

**ABSTRACTS FOR THE PATRICK WHITE CENTENARY INTERNATIONAL
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**Distinction Between Self and Other
Women Characters in *Voss*: A Lacanian Perspective**

Ahmad Qazi Khursheed - University of Kashmir

This paper will look at the plight of women in White's *Voss* from Lacanian perspective. It will interrogate the whole text through tracing the instances where we may observe these female characters of the novel caught in a struggle of Self and Other. It will also explore aspects of their domains of desire and their search for the *Lacanian Objet Petit*.

The paper will explore the concept of a perfect whole 'self' of these females one that has no sense of insufficiency. Once this "ideal ego" becomes internalized these women pursue their search for their sense of "self," and "Identity", by identifying themselves with this ideal ego. The paper will show how they imagine a self that has no lack, no notion of absence or incompleteness: this will be a Lacanian reading of *Voss*' female characters.

**'Unity of Being': A Study of Patrick White's Mystic Vision and the Indian
Religio-Spiritual Tradition**

Arora Gursharan Kaur - Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology

The quest to attain the '*Unity of Being*', the ultimate state of transcendence that forms the core of Indian Religio-spiritual tradition finds an echo in Patrick White's novels. Some of his recurrent themes – the solitariness and alienation of human beings; the incessant war between human ego and the humbling forces of existence; the quest of the non-conformist characters for enlightenment; and suffering as an indispensable condition of human beings are also pre-shadowed in the Indian Religio-spiritual tradition.

White's exploration of spiritual suffering and the possibility of salvation through negation of the ego are akin to the concept of '*Tapasaya*' (spiritual struggle for transcendence) and '*Tayaag*' (renunciation). Spiritual suffering stems from the pangs caused by 'separation of the spirit from its source'. Man's quest is to reunite with the eternal life force through a

journey within to find one's own inner self; to come to terms with the evil within; annihilate it; and then move out again on a journey towards transcendence, a journey from humanity to divinity. My paper will seek to delve into the points of similarities between White's vision and Indian religio-spiritual traditions as both seek to find ways to make "the opaque world transparent."

BIO NOTE

Gursharan Kaur Aurora retired as Principal of a reputed school in Punjab, India on 31st December, 2010 and joined Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Majhitar, East Sikkim, India as Assistant Professor in January, 2011. In 1984, she wrote a dissertation on 'Patrick white's Characters as Seekers' for her dissertation for M. Phil. Now, at the age of sixty one, she has picked up the threads again after almost three decades and has recently registered for PhD. thesis working on 'The Spiritual Quest of Patrick White's Non-conformist Characters and its Parallelism the Indian Religio-Spiritual Tradition' for her Doctoral thesis.

Quest for the Infinite: A Comparative Study of the Protagonists in Patrick White's *Voss* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Bala Suman - University of Delhi

Patrick White is regarded as one of the greatest writers of Australia. The award of the Nobel Prize in 1973 drew world attention to his writing. In his Miles Franklin Award-winning *Voss*, White presents a mysterious German explorer who has come away from his homeland in order to discover the strange primitiveness of the interior of Australia. He attempts to overcome the challenge of crossing the Australian continent for the first time.

One finds many parallels in the journey undertaken by Voss and that undertaken by Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, the great twentieth-century British novelist. Through his journey to Congo in search of Kurtz, Marlow also yearns (as Voss does) for a meaning in the ineluctable conditions of existence. The novel is concerned with the effect of the country and of Kurtz on Marlow. Marlow's journey into the impenetrable darkness of

Africa transforms him profoundly. And (like Voss) he gains valuable knowledge about himself, the nature of evil and the world.

The Body: A Reading of the Androgyne in Patrick White's *The Solid Mandala*

Barua Krishna - IIT, Guwahati

The androgynous personality has figured in classical literature, legend and religion. In Patrick White's novels *The Solid Mandala* and *The Twyborn Affair*, there are many connections between mind and body inviting challenging discourses on consciousness. In these two novels, Patrick White has tried to explore what may be called the ambiguity of existence on the basis of the story of two persons living one life, a pair of twins, in the first work, and the life and experience of an androgynous character, in the second. The purpose of my paper is to reveal how the author has delved deep into the ambiguous landscape of the two selves where each is inadequate by itself, struggling to achieve a wholeness in *The Solid Mandala* and the stimulating exploration of the psychological, physical and spiritual motivations behind the androgynous personality in *The Twyborn Affair*. White tells in his autobiography *Flaws in the Glass* that he had in his childhood begun "the inevitably painful search for the twin who might bring a softer light to bear on [his] bleakly illuminated darkness". The works also convey the idea of the divided personality of the Platonic twins, each inadequate by itself, each constantly seeking the other out; together they put up an image of an integrated self; divided, they reveal their fragmentariness. In Patrick White's own words "I see myself not so much a homosexual as a mind possessed by the spirit of man and woman according to the actual situation or the characters I become in my writing."

