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Patrick White's
Flesh/Spirit
Balance

Keith Bellamy

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
English

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
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ABSTRACT

Patrick White's Flesh/Spirit Balance

Keith Bellamy

Sexuality is the focal point of Patrick White's art, androgyny is the hue - but language is the restrictive frame. With the Fall, the matriarchal existence of unconscious physical harmony is replaced with a patriarchal world filled with consciousness, spirit, intellect, and a logos. The before-and-after describe White's androgyny, but the "word," a cultural and spiritual male construct, blocks out natural female physicality. Encouraging that disequilibrium (with words) produces power politics: male domination perpetuated by the control and manipulation of the body (and, hence, women). Subverting spiritually exclusive hegemonies is the goal of White's novels, and in the "gaps" between his letters, a somatic presence cries out (in silence) for recognition. This thesis is a response to White's voiceless flesh and desire not to emulate a phallogocentric culture bound in Freudian priapism and productivity. To Patrick White, pleasure is a viable alternative, not a source of sexual aberration; and the body deserves equal consideration in life's spirit/flesh balance.

To Richard Daly,
who believes more in me
than I ever did in myself.

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A Note on the Text

The following White texts are cited in the body of the thesis without further annotation:

The Solid Mandala. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1983. SM

The Twyborn Affair. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1980. TA

The Vivisector. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1985. VS

Voss. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1983. V

Introduction

All great authors have a great critical following. Patrick White is no exception; but the greatest problem with all his critics has been their hesitancy of addressing a wide range of textual examples, the incapacity to account for the characters' sexual preferences, and the inability to corroborate those elements with White's style and point of view.

This evaluation is partially unfair to two critics. Peter Wolfe's Laden Choir's: The Fiction of Patrick White relates great amounts of action, but ends up being over reliant on plot summary.¹ He, however, comes the closest in intent to my own thesis: White "states his belief in the interconnectedness of matter and spirit by endorsing the fallible and the corrupt as the only sources of salvation. The mind needs the body."²

The body is "fallible," in a naturally positive way. Wolfe's problem arises when determining what is "corrupt," what is "salvation," and what are the theoretical implications of flesh: "snot, phlegm, eye mucous, shit, and menstrual discharge."³ That Voss and Laura exclude physical bonds does not prevent Wolfe from

¹Peter Wolfe, Laden Choirs: The Fiction of Patrick White (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983).

²Wolfe 7.

³Wolfe 7.

suggesting they have "attained the poetry of spiritual intimacy."¹ Is salvation, for Wolfe, based on spiritual exclusivity? If so, where is the body/mind (flesh/spirit) duality?

How to handle the sexuality in The Solid Mandala is also a dilemma for Wolfe. He argues that White "seats his belief in the family," that the novel does not equate "maleness with dominance and aggression," and that Waldo "responds sexually to other men."² How can the "normalcy" of a heterosexual, patriarchal family unit (such as Dulcie Feinstein and Leonard Saporta's) not be threatening to a homosexual?

I answer this last question in my thesis, and I analyze the flesh relationships in The Vivisector (only to a few of which Wolfe gives cursory mention) and Hurtle's paintings (which all critics have been unable to decipher).

Peter Wolfe is also at a loss to describe the sexuality in The Twyborn Affair in anything but patriarchal terms. He correctly ascertains that "a crypto-world calls for a pseudo-self," but he says Eudoxia/Eddie/Eadith always "reach...for the perverse and the outrageous."³ Wolfe fails to see the body/mind link between homosexuals, hetairai, whores, angels, and female socialites.

The second critic who has quoted extensively in tracing a

¹Wolfe 117.

²Wolfe 141,143,147.

³Wolfe 219,224.

thematic organization is Patricia A. Morley. She acknowledges an ongoing fusion of spirit and matter, like Wolfe, but argues that the main orientation of White's novels is "religious" and that his heroes seek a "true freedom...beyond physical death."¹ My thesis argues against this spiritual privilege and the notion that "suffering of the spiritual elect...[is] instrumental in the redemption of all men."²

Morley, for instance, says that Laura's suffering is "exemplary."³ White believes in spirit; but he warns that the body's continuous torture or total effacement is a patriarchal power ploy. The one who stands to gain from the Voss expedition (or a social system that thrives on physical sacrifice) is the social magnate, Bonner.

To Patricia Morley, White "shows sexuality within a supratemporal framework" which is not the "ultimate expression of love."⁴ Again, the flesh takes the back seat to spirit, and in The Solid Mandala, she does not account for the Brown brothers' homosexuality. She understands how Arthur and Waldo's characters

¹Patricia A. Morley, The Mystery of Unity (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972) 1.

²Morley 6. This is not to say that Patricia Morley's work is not admirable. The Mystery of Unity is a quality analysis of the religious aspect and was written before The Twyborn Affair, a novel which helps immeasurably in the discovery of sexual politics in all of White's opus. Transcendentalists, such as Morley, are not wrongheaded. They have simply not properly weighted White's flesh/spirit balance.

³Morley 145.

⁴Morley 7.

are built on Jung's concept of the personal unconscious, the anima/animus shadows, but has not dealt with the psychoanalyst's theories of sexual aberration.

In point of fact, Patricia Morley has not tied in White's emphasis on the flesh. She says Nance is a "completely unsentimentalized version of the archetypal whore with a heart of gold,"¹ and unawaredly quotes: "In her enthusiasm and hurry a roselight had begun to pour out of the straining camisole; her natural moist mouth had worked off the cheaper veneer..." (VS 184). Hurtle's "straining" penis, a soul or spirit that came ("camisole"), ejaculates "veneer" (viens/come) into Nance's "natural moist mouth." Does a heart of gold extend to fellatio? How then does White translate flesh into sexual theory?

The latter question restates the departure of this introduction: any exegesis of Patrick White's opus must describe his style: words which stifle the expression of the body; whisper for the exposure of sexual theory, and silently scream for a balance between flesh and spirit.

A panorama of White's vision of reality includes his theories of androgyny, discourse, and sexual politics. The width and breadth of these topics demand an incremental vision, and for this reason, my study of Voss, The Solid Mandala, The Vivisector, and The Twyborn Affair should not be understood as a chronology of artistic development.

"Voss" introduces androgyny - but not merely the

¹Morley 216.

stereotypical active/male, passive/female characteristics. White also pours in the archetypal ingredients of the Fall, stirs in the alchemists' four elements,¹ and catalyzes the androgynous whole by adding what Robert Martin calls a "polysemous phallicism."² White's elixir, his flesh/spirit balance, juxtaposes the matriarchal world of child/animal-like innocence, emotion, unconscious harmony, timelessness, death, flesh, earth, water, and the limp penis to the patriarchal world of logic, intellect, consciousness, cognizance of time, life, spirit, wind, fire, and the erect penis.

"Voss" also introduces White's linguistic theories. Patricia Morley states:

Literary meaning is hypothetical and autonomous. It exists for its own sake, as a detached pattern whose meaning is primarily inward or self-contained. The truth of art is not dependent upon conformity with fact or external reality.³

This New Critical stance is inadequate when facing deconstruction: the component considered primary in a hierarchal opposition can be logically placed second. Linguists discover relationships between concepts that were previously considered autonomous, and consciousness, once thought individual, is reduced by structuralists to social learning. Definition is always dependent on the "other," and in Voss, White provides some

¹ The elements listed below tend to reverse their male or female status. For a more detailed explanation, see "Voss" p. 10.

² Robert K. Martin, Hero, Captain, and Stranger (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986) 92-3. See "Voss," pp. 13-14, for explanation.

³ Morley 18.

astounding comparisons between homosexuality and heterosexuality; and patriarchy and the eucharist.

Language theory is extended in "The Solid Mandala," and deconstruction is itself deconstructed into structuralism. Meaning is the futility of looking up a word in the dictionary only to find that another and another and another (and so on) must be defined. This deconstruction seems infinite, but when every word has been used, the dictionary ends up being the structural limitation. The result is intertextuality: different texts saying variations of the same thing. That the redundancy is also phallogocentric, the "word" is a phallus, has a threefold consequence: first, the "word" because male, effaces nature (woman and the body); second, point of view is not the first person narrators (such as Voss, Laura, Arthur, Waldo, or Eudoxia/Eddie/Eadith) but their "words'" inherent cultural, spiritual, and male meaning; and third, language, such as the Freudian or Jungian interpretations of the unconscious (nature) in The Solid Mandala, only serves to promote patriarchal intertextuality and control.

The woman's only voice is between the letters - in the silent "gaps." Here, the sexual politics exist; in The Solid Mandala, White shows how patriarchy defines and subjugates women and homosexuals; and in The Vivisector, he compares Christ to artists, homosexuals, heterosexuals, pornographers, and the creation. He also sifts the common ground between whores, saints, and transvestites, and in The Twyborn Affair, he continues that

meticulous search, tracing patriarchal mutations and domination back to ancient Greek homosexual culture.

Left to consider is the actual mechanics of Patrick White's style. No critics to date have understood that his novels reflect his understanding of contemporary society under patriarchal domination: how male power structures have relegated nature and the body (flesh) to oblivion while valorizing culture and spirit. Patricia Morley argues that "puns have never played such a major role before The Vivisector."¹ Unfortunately, she has not recognized the utter saturation of ironic language which rocks the patriarchal pedestal in the entire canon,² and all critics have failed to locate the pun's "sexual play" as a deterrent to patriarchy's concept of "sexuality as (re)production."³ To Patrick White, pleasure is not a disruption of the Reality (work-to-survive) Principle as Freud thinks; and self-harmony is only attainable if the body and soul are given equal respect in life's androgynous flesh/spirit balance.

¹Morley 230.

² Anagrammatically, The Aunt's Story is "The Cunt's Story"; Riders in the Chariot is "The Id in the Arch (limp penis)." The glossaries in "The Vivisector" are applicable to any of White's novels.

³Martin '80, uses this language to describe the purpose of Melville's puns.

Voss

In Patrick White's fiction, historical, religious, psychological, and social mores are debunked, not through nihilistic attack but through the careful emulation of the hypocrisy behind patriarchal hierarchies. The introjection of their political platforms is achieved through language, a male manifestation which subtly speaks of spiritual and cultural centrality and superiority.

In Voss, natural androgenic plenitude is steamrollered by encratic,¹ patriarchal dogma. Characters incognizant of their androgynous make-up and the sexual politics which determine their roles, mimic patriarchy, but Patrick White undermines the entrenchment of male power structures with irony (that creeps about in puns and anagrams) and an elaborate androgynous symbolism (that runs so rampant that it is difficult to arrest and question).

The key to Patrick White's fiction lies in his concept of human genealogy and, more specifically, in the patterns of language which embody the quintessence of biblical archetype. Before Adam ate the forbidden fruit, pure nature existed in an

¹Language produced and spread under the protection of power.

"indefinite dimension of time and space."¹ After the Fall, man gained consciousness and acquired "something called the knowledge of good and evil, obviously connected with sex but not otherwise explained."² The exchange is nature for culture: flesh for spirit; or matriarchy for patriarchy.

White's primary leitmotif is androgyny, exclusion of either male or female attributes, fatal. Returning to the womb and the mother-principle of nature constitutes unconsciousness or death, but "every change from nature towards culture [or the father-principle] is a step towards patriarchy."³ Vying for total transcendence (and separation from the body and nature) may promise spiritual purity and infinite consciousness but only ends with the elimination of the physical self: again, death. Patrick White's novels reflect his understanding of contemporary society under a domineering patriarchy which relegates nature and the body (flesh) to oblivion while valorizing culture and spirit.

Two elements of White's language are pivotal. First, his androgynous imagery borrows from male and female stereotypes. On the side of nature and women are "passivity, compliance, softness, emotion, co-operativeness, nurturance [sic], intuition, conservation, and tenderness," and on the side of culture and men are "aggressivity, dominance, hardness, logic, competitiveness,

¹Northrop Frye, The Great Code (Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982) 108.

²Frye 109.

