colour transcends Death for him, a shade above finality. The
continuity which lies beyond the confirmed end.
Before he could contemplate his vision of indigo, he had to paint out the death which had stoked him. Some at least of the brush strokes he recognised were alive. His painfully electric arm performed extra-ordinary miracles; though not often enough. The white core had begun to glow, but there were the flat stretches leading to it. (Pg.565)
The flat stretches are those moments filling between 'what he saw and what he knew' and the vastness with emphatic sureness begins to take form, grow substantial, as in this observation,

The desert was beginning to flower; not that he had any illusions about its flowering. The sensory gardens of the past were no substitute for what he had to do in the present.

and

.....arranging on the little table the archangel had made according to instructions, the tortured tubes, the prepared brushes.....he renounced the temporary delights-or those which couldn't be squeezed out in proliferating colour, and compressed into a vision which, by its compression, would convey the whole. (Pg.604)
The interminable condition of performing through life supported by the dead hand and his live one 'the promise of the flowering desert dissipates as an illusory promise with death leading life or death as the final, lasting symbol of life, as described in this walk with Cec Cutbush,

'Wherever their common sweat fell, the desert didn't flower, but thorns sprang up in celebration of their victory. If flowering occured it was in the gelatinous light throughout the upper realm.......
and

All life he had been reaching towards this vertiginous blue without truly visualising, till lying on the pavement he was dazzled not so much by colour as a longstanding secret relationship. (Pg.646)

The fusing together of the dead aspect and the live thought, primary to his scrutiny of life and relationship with life and relationship with life Hurtle Duffield's final impression of the unnameable I-N-Di-G-O (Pg.617) holds within it the distorted truth.

'Too tired too end-less obvi indi-ggod (Pg.617)

where,

Light follows dark not usually bound by the iron feather which stroked. (Pg.617)

The dilemma faced by Hurtle Duffield to come to terms, with God the Merciful and God the vivisector, is encountered by Ellen Roxburgh/Gullyas in A fringe of leaves, as the inherent bestiality, within the human condition. The physical journey undertaken by the character, transcends the man-woman distinction because it is about what, as Mr. Roxburgh expresses,

'It was about the country beyond,' he was forced to admit;

beyond the unknown settlements. Prisoners', he positively drove himself, 'will sometimes escape. And wander for years in the interior. Supporting themselves off the land. Suffering terrible hardships. But as life it is more bearable than the one they have bolted from.' (Pg.137)

Moving into the interior is the crux of Patrick White's argument, in favour of the sig-
nificance of the fringe as the living entity keeping that interior of incomprehensible complexities significant. Literally the narrative moves from the fringe of observations made by the Merrivales about Roxbours, bringing into focus the metaphoric import of the shawl, the journal and Ellen herself playing the middle voice function in the coming to terms with knowledge of what lies between the two poles of life; and Miss. Scrimshaw's evaluation of Ellen Roxburgh draws the frame around the vacancy which later becomes the ground for the transition of the beast into the human essence.

...She reminded me of a clean sheet of paper which
might disclose an invisible writing-if breathed upon. (Pg.17)
The narrative achieves fluid movement by subverting fringe details, of impressions into the core of Ellen Roxburgh's experience. She remains the still centre, substance passing through and out of these segments of suffering. The alternating modes of experience is expressed through this particular description.

'Disappointment made her withdraw her and, to pick at
the twigs of a bush which drought and wind had not
prevented from putting out flowers. Golden harsh-coated
teasels alongside grey, hairy effigies of their splendour.(Pg.27)
The 'grey hairy effigies', is her self-conducted tour through the back waters of experience' (Pg.24) Hemmed between memories and reality, both individuals occupy narrow spaces, observing a landscape, suggestive of this fact, that

There is a lot in this part of the world that looks
alive when its dead and vicey versey. (Pg.35)
The journey undertaken in the Bristol Maid, the ship which oscillates Ellen Roxburgh between the past and present is another functionary of the middle voice role, the second
person position, from which the impressions of the first and third person position avail credibility, where 'human life was made to appear an incidental hazard.' (Pg.40)

Captain Purdew's impression of Ellen Roxburgh places her within this heart or centre of energy that marked this fact, about human life as 'an incidental hazard', as a potential frame within which a certain sustainable synthesis is expected to expose its strength.