Woman subjugated or Woman victorious? Ellen in *A Fringe of Leaves*

Bindu - N.SS Govt Arts College, Tiruttani, Tamilnadu

White's novel *A Fringe of Leaves* is based on a historical incident and revolves around the experiences of an Englishwoman who was shipwrecked on an island, lived amongst the Aborigines for several months and was then rescued and returned to 'civilisation'. A central paradox remains at play throughout: Ellen appears as a victim of patriarchy exploited

by the males in her life: in early life by her father; later by her husband and also her lover. The pattern of subjugation may be traced also during her sojourn amongst the Aboriginal people and her rescue by the escaped convict Jack Chance. Yet she is also constructed as a woman who triumphs over all the challenges she encounters to emerge finally as the dominant and strongest force in the novel; the males seem no more than pawns in her own triumphant path to selfhood.

Amplifying the Mandala Philosophy Re-reading Patrick White's *Solid Mandala*

Biswas Sarbojit - Barjora College, West Bengal

The origins of the Sanskrit word *mandala* meaning 'disc, circle,' can be traced to the *Rig Veda* where it stands for the title of sections of the book and in Hindu and Buddhist art and religious practices, refers to a formation where a square is enclosed in a circle. The mandala has manifold representations and meanings – it can stand for a circle, a polygon, a community, a connection, a support for a meditating or *tantric* person, a palace with four gates facing four corners of the Earth, a sacred space and even a geometric pattern for the microcosm of the universe in the human mind. (Hansen)

C.G. Jung, in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* uses the term to refer to circular images drawn by his patients and himself while trying to attain a sort of psychic wholeness. He describes the mandala to be a representation of "an inner image...gradually built up through (active) imagination ...when physical equilibrium is disturbed or when a thought cannot be found and must be sought for." (Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*)

It has been variously debated that towards the later part of his literary career, Patrick White became preoccupied with religious issues (he has himself affirmed that this was his main concern): its greatest evidence lying in his novels, *The Solid Mandala* and *Riders in the Chariot*. In the latter novel, White made his four main characters conform to the quaternity of the mandala so as to transform them into the biblical riders in the divine chariot. As such, this paper aims to look at White's rereading of the mandala motif in his *The Solid Mandala* and find how the mandalas become the linking devices in the novel represented through the main

character Arthur's four marbles which ultimately present the oneness of the self and enable him to solid mandala to a culmination.

BIO NOTE

Sarbojit Biswas is presently associated with Barjora College, The University of Burdwan, West Bengal, India as Assistant Professor in English. He is also Visiting Research Fellow at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia and a Guest Faculty at The Department of English, The University of Burdwan, Burdwan, West Bengal, India. His doctoral thesis was on the novels of Indigenous Australian writer Kim Scott.

Patrick White's *The Tree Of Man* A Study Of a Human Being's Relationship with The Given World

**Choubey Bashisth Jagdamba College and Choubey Meenakshi, Govt Girls' College,
Achalpur**

Patrick White is deeply interested in evaluating the basic questions of human life within the parameter of a familiar given environment. The complex and reciprocal relationship in *The Tree Of Man* between man and the land is highly evocative of a pioneering saga. White's creative use of the flood, the storm and the tree is suggestively mystical in its resonances. The theme of the novel is strongly projected through the seasonal cycle and the forces of nature. It is necessary, to carefully examine White's treatment of the dialectical interactions between the land, the agencies of nature and the human being in order to appreciate the essentially organic conception of life in *The Tree Of Man*.

The focus of this paper would be the detailed analysis of the novel with a view to assessing the vision of life in the given world as experienced by the Stan Parker. In the first phase Stan's neuromuscular adaptation to the given world is elaborately described. This includes his conjugal life with Amy. In the second phase, the spiritual dimension of Stan's search gains prominence. Driven by the demon of purpose, Stan builds an honest house, marries Amy and settles down. But the untamed forces of nature constantly test the limits of Stan's fortitude. In the face of threatening storms, fear of death and annihilation become concrete realities. The

heroic Stan for the first time realizes that he was altogether 'insignificant' .Thereafter he begins to learn the true meaning of courage and strength.

BIO NOTE

Dr. Bashisth Choubey is an Associate Professor of English at Jagdamba Mahavidalaya, Achalpur (M.S). He has published more than fifteen research papers in different national and international journals, and he has also presented many research papers in national and international seminars and conferences. At present he is a recognized research guide of Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati.

Dr. Meenakshi Choubey is an Associate Professor of English, Govt. Girls' College, Betul (M.P.). Her publications include articles in prestigious journals in India and abroad. Her areas of interest are: Comparative Literature, American Literature, Commonwealth Literature and Third World Literature. At present she is supervising research scholars for Ph.D degree. In addition to literary activities, she is spontaneously interested in classical vocal music.

‘Neurophilosophy’, ‘Whole Brain Theory’ and Patrick White’s *Solid Mandala*

Das Arindam - Heritage Institute of Technology, Kolkata

The philosophy of mind and neuroscientific theories of the behavior of the brain may seem issues which are poles apart. However, with the publication of the book *Neurophilosophy* (1986) and later its sequel *Brain-Wise* (2002) by Patricia Smith Churchland, the lacuna between the two seems to have been repaired. This particular branch of interdisciplinary research paves the way for the application of neuroscientific concepts to traditional philosophical questions. A particular sub-field of this branch is the “whole brain” theory—an amalgamation of “right-brain/left-brain” theory. In this paper I will selectively apply the “neurophilosophy” and “whole brain” theory to an analysis of Patrick White’s *Solid Mandala*.