³Robert Donington, Wagner's Ring and Its Symbols (London: Faber and Faber, 1974) 39, 117.

achievement orientation, thinking, inventiveness, [and] reason."¹

Also important in any exegesis of White's fiction is his singular concept of the four alchemical elements. Water, for instance, associated with feminine softness and the wetness needed to sustain animal and vegetable existence, has a womb connotation and, hence, is hot, dark, and natural; earth, usually collocated with the mother, is in White's novels often concomitant with cold, hard, dry rocks or landscape (man-made) and therefore can be of masculine origin; wind, is a drying agent and consequently spiritual and male; and fire, although sometimes associated with feminine emotion, is more often used in connection with light and spirit. The complexity does not end there. Each element is androgynous. If wind, waves, earth/land, or fire rise, they are symbolic of a spiritual erection, but if they fall, they represent natural limpness. (A detailed analysis of this "polysemous phallicism" follows on pp. 13-14.)²

Patrick White's characters exhibit both natural/feminine and spiritual/masculine traits. Judd, for instance, although beaten unmercifully, cannot be separated from his body and, consequently, to the chagrin of culture, retains a flesh/spirit balance:

[Judd's] mind [spirit], moreover, had returned to

¹June Singer, Androgyny: Toward a New Theory of Sexuality (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976) 34.

²Peter Beatson, The Eye in the Mandala (London: Paul Elek, 1976) 147, recognizes a religious duality, in his words "destructive or redemptive," working within each element, but he fails to connect them to androgyny.

his good body [nature], and was now in firm [erection] possession, devoted [worship/spirit] to all those objects on which the party [culture/spirit] was dependent, as well as to the animals [unconscious/nature] in his charge [commerce/culture/spirit].

Judd remained, besides, intensely interested [commerce/spirit] in natural [nature] forms [sculpture/culture/spirit]. For instance, he would pick at the black [dark/womb-like/nature] fruit [nature] of trees [penis] to release the seed [semen]; with the rough [hard/dry/spirit] skin of his hand, he would rub [masturbate] a hot [womb-like/nature], white [light/spirit] bone [penis], whether [pun: weather: wet/nature; dry/spirit] of man [male/spirit] or animal [female/nature], as if to re-create his flesh [nature]; he would trace with the toe [flesh/nature] of his boot [clothing/culture/spirit] a foot [-] print [flesh/nature; word/culture/spirit] in the dust [dry/spirit] to learn [consciousness/spirit] its shape [sculpture/spirit] and mission [pun: ejaculation] (V 243, emphasis mine).

Retaining that balance in the light of the spiritual determinism of patriarchy is almost impossible, but nature, in White's novels, does exist within the essence of certain symbols. In The Twyborn Affair, M. Pelletier's "sordid ejaculation became a triumphant leap," harmony achieved during his "climax" performed in "conjunction" with "the action of the obsessed swimmer [Eudoxia], so strong yet so poetic, so hopeful yet so suicidal, as indeed we all are, in our sea of dreams." (TA 76,74, emphasis mine) Masturbation, writing, dreaming, and immersion in water are all methods of experiencing nature, unconsciousness, and death. Music also permits an escape from spirit and consciousness. Eudoxia "drift[s] in the wake of music" (TA 17); and Kathy's piano, in The Vivisector, remained a "dead expanse" in Hurtle's painting (VS 472). In Voss, "dreams are overtures of intimacy" where "bodies...role over and touch"; "dreamy waltzes" allow youths to "drift with several breathless girls"; and "the

sublimity of perfection" is defined by Topp, the musician, as "great sweeps of pure sound" (V 42,439,446):

'Some will learn to interpret the ideas [mind/spirit] embodied [body/nature] in the less communicative forms of matter, such as rock, wood, metal [all three: hard/spirit] and water [wet/nature]. I must include water, because, of all matter it is the most musical.

Topp, the bristling [erect], unpleasant little thing [small penis] was sitting forward. In the head[-] mistress's [Laura's: mind-master: culture/spirit] wooden [spirit] words [culture/spirit], he could hear [music/death/nature] the stubborn music waiting for release [ejaculation]. Of rock [spirit] and scrub [dry/spirit]. Of winds [dry/spirit] curled invisibly [dark/nature] in wombs [nature] of air [spirit]. Of thin rivers [water/nature] struggling towards seas [water/nature] of eternity [timelessness/nature]. All flowing [water/nature] and uniting. Over a bed [garden;love: nature] of upturned faces.

The little Topp was distracted by the possibility of many such harmonies. He began to fidget and snatch at his trouser leg [masturbate]. He said:

'If we do not come [ejaculate] to grief on our mediocrity [pun: medio/middle/balance] as a people. If we are not locked for ever in our own bodies [nature]. Then, too, there is the possibility that our hates and our carnivorous habits will unite in a logical [mind/culture/spirit] conclusion: we may destroy one another (V 446-7, emphasis mine).

While bearing the wind and rain of a desert storm, Frank LeMesurier "conceives a poem, in which the silky seed that fell in milky rain from the Moon [feminine] was raised up by the Sun's [masculine], laying his hands upon it" (V 251) The orgasmic writing (similar to Eudoxia's which "comes shooting out, finally, like milk, or sperm") consummates a genesis, but that male/female balance can only be achieved through the celebration of the flesh, as in Topp's masturbatory nature/culture harmony (TA 241). Any imbalance ends in destruction. Projecting into total spirituality or physicality effaces respectively the body or

life: death is the result in both scenarios.

✓ Patricia Morley states that the "imagery [in Voss] clearly suggests the physical consummation of [Laura and Voss'] love."¹ While in the desert caves, Voss "wonder[s] about the woman who was locked inside him permanently," in this case, not about Laura but about his androgynous being and about "the souls [i.e., spirit] of men [that] were only waiting to come [ejaculate] out" (V 275). Physical release cannot be impeded. Dreams and writing are natural expressions, but Voss staunches any emotional or feminine response. He incurs a "strange lack of personal control" when writing to Laura, and he defers his reading of Frank LeMesurier's poetry because of "dislike, almost fear of reading his own thoughts" (V 153,272). One poem, which Voss "hated and resented," is appropriately titled "Childhood... under the word was drawn a line so deep it defended like a moat" (V 295,294). Voss shuns anything associated with nature: in the latter citation, innocence and water and, in general, women, including the feminine side of his self. Even the structure of the novel, the chapters alternating between the desert and Bonner's home, insure Voss' and Laura's spiritual seclusion, not their physical union.

Robert K. Martin, in Hero, Captain, and Stranger, brilliantly exposes the danger of exclusive exogenous or spiritual search, defining Ahab's stiffness and resolution in physical terms of staunched emotion - a penis that can never ejaculate. At stake

¹Morley 120.

are two types of phallicism:

A phallicism that is largely divested of its sexual energy and redirected towards political ends, the phallicism of Ahab and the phallicism of a perfunctory heterosexuality; and a polysemous phallicism that is not directed outward but that retains a full sense of its own pleasureability, while it is at the same time capable of extending itself into social action in terms of sharing. This second phallicism is the phallicism of Queequeg, the phallicism of the mutual masturbation of 'A Squeeze of the Hand'.¹

In Moby-Dick, the tomahawk, an instrument of war, has the potential for pleasureability as a pipe,² and in Voss, symbols reflect the same phallic possibility. The knife, for instance, is used by Mrs. Judd as an exotic tool in the process of "pressing and squeezing" butter into an orgasmic "milky perspiration," (V 145) the language an obvious parallel to Ishmael's masturbatory transformation of whale sperm:

Squeeze! Squeeze! Squeeze! all the morning long....Oh my dear fellow beings, why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill-humor or envy! Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness.³

While churning the butter, Mrs. Judd tells Voss, "He will not be long," although the reference to her husband ironically signifies the limping of the penis after ejaculation. Turner's dream, after his drunken embarkation on the Osprey, is also auto-erotic, the knife and butter the respective phallic and

¹Martin 92-3.

²Martin 79.

³Herman Melville, Moby-Dick (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1967) 348-9, emphasis mine.

ejaculatory symbols: "Give me the knife, please. Ahhhhhh! The butter! The butter! Its not my turn to die" (V 119). Dying, succumbing or coming, is feared because of the unification with the unconscious, and because of the interruption of the spiritual erection, ejaculation is considered an insult to culture's dominating rule. Turner, fearful of patriarchal reprisal, insists his knife is "unlucky" - "come by in strange circumstances" - and, consequently, he flings "the knife into the waves [water/nature]" (V 123, emphasis mine). Remaining erect, the penis stifles emotion and nature and functions as a knife-like weapon, which in Voss usurps the lives of Palfreyman, LeMesurier, and Voss himself.

The theme of Voss is phallic worship, the erect penis statuesque. Like Ahab, Voss is firm, hard, and stiff-permanently erect. He walks as if "lame" with "stilts of legs" (V 26,333); his words are "cast in metal" (V 44); and his "name;[is] a crystal in his mouth" (V 41). "Deadly rocks" inspire him with "fresh life," and long before he is "canonized" in stone in the final chapter, "he was already more of a statue than a man," more of a "memorial to the public's "own achievement" (V 18,444,109).

Voss is totally committed to spirit. His name is a "translinguistic pun on the Greek word phos or light,"¹ and his will is symbolic of his unidirectional quest or phallic extension. Every link with the body Voss severs. He relinquishes

¹Rodney Edgecombe, "Faith, Pride, and Selfhood in Patrick White's 'Voss,'" English Studies in Africa 27 (1984): 141.

his indenture as a surgeon because he is "revolted by the palpitating bodies of men," and he decides to become a great botanist, not as an amateur but possessor of nature, being especially interested in a "species of lily which swallows" the bodies of "flies" (V 13). Finally, by "tread[ing] with his boot upon the trusting face of the old man, his father" (V 14), Voss forsakes fraternal ties and symbolically commits patricide, fulfilling Harold Bloom's The Anxiety of Influence: "each poet must slay his poetic father."¹ (Culler: P of S, 13) This guarantees male access to hierarchal positions of authority and effaces anything not part of the father/son cycle, in particular, women, and hence, nature.

With no body, or at least the refusal to acknowledge physical being, Voss could "never free himself from his inherent helplessness," being "weak with knowledge" (V 32). Opposite to him is Harry Robarts, "strong with innocence," who represents the archetypal unconsciousness and harmony of nature. But balance between flesh and spirit is requisite (V 32). Voss cannot extricate himself from nature nor Robarts from spirit, but, more importantly, because Robarts has no consciousness or spiritual perspicacity, needing "someone to think for him," he becomes slave to "the superior will of whatever master" (V 32,94). Voss' patriarchal influence denies Robarts any affiliation with nature. While chewing gum (a pun on come), Robarts senses a "disloyalty,"

¹Jonathan Culler, The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction (New York: Cornell University Press, 1981) 13.

spits out Judd's gift, and vows to "learn languages" (V 246). Robarts' rejection of the body is consistent with his desire to master cultural communication and to remain with the Voss/LeMesurier party, although (or because) "there was no reason" (V 348, emphasis mine). With no mind of his own, Robarts stick[s] closer than anyone, in the end," to Voss and dies "naturally," unaware of the patriarchal politics that shape his destiny (V 246,389).

Torn between the natural and cultural, Frank LeMesurier wonders which "part he is to play in the general scheme" (V 34). The pull towards nature is strong for him, but the "smell of milk, or innocence," which he correctly relates to Harry Robarts, is a "refuge to which he might never again retreat" (V 37). His superior education, association with the elite, and dabbling in "metaphysical" (beyond the body) poetry finds him "getting nowhere" but, ironically, induces him to undertake Voss' vacuous expedition (V 34). Just as the spirit never ends, so is LeMesurier a "man of beginnings," his "delusion" of spiritual and cultural salvation concentrated in his theocentric vision of Voss (V 99):

Voss began to go with him [LeMesurier], never far distant, taunting him for his failures, for his inability to split open rock, and discover the final secret. Frank, I will tell you, said his mentor, you are filled with the hallucinations of intellectual power: I could assist you perhaps, who enjoy the knowledge that comes with sovereignty over every province of illusion, that is to say spiritual power; indeed, as you may have suspected, I am, I am, I am....

But the young man has been submitted to such a tumult of the elements, and now, of his own emotions, he failed to catch the divine Word, only the roll of

thunder departing on the drums of wax (V 250, emphasis mine).