Possibly Mrs. Roxburgh was only trying to test her courage
in a man's world, though the captain suspected, there was more

to it than that. He would not have known how to express it, but
in his still centre, round which many more considerable storms
at sea had revolved, he sensed that his passenger had an instinct
for mysteries which did not concern her. (Pg.41)

A similar sense of doubts over the feminine strength had formed in the mind at her birth, with a father who had preferred a son, 'an industrious one, to help about the farm
and make amends for his own poor husbandry.' (Pg.43)

Stationed between ambiguities of expectation and reality, being the centre of dualities, Ellen meets in Mr. Roxburgh, her expectation of finding a legendary, chivalrous character who would set her life in motion across and beyond the existence as a stationery point.

'Promised in marriage to a King, she took her husband
as a lover, and the two died of love.'

Death here is the continuation of Ellen in her transformed significance as the second person or the middlevoice in fusing the strands of Austin Roxburgh's life.

Oh the blackness in which it is never possible to
distinguish the outline of a beloved for; or know
the wife of one's own choosing! No wonder that a
state of doubt; anguish even terror, should exist,
to explore which might prove disastrous. I am
from time to time the original Abyss, into which I must
restrain my rational self from plunging for fear of the
consequence. (Pg.61)

Through her marriage to a man of civilized comforts of thought and frame, she heaves
herself into what had always driven her out, 'to escape from her innerself'. (Pg.74) as
recorded in her journal,

Often on such a night at Z., a country to which I belonged
(more than I did to parents or family) I w'd find myself wishing
to be united with my surroundings, not as the dead but fully alive.
Here too, inspite of gratitude and love for a husband as dependent
on me as I on him, I begin to feel closer to the country than to any
human being. Reason, and the little I learned from the books I
was given too late in life to more than fidget over, tells me I am
wrong in thinking thus, but my instincts hanker after something
deeper, which I may not experience this side of death.' (Pg.92)

That freedom sometimes exchanges abstraction ior reality' (Pg.112) is the turn the nar-
native takes in altering the evil that pursues, round the point, a Mrs. Roxburgh, for
whom calculated evil is an unexperienced feature of human life.

'Magnificent view of mountain and river seen by an oppressive
light - stormy to say the least. An unpleasant incident on which I
do not propose to dwell. Only heartening to know whatever bad
I find in myself is of no account beside the positive evil I discover
in others. I do not mean the instinctive brutality of the human 
beast, but the considered evil of a calculating mind. When I say 
'others' I mean An Other (and no friend imagined on the moor 
at dusk in my inexperienced girlhood). (Pg.122)

The physical journey on Bristol Maid forces out of Austin Roxburgh is system 'the 
solid architecture of life' built around him as part of his childhood and for Ellen, the 
passage to the other side, the period or space within which abstractions become reality.

'Time and its fellow conspirator space, Subtler for 
its present watery guise, were never in more perfect 
accord,, and when on the seventh day the ship nosed 
gently into fog, the impression of limitless unity was 
increased, if not for all the voyagers, for Mrs.Roxburgh 
unquestionably. (Pg.144)

Relationships smoothen making human communication possible, as in the case of the 
boy Oswald Dignam where the ship with its uncertain relationship with the accustomed 
gravitational authority, becomes the medium re-arranging meaning behind the objecti-
ified relatedness.

.....by a rude a break in their measured routine, and by 
having to adjust their physical bearing to the angle of a 
heeling ship, but now, suddenly the cold air pouring down 
from above, was aimed at their defenseless bodies, and 
struck even deeper. Their souls shrank dreadfully under the 
onslaught, and would have wrapped themselves together in 
a soft, mutually protective ball had that been possible. As
it was not, the man and woman were left flattening themselves
against a wall groaning, almost breaking it seemed, as they
wrestled perhaps for the last and was it also the first time?

with a spiritual predicament. (Pg.151)

The ship caught in its throes of doom, an imminent wrecking of her frame, is the womb
out of which Mrs. Roxburgh emerges to survive as the only survivor of incidents that
followed the wrecking of the vessel.

She would have liked to pray but found the vocabulary
and the necessary frame of mind for prayer, wrecked
inside her. Mentally she was still too exhausted to sort
out the wreckage, and recoiled moreover from a possibility
that she might never restore order to a spiritual cupboard
which had not been kept as neat as it looked. (Pg.154)

The unborn child within her, retains her hold on to memories that were now moving
over to reality, as a medium only accustomed to premeditated life-styles. It is the
symbol that immobilises her 'caught between reality and actuality.' (Pg.156) Perched in
the precarious boat.