Transnational Migration and Search for Identity: A Reading of Patrick White's Autobiography *Flaws in the Glass: A Self-portrait*

Deepa B. S. - The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad

‘I feel what I am, I don't feel particularly Australian. I live here and work here. A Londoner is what I think I am at heart but my blood is Australian’

‘I am not for nationalism at all...for flag-wagging and drum thumping’ (Marr – *Patrick White, A Life*)

Crossing national boundaries is a travel experience, which evokes questions of alienation, belonging and finally allots a new meaning to human space. This paper is an exploration of identity formation when crossing national boundaries in Patrick White's autobiography *Flaws in the Glass: A self Portrait* (1912-90). White's life was spent not only in Australia and England, but also in travels through France, Germany, and the US. None was singled out as 'home' in definite terms. He records his extensive travel as an attempt to demonstrate an ambiguity of attitude and the repudiation of a single space as home. Patrick White's life story in his autobiography can contribute greatly to our understanding of such patterns of connections and explores the way the migrants combine aspects from two or more cultures in day-to-day lives. This paper attempts to analyze a personal account of Patrick White's experience as a transnational and also as exploration of identity formation.

Ecology and Identity: A Comparative Study of Patrick White's *Voss* and Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*

Dhawan R.K. - University of Delhi

Ecological concerns have been the subject of literature since time immemorial but lately there has been a new impetus given to it. There has been a paradigm shift in our attitude towards the Human -Nature relationship for a number of reasons. It is being increasingly realized that modern technology has caused depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation. The ecological movement in the last few decades has gained considerable momentum and vigorously drawn the attention of intellectuals, academics and scientists to the serious issues pertaining to this relationship. Ecologically-oriented literary critics condemn modern civilization for the oppression of nature and all other forms of "the other." Literary works, it

is commonly agreed, have the potential to exploit environmentalism amongst readers tempting them towards a philosophy more adequate to confront the environmental crisis. In Patrick White's *Voss*, we are placed in the urban settlement of New South Wales which is growing fast and is the world of civilized whites, while the unexplored desert area of the Australian landscape is the abode of the native Aborigines, symbolizing lives of simplicity and spontaneity. *Life of Pi*, an Indo-Canadian novel by Yann Martel, winner of the prestigious Commonwealth Prize, is perhaps the most notable contemporary work expressive of contemporary eco-critical theory. It is more than an adventure story; rather it is philosophical and metaphysical study. This paper will make a comparative study of the two novels with particular reference to our changing perceptions of the environment.

Patrick White's *Voss*
A Queer Portrayal of Settlers in Contemporary Australia

Gangopadhyay Rudrani - Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Patrick White, in his 1957 novel *Voss*, provides excellent insights into the various kinds of settlers that could have been found in Australia at the time, while also constantly queering these very images. This duality is mostly embodied in the queerness of the protagonist, Voss. Since Australia itself could be considered a queer double of England, it is no surprise that the people residing in it will be queered visions themselves. The inevitable cultural diffusion between whites and Aborigines also results in the existence of unusual parallels among both groups of people, thus adding to the queerness around. An intense desire to fit in can also be noted among the settlers. In the queerness of the characters – whom Australia destroys and reshapes – there is a suggestion that the worst of sufferings are possibly borne out of a need to understand all that Australia offers, and to make it their own. This paper intends to identify the prototypes of the settlers described in the novel, show how their traits are queered throughout the text and propose that the settler finally becomes a native in Australia only through the process of utmost suffering.

BIO NOTE

Rudrani Gangopadhyay is a postgraduate first year student at the Department of English, Jadavpur University, Kolkata India. Her research interests include Classical Literature, Crime Fiction, Fantasy, Postcolonial Literature, Queer Studies, and Popular Culture. Academic

Projects and Term papers on which she has worked include “Portrayal of Warrior Ethics in Edward Zwick's *The Last Samurai*”, “Colonial Mimicry in Niharranjan Gupta's *Kiriti Stories*”, “The Blind Man In Tragedy”, “Arriving at dystopia: Crossing through time and into P.D.James’s *The Children of Men*” (presented at the International Postgraduate Conference at Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka, on May 2012), “Wish Every Girl Was Like AISHA: Replacing humanity with bots” (presented at the National Seminar at Padmanava College of Engineering, Rourkela, on September 2012).

Framing the Historical Matrix of Patrick White and Thomas Keneally through Whitehead

Harishankar V. Bharathi - University of Madras

The fiction of Patrick White and Thomas Keneally show affinities in their depiction of alienation of individuals, personal quests which take on spiritual-moral overtones and the sweep of history which encompass the personal, national and global pasts. Their fiction combines two apparently contradictory senses of history: first, they represent the “mass experience” of certain epochal events in world history such as the world wars, their impact on Australia, the Holocaust, and arrival of convicts, colonial contact moments and the like. Besides, they present human life caught in the welter of conflicting events. Thus, we do not have so much of a re-writing or re-telling of history as moments when ordinary individuals cross paths with history. The result is that they alter the course of history and themselves in the process. (Voss, Ellen Roxburgh from White's fiction and Oskar Schindler, Halloran from Keneally's fiction are examples.) Very often, this phenomenon is explained through a metaphysical framework for Patrick White and a moral dimension in the case of Keneally.