St. John's I,1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," explicates both Voss' and LeMesurier's belief in the Word and in its meaning and order within thought, truth, reason, logic, and culture.¹ If the beginning was the Word, it preceded the world and was therefore the creator or father.² This phallogocentrism is the genealogical politics behind patriarchal productivity and power and the effacement of women's identity. Pleasure is counter-productive; and Frank LeMesurier, a man of beginnings or erections without orgasm, hides his masturbatory writings because of the need for social acceptance. As stated earlier, harmony associated with the body is equivalent to a unification with nature, although loss of consciousness, timelessness, and death are part and parcel. When Voss first invites LeMesurier to "come" (ejaculate) on the voyage, Frank responds that he did not want "to cut his throat just yet," signifying his fear of death and/or nature (V 34).³ As Susan Wood states, Frank turns to Voss for "a sense of power,"

¹Jonathan Culler, On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985) 92.

²Culler, On Deconstruction 100.

³In an ironic sense, LeMesurier (the-but-sure-to-laugh) laughs off any connection to nature, and is only frank when seconding Topp's rejection of Voss' spiritual country: "Nor mine, frankly...I cannot think of it except as a bad joke" (V 40, emphasis mine).

but when Voss' spiritual veil falls, LeMesurier commits suicide and tumbles into nature:¹

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

The body of LeMesurier glugged and blubbered a little longer before lying still. Even then, one of the ankles was twitching, that had come out of the large boot. Everything was too large that had not shrunk (V 381, emphasis mine).

According to Jonathan Culler, "a deconstruction involves the demonstration that a hierarchal opposition, in which one term is said to be dependent upon another conceived as prior, is in fact a rhetorical or metaphysical imposition and that the hierarchy could well be reversed."² In this case, the binary culture/nature opposition is reversed. The phallic knife, used as a weapon to kill, only serves to unite LeMesurier with the unconscious or "forgot[ten]" "fields" of nature, the place of "beginning" where the body exists in orgasmic harmony.

Palfreyman, also fearful of nature and its social stigma, deludes himself by being a science enthusiast and religious devotee, although his entrapment within patriarchy establishes his role as both collector and pseudo-Christ. As a young man, Palfreyman is reared by his sister, a matriarchal figure. She is always preoccupied with nature, "spending little enough time in

¹Susan A. Wood, "The Power and Failure of 'Vision' in Patrick White's Voss," Modern Fiction Studies 27 (1981): 152.

²Culler, Pursuit of Signs 183..

the house" so as to be in the "garden" or "woods"; she is "forgetful," a sign of unconscious existence and timelessness; and she is "passionate" and, therefore, emotional and feminine (V 261-2). Palfreyman's flight is precipitated by her "consuming nature," her maternal embrace (V 287). His birth circumscribes the beginning of culture and consciousness, but a total break from nature or a desire to control or efface the body is a patriarchal goal. That Palfreyman's sister desires to "keep [him] in her own image" has a threefold significance: first in patriarchy, the body must remain an illusion or "image," and Palfreyman would extinguish himself by reflecting nothingness; second, the body, as previously stated, represents nature, and therefore Palfreyman must escape that image, and thirdly, his sister's infirmity (a pun that she is not erect) guarantees the impossibility of spiritual representation, insuring her cultural rejection and ironically juxtaposing nature, pleasureability, and the limp penis to culture, power, and the perpetual erection (V 263). By leaving his sister and nature, however, Palfreyman remains locked within the patriarchal rubric, and by becoming an ornithologist (studier of birds/penes) and collector of natural objects, he uses science as a fulcrum to elevate the mind and spirit to positions of authority over nature.

Martyring himself at the hands of the blacks, Palfreyman emulates Christ, fulfills the patriarchal imposition of physical absence, but, nevertheless, like LeMesurier, unwittingly turns volte-face to nature:

The one black man warded off the white mysteries with terrible dignity. He flung his spear. It stuck in the White man's side, and hung down quivering. All movements now became awkward. The awkward white man stood with his toes turned in. A second black, of rather prominent muscles, and emotional behaviour, rushed forward with a short spear, or knife, it could have been, and thrust it between the white mans ribs. It was accomplished so easily.

'Ahhhhh,' Palfreyman was laughing, because he still did not know what to do.

With his toes turned in.

But clutching the pieces [pun: penis] of his life.

The circles were whirling already, the white circles in the blue, quicker and quicker.

'Ah, Lord,' he said, upon his knees, 'if I had been stronger.'

But his voice was bubbling. His blood was aching [pun: arching/limping] through a hole which the flies had scented [pun: ascent/erect] already.

Ah, Lord, Lord, his mind repeated, before tremendous pressure from above compelled him to lay down the last of his weakness. He had failed evidently (V 342-3, emphasis mine).

The meanings are manifold. Again the knife or spear is used as a phallic weapon, the black man, after penetrating his victim, achieves orgasm and his penis becomes limp: It "hung down." At the same time, Palfreyman, "clutching" his own penis and worshipping it as "Lord," also reaches orgasm, but in doing so, believes he has "failed" because he has not retained his spiritual erection. Like LeMesurier, Palfreyman's cultural bias evokes nature, and the binary structure of productivity/pleasureability (and now Culler's definition of hierarchal oppositions is again appropriate) reverses itself, heterosexuality used eugenically becoming homosexuality performed ecstatically. By remaining perpetually erect, the penis becomes a weapon against pleasure, but the patriarchal genocide equals a return to natural harmony (death or the orgasmic completion the

erection originally attempts to prevent or kill). The black's coition, therefore, equivalent to killing (with the intention of eliminating pleasure), ends up homosexual; Palfreyman's "toes, turned in" a trope for inversion.

Robert Donington's argument, that "incest implies a failure to break...with the mother-principle [and]...has the psychological effect of turning libido inwards [sic] into the matriarchal situation, which is nature's own," complements White's treatment of masturbation and homosexuality: both celebrate the flesh, opting for physical harmony and pleasure rather than (re)production, and both remain within the self, preferring the body and nature to spirit and culture.¹

Still to consider (and this is pivotal to understanding all the women in the novel) is Palfreyman's religious connection: how his death, a Christ-like sacrifice, parallels his sister's attempt at suicide. Her Gothic splendors, prevented, Voss submits, by Palfreyman's intervention, are appositely defined by James McAuley as "the ambition to transcend humanity, to transfigure it, and attain [a] level of divinity."² McAuley's omission is that the gothic novel emerged as a feminine reaction to patriarchal domination³ and that Christianity has helped to

¹Donington 117.

²James McAuley, "The Gothic Splendors: Patrick White's 'Voss,'" Southerly 25 (1965): 39.

³Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) 91, offers Ellen Moers' Literary Women (New York: Doubleday, 1976) and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's The

interiorize male power.

Susan Griffin, in Pornography and Silence, locates absence of body as the ultimate pornographic goal. Through physical abuse (or continual censorship and prolonged impositions of male values), the woman's self is divided, half of her artificially projected for "appearance" sake and the other, the real self, "consigned to silence."¹ Only two roles are available. As a mother, the woman exists only for her husband and children. Her sexuality, the source of "suffering, knowledge, and sin,"² is tied to the myth of the Fall: "Adam was made to be immortal, but he lost both his innocence and his immortality when Eve taught him about sex."³ Griffin points out that Imitatio Christi means "to be selfless, to be virgin, to renounce sensual pleasure"; and the immaculate conception is an example of Christian theology which denies the body, Virgin Mary's purity and innocence, non-qualities, prescribing absence (especially that of intellect).⁴

Women are also channelled into roles as models. Emulating the pose of the wealthy socialite, the model, whose beauty and idleness are only symbolic of the power of husband or father,

Madwoman in the Attic (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979) as proof.

¹Susan Griffin, Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1982) 202.

²Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (New York: Ballantine Books, 1983) 73.

³Barbara G. Walker, The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983) 912.

⁴Griffin 68, 213, 239.

mirrors the male psyche and represents spiritual perfection and physical absence or nothingness.¹

Both the model's and mother's bodies are patriarchal sacrifices. The same is true of the pornographic film star. The end result is always death: metaphorically, from total effacement of the female self or, literally, either from murder - or despair and suicide. Palfreyman's sister is not only mother to her brother but once assumes the model "image" by "outlin[ing] her lips in red ink, giving them the arch of a perfect, but horrifying mouth" (V 262). That physical perfection, or absence of self, cannot be maintained. She translates her hunchback, reason for the "[im]possibility of redemption" and mark of "His disapproval," God's, into Christian terms (V 264, emphasis mine). Her suicide attempt is Christ-like but at once exemplifies the pornographic and patriarchal elimination of the body. As Palfreyman walks to his death at the hands of the blacks, all who witnessed "remembered the face of Christ," but no one sees that the sacrifice is both pornographic and an act of patriarchal murder (V 342). Palfreyman is essentially a woman, natural; and hence, his intelligence is disavowed and his cultural status is denied:

There was Palfreyman, in a cabbage-tree hat that made him look smaller, with a clean, white handkerchief to protect his clean white throat, but which exposed rather, his own innocence and delicacy. There he was, riding out, an old woman of a man, with the boy Roberts perhaps, and one or two natives, to secure the ornithologist specimens which he would then clean and

¹Griffin 234.

prepare by candlelight. Nothing more simplified than Palfreyman (V 174, emphasis mine).

The cabbage-tree hat, one which Palfreyman wears at his death (341), is White's metonym for Belle's garden, an Edenic paradise where a flesh/spirit balance exists, where Belle can "lose herself" and "hum songs" in the timeless, physical harmony of nature, and where the penis functions naturally:

In a circle of light [spirit] was the cabbage tree. According to the day [light/spirit], the miraculous spire [phallic] did not stir from its trance [dream: flesh/spirit balance] of stillest, whitest wax, or shuddered [cold/spirit] stiffly [erection/spirit] on the verge of breaking free [ejaculation/nature], or rejoice simply [innocence/nature] in its jewels [pun: ballocks & scrotum] of innocent [nature] and tinkling [pun: urinating] crystal [stone/spirit] (V 429-30).

But Palfreyman, like his sister who mirrors cultural bias, considers his "delicate constitution," a reference to his physical debility, one of the "failures of his nature" that "would cause [him] to suffer tortures" (V 242, emphasis mine). Voss, recognizing Palfreyman as a "professional saint" and "feminine man," sacrifices him (V 217,48).

Women, conditioned by male values, work towards the elimination of their own bodies, and the female's super-ego (or social face) is only superficial make-up. Socio-cultural roles are exclusively male, both in accessibility and expression. Mrs. Bonner, for instance, by her own admission, is an "actor [not actress] in the great play," and Belle, meaning beautiful, plays the part of model (V 313). She may frequent her cabbage-tree garden, but any proximity to nature is interdicted. Belle's childhood is "torn out of her," and she is admired for her

"spirituality" (V 431,433). Like Voss, she is associated with light: her "dress is of pure, whitest light", her hair "shone," and her "hands and arms...pass through...shafts of light to smooth out any encroaching shadow" (V 79). But power and wealth are not hers; and her beauty is only a reflection of the male psyche:

Belle, in her simplicity, secretly admired those who were light and meretricious, imagining they had found the key to some freedom she had never yet experienced, nor would, because she did not dare. This diffidence, far from diminishing her beauty, enhanced it in the eyes of the elegant by restoring the strength she was in danger of losing (V 433, emphasis mine).

According to the O.E.D., meretricious means "showily but falsely attractive" and "befitting a prostitute."¹ The former alludes to the factitiousness of beauty and wealth, and the latter to Belle as chattel, bought and sold by males. She is Tom Radcliffe's "precious property," and at her wedding, she is "create[d]" a "pure, white, heavenly symbol" (V 305,310). Apropos to Susan Griffin's insights on purity, Belle, with no identity of her own, "did not feel," and like Mrs. Bonner, she stands in front of the mirror "looking for reflections" (V 330,16). But unlike Palfreyman's sister, Belle, because of her beauty, wealth, and passivity, attracts socio-cultural approval and is not psychologically bound to make a religious-like sacrifice of her body:

If she had not been at the same time, a practical woman, loving wife, and devoted mother, she might have

¹J. B. Sykes, ed., The Concise Oxford Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) 634.

made a religion of it, but a pretty, gentle, saffron-coloured one, like Buddhism perhaps. Belle Radcliffe was never for the swords and saints of religious faith, nor would she blow her way to Heaven with assistance of the leather bellows. To accept, to respect, to let live: these were enough. Her own beauty and goodness were a pledge [i.e., wealth] that she found confirmed [i.e., erect] repeatedly in what she saw around her (V 428, emphasis mine).