Ellen circumnavigates around her twin identities, jostled all along the way from her
status as Mrs. Roxburgh to Ellen Gullyas preparing for more complete explication of
the I' in relation to the several cores around which it revolves to secure fast its identity.
The voyage undertaken symbolises the course taken by the 'I', from Ellen Gullyas, to
Ellen Roxburgh, and the complete depletion of titles as significant markers in the midst
of the aboriginal community.

As their movements fused and confused she saw above all
her father's wrist flicking the whip with a movement of its
own as they jogged side by side in the cart, or on feast days,
the jingle. She stepped forward at last over the legs of the
rowers and closed the scaly lids when the eyes were no longer
looking at her and folded the hands on the wesket before hurrying
up the road for help. Had she been left to mature naturally she
had inherited that same chapped skin. Looking at her hands,
Mrs. Roxburgh noticed that she was returning, and not by slow
degrees, to nature. (Pg. 173)

The re-enactment of her symbolic self, transforming to return to the one image printed
as an unalterable static form, lowers influences, and erases out for Ellen Roxburgh the
problems of perspective—whereas for Austin Roxburgh traces of familiarity veils and
unveils reality or the pure being that lay beyond the familiar situation, as it is evident
from the instance quoted below.

In his vigilance Austin Roxburgh seemed to remember
all that he had never begun or left unfinished: broken phrases
dangling from his lips at moments when he had most needed to
express himself, the resolution to follow an ascetic rule, to love
all human kind to give thanks to the Supreme Being, to round out
his miserable fragment of a memoir, to undertake Sanskrit, Arabic,
Hebrew, Russian while there was yet time. (Pg. 177)

Carrying the 'rather inconvenient volume' of Virgil, Austin Roxburgh makes his wife
the material that links the fading semblance of reality and as a defence, an artwork, to hold the reigns of sanity to confront the hitherto unconfronted reality.

His wife had surprised a trait which she might have caused him to suppress by coddling him too assiduously in order to curry favour with his mother; while he, no doubt, saw his wife as the brittle work of art he was creating, the glaze of which might crack were she to become aware of her creator's flaws and transgressions.

On the contrary Ellen Roxburgh, placing faith in securing ties as sustainable forces of continuity, reflects upon her condition thus,

It could have been lassitude again which was developing her faith, not in God, in whose service she had never been punctilious, nor in the mere compelling gods of the countryside into which she had been born, but in the umbilical rope joining the long-boat to the pinnace. No, it was more than the ebb of her mental and physical powers, it was life itself dictating her faith in this insubstantial cord. (Pg.174)

Two instances speak for the retention of faith in the familiar and the forced departure of the assurance the same offered under circumstances of better human control. The first is expounded in Austin Roxburgh offering his assistance to Spurgeon, which in turn
allows his liberation within the human sphere of compassion, a crossing over of boundaries well-within the human limits, of a complete religious comprehension through his Christ-like administration of help to the man covered in sea-boils.

Faced with this human derelict, Austin Roxburgh realized afresh that his experience of life, like his attitude to death, had been of a predominantly literary nature; inspite of which, it was required of him to exert himself as a member of the ruling class, for so he must still appear to others inspite of his recent enlightenment.' (Pg. 187)

The slow detachment of the same, the transcending of the familiar, initially figuring as painful separation occurs in the two instances with Ellen as the centre. The one involves Oswal Dignam, the youngster, who is the initial thrust in breaking down the stratified interior of Ellen Roxburgh. A circumstance which is also the first movement of going over the edge to the other side, a symbolic death, the consumption of man the fragile creature by a medium holding within a Divinity unknown to the puny figure, who 'continued resisting his fate....against the mystery of divine prerogative before the sea put a glossy stopper in his mouth' (Pg. 191) The boy slips from 'common consciousness' of the rest of the crew, and is a minor accident in the wake of unknown cruelties awaiting them. The individual consciousness of Ellen Gullyas in making connections with the aborted relationship and her child within, is given complete expression when she is driven, slinking, 'guided by her instinct for cunning' and falls upon a nest of eggs,
and finding within it a 'putrefying embryo' (Pg.196) The meaning of the desert within comes to light with the search for signs of survival and the straggling fringe of the shawl, as a hopeless reminder of a defunct set of human assurances.