This study proposes Alfred North Whitehead's views on Time as a framework to study the historical matrix of White and Keneally. Whitehead views time as a process and perception of reality which exists in two dimensions – concrecence and prehension. Concrecence is the individual's perception of disparate moments as a unified historical process. The individual incidents are interrelated by an internal mechanism called prehension -- a historical moment/event has a relation (positive or negative) with what precedes or follows it. The highlight of this framework is that simultaneity replaces causality and therefore there is a move out of the moral-spiritual dimension which appears to dominate the works of White and Keneally.

Bearing the Bare reality/Baring the Masked Truth Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Daisy Bates

Kalpana H. - Pondicherry University

This paper attempts to reveal how indigeneity is constructed by the writers, Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Daisy Bates. Indigeneity and belonging are common metaphors used by writers. It, however, becomes much more relevant in Australian writing because many of the non-natives too claim a native position if they have been born and brought up in the Australian nation. Thus, if one wishes to question the nature of being autochthonous, then it would be difficult to separate the settler and the native in Australia. It is within this thin margin that studies regarding the status of the indigene are attempted. The focus of the present paper is on two writers: Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Daisy Bates who deliberate not so much on the position of the indigene but on the representation of the Indigene/Aborigine. Oodgeroo's poetry was a voice that bore witness to the harsh reality of the Aboriginal existence and at the same time it also voiced the vision of the Aborigines through a culture of activism. On the other hand, Bates through her work, *The Passing of the Aborigines* bares the truth regarding Aboriginal existence. Most reading of Australian writing emerge from two perspectives. The first perspective is the view that the colonizer is a dominant master and the second is that the Aborigine as a passive victim. In the light of these two perspectives it is refreshing to examine the work of these two women writers who, in their own way empowered Aborigines. To understand the issues raised the paper will focus on a close examination of some of the poems of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and extracts from Bates', *The Passing of the Aborigines*.

BIO NOTE

Dr. H. Kalpana is an Associate Professor in the Department of English, Pondicherry University, Puducherry, India. She has had her education at Bangalore University, Pondicherry University and University of Alberta. Her area of specialization is Canadian literature and her other areas of interest include American literature, new literatures, women's writing, feminist, gender and cultural theories. She attended a workshop on Contemporary American Literature at University of Louisville, USA as part of the Fulbright foundation's Study of Institutes program. She has in the last 25 years guided a number of student projects and dissertations at MA, M.Phil and Ph.d levels. Throughout her academic career she has steadily attended conferences and seminars as well as delivered talks at various universities in India. She has to her credit a number of publications including a book, *Quilting*

Relationships: A Cruise through Comparative Literary Studies (Atlantic Publishers, 2009). She was selected on the basis of students' evaluations as the best teacher in the department of English in September 2011 and was awarded a certificate of merit by the University.

Establishing a Connection: Similar Reverberations in Guru Granth Sahib and Selected Works of Patrick White

Kaur Ishmeet - Central University of Gujarat

Patrick White's fiction crosses all boundaries and enters a wider sphere of universality. His novels depict his interest in the relationship between the human being and God. His protagonists are often in search of a greater reality beyond the realms of institutional religions. He condemns rituals and dogmas and focuses on the influence of a "Divine power, a creator" (Marr, 282) on human beings. In the same vein, *Guru Granth Sahib*,* too steers clear all the discriminating factors and embraces the entire human race irrespective of class or caste. The fact that the text is a compilation of verses by *Gurus* and the saints of different sects and religions advocates its universality. Patrick White's thematic concerns about religion are similar to those in *Guru Granth Sahib* as both deal with the spiritual and human experience.

The paper is an attempt to evolve a methodology for comparative literature by a close study of the influences and traditions, that have shaped the texts, historically and thematically. In the case of *Guru Granth Sahib*, the influence of the Sufi and Bhakti movements set up universal notions of human freedom. In Patrick White's works, the after-effects of war, alienation and isolation urge the protagonist to recognize the metaphysical concerns leading towards liberation of human beings.

Note on *Guru Granth Sahib*: *Guru Granth Sahib* is a Sikh scripture compiled by Guru ArjunDev in 1604 AD. The complete structure of the text was finalised in 1706. It contains compositions of seven Gurus (spiritual teachers and leaders), fifteen Bhagats (devotees), and eleven Bhattas (bards) who were from different sects, religions, classes and castes.

Exploring the Land and the Self in Patrick White's *Voss*

Khan Afrinul Haque - Nirmala College, University of Ranchi

An important feature of Australian literature, as has been manifested in the works of major writers, is the concern with portraying an effective identifying relationship between self and place. Australian literature seems marked by a continuous struggle to resolve the tension between the settlers' sense of identity and their relationship to the land they had come to inhabit. In Australia the initial immigrant population was largely from the British Isles and British settlers in Australia often found it difficult to determine the nature of their identity in a strange land. Even today, Australians still seem to be asking themselves, who they are, what forces shape them and what is their relationship with the land in which they live? The present paper attempts to examine some of these concerns through an exploration of Patrick White's *Voss*.