Unlike Belle, Laura does not take the path of least resistance, passivity; and her topographical religiosity is really the aegis of patriarchal politics. She is, first, a mirror of male power, with no identity of her own and, second, but most important, a reflection of Voss and his spiritual cathexis. She was of the "same base metal as the German," and at the Pringle's party, Laura and Voss "were possibly more alike than any other two people" (V 29,68). She is "cold," "hard," "firm," "stiff," and "rigid": like Voss, permanently erect (V 112,11,311,53). Laura is a product of culture. Her love of "words," "mathematical problem[s]," and "intellectual kinship" correspond to her distancing from flesh and nature: her "disguise of emotions" and Voss-like "self sufficiency" (V 63,9) "Disembodied," Laura is objectified as a model, in this case, "flawless" and made of "marble" (V 63,7,120).

Patricia Morley has remarked on the Petrarchan derivation of the name "Laura,"¹ but John Addington Symonds, in many respects Susan Griffin's harbinger, shows how spirit and Christianity have been used to insure male domination:

The spirit in its self-sufficingness, detached from the

¹Morley 119.

body, antagonistic to the body, had been divinised by Christianity. Woman regarded as a virgin and at the same time a mother, the maiden-mother of God made man, had been exalted to the throne of heaven. The worship of woman became, by a natural and logical process, the correlative in actual human life for that worship of the incarnate deity which was the essence of religion. A remarkable point in mediaeval love is that the sensual appetites were, theoretically at least, excluded from the homage paid to women. It was not the wife or the mistress, but the lady, who inspired the knight. Dante had children by Gemma, Petrarch had children by an unknown concubine, but it was the sainted Beatrice, it was the unattainable Laura, who received the homage of Dante and of Petrarch.¹

That Laura does not pray stimulates Voss' deprecation, "Atheismus is self-murder," but what seems to stand for simple religious encouragement has more profound political implication (V 89). On one level, the absence of spiritual fervour suggests a preferred matriarchal immersion in nature. For the patriarchal Voss, this is a taboo. On another level, atheism limits patriarchal control. Like Adam or Prometheus, Voss takes on himself a god-like superior consciousness, but without religion, there is no congregation. In one of his reveries, Voss translates Laura's, "I shall pray for you," into, "I shall worship you," but the two dictums are equivalencies: the former a religious commitment which supports the patriarchal panoply of the latter; and Voss is both "destroyer" and "saviour" to Laura because he destroys her body as he, in Christ-like fashion, eliminates his own (V 90, 144, 185).

Like Palfreyman's sister, Laura's religious suffrage (pun

¹John Addington Symonds, Male Love: A Problem in Greek Ethics and Other Writings (New York: Pagan Press, 1983) 54, emphasis mine. (First published in 1883.)

intended) is the dynamic behind the effacement of her identity. Her prayer "grows...out of wretchedness, her somatic sacrifice the outcome of "abandon[ing] her[...]self" for Voss (V 161, 306). When the desert expedition is forced to hole up in a cave, symbolic of the womb, Voss, "husband" to Laura, envisions her dressed in a "habit" (V 285,227). Coincidentally, Laura assumes the role of virgin mother, her immaculate conception, ad rem Griffin and Symonds, the result of mental or spiritual focalization. Laura's expression "engrossed," she becomes "quite pregnant with some idea waiting to be born," and "once she had felt the child kick inside her" (V 223,227). During Rose's delivery, "Laura Trevelyan could have screamed with pain," and she "bit the inside of her cheek, as the child came away from her body....There was no doubt that the child was hers" (V 230-1).

Laura's motherhood is the historical solution to the socio-cultural problem of sensuality, and her illness, which coincides with Voss' death, is directly related to her spiritual introjection and priapism. Mr Bonner's quandary, "I would like to know the reason for this fever," is self explanatory, and the medical treatment, cutting off Laura's hair, is an example of patriarchy's physical censorship (V 357). Laura, as per Voss' vision, becomes a faceless non-entity, beautiful because a reflection of male power and spiritual exclusivity:

Then [Voss] looked at her, and saw that they had cut off her hair, and below the surprising stubble that remained, they had pared the flesh from her face. She was now quite naked. And beautiful (V 367).

Laura's religious motivation for giving up Mercy is genuine

but stems from the internalization of male domination, her "sacrifice" one of a "personal nature" (V 370, emphasis mine). The ironic language undercuts patriarchal ethos and phatic language. Any proximity to nature, such as the mother/child relationship between Laura and Mercy, is forbidden.

William Walsh says "Voss embodies the belief, or rather perception, of the novelist that simplicity and suffering are the conditions for the re-making of man";¹ Patricia Morley states that "Palfreyman's death and Laura's suffering are exemplary for all, and that Voss's death belongs to this context";² but Patrick White's message is entirely different. When Laura's illness worsens, the medical consultation only substantiates the uniformity of a patriarchal discourse which demands spiritual insularity. Leeches are applied, and, surprisingly, the destruction of Laura's body (to isolate spirit) is perpetrated so that she may be "strengthened" (V 385). Typically, Laura, as in Voss' vision, becomes a model of male power, her body sacrificed and objectified in art: "the young woman's face was sculptured by shadow as well as suffering" (V 385).

When the fever breaks, Laura's "animal" crying is not only symbolic of childbirth but also its equivalents: emotional release, physical harmony with nature, and ejaculation. She "streams with moisture," "wetness," and "perspiration," causing

¹William Walsh, Patrick White's Fiction (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1977) 47.

²Morley 145.

the "old thing [anagram: thin/erect: Mrs. Bonner or Laura's penis] to whimper [pun: limp]," but that phallic celebration prompts her contrition (V 395):

'I know that my will [erected] wavered [limped], for which I hope I may be forgiven,' [Laura] replied. 'He will forgive, for at that distance, I believe, failures are accepted in the light [spirit] of intentions (V 396).

Important to understand is that events which seemingly unfold extempore are veiled by male power politics. Mercy for instance is not sent away for two reasons: first, Mrs. Bonner assumes the role of virgin mother to "her secret [anagram: erect] child," Mercy; and second, developing into a cultural product, Mercy no longer flaunts her childhood: nature. Only the body can be discarded, as Mrs. Bonner's rationalization of keeping Mercy implies: "One cannot dispose of a soul [spirit] as if it were a parcel [arse]" (V 373). Mercy becomes a carbon copy of Laura, their relationship made of "bronze or marble" signifying their erect state and do-not-touch policy, and Laura, sculpted from patriarchal rock, becomes a "headmistress" (i.e., mind/master), teaches "mathematics," a "man's subject," and exists separate from physical contact, "completely detached" (V 439,403,410).

Laura's subjugation is absolute, and Voss, although lobbyist of patriarchal politics, is not author but minion of male domination. All of a sudden this sounds like a reversal of argument, but Robert K. Martin's keen perceptions on the work ethic in Moby-Dick clarify the patriarchal dynamic in Voss:

A link [exists] between the repression of sexuality, as seen in the interdiction of masturbation and the hatred

of the phallus, the assertion of a false religious authority, and the triumph of industrial capitalism. For that capitalism...depends upon the harnessing of the 'natural and its elimination as an independent force, just as productivity requires the suppression of the erotic.¹

In Moby-Dick, the whale, symbolic of nature, is victimized by the capitalist, but quasi-religious, Peleg and Bildad;² in Voss, Bonner is the commercial exploiter. He pays lip service to his church while deploying Voss on a capitalist venture, the politics of which manifests the repression of women. Like Voss, Bonner is "rigid," his name a phallic pun on "boner," and he expresses his emotions, not spontaneously, but "according to rule" (V 103, emphasis mine). Bonner enjoys the "power of patron" over Voss, considers himself "master," and uses his money to buy his way into heaven, calculating for how much "salvation might be bought" and hedging his bet by "subscribing liberal sums to all denominations, including those of which he approved" (V 19, 110, 349). As for the Voss expedition, the

Crusades were not more remote! No doubt he would have subscribed to a crusade, just as he would continue, if called upon, to support the expedition, but in hard cash, and not in sufferings of spirit (V 155).

Bonner's religious hypocrisy is not even complemented with an "intellectual" or "spiritual" front, being content to leave those qualities "to the women" (V 349). What interests Bonner is power and his own "magnificence," his privileged position sustained by his sculptural customization of the natural body

¹Martin 84.

²Martin 86, 88.

into a suffering perfection:

If he had experienced yearnings of the spirit, he had come closest, though still not very close, to satisfying them by going out and thinning the buds from his camellia bushes,¹ those fine, shiny, compact, impenetrable shrubs that he had planted himself, and which had increased with his own magnificence. Although their flowers suffered in the end from perfection, and their reliable evergreen charms became a bore as the season progressed, that was really what he liked: the unchanging answer to his expectations (V 349, emphasis mine).

Bonner "demanded submission," but before examining his capitalist and spiritual influence on Voss, the patriarchal machinery within the class structure should be dismantled, showing how some of the cogs, characters such as Angus, Turner, Palfreyman, and LeMesurier, automatically transfer power to the main gears, the Bonner-like elite. Kate Millett's understanding of the internal workings of the class hegemony is to the point:

While in the lower social strata, the male is more likely to claim authority on the strength of his sex rank alone, he is actually obliged more often to share power with the women of his class who are economically productive; whereas in the middle and upper classes, there is less tendency to assert a blunt patriarchal dominance, as men who enjoy such status have more power in any case.²

Adding an analogy to Susan Griffin's investigation of pornography as the ruthless annihilation of the female body will clarify Millett's hypothesis as it functions in Voss. In a pornographic production, there are three main positions of

¹"Camellia" is a pun on the name "Camilla" who was attendant to Diana, goddess of the moon (i.e., women), marriage, and chastity. Inferred are the themes of male domination, immaculate conception, and sensual abstention.

²Millett 50.

authority, producer, director, and actor, each exploiting women to realize their primary goal of monetary gain. Bonner, of course, is the producer, establishing rule with monetary partisanship and the pseudo-religious morality which supports production by denying sensual activity. Bonner remains aloof from the work ethic, the expedition, and like the producer, uses (manufactures, re-models) nature, and pleasureability itself, to produce financial benefit.

Voss is the director. He interprets the theme or producer's intent, idealizing spirit and imposing a buffer between himself and physical activity, but unaware of the overall sexual politics, he nevertheless engages the actors (and even actresses) in their roles of female subjugation.

The pornographic actors, the lowest of classes, cannot conceal their hedonist dress but, nevertheless, are cast with those of spiritual costume because of their domination of women (and their bodies). The actors feel guilt because of the social mores regarding pleasure, but, knowing nothing of sexual politics, they, like the masses, exist believing themselves free when they are in fact fettered in the fabric of the elite's double standard. In this category are Boyle and Turner.

Boyle, like Voss, is "erect," "cold," and "hard"; his firm penis is his geist, and his sexuality is linked to prolixity (he "craved" conversation) and to a "repulsive nature" which had to be "explore[d]" (V 167). The import is that Boyle's "pleasures of conversations" are really cultural logic, not endogenous

celebration, and his exploration of the flesh is like Voss' exogenous search to "overcome distance" (V 167, emphasis mine). Apropos to the "actor" metaphor above, Boyle feels guilt. He compares his sexual ventures with Voss' "human weakness..." of sleepwalking, but Boyle hides his licentiousness behind a facade of poverty and nighttime darkness, even though his motivation is clearly his "concealed wealth": the "squalid pleasures of black flesh" (V 177,175).

As stated earlier, Turner's guilt over masturbating motivates him to pitch his knife overboard, but he cannot control his flesh from erupting, his boils symbolic of both natural ejaculation which cannot be withheld and Boyle's licentiousness. Like Boyle, Turner is "elevated by conversation," and both men like to "kill," the ultimate pornographic control: power over nature (V 253,175,332). Boyle hunts ducks (175), and Turner kills a bird which is "whacking [masturbating] its beak against the bough of a tree" (V 332). When Palfreyman protests, Turner senses weakness and feels "perhaps even a gentleman's superior" (V 332).