'The fringe of her shawl trailed through depths in which it was often indistinguishable from beaded weed or the veils and streamers of fish drifting and catching on coral hammocks then dissolving free for the simple reason that the whole universe was watered down. (Pg.222)

The fringe here is the dividing line between two dichotomous spheres of familiar substances, one exhaustively ingested, as Austin Roxburgh's doubts foggily restate it as 'all his life he might have been on equal terms with reality.' (Pg.203) and the other, the piece of land which the castaways, thus far 'on equal terms with reality' believe it to be 'the fringe of paradise itself.' (Pg.208) Putrefaction becomes the substance on the fringe but the metaphoric import of it is a reflection of their immanent putrefaction on the fringe.

Ellen Gullyas ceases to be an identity when she stills her spirit, to an impassive object of life ahead, of endurance to regain her virtue as a human person from the stilled moment, through sufferance.

...in a country designed for human torment, where even beauty flaunted a hostile radiance, and the spirits of the place were not hers to conjure up. ( )

Quick physical transformations and new interpretation of stock definitions of love and
affection, in its re-arrangement shifts her centres of identification from one aspect of the aboriginal method of survival to another, driven, 'to search for a cause or reason for her presence in a clueless maze. '(Pg.226) Lying on the fringe of this life continuing with a concussed practise of looking for an explanation Ellen Gullyas is driven up trees to capture opossums, kept secure in the fringe which now becomes a region of stability, emblematic of the Australian consciousness

'She was scarcely more alive than the opossum but her girdle had held and she was comforted to see amongst the leaves her ring. (Pg.236)

Besides being a haven, the fringe becomes a plane where the passivity inbred into the human female psyche grows into a dynamic force within her; expelling dressed chores of civilized behaviour is the contrastive re-running of past events, set against present needs of greedy survival strategies.

'Now reduced to an animal conditions she could at least truthfully confess that ecstasy had flickered up from the pit of her stomach provoked by a fragment of snakeflesh.'(Pg238)

and

She was the 'Ellen' of her youth, a name they had attached to her visible person at the font, but which had never rightfully belonged to her anymore than the great part of what she had experienced in life. Now this label of a name was flapping and stirring ahead of her among the trunks of great moss-bound trees, as its less substantial
echo unfurled from out of the past, from amongst fuchsia, and geum and candy tuft, then across, the muck-spattered yard, the moor with its fuzz of golden furze and russet bracken to expire in some gull's throat by isolated syllables. (Pg.243)

From the aboriginals point of view the woman is no human particle but a spirit to be exercised from their midst. The alternating of her role, as the slave to be beaten into obedience, and the one placed on a throne to be scrutinised thoroughly, as an entity that could perhaps dislodge their centrality from within its corporate action for survival, serves to disentangle for Ellen her disparate emotions. The final exposure of the human spirit is in its darker needs, in the named condition as cannibalism, unknown in the present time of the overwhelming survival concerns.

Just as she would never have admitted to others how she had immersed herself in the saint's pool, or that its black waters had cleansed her of morbid thoughts and sensual longings, so she could not have explained how tasting flesh from the human thigh-bone in the stillness of a forest morning had nourished not only her animal body but some darker need of the hungry spirit. (Pg.245)

The emergence of Jack Chance and his past embittered by the memory of Mab, his convict identity, and the forced exile recentres for her, by bringing a future into focus with symbolic removal of the defoliated vine around her and a symbolic removal of the defoliated vine around her and a rebinding of her body with fresh foliage and the symbolic exposure of the ring concealed until then from the gaze of the aboriginals. Her passage through the alien terrain is a course within 'subterranean darkness' (Pg.293) and the final release of the ring in the fringe of this darkness, (Pg.293), is the final
breaking away from a fatality that emphatically meant that no 'person is ever really cured of what they were born with.' (Pg.299) or that 'Only the condemned survive.' (Pg.309) The overlapping experiences, from her farmyard upbringing to the Roxburgh refinement, the existence amongst the blacks, the burden of Jack Chance's exile, the realisation that dawns is that 'she might never become acceptable to either of the two incompatible worlds become acceptable to either of the two incompatible worlds even as they might never accept to merge.' (Pg.335) In Mr. Pilcher's words, the other survivor, Mrs. Roxburgh is 'the cold lady, the untouchable', and Ellen's interpretation of her mid-state between the two incompatible segments is 'if I was given a soul, I think it is possibly lost.' (Pg.348)