Set in the mid nineteenth century *Voss* tells us the story of a German explorer who sets out to cross the Australian continent. He seems to be greatly fascinated by the land and even though he had been in Australia only for twenty-eight months, he seems to have a greater understanding of the land than the settlers of New South Wales who show an inexplicable aversion to their country. While the settlers feel alienated and distanced from the spirit of the country, Voss has identified himself with the spirit of the land and he has every intention to know it with his heart, and finally through his death at the end of the expedition seems to be finally merged physically into the land. Perhaps there is a suggestion by the author that it is only through a kind of absorption into the land's native purity that the foreign migrant can become identified with the land.

BIO NOTE

Dr. Afrinul Haque Khan is Assistant Professor of English in Ranchi at Nirmala College, Ranchi University.

Landscape and Transcendental Visions in Patrick White's *Voss* (1956)

Kiran S.N. - Tumkur University, Karnataka

Human beings have an everlasting relationship with Nature which has resulted in the creation of myths in relation to nature. This provides us with a clue for exploration of the philosophical significance of the journey of John Ulrich Voss into the heartland of Australia. The paper proposes to explore the landscape and transcendental visions as evident in Patrick White's *Voss* (1956). Australian desert; while the Blacks and European colonizers contribute to the narrative events of the novel. The plot revolves around the lives of the European settlers and Aborigines. Set in the 1840s, the novel is also a story of exploration of the self. Through portrayal of the attempt to explore the Australian desert, the novelist reveals the mind of the megalomaniac protagonist and his companions who become lost and eventually die in it.

BIO NOTE

Kiran S. N. teaches Indian Literature in the Post-Graduate Department of Studies and Research in English, Tumkur University, Tumkur, Karnataka. He holds an M.A. from the University of Mysore, Mysore and M.Phil. from Bharathiar University, Coimbatore. He is pursuing his Ph.D. on Diaspora Studies and especially involved in South Asian literature and classroom research. He regularly presents papers in seminars and workshops and has organised a national level conference on South Asian Literatures.

A “journey to hell and back”: Ellen's strategic resistance and interpolation of the adversaries in Patrick White's *A Fringe of Leaves*

Mashrur Shahid Hossain - Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh

This paper gives a geo-critical feminist reading of Patrick White's *A Fringe of Leaves* in order to trace the ways Ellen Roxburgh encounters, resists, and interpolates action and initiative into challenging situations. It concentrates on five different 'places' that Ellen has to traverse and create *space* for herself. First, the urban life in which the Cornish tomboy is transformed into a Cheltenham “lady”; second, the rough Van Diemens Land and her encounter with Garnet; third, her helpless exposure to the Aborigines; fourth, the long

hazardous journey across a desert along with the convict, Jack Chance, ; and fifth, her stay at the Oake's household .

Ellen's return to England at the end suggests that she lacks the strength, both physical and spiritual, to play with the extremes unlike White's typical 'questers' like Voss who attempted "a journey to hell an' back". It is exciting to note however, the way Ellen *encounters* adverse situations – ranging from her marriage to the sickly Austin or encounter with Garnet to resistor *interpolate* action (e.g. her strategic approach to her seducer Garnet) into situations so as to survive and thrive. Acknowledging that Ellen's identity, situated vis-a`-vis male figures – Austin, Garnet, Jack, Mr. Oakes – in the major phases of her life – marriage, seduction, wilderness – is constructed in relation to men and nature, the paper argues that Ellen's adaptation is a kind of creative resistance against annihilation and an affirmation of her female self.

Disturbing Past and Chaotic Present: A Re-reading of Patrick White's *Voss*

Noufal N. Mohammed - University of Hyderabad

Contemporary historical fictions seem to be preoccupied with the traditional notions of history. History has been revisited through fiction by constant interrogation of the accepted truths. Since Australia's history is marked by conquest, settlement and exploration, this paper will explore White's blending of history, myth, memory and imagination in the novel *Voss*. The paper will be concerned with the ways the novel questions the European presence on Australian soil and its cultural significance. Since the novel echoes the accounts of actual explorers of the nineteenth century, the paper adopts a method of postcolonial re-reading of fiction in terms of history and resistance. The paper will analyse the novel as both a reconstruction of the disturbing history of Australian settlement and an anxious discussion of the chaotic visions of the present. The paper further explores the position of woman in Australian colonial history through an analysis of the struggles of the novel's female protagonist. It also contextualizes her self-discovery acquired through a struggle for spiritual and physical independence.

'Portrait of an Artist': Imaging Patrick White through his *Letters*

Pandiarajan Supala - University of Madras

Patrick White was a prolific writer of personal letters. Despite the commitments of his creative projects he devoted Sundays to corresponding with his friends, relatives and contemporaries. As a writer, White was zealously preoccupied in creating a variety of genres - fiction, short fiction, poetry, and plays. These published products of White's genius are a provide a constant source of academic and critical discussions on White's personal and political views but his standpoint on global, political, social and environmental issues is more direct and obvious in the letters he has written to people, which were not meant to be published. Patrick White had always urged his correspondents to destroy his letters, but David Marr, White's biographer, was able to collect around three-thousand of those letters. *Letters: Patrick White* (1994) is a compilation of six hundred letters written by White to his friends and relatives discussing a wide range of topics: literature, publishing, religion, society, culture, homosexuality, war, constitution, politics and nuclear disarmament.