Whatever the role, producer, director, or actor/actress, wealth is always the inspiration for the performance. Turner and Angus may seem strange bedfellows, but their idleness (292), the female model's goal, is symbolic of power and privileged position. Turner is a "lag turned squatter;" and, to him, women are just more chattel (V 291). He thinks nothing of bartering for a black woman for a pan handle, and his eye for property keeps

him panhandling for the landowner's favour, the pun White's intention. And just as Turner's embarkation (on the Osprey) and "cunning" for gain is determined by the "wind" (or spirit), so is Angus' enlistment financial and spiritual (V 42,253 & 119):

'[Angus] is the owner of a valuable property in the neighbourhood of Rhine Towers. A young fellow of spirit - I [Bonner] would not say hot-headed of anyone so amiable - who visited the Downs several years ago, and was at that time anxious to pursue fortune [i.e., money] farther to the west, though just then conditions happened to be unfavourable' (V 22, emphasis mine).¹

Palfreyman's crusade is not only inaugurated because of his phobic reaction to his sister and nature. He "had been commissioned by an English peer, a petulant one left over from a previous reign, who collected all manner of things from precious stones and musical instruments, to stuffed birds and tigers" (V 46, emphasis mine). Nature is objectified; and wealth and appearance like Angus' (see the previous footnote), turn out to be the dominating force and hypocritical energy behind Palfreyman's science and religion.

¹Angus deserts Voss not only because he has "enough land" but also because, like Turner, he cannot sustain his erection (V 347). When Judd announces his defection, Turner "was like a gristly [white, flexible tissue: limp penis and ejaculation] fowl [penis] escaping from the block [erection and castration]. / 'You can count [commerce] on me,' [Turner] cried too quickly, 'and Ralph will come'" (V 346). The difference between Turner and Angus is that the latter is better able to conceal any sensual or emotional activity because of his wealthy appearance. Turner dies "wildly importunate," whereas Angus, "haunted by a fear that he might not know how to die, when it came to the moment, in a manner befitting a gentleman," commits a silent suicide (V 425, emphasis mine).

LeMesurier is also wise to protocol. Like Bonner, whose falsity is draped in the affluence of his business linens, LeMesurier's sartorial conscience is displayed by the "polish [on] his boots" and by "his waistcoats [which] were still presentable, . . . rous[ing] comment in hotels from those who bored him" (V 33).

Even Voss is preconditioned by Bonner's pandemic commercial language. After nursing LeMesurier back to health, Voss, with apparent jocularly, ironically imposes conditions on his patient: "How you are in my debt" (V 270). Voss' physical contact is translated into financial gain, but by supporting a patriarchal production philosophy, he ensures his own subjugation.

Voss cannot reflect perfection. His socially unsatisfactory physical and cultural features precede him. He is ugly (89); and he is also a "foreigner," German and tongue-tied by his ignorance of a foreign language: not just the inflections of English, but, ironically, the nuances of patriarchal logic, reason, intellect, and spirit (V 61). To be a full fledged member of culture, Voss must mirror Bonner's social status - which is impossible because Voss does not have the wealth and/or appearance:

[Voss'] heels had frayed the ends of his trousers by walking on them....He looked [sic] rather furry in his self-absorption. The nap of his hat had been roughed up, and he was cheaply dressed, and angular, and black (V 12 & 58).

While nursemaid to LeMesurier, Voss emphasizes his deed was performed for "reasons of necessity and hygiene" (V 270, emphasis

mine). But his words are patriarchal jargon which demands physical absence and spiritual perfection. Cleaning diarrhea may be work for "prospective saints," as Voss declares, but if true, he epitomizes the self-less role of mother or Virgin Mary and becomes not just the vehicle of male power under Bonner but also his female victim (V 270).

Voss is sexist and culpable; but mostly he is ignorant of the rhetoric of patriarchy's Juggernaut. As Robert Martin has propounded, "phallic jokes are always linked to power, not only the power of the phallus but the ways in which power employs the phallus."¹ The pun, he argues, maximizes "the potential for sexual play," undercutting patriarchal logocentrism and the role of "sexuality as reproduction."² Voss is blind to the possibility of meaning beyond the phallogocentrism which, as Jonathan Culler submits,

unites an interest in patriarchal authority, unity of meaning, and certainty of origin....The term asserts the complicity between logocentrism and phallogocentrism. 'It is one and the same system: the erection of a paternal logos...and of the phallus as 'privileged signifier' (Lacan)....'In both cases there is a transcendental authority and point of reference: truth, reason, the phallus, 'man.'³

Judd ironically distinguishes the source of Voss' monomania: "Words were not the servants of life, but life, rather, was the

¹Martin 80.

²Martin 80.

³Culler, On Deconstruction 61, 172. Concomitant with Martin's observations is Culler's belief (p. 91) that the pun becomes a "sin against reason."

slave of words," (V 203) and as per Culler's definition of deconstruction, "the critical undoing of the hierarchal oppositions on which theories depend,"¹ Patrick White deconstructs patriarchy's power position by tracing the etymology of phallogocentrism:

'See, this man is going to die. They have planted a spear in his heart. It has gone in at the back through the shoulder blades.'

In fact, the little fishbone in faded red ochre had entered the wizened pear, that would soon be rattling in its cage of bones. The boy poked his finger between the bars, in order to touch the leathery thing (V, 280, emphasis mine).

Before explaining how Harry Roberts' interpretation of the hieroglyphical cave man presents patriarchy's morphological nascence, the scene should be set. In the first sentence, death is forthcoming (pun intended), and as with the demise of LeMesurier, Palfreyman, Turner, or Angus, the subsequent ejaculation is symbolic of harmony with nature. The spear/knife is the priapic weapon, but the elimination of flesh, re Palfreyman, revolves into a homosexual-like integration with the self - libido turned inward signifying matriarchal or natural union:² and hence the reason for the phallic penetration of the "heart" (emotion/nature) from "the back." However, potential for a polysemous phallicism exists in the "fishbone" which is both soft (limp) like the "pear" and hard (erect) like "bones," although the latter, the spirit, incarcerates ("cage[s]") the

¹Culler, On Deconstruction 131.

²Donington 117.

former, flesh, behind "bars." The implication is that nature is always subjugated; and meaning, as culturally institutionalized in language, has been anagogically inflected. The pear becomes the spear, the morphological supplementation of the s as a prefix instead of as a suffix, privileging the pluralization of patriarchy instead of the multiplication of nature (and natural meaning).¹

Helene Cixous, in "Sorties,"² situates the inception of thought in binary oppositions in which "hierarchization subjects the entire conceptual organization to man."³ Active rules the passive,³ and in the case of culture/nature, the spirit always eclipses the flesh. Intrinsic to structure, therefore, is order, logic, reason, and male domination, but part of White's accomplishment was to see that non-structure offers the possibility of true balance, destroying patriarchy's spiritual essentialism. Jackie's interpretation of the hieroglyphics is

¹Mr. Bonner's "soft" and "innocent," and later, "viscid" and "withered," pears represent both the body, in its natural decay and function, and the penis, in its limp state after ejaculation (V 355,372). At least two other images have binary meaning parallel and similar to the spear/pear. LeMesurier's pearl, in one aspect, demonstrates the Bonner-like "dream of gold" and the Voss-like will of "pearly distance" and, in another aspect, the ejaculatory harmony of his own "oyster delusion" which "brings forth something of great beauty" (V 99, emphasis mine). Belle's "pear blossom" (with "sticks" attached) also has a dyadic purpose: the flower is part of nature and the sticks (which are explained below) are part of culture.

²Hélène Cixous, "Sorties," New French Feminisms, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken Books, 1981) 91.

³Cixous 91.

indicative of the centrifugal deferral of definition: meaning is heterogeneous because the convoluted syntax points simultaneously to both spirit and nature:

'Men gone away all dead [nature],' the boy explained. 'All over [terminated or ubiquitous],' he waved his arm. 'By rock [spirit]. By tree [nature]. No more men,' he said, beginning to comb the light [spirit] with his dark [nature] fingers, as if it had been hair [dead/alive: nature/spirit]. 'No more nothink [nothing/something; unconsciousness/nature]. Like this. See?' He laid his cheek upon his hands [praying/spirit], seed-shaped [nature], and his eye[-]lashes [whip/pain/work/spirit] were playing [pleasure/nature] together. 'Wind [spirit] blow big, night [nature] him white [spirit], this time [spirit] these feller dead [nature] men. They come [ejaculation] out. Usfeller [male companionship] no see [unconscious/nature]. They everywhere' [spirit-as opp. to first sentence] (V 275).

But anything not spiritually pure, the negro or his language, is ostracized by the white male power clique. Like the women in Voss, the blacks exhibit an affinity with nature:

Although the natives never showed themselves in strength, several dark skins at a time would flicker through pale grass, or come to life amongst dead trees. At night there was frequent laughter, a breaking of sticks, more singing, and a thumping of the common earth (V 335, emphasis mine).

Voss is the "stick" (or erection), and the "breaking of sticks" refers to the blacks' orgasmic exultation (V 58,335).¹ Voss fears nature; the natives fear culture, but seeing a spirit "come" (ejaculate) is altogether un-natural:

¹But even the blacks are contaminated with patriarchy, the women "plucking" their hair until they reflect "the perversity of innocence" (V 204). That absence of body is also apparent when the black women carry "nets and children" while the "men were free," Susan Griffin's thesis on the mother's or model's role as pure and self-less at work again (V 210).

All their lives haunted by spirits, these had been of a colourless, invisible, and comparatively amiable variety. Even the freakish spirits of darkness behaved within the bounds of a certain convention. Now this great fiery one came, and threatened the small souls of men, or coiled achingly in the bellies of the more responsible (V 379, emphasis mine).

That the blacks are of nature has a twofold significance: first, as stated above, they are subjugated, as are women, exactly because of their natural affiliation; and second, the natives are symbolic of archetypal man before the fall.

As a negro boy, Jackie, "supple and young," must make the transition from nature to the hard (erect) world of culture, and so, to "expiate his innocence," he kills Voss:

The boy was stabbing, and sawing, and sawing, and cutting, and breaking, with all of his increasing, but confused manhood, above all, breaking. He must break the terrible magic that bound him remorselessly, endlessly, to the white men.

When Jackie had got the head off, he ran outside followed by the witnesses, and flung the thing at the feet of the elders, who had been clever enough to see to it that they should not do the deed themselves (V 394, emphasis mine).

Double (androgynous) meaning prevails. The man of culture wields the erect penis (or knife) to kill the body. In one way, therefore, Jackie achieves a manly erection to enforce patriarchal domination, but in another way, Jackie "break[s]" his penis, ejaculates, in order to escape the "endless[ness]" of the white male's perpetual erection. Also, when his head (or mind/spirit) is cut off, Voss, in effect, is castrated, leaving him in the natural state which he always eschewed, and the elders, the real authors of Voss' death into nature, demand, as the Christian religious authority or patriarch, the sacrifice of

the body (in favour of spirit) while remaining aloof from killing (or their own orgasm).¹

Laura's observation of Voss is correct: "Half the time I think he does not understand himself, even in his own language" (V, 161). For instance, "words had been placed into his mouth" when he tells LeMesurier, "I have no plan," and Voss tells Robarts, "I am no longer your Lord," because, "in the state to which [Voss] had come," he could no longer accept the "luxury" of "devotion" (V 379, 366, emphasis mine). Grace Millman says that Voss' "self-sacrifice is voluntary."² This is untrue. Voss is trapped by words and their patriarchal meaning which is proliferated under the auspices of wealth and religion; and he is trapped by a natural self - which is represented by the negro. When Voss' outward motion (or erection) is restricted by the natives, he becomes "withdrawn" (or limp), and a black "guard," who appropriately transforms into a "woman," dramatizes Voss' inextricable link with nature (V 380, 382, 383).

To Grace Millman, Voss, at the time of his death, "has

¹Although repeatedly referred to as a "boy," in itself a condescending and racist nomenclature for niger, Jackie is successful, after killing Voss, in becoming a man (V 413, 417, 418, 420, 427, etc). Like Voss, he is in continual "motion," "always travelling," but similar to LeMesurier, "the great spirit by which [Jackie] was possessed" would often "gush and throb" (i.e., like a penis), even though "nobody was to know of it but himself" (V 419, 421).