Circumventing around experience as a manner of recentering oneself within the human world, a structuring of oneself within the familiarity embodied in Pilcher's chapel, is a course of action unfamiliar to the being of Ellen the Woman, the Eve in Adam's paradise

'A woman as I see is more like moss or lichen that takes to some tree or rock as she takes to her husband.(Pg.363)

The woman in accordance with the Old Testament ethos is the minor growth on the solid, rooted significance of Man. Ellen Roxburgh elevates herself from the particular condition in running away from Pilcher's construction, a church better known by its architect than by the power invoked within.

Despite Patrick White's admission that religion is at the heart of all his works, and the dualities within known reality and his varied contrasted approaches to the underlying truth, shifting between details of hard reality of the familiar and stark reality of the unfamiliar aspects of human nature, it is predominantly a fictional quest to comprehend
the vacancy that lies in between matter that makes space for the opposite meaning to
take form. In the vacancy lies the instrument that makes human existence a procession
of dual complexities, sustaining in it recurrent pair of opposites; and attempts at center-
ing ones self within the patterned chaos which is the quest undertaken by Patrick White
in the works chosen for study. Humanism as understood through his works is not its
anti-thesis which has become the conditional starting point for the evolution of a par-
ticular kind of humanism given the cultural circumstances and spatio-temporal reasons
that received colonialism as both a blow and an essential tool for deconstruction of
time-tested strongholds of convention within a particular country, as in the case of
Africa. The expansion of this anti-thesis is that it limits one's interests to the particular
society to which one belongs. Patrick White strives towards giving exposure to human
needs detached from the specific requirements of civilized codes of human conduct and
religious structure in their awkward assemblance or as reminders of their functional
days, now dilapidated, is a clear rejection of any doctrine or institution that chooses to
overpower human needs. Taking into account human needs as the universal ground for
the comprehension of the spiritual Patrick White strives to demythify the faith in the
brotherhood of man, yet another maya, a unity promising liberation under the domina-
tion of ordered devotion. The rebellion leading to violation, with fiction designed to
shock by the exposition of the sordid side of human needs, the putrefaction as the core
of human substance.

Identity within the vacancy ceases to be the object that is invariable, which persists
through a certain time segment, instead it is that vacuum where a new essential imbal-
ance or a new set of pressure points emerge, the movement away from numerical sense
to the stillness of specific sense. In the numerical sense self-awareness is the fabrica-
tion of experience, whereas, as in the thoughts of David Hume, the vacuum allows the emergence of self-image, as a composite of various fading images, ephemeral in its existence value. 2 By ordering his themes to permit the specific talents of an artist, as a painter or musician, Patrick White as the medium of drawing patterns within the vacancy he animates semantic fields, formulating metaphors for this plain, a conceptual scheme for comprehension of the vacancy as the ideal. The circles around Stan Parker, the centre, is the semantic field moving from the 'I-maker' tasks to the 'I' stance.3 It is a similar emergence of Ellen Gullyas, initiated through episodes of birth, death and rebirth, through pain into this centre, the eye of universal dualities. Whereas Voss and Hurtle Duffield within the vacant plot move from identifications with 'that is the self' and at one instant, 'that thou art, and finally lie slain by the knowledge that, 'that is the self' but 'Not that thou art' thus opening the vacancy as the eye of visions, where the infinite possibilities of comprehending this knowledge is made possible. Patrick White, moves scientific realism which implies that 'man is the measure', to the centre of this eye, to explicate the 'mutual connectedness' of self and spirit, a truth expelled out in the excesses of desert condition; realised through the violent reduction of man, the measure, of all things.

2 Giles, James 1993 'The No-Self Theory: Hume, Buddhism and Personal Identity.' Philosophy East and West A Quarterly of Comparative Philosophy Vol. XLIII No.2 Pg.175

3 Myers, Michael. W; 1993 'Tat Tvam Asi as Advaitiv Metaphor' Philosophy East and West A Quarterly of Comparative Philosophy Vol. XLIII No.2 April 1993, Pg.232