This paper aims to explore the images of White that are revealed in his letters which are considered to be the "best, freest, funniest, most intimate and accessible writing White has ever produced." It also attempts to read the letters as a self portrait that gives us a glimpse into White's complex personality, his private world, literary fervour, political ideology, socio-cultural orientation, national and global concerns. The paper, thereby, contextualizes the contemporary relevance of "the voice of Australia's conscience" --Patrick White.

The Quest for Self in Patrick White's Women Characters

Purohit Kalpana - Jai Narain University, Jodhpur

Patrick White is noted for his delineation of strong women characters who each undertake quests for identities beyond those defined by familial or social roles. The fundamental thrust is towards a spiritual quest to identify one's own individuality and sense of selfhood.

White's affiliation to women protagonists can be described in the words of Robin Matthews as "the liberation of women (which) is not a liberation into 'free' rejection of men, community and nation but into a state of increased equality and harmony with men and a

humanised and liberated participation in community and nation". White constructs women characters who are not stereotypes. He needs to dramatize "how a woman finds the fullest possible expression of her personality by transcending the conventional barriers of sex". The quests for identity are marked by conflicts, and the protagonists are portrayed as 'ordinary' women but they are possessed of a potential to assert their individuality. This paper makes an attempt to explore some of the powerful and well-delineated female characters of White and also *discover the extraordinary behind the ordinary*".

Patrick White's *A Cheery Soul* as a Modern Comedy of Manners

Reddy K. Venkata - (retired from) Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur

Set in Patrick White's favourite fictional suburb of Sarsaparilla at the end of the 50s, 'A Cheery Soul' is a satirical look at the mores of a so-called Christian society, a comedy about the tyranny of good intentions. Patrick White writes about the people he knew and lived with. Like Bernard Shaw, White holds up a mirror to a society that does not like what it sees.

The play is a comedy about the tyranny of good intentions. The protagonist of the play, Miss Docker, is essentially a 'do-gooder,' who believes that people need to be told when they are doing something wrong whether it's cooking a roast or preaching a sermon. Like Shaw's Joan of Arc, Miss Docker has unflinching faith in God and believes that she is acting according to the dictates and interests of God. White has created in her the ultimate Australian anti-heroine, a "ferociously cheerful old woman who destroys everything she seeks to nurture."

The play presents a cavalcade of bold physical characters, outrageous situations and moral outrage. Her path is strewn with victims of her indefatigable disruptive goodness. Amongst those flung into Miss Docker's whirlwind path are the childless middle-aged couple desperate to "do something worthwhile", an ageing heiress, a former beauty reduced to penury, and the rector who cannot find words to inspire his 'flock'. White uses Miss Docker to confront the consumerist ideal of amassing material wealth.

BIO NOTE

Prof.K.Venkata Reddy retired from service as Professor of English and Principal at Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, India, after putting in 36 years of teaching and research experience at the post-graduate level. The areas of his specialization are

Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, Modern drama, Commonwealth Literature, and Indian English literature. He has to his credit **10 books** and about **100 research papers** including articles on various facets of higher education. He has also dramatized Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* into a three-act play, and translated Chalam's Telugu short story *Jealousy* into English. A recipient of the Best Teacher Award by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1980, Prof. Venkat contributed his mite to the strengthening of English studies in India.

Journey to the Interior: Landscape as Metaphor in Patrick White's *Voss*

Reshmi K. - Pondicherry University

Patrick White's *Voss* perhaps more than any of his other novels, amply demonstrates the characteristic qualities of his imagination and asserts his right to be among the major novelists of the twentieth century. The novel, which has the structure of a journey, depicts the geographical journey undertaken by the protagonist Voss into the interior of Australia. The landscape also becomes a metaphor for the spiritual quest of Voss, to test the merits and limitations of his own self.

Voss starts his expedition in a spirit of pride; he believes that he is complete and indestructible. His journey through Newcastle, Rhine Towers, Jildra and then through the desert becomes a challenge to his will and moral strength. In course of his journey, Voss incorporates and accepts the fragmented aspects of his self, as represented by his fellow explorers and becomes whole. He recovers his humanity, his child-like capacity for love and compassion and accepts his mortality and fleshly pains and pleasures. As Laura, the central female character in the novel interprets his experience: "Knowledge was never a matter of geography. True knowledge only comes of death by torture in the country of the mind". The paper will also analyse how landscape particularly, besides his encounter with Laura and the humanity of his companions, becomes a metaphor for the spiritual progress of the protagonist.

Hybridity in the Contact Zone: Re-reading the Narrative

Sahoo Soumya Sangita - University of Hyderabad

The depiction of Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relationships in White's writings and in the narratives written by select Aboriginal writers will be examined in this Paper. The terms and concepts of colonizer/colonized and settler/native will be re-analyzed and the concepts of 'going native' and hybridity will be explored in the paper. The paper further critiques the postcolonial predicament of the contact zone with the intention to re-read victim position. The relationship is studied beyond the colonial history of hegemonic power structures, in terms of the interaction, co-presence and impacts of the contact. The impact of this interaction and dilution is an important mode of writing in Australian literature which avoids essentialist racial positions and is especially seen in the writings by Patrick White.