²Grace Millman, Man, That Great and True Amphibium: A Thematic Study of Patrick White's Novels (Montreal: Concordia University, 1975) 158.

fallen from the false state of pride, and has discovered that suffering and humility are the seeds of transcendence";¹ to Patricia Morley, Voss "identifies himself with man and God";² and to Voss, "saints acquire sanctity who are only bones" - not flesh (V 389). Obviously, Voss epitomizes the Christian credo, particularly as it parallels the Christ/Virgin Mary-like sacrifice of the body, but, just as the negro religious hierarchy or elders profess spiritual exclusivity (yet evoke Voss' limping (or nature) by castrating his "head"), Voss' hypostatic union is rendered a patriarchal hypocrisy in his eucharistic reverie. He and Laura

dismounted to pick the lilies that were growing there. They were the prayers, she said, which she had let fall during the outward journey to his coronation, and which, on the cancellation of that ceremony, had sprung up as food to tide them over the long journey back in search of human status. She advised him to sample these nourishing blooms. So they stood there munching awhile. The lilies tasted floury, but wholesome. Moreover, he suspected that the juices present in the stalks would enable them to be rendered down easily into a gelatinous soup. But of greater importance was his own words of love that he was able at last to put into her mouth. So great was her faith, she received these white wafers without surprise (V, 393 emphasis mine).

The "words" that Voss puts into Laura's mouth are the "white wafers" of her "faith". But just as the common thread between words and the eucharist is spirit, so is spirit the principle force in fellatio. In this case, Voss' spiritual erection is feeding patriarchal domination to Laura, the voluntary, but

¹Millman 159.

²Morley 147.

politically duped, subject.

As stated above, Voss is also a victim of words. The lily, of which Laura and Voss both partake, has an obvious parallel in Palfreyman's specimen, which has seeds "like testes" (V 187). As well, Laura's lilies are "prayers," collocating this fellatio with phallic worship and patriarchal essence of both the eucharist and Christianity itself.

Much more, the lily/wafer imagery is not a contrivance to substantiate the sexual politics of fellatio, but is rather an ingenious dilation of the patriarchal-like hypocrisy behind religious theory and practice. Eating the eucharist is "cannibal[istic]," the object of which, as Barbara G. Walker submits, is to "become flesh of the god's flesh by eating him."¹ Theophagy or remaining within the self, as per Donington's argument (see p. 22), is incestual, and hence, natural. Therefore, Christianity is in the dubious position of being patriarchal, soliciting a spiritual totality which subjugates nature and, more specifically, women.

The eucharist scene, Voss' patriarchal reaffirmation and quasi-redemption, has its counterpart in Laura's phallic submission in which she seems to be defining humility as the human acceptance of finitude before ascension:

'When man is truly humbled, when he has learnt that he is not God, then he is nearest to becoming so. In the end, he may ascend.'

By this time Dr. Kilwinning's cuffs had acquired a crumpled look. The coat had wrinkled up his back. Upon

¹Walker 136.

departure he said quite sincerely:

'This would appear to be a case where medicine is of little assistance. I suggest that Miss Trevelyan might care to talk to a clergyman' (V 387, emphasis mine).

James McAuley identifies Voss' megalomania, but like most critics, misconstrues the patriarchal language in the excerpt above for "redemption."¹ What Patrick White declares is that "he" is considered universal and that the masculine case is the only one available or permitted in a patriarchy: women's responses are only reflections of male orientations.² Laura mirrors Voss. Her vow that she will not succumb to her fever, "I shall not die," is the same as Voss' defiance of the blacks, "I will not die" (V 370, 365). Spiritual permanence after death is the implied Christian belief, which Laura and Ludlow's conversation seems to affirm:

'Voss did not die,' Miss Trevelyan replied. 'He is there still, it is said, in the country, and always will be. His legend will be written down, eventually, by those who have been troubled by it.'

'Come, come. If we are not certain of the facts, how is it possible to give the answers?'

'The air will tell us,' Miss Trevelyan said (V 448, emphasis mine).

But once again the voice is ironic. The Elizabethan meaning of orgasmic dying or coming fixes both Voss' and (as a consequence) Laura's perpetual phallic erections. They cannot die because they cannot come - and only because they breathe the pervasive spiritual "air."

¹McAuley 41.

² See Voss p. 441 for Laura's ironic use of the "universal" case.

Chapter 13 is the climax of Voss, appropriate because both Voss, because of his death, and Laura, because of her fever, achieve pseudo orgasms. Chapter 14 is not the start of the denouement - there is none! The story (or Voss' penis) is extended. Three more Virgin Mary's are born: Mary Hebden, Mary Cox, and Mary Hayley; and Voss is "canonized" after eliminating his body (V 444). Besides his religious example, Voss becomes a social ideal. "[He] is...history," what Bonner aspires to because it is "impersonal" (V 413, 155). Finally, Voss takes on mythical grandeur. According to Joseph Campbell, Hermès Trismegistus, originator of the mythical writings, was

represented as having received instruction directly from the Divine Mind (personified in these writings as the 'Father'), the light and sound of whose Word (the 'Son'), reflected in the glass of Trismegistus' own unclouded mind, had revealed to him the truth of himself, and of all mankind, as of one mind with the Father.¹

That hierarchal father/son opposition, typically patriarchal, is integrated in Laura's vacillation over Voss' "myth[ical]" being as well as her own: "Was the firm, upright, reliable character one seemed to have been, a myth" (V 329)? The perpetual erection implied has spiritual linearity, being never able to turn back or ejaculate, and is therefore the reason why Col. Hebden "follows in the tracks of another" (V 407). Like Voss, he is "wooden," and "stilted"; he avoids "break[ing] sticks"; and he uses words such as "capital," "claim," "reward,"

¹Joseph Campbell, introduction, Myths of Greece and Rome, by Thomas Bulfinch (New York: Penguin Books, 1984) 6.

and "interest" which are commercially laden (V 412, 411, 410, 408, 414). Hebden is the microcosm of chapters 14 through 16, the latter the microcosm of Voss, and all three just "prolong[ated]" (White's pun) explanations of the patriarchal ubiquity within social and religious institutions which are epistemologically justified through history and myth (V 408).

Jonathan Culler states that a

reader-orientated criticism relies heavily on notions of the reader's experience, referring to what the or a reader finds, feels, wonders, conjectures, or concludes to justify its accounts of the meaning and structure of literary works. A question therefore arises about the nature of the reader and of this experience.¹

Judgments such as Brian Kiernan's, "There is something decidedly heroic about [Voss'] expedition,"² or Susan A. Wood's, "We are in the presence of a man, [Voss], whose nervous energy, concentrated on his obsession with his own latent divinity, is irrefutably impressive,"³ encapsulate the essence of Culler's deconstructive approach and White's art. For instance, White understands the patriarchal throes to be wholesale and accepted; and critics prove him right, interpreting his fiction, as above, according to patriarchy's social and religious standards. This accounts for the great critical (never ending) dialectic, particularly with regards to Voss himself. Clearly, Voss the victimizer is also Voss the victim, although the inspiration for

¹Culler, On Deconstruction 40.

²Brian Kiernan, Patrick White (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1980) 63.

³Wood 145.

both is the cultural gimmick, acceptance; and Patrick White's novels, ironically, do not "fit in."

The Solid Mandala

In Voss, there exists a plenitude of meaning. The author carefully ties the plot and characters to a phallogocentric tightrope. The preconceived signifier, Bonner, equals the signified, culture, and as circus owner, he controls the ringmaster (Voss) and the patriarchal net. In The Solid Mandala, White toasts the death of the author with Roland Barthes who defined the "text [as] not a line of words releasing a single 'theoretical' meaning (the 'message' of an author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash."¹ The arm of patriarchal authority still exists in Sarsaparillian culture, but under a structuralist framework where "human beings are controlled by the Rationalizations and False Consciousness which have replaced Reason. A dizzying state of affairs, where one cannot trust one's ideas and yet cannot get down from them either."²

In Voss, the "Word" is the ontological center of spirit, culture, and phallogocentrism. In The Solid Mandala, Patrick White goes a step further and declares that the "I" is a

¹Jonathan Culler, Roland Barthes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) 11.

²Richard Harland, Superstructuralism (New York: Methuen, 1987) 59.

conglomeration of other texts and that the novel (or life itself) can (and does) write itself. Phallogocentrism is not merely the signified (along with culture) but the signifier, the author.

What is concealed, of course, is the body, but not merely through the cultural edification of nature (such as Peleg and Bildad's religious façade¹ in Moby-Dick). The flesh is extrinsic to language, not definable in words, but the body is still present, creating meaningless (because incomprehensible) spaces in the linguistic system and the mind's logic and order. The "word" has authored The Solid Mandala, not Patrick White, but critics (like psychoanalysts) persist in a phallogocentric (exogenous) search to unify meaning. The gaps (or flesh) should remain a silent celebration but are filled with writing and more writing until there exists an infinite intertextuality (on linguistics, psychology, religion, etc.). At the crossroads of all those writings is The Solid Mandala which is both a structuralist presentation, in that consciousness is shown to be a linguistic and social construct, and a deconstructionist manifestation, in that the unconscious, like the body, defers meaning and any univocal theory. To Patrick White, understanding the self means accepting those spaces, not carrying on an infinite dialectic to reify matter into cultural concepts. Only this way can a true spirit/flesh balance exist.

All of Patrick White's fiction incorporates an uncertainty of signs which frees it from conventional social meaning. Any

¹Martin 86,88.

understanding of The Solid Mandala must demonstrate White's continuity of those signs as designators of androgyny.¹ With Arthur's and Waldo's androgynous halves in perspective, their conscious beings (as moulded by social preconceptions), and their unconscious selves (as determined by physical expression), are more visible. Then clear is an inner (id) and an outer (super-ego or social) life which the ego tries to balance, but as Patrick White so satirically and ironically conveys, the contemporary self ends up the product of countless texts, including Freudianism and Jungianism. Theorists and theologians recognize the unconscious and its physical presence, but they only vivisect the body with a philosophical and, hence, phallogocentric knife. This is Patrick White's complaint. "Can't tell" is the body and the true unconscious, and should be non-defined as pleasure, not as an obfuscatory patriarchal discourse which only ends up continually writing itself into an open or conceptual impasse.

Part of the problem with interpreting The Solid Mandala is that White's style is compact, and a systematization of his androgynous imagery is difficult to record. However, as in Voss, everything is given phallic significance and associated with the male attributes of consciousness and culture. Mr Feinstein's "gold [wealth/spirit] clock [cock/spirit] on the mantelpiece [man's piece (penis)]" is a good example, in which the nude lady,

¹For a summary of White's male and female system of signs, see the introduction on pp. 4-5. For a detailed explanation, see "Voss" pp. 8-10 & 13-14.

he says, "represents Reason keeping an eye on Time" (SM 105) In effect, the woman is the objet d'art, sculptured into a cultural penis to represent male supremacy. Like Bonner, Mr. Feinstein also has all the spiritual qualifications, being "cold, dry, and firm": permanently erect (SM 103). Indeed the only way he can ejaculate is through his "intellectual honesty" which "kept on coming out" through his "billiard ball" head (SM 103, emphasis mine). Any flowing hair, symbolic of the limp penis,¹ is conspicuously absent, and he staunches any emotional or natural expression by wearing a capple to "protect his nut [testicles] from draughts" (SM 104). Waldo also establishes control over Arthur by making him sit on a stool on the back veranda to cut his hair which "flowed [pun: low/limp; ejaculate] through his fingers" and fell on the boards "in dead snippets [pun: pet/masturbate], and livelier love-knots, quite old girlishly, if not obscenely soft" (SM 26, emphasis mine). Here, death, woman, the limp penis, and ejaculation are collocated, all elements which in Voss were natural and unconscious.

The nose is also phallic. Mrs. Feinstein's nose reminds Waldo of an "uncircumcised penis," although the appendage can have either a flesh or spirit connotation depending on whether the mucous is permitted to descend (SM 136). Arthur "pick[ed] [pun: pricked] his nose till [Mrs. Brown] slapped him," but Waldo, like Laura who surreptitiously masturbates by kneading and

¹For an in depth study of hair, see Glossary 1 in "The Vivisector."

pinching the bridge of her nose until "quite white," "pick[s] [pun: pricks] his in private" (V 439,445; SM 37).

According to mood, [Waldo] might take his pince-nez [Fr. pinched nose] off, blurring the image [age: memory/unconscious/nature], allowing his imagination to play [nature, as opp. to work/spirit] amongst the hydrangeas [hydra; ange: Fr. angel; as: ass], or alternately he would clip the lenses firmly [erect/spirit] on, and refuse himself any avenues [venue: Fr. come] of escape from that intellectual [mind/spirit] ruthlessness he knew himself to possess [spirit, as opp. to sharing/nature] (SM 120, emphasis mine).

In this excerpt, "hydrangeas" links woman (and the cultural concept of her as monster and angel) with the flesh (ass) and its capacity for play (ejaculation). Work, intellect, and priapism is culture's ethic; yet escape from the rigour of cathectic spirituality into a harmonious union with nature, the unconscious, and the body is possible while dreaming/sleeping, playing (or listening) to music, writing, dancing, immersing oneself in water, or masturbating.¹ In a book based on the unconscious, the examples are innumerable: after dreaming about Waldo, Arthur recalls, "You had lumps of Pears soap trying to come out of your nostrils [penis]" (SM 209, emphasis mine). Body functions, including defecation, are always part of White's euphonious harmony with nature. During Dulcie's performance on the piano, Waldo is distracted by an attack of diarrhoea, philosophizing while on the toilet:

And now the music was flowing [i.e., water] from unseen hands - they could only have been Dulcie Feinstein's - though under Arthur's influence, he feared. Waldo

¹ For examples in "Voss," see pp. 11-12.

wished he could have conceived a poem [i.e., writing]. He had not yet, but would. If it would only come shooting out with the urgency of shit and music (SM 110, emphasis mine).

Similar to this shit/come/music imagery, Arthur's pantomime, his "fly-speckled version of a pierrot song," ends abruptly when his face had "become impasted with the thick white substance of his song" (SM 248,134, emphasis mine).

As in the block quote above, ejaculation is also a part of Waldo's writing, which Arthur understands as "self-fulfillment,"

but

most of what [Waldo] did he did secretly [erect-ly; secrete-ly], as though making a secret [erect; secrete] of his acts gave them a special importance. It was only too bad that more people were not in the secret [erect; secrete], for in the circumstances [come/nature/uc] he could only appear important to himself.... Perhaps Arthur even had a secret [erect; secrete] life of his own, but necessarily of such simplicity, you did not stop to think about, let alone enter it (SM 81, emphasis mine).

But Arthur is able to share his secretions with Mrs. Poulter's during the mandala dance - the purpose of which is to attain self-harmony through the celebration of the flesh. Other particulars will be discussed later, but for the moment, what is important to establish is the imagery of masturbation. Once ensconced among the blackberry bushes, Mrs. Poulter takes down her hair (or penis), and "all that was spoken and acted was as inescapable as conviction and dreams" (SM 263-4, emphasis mine). Mrs. Poulter gives Arthur permission to "stroke the tips of her shiny hair, which was "like some kind of sleepy animal [anima/unconscious]," and subsequently, Arthur decides to dance a

mandala, while Mrs. Poulter "play[ed] with the tips of her dark hair. Sighing sometimes" (SM 264,265). Then both Arthur (after dancing the "centre of their mandala), and Mrs. Poulter (who had been "holding her hair by handfuls in knots of fists...waiting,") achieve orgasm (SM, 266):

He had been spewed up, spat out, with the breeze stripping him down to the saturated skin, and the fit [orgasm] had almost withdrawn [limp] from him....

He fell down [limp], and lay, the rise [erection] and fall [limp] of his ribs [penis]¹ a relief, to say nothing of her eyes, which he knew could only have been looking at him with understanding for his dance.

Arthur must have dozed [dreamed; oozed/come], for when he got up, Mrs. Poulter was putting the finishing touches to her hair [to re-staunch penis]. Her head [mind/spirit] was looking so neat, though her nostrils [penis] were still slightly flared, from some experience recently suffered (SM 267, emphasis mine).

White defines the mandala as a "symbol of totality. It is believed to be the 'dwelling of the god.' It's protective circle is a pattern of order super - imposed on - psychic - chaos. Sometimes its geometric form is seen as a vision (either waking or in a dream) 'or -....Or danced" (SM 238, emphasis mine). The vision, dreamed or danced, is symbolic of masturbation, but the mind, in need of "pattern," "order," or "form," "impose[s]" a "protective circle" to conceal the inexplicable spaces (i.e., the hyphens) of the body or unconscious. Beyond the logic and reason of language, there exists an inner meaning, such as that conveyed in the four epigrams:

There is another world, but it is in this one.
Paul Eluard

¹See Glossary 1 of "The Vivisector" for White's use of the rib as penis.

It is not outside, it is inside: wholly within.
Meister Eckhart¹

...yet still I long
for my twin in the sun...
Patrick Anderson

It was an old and rather poor church, many of the ikons
were without settings, but such churches are the best
for praying in.
Dostoyevsky

There is an inner unconscious and an outer conscious, but "it" is "old" and "poor" and "in". Inside there is only the id and nature (unlike the cultural identity outside), although the androgynous self is always seeking equilibrium between the masculine and feminine. When Waldo "approach[es] the looking glass, his face growing bigger and bigger, his mouth flattening on the throbbing glass, swallowing, or swallowed by his mouth," his self-love is homosexual, incestual, and cannibalistic (SM 32-3). All are culturally taboo; and all are symbolic of natural integration because the "libido is turned inwards [sic] into the matriarchal situation,"² and therefore, they are either designated perverse or, in the case of the latter two, camouflaged in the eucharist celebration and social eating.³ But

¹Thelma Herring, "Self and Shadow: The Quest for Totality in 'The Solid Mandala,'" Southerly 26 (1966): 187, discovered that the passage about the "hermaphroditic Adam" (SM 281) is reprinted verbatim from C. G. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) 151. The Eckhart quotation appears in the same edition on page 102.

²Donington 117.

³Mr. Brown joked that Mrs. Poulter made a "sacrament of food" (SM 160). Mrs. Brown says that food was "something you couldn't avoid" (SM 150, emphasis mine); Mrs. Poulter "had faith in food" (SM 160); Dulcie remarks that Mrs. Feinstein "lives to

Waldo's ass (or body), as emphasized above, is owned by culture, and therefore, he has to "drag himself out of the mirror's embrace" - "drag," both his physical expulsion from nature and his costumed role in society (SM 53).

But before looking at the cultural mask and how the "system of language" and its semiotics are the "guarantor[s] of meaning...rather than the individual consciousness",¹ Arthur's and Waldo's androgynous make-up, sexual voice, and social face need to be examined. In general, a patriarchal society is successful in restraining feminine expression, that of the unconscious and physical pleasure included. Like Mr. Feinstein, Waldo exhibits spiritual uniformity, being "cold," "dry," "thin," "tall," and "rigid": permanently erect (SM 31,111,243,122,284). His hair [penis] was candid (i.e., canned id), and "he had always known how to control, himself, his parents, his colleagues - and his brother" (SM 74,30). Finally, he acquires all the cultural positives: "scholastic brilliance," "knowledge of the world," and "self-sufficiency," the latter to the point where he "hated almost everyone" (SM 243,80).

Opposite to Waldo is Arthur, who is described in terms of his body and femininity (rather than his mind and masculine make us eat" (SM 98). Mr. Feinstein admitted that Jews use "religion as an excuse to overeat" (SM 277); and Mrs Musto recalled having told an Archbishop of the virtues of eating, that "it doesn't pay...to neglect the flesh" (SM 84). For an explanation of the association between cannibalism, incest, and the eucharist, see "Voss" pp. 22 & 44-5.

¹Jonathan Culler, Saussure (London: Fontana Press, 1976) 112-3.

traits). Mr. Brown (who praises Arthur as an "athlete") doesn't attend sporting events because "if you take the trouble to invent gods...you don't turn them into sweating lumps of human beings" (SM 33). In other words, the body should be rationalized and ignored, particularly when Arthur is a "big shameful lump" or, as a disgusted Waldo says, a "big fat helpless female" (SM 45, 230). Arthur is "thick" and "fleshy": limp; he is not "logical"; and he has "difficulty with his words," unlike Waldo who "rolled them in his mouth like polished stones" (SM 19, 24, 242, 25, 36). As well, because Arthur shows more aptitude for the female activity of making butter and bread (which gave him a "satisfaction more intense than any he had experience before the coming of Mrs. Poulter"), the Browns "decided schools were wasted on him," and he goes to work for Mr. Allwright "about the time Waldo began at Barranugli High" (SM 232, emphasis mine).

Brian Kiernan calls Arthur "mentally retarded" and "not fully normal," when in fact he only has feelings of "feminine origin" (SM 27).¹ Harmony with the body is unacceptable:

Arthur said: 'You know when you are ill, really ill, not diphtheria [dip/limp theory], but anything, pneumonia [Fr. (i.e., car) tire; tire: fatigued/limp]-you can't say we haven't had pneumonia - you can get, you can get much farther [Arthur] in.'

'Into what?'

It tired Waldo.

'Into anything' (SM 57).

"It" is "in" or unconscious or limp: to be limp is to be ill

¹Kiernan 93. Arthur also has a spiritual gift. He's a natural at mathematics, although the pun is that Arthur is athematic when it comes to "mould[ing] music" to predetermined social structures and strictures (SM 232).

or a dill (like Arthur), and dill, the herb, "look[s] like fennel [anal]" in Sarsaparilla (arse) - again, the flesh always concealed, always condemned (SM 225, emphasis mine).

But Arthur's and Waldo's social one-sidedness does not explain why they are "two twins" (SM 14,75). What seems like a tautology is clarified by the brothers' homosexuality:

That night Arthur tried to drag him back behind the almost visible line beyond which knowledge could not help...

Arthur was taking, had taken him in his arms, was overwhelming him with some need...

[Waldo] should have struggled, but couldn't any more. The most he could do was pinch the wick, squeeze out the flickery candle flame.

The stench of the pinched-out candle was cauterizing Waldo's nostrils. But he did not mind all that much. He was dragged back into what he knew for best and certain. Their flesh was flickering quivering together in that other darkness, which resisted all demands and judgements (SM 47-8).

All the bread and milk in the world flowed out of Arthur's mouth onto Waldo's lips. He felt vaguely he should resist such stale, ineffectual pap [i.e., fellatio]. But Arthur was determined Waldo should receive. By this stage their smeary faces were melted together.

But so ineffectual, Waldo remained the passive, though palpitating, plastic [ass] doll in Arthur's arms (SM 208-9).

In the first excerpt, the most Waldo can do is pinch out the flame of spirit, although his nostrils (penis) are still cauterized or occluded. In their second sexual experience, Waldo is even more clearly assuming the passive role in intercourse, and so while he is overtly masculine, he is sexually feminine. Arthur, of course, is the exact opposite, but apart from their androgyny, what is important is the social imposition of roles. Waldo, who chooses obscurity as a homosexual, chooses silence

over political exposure and ends up vicariously supporting patriarchy. He is the one invited to Mrs. Musto's tennis parties (the sexual significance of which will be detailed later), and he is Leonard Saporta's rival for Dulcie, although the outcome "turned out exactly as [Mrs. Feinstein] expected" (SM 254).¹

Arthur, on the other hand, has a high homosexual profile, which ends up "control[ing], restrict[ing], and inhibit[ing]" (as in the example of Arthur's femininity in the last footnote) but, at the same time, allows him the comfort of close relationships with women, particularly Dulcie and Mrs. Poulter.² That rapport, generated because Arthur presents no sexual danger, is central to the bedroom scenes with Mrs. Mackenzie (when Arthur accidentally discovers the pseudo invalid female in a "starchy nightdress") and Mrs. Musto (when he catches her in "bloomers and camisole"): "her impulse was to scream, until she realized who it was" (SM

¹Arthur soon discovered that the Feinsteins, "who might have become his private property, were being given to his brother Waldo" (SM 239). The reason is implicit in Gayle Rubin's argument that "patriarchal heterosexuality" is a form of "traffic in women: it is the use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men." See Sedgwick 25-6. Of consequence is not that Leonard and Waldo are amicable, but that they hold the balance of power. Dulcie is "kept a faceless mystery" (SM 242). Waldo offers marriage in order to acquire a cook and "benefit" his work, and with Leonard, Dulcie is a "slave" to pregnancy (SM 150, 275). Arthur, who is socially feminine, cannot own property, and like Dulcie who is silenced at the Saporta's religious ceremony, Arthur is marginalized when obliged to peer through the small window. Dulcie "surrounded by her children and her children's children" does not constitute, as Brian Kiernan suggests, "the attainment of a completeness." See Kiernan 98.

²Kenneth Plummer, "Building a Sociology of Homosexuality," The Making of the Modern Homosexual, ed. Kenneth Plummer (London: Hutchinson, 1981) 29.

220,235).