A Modern *Ardhanarīnatesvara*: The Story of Eddie in *The Twyborn Affair*

Samad Shaikh - Vasant Rao Naik Mahavidyalaya, Aurangabad

This paper is an attempt at an analysis of Patrick White's *The Twyborn Affair* from within a perspective of Queer theory. Part I of the paper, traces the origin, development and the assumptions of gay/ lesbian Theory while part II analyses the novel. It is important to note that gay and lesbian theory begins in a social movement. The Stonewall Riots of 1969 may be described as the point of origin of the gay liberation movement. Since then, the movement has sought to fight social legal, medical and religious oppression and tried to locate a whole new cultural space for the thus far, marginalized community.

The Twyborn Affair has a homosexual as its central character. White comes back in a new way to two of his major themes: the reconciliation of opposites and the parent – child relationship. The conflict is between a mother and a sexually ambivalent child. The problem appears to have its roots in White's own life. White has always insisted that his novels are autobiographical to some extent but this appears to be more explicitly so than the others. White sees himself not so much as a homosexual but "as a mind possessed by the spirit of man or woman according to actual situations or the characters I become in my writing."

The title of the novel and the name of the protagonist are in themselves quite suggestive. The novel has three epigraphs and is divided into three parts. Each part describes a separate self of

Eddie Twyborn, son of Eadie and Edward Twyborn, who is in search of an emotional identity. Actually, each of three selves of Eadie's child is part of the same personality. Eddie runs away from his parents as he cannot explain to them his sexual and personal dilemmas. It might be possible to discuss the novel "as an extravaganza on sexual themes."

BIO NOTE

Dr. Shaikh Samad is at present working as the Principal of Vasant Rao Naik College, Aurangabad. He had been a Reader in English at Shivaji College, Kannad for 30 years. His research interests include postcolonial studies, English Language Teaching and Linguistics. He has several books and papers to his credit and has also presented papers at national and international seminars. He has also organized several conferences at his institute and has been the resource person for several refresher courses, workshops and seminars. Besides being a member of several Board of Studies and academic councils, he has also received several awards for his contributions, the most recent one being the Eminent Educationist Award by the International Institute of Education and Management, New Delhi in December 2011.

PATRICK WHITE'S VOSS: AN ECO- CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Samira Sinha Ranchi University

Our philosophical understanding of Nature, our environment and humanity has, through the ages been conditioned by literature. The aesthetic parameters by which our responses to Nature are understood whether these are of the beautiful and the sublime, or the wild and destructive, are interpretations defined largely through their construction in literature and art. The relationship between Nature and human society has frequently been contextualised by writers in their works. Analyses of this relationship has given rise to the school of contemporary literary criticism called eco-criticism.

This theory will be invoked in my discussion of White's novel *Voss*. In the novel, White evokes the Australian landscape with the masterful strokes of a painter – the desolation of its deserts, drought and flooding rains and also its grandeur. The work also affords an insight into the culture of Aboriginal Australians who seem so intimately linked with their natural environment. This enforces a realization of how dependent the White explorers are on the knowledge and skills of their Aboriginal guides. This Paper will explore the inter-link between the Australian landscape and Aboriginal ethos and its significance in Voss' quest for understanding of the land.

Patrick White's Search for Identity in *The Twyborn Affair*

Sangeetha V. - Periyar University, Salem

Patrick White's *The Twyborn Affair* (1979) is a complex work on gender identity. The identity of Eddie Twyborn is revealed through three characters: Eudoxia Vatatzes, Eddie Twyborn himself and Eadith Trist. Gradually *The Twyborn Affair* unravels the apprehensions, desires and struggles of Twyborn – a transvestite searching for identity. Eddie Twyborn could be regarded as a figure of the novelist himself. Eddie Twyborn's confrontation to form relationships in an unsympathetic world shows how White's personal views about the plights of the transgendered. White explores here the theme that had for long preoccupied him – the question of identity – sexual and otherwise. It challenges one's own sense of gender identity as the narrative shows how identity, gender and society shift and change. White did not intend his novel to be a piece of queer activism as queer theory came to prominence only in the 1990s.

Very few authors have focused on this sensitive issue. In Tamil, a prominent writer Su.Samuthiram has written a novel *Vaadamalli* describing the life of a eunuch for the first time in contemporary Tamil fiction shows a new trend in Indian writing.

BIO NOTE

Dr. V. Sangeetha is Associate Professor and Head In Charge, Department of English at Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu. Her areas of Specialisation are Australian and Canadian Literatures. Her Ph. D thesis was on Patrick White and Margaret Laurence. She is also interested in American Literature, British Literature, Commonwealth Literature, Literary Criticism, Postcolonial Literature and Translation Studies. She has published 3 books. More than 10 of her articles have appeared in Peer reviewed Journals. She has also presented more than 40 papers in International and National Conferences and Seminars.

Time and the Human Being: A Study of Patrick White's *Voss*

Sarang Jaydeep - Calcutta University, West Bengal

The misanthrope Voss possessed a belief in his own divinity, the future is nothing but will and had a desire to go “barefoot, and alone”. Voss tells Les Mesurier “To make yourself it is also necessary to destroy yourself.” It is valuable to the author and his role as a novelist/narrator that the union of divergent ideas is consummated with a wedding and a newborn child. Time, properly understood, is not a structural enigma in this search for consciousness, is there a link between memory, fossilized nostalgia and forgetting. Is it a travel through time, of “being” and in love? My full paper will make an in-depth study of Patrick White’s search for Australia and its national identity, combining an English strain, a German strain, and an Aboriginal strain. The sincere experiences of sublimity in rare moments are those where the flux of time merge with palpable deep silence, and a sense of imaginary oneness. For the multiplicity of perspectives, grandeur of scale and complexity of style, the novels of Nobel laureate, Patrick White have been described as the “difficult novels of a difficult man.”

In Search of True Self
A Critical Study of Patrick White’s *A Fringe of Leaves*

Singh Sudhir - Govt. Post Graduate College, Udhampur

The underlying essence of Patrick White’s fictional matrix is the endless quest of individuals towards realization of their true selves. In the struggle they experience, to quote Carolyn Bliss, a ‘redemptive or facilitating failure’ i.e. they first fail to achieve some understanding in which selfhood is “abandoned, perfected and dispersed or subsumed and then a transition from ‘via negativa to via affirmativa’”. White’s novels, on the surface might appear dealing only with metaphysical experiences of his characters but his grip of the realities of human life on this earth is equally appealing. A reading of *A Fringe of Leaves* reveals an altogether fresh insight into White as a novelist. He may also be called a feminist as far as the creation of his female character especially Ellen Roxburgh is concerned. The quest of White’s women towards self-actualization does not involve a rejection of the world of men; rather their initiation is one that signals attainment of a state of enhanced gender equality. This journey of self-realisation necessarily requires a questioning of accepted roles, withdrawal from society, urge for freedom and most importantly instinct for survival. This paper will discuss this quest with a special reference to Ellen Roxburgh of *A Fringe of Leaves*; a novel which based on the

historical account of the adventures of Eliza Frazer. White has used this event to unveil 'the extraordinary behind the ordinary' through a woman's struggle to define her individuality. Whether Ellen's struggle leads to triumph or capitulation will be a matter of discussion.

BIO NOTE

Dr. Sudhir Singh is currently working as Assistant Professor of English at the Govt. Post Graduate College in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir. He has also worked as the Head of the Department of English. His doctoral research was on Australian fiction in English. He has several publications to his credit and has also presented papers at various national and international conferences. He has also been a part of several academic councils and committees. His varied experiences also include serving as announcer and news anchor in Doordarshan (Jammu and Jalandhar) and Radio Kashmir, Jammu. He is also a member of several associations, including the Indian Association for the Study of Australia.

The Tree of Man: An Odyssey of Permanence

Sunitha K.T. - University of Mysore

The Tree of Man is the story of a small farmer Stan Parker who settles on a small isolated part of virgin wilderness near Sydney. As White himself says he conceived the novel as an attempt to portray "every possible aspect of life through the lives of an ordinary man and woman." He also wanted to suggest "the extraordinary behind the ordinary, the mystery and poetry which alone could make bearable the lives of such people and incidentally my own life since my return". He tried to convey in this novel "a splendour, a transcendence which is also there, above human realities." ('The Prodigal Son')

My paper will explore *The Tree of Man* as a version of a 'peasant' novel, reminding us of other well-known works of the kind like Turgenev's *Virgin Soil*, Kunt Hamsun's *Growth of the Soil* and Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*. Like many a hero in other peasant novels, Stan Parker also has undergone the "process known as the formation of a philosophy of life" through life on the land. As in *The Good Earth*, *The Tree of Man* is also an epic of the soil, portraying the peasant's affinity to the land, his dignity derived from life controlled by the rhythm of the seasons. The novel is much more than a 'peasant' novel; it deals with the theme

of the life of man as a quest for vision, blended with the theme of suffering. The protagonist's quest for permanence and his longing to strike roots is amply illustrated in his life and career which is clearly marked by the four distinct stages of innocence, experience, suffering and reconciliation. The *Tree of Man* reveals the affirmative value of an ordered universe is merged with the nostalgia of permanence, the mystery and poetry which lie behind the life of an ordinary man and woman'.

Resistance in Patrick White's *Voss*

Usha N. - Krishna University, Machilipatnam

Literary writers use their works as a mode of voicing political and cultural criticism while simultaneously celebrating their communities, histories, families and heritages. Patrick White explores different forms of resistance in his epic narrative *Voss* with the spiritually living characters such as Voss, Laura and Le Mesurier and the spiritually dead characters such as the Bonners, Turner and Angus. Voss exhibits resistance towards but he also resists the materialistic Sydney society and its materialistic conventions and undertakes an exploration of the Australian outback, seeking a deeper understanding of himself, intending "to explore the depths of one's own repulsive nature". Laura also shows resistance towards traditional conventions and the social manners of Sydney through her own value for education, intellect and in her actions, particularly by her adoption of Rose Portion's daughter Mercy.

Both these people who have the courage to resist tradition, have other kindred spirits in the narrative such as Judd for Voss and Belle Bonner for Laura with whom they can be measured and compared. For Le Mesurier, the mystery of life lies in "failure, in perpetual struggle, in becoming". White uses resistance as a major theme throughout the novel in order to drive the point home that those who struggle, resist and change are, like the explorers, involved in the mystery of life. My paper explores the representation of different forms of resistance in this novel.

BIO NOTE

Dr. N. Usha is an Associate professor and Head, Department of English, and Coordinator, Academic Audit Cell, Krishna University, Machilipatnam, AP, India. Her research includes Literature of the Indian Diaspora and New Literatures in English.