The upshot is that Arthur and Waldo are androgynous but, because of social pressures and the stigma of homosexuality, act out roles which support their social valence. Waldo acts the patriarchal bull; Arthur plays the tragic cow; but both are social products of heterosexual stereotypes: if not a male and masculine, then female and feminine - whether homosexual or not.

Recognizing that Arthur's and Waldo's exteriors are social constructs leads the way, first, to the structure of the novel, second, to a psychological definition of Arthur's and Waldo's introjection, and, finally, to White's theory of language. Waldo, in his section, relates an unconscious past intruding upon his conscious self during the brothers' walk.¹ Mary-Ann Berg argues, and with merit, that Arthur, in his section, reviews his life "immediately after he has understood that his brother has died."² Both the "Waldo" and "Arthur" sections, therefore, originate from what the brothers "have in mind," - but not from the unconscious.

A detour into the psychologists' dictionary will confirm this hypothesis. Jung defines persona as "a complicated system of relations between the individual consciousness and society,

¹Mari-Ann Berg, Aspects of Time, Ageing and Old Age in the Novels of Patrick White, 1939-1979 (Goteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1983) 27,188.

²Berg 28, suggests that rigor mortis (or the "steel circlets" (SM 294) that hold Arthur to the dead Waldo) takes a number of hours before setting in. That time period, the commencement of the "Arthur" section directly after Waldo's death, and White's use of the "fictive present" would substantiate her theory on the point of view.

fittingly enough, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual."¹ The equivalent in Freudian terminology is the ego, which is the mediator between the id ("domain of the unconscious" and "primary instincts")² and the superego (the "part of the mind which exerts conscience and responds to social rules").³

As stated earlier, Arthur's and Waldo's pentimento, their homosexuality, has been impasted in heterosexual (and patriarchal) definition. What the brothers relate in the "Arthur" and "Waldo" sections, therefore, is not the id (or unconscious) but the persona, and to Patrick White, the meaning of their conscious and cultural (but artificial) selves is circumscribed by the "Word" and its inherent phallogocentrism.⁴

In Voss, meaning is polysemous: the knife malignantly usurped life or benignly restored bliss: in both cases the knife is signifier and the results are the signifieds. The author halts the meaning, "the signifier point[ing] away from itself while the

¹C.G. Jung, Jung: Selected Writings, ed. Anthony Storr (Bungay, Suffolk: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983) 94.

²Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Freud, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966) 29-30.

³J. B. Sykes, ed., The Concise Oxford Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) 1070.

⁴ The point of view of "In the Bus" and "Mrs. Poulter and the Zeitgeist" will be discussed at later stages. For a review of phallogocentrism, see "Voss" p. 18.

signified does not."¹ In The Solid Mandala, meaning is in the process of "dissemination," in which one signifier points to another and another "ad infinitum":² (Harland, 135)

'In [uc]³ those days,' she said [uc] from out [con] of the distance [exogenous/spirit/con], 'all [balance: uc/con] the roads at Sarsaparilla were dead [nature/uc] ends [ass/ill/end: body/uc]. Not only Terminus [end in us: uc]. You couldn't go anywhere as [ass/uc] the crow.'

'Eh [he/con]? Mrs. Dun asked [ass/uc].

As [ass/uc] the crow flies, Mrs. Poulter explained [uc].

'Oh, the crow,' her friend-[body/uc] murmured, seeming uneasy at the idea [uc].

'There was a Chinese woman lived on a hill [body/uc] up [erect/spirit/con] at the back. I never ever [Eve/nature/uc] knew her. I seen her once [as opp.to all: one dimensional: spirit/con]. They were people of means, so people said [uc]. Growin' vegetables [we get able: body/uc] and things [thin/erect/con]. They planted one [con] of those what-they-call [uc/con] wheel-trees. Well, I seen her standing [uc] under it when it was [ass/uc] in [uc] flower.'

Mrs. Dun sucked her teeth [eat:social:con].

'You wouldn't of said [uc] she was without [con] refinement [uc;con], ' Mrs. Poulter remembered [penis/con]. 'But a Chinese is never [uc] the same.'

It was [uc] something Mrs. Dun had not even [uc] contemplated [con].

'And anyway, the Chinese person [con] isn't the point [uc].'

Just [sharing/touch: uc] then the bus [uc] nearly [hearing/uc, see Glossary 1 in "VS"] shook apart [one dimensional: con] and one [con] of the young lady typists [urinate/uc] lost her balance. It was [uc] those stiletto [style/culture/con; ill/uc] heels.

'These old [uc, see "VS," pp. 112 & 119] buses [uc]!' Mrs. Poulter heaved [Eve/uc] and laughed [con, see LeMesurier in "Voss" p. 18].

Mrs. Dun laughed [con] a deeper yellow as [uc] she grasped [uc] the rail.

'They're a downright [down/limp/uc; right/rite/

¹Harland 135.

²Harland 135.

³"Unconscious" is abbreviated as "uc"; "conscious" as "con."

cultural habit/con] disgrace!' Mrs. Poulter laughed [con].

The sadness [uc] had been shaken out [con] of her. She was [uc] happy [con] again [uc].

Presently [time/con] she couldn't resist: 'That veranda [façade/culture/con] of yours must [uc] be a real luxury, dryin' [dry/culture/con] laundries [dry/con] in [uc] the rain' [wet;in/uc] (SM 13, bolding and italics mine).

"In the absence of all signifieds, language takes on its own kind of energy and creativity," and the author disappears.¹ Apart from the play of codes, the explanation in the square brackets emphasizing the elasticity of signs and their break from arbitrary values assigned by culture, meaning is fathered by the "word" and spread by its genetic filiation. In the excerpt above, the genealogical tree, incestual in its interrelationships, is traceable from any word which has been italicized, although the most centrifugal is perhaps "Chinese." It signifies the typecast of Chinese laundries and the utility of Mrs. Dun's veranda. On another tangent, "Chinese" signifies the "wheel-tree," which in turn fathers the ideas of both the typist's "stiletto heels" and "flower[s]." Flowers, signifying the "owing" of the body to culture (as previously explained), fission into "crow," "growin'," and "yellow"; and the latter, the colour of Mrs. Dun and, of course, the Chinese, radiates into countless other signifiers: Sarsaparilla has "deep and streaming" masses of "yellow" grass (83); Mr. Brown has a "citron-coloured face" (54); Both Mr. and Mrs. Brown are "jaundiced" by light filtering through branches (48); Mrs. Mackenzie is "yellow" (219); Leonard

¹Harland 135.

Saporta has "gold" teeth (250); Dulcie's facial bones are "yellow" (252); and Arthur's hair is white with "tobacco stains" (23).

Ultimately, any word "spreads out across every other word in the whole language."¹ The effect is twofold: first, Mrs. Poulter's superego, created by the word's social definition, is the point of view "In the Bus," for nothing seems so stilted as her comment that the Brown brothers mean "nothing to [her]" (SM 21); and, second, the interdependence of social definition results in intertextuality: "in the space of a given text, several utterances taken from other texts intersect."² In The Solid Mandala, there are plangent echoes from Freud and, even more predominantly, Jung, although their diagnoses are only mutations of a phallogocentric and patriarchal discourse.

"Aberrant" sexuality, defined by Freud, included homosexuality and "attraction to those who are sexually immature or of another species. As deviations in aim (or perversions), he cited practices involving an extension of interest, anatomically, from the genitals to other parts of the body, such as the mucous membrane of the lips or the anus or an insurmountable attachment to a preparatory or intermediate activity, such as looking, or touching...."³ Herbert Marcuse, in contradiction, argues that

¹Harland 133.

²Harland 133.

³Richard Wollheim, Freud (Bungay, Suffolk: Fontana/Collins, 1971) 110.

"development of the instinct...[depends on the] regression from sexuality in the service of reproduction to sexuality in the 'function of obtaining pleasure from [multiple] zones of the body.'"¹ This delimits the primacy of genital sexuality and frees the unconscious from the Freudian reality principle: "since [society] has not means enough to support life for its members without work on their part, it must see to it that the number of these members is restricted and their energies directed away from sexual activities on to their work."² Whereas Marcuse believes that scarcity is organized to benefit a few in privileged positions, Freud believed that a non-repressive civilization was impossible, and hence, his accentuation on work (sexuality as production and procreation) rather than play (pleasure and absence of repression): Freud's pleasure principle.³

Traditionally Narcissus has been considered a victim of his own selfish pride and a Freudian medical diminutive for homosexuality - the consequence of association with the inner or unconscious self, but Herbert Marcuse and Patrick White understand narcissism as the broadening of sexuality and the root of harmony with the self. In The Solid Mandala, Waldo rejects his unconscious but surreptitiously and uncontrollably (but unawaredly) rejoices the flesh by narcissistically kissing the mirror, dressing up as his mother, and writing about himself. At

¹Marcuse 204-5.

²Marcuse 17.

³Marcuse 36,17,12.

the end of World War II when there is a renewed confidence in humanity, he shuns the company of Parslow, Cornelius, and Miss Glasson, and lauds his "avoid[ance] of fleshy love": "men were either dull or dazed, incapable of rising [erect] to the ecstasies of abstract [spirit] more-than-joy - die Freude,¹ in fact - which he could not help visualizing as a great and glittering fountain-jet rising endlessly skyward - never, till then, plopping 'back into reality' (SM 183-4). The joke, of course, is on Freud's reality principle and the denial of physical satisfaction, "plopping back" (or limping) impossible if "rising endlessly" (or constantly erecting).

Opposite to Waldo, Arthur celebrates the flesh, admitting, although labelled a "narcissist," that the dogs were bought for "something additional - reliable - to love" (SM 284). Arthur keeps in contact with his unconscious or anima ("animals"): the dogs perform fellatio: Arthur "plant[s] his nose [penis] in one of the other of the moist-blackberry noses so that he and dog were one"; and Arthur performs bestiality: the dogs were always "farting and shitting under his nose [penis]" (SM 284, 181, 187).² He thrives on his protean erogeneity. To Patrick White, Arthur is the ultimate subverter of the reality principle, but to Freud, he

¹Die means "that" but also seems like a killing pun on Freud.

²Waldo "had promised, and denied himself, "tenderness" (or a soft end: limp penis) with the dogs, but he chooses to "mortify himself" (SM 180-1, emphasis mine). See also Arthur's poem of Narcissus: "But shall not dwell/ On which well./ Might see my face/ At the bott-urrah" (SM 134).

is an out-and-out sexual misfit.

The other text which has been "super - imposed on" The Solid Mandala is Jung's (SM 238). Similar to Freud, he believed homosexuality a deviation which resulted when a subject is "convinced that the way he relates to his inner process is his real character."¹ Again, this leaves Arthur in the psychiatric ward, but the hypocrisy of Jung's theories lies in their double standard. From an unprecedented number of test cases, Jung, in Psychology and Religion, gives the example of Guillaume, a fourteenth-century mystic, who asks an angel in his vision the symbol of the Trinity.² She explains the meaning of the colours gold, red, and, green as, respectively, representations of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. She also warns against asking ~~more~~ questions and hurries off before Guillaume has a chance to ask the meaning of blue, which also appeared in his dream. The blue, Jung suggests, transforms the Trinity into a quaternity (such as the mandala) and constitutes the addition of the feminine, and more specifically, the earth, body, or unconscious.³ But "mandalas are expressions of a certain attitude which we cannot avoid calling "religious" and "either symbolizes the divine being, hitherto hidden and dormant in the body and now extracted and vivified, or it symbolizes the vessel or the room in which

¹Jung, Jung: Selected Writings 104.

²C. G. Jung, Psychology and Religion (London: Oxford University Press, 1946) 84-5.

³Jung, Psychology and Religion 76,89.

the transformation of man into a divine being takes place."¹ In other words, the mandala may have at its center the deity,² or it may not³ - for if the subject no longer accepts the god as an "overwhelming psychic factor" he himself "replace[s] the deity."⁴ In both cases, religion is an abstract, and as Jung submits, "creeds and ceremonies...exist for the sole purpose of forming a defence against the unexpected, dangerous tendencies of the unconscious."⁵ To Jung, therefore, the mandala symbolism and its religious significance are a function of the mind's struggle to both free itself from the unconscious and attain harmony with the self. Yet, in his own diagnoses of the homosexual, Jung persists in denying the value of the flesh.

A. P. Riemer, in "Visions of the Mandala in 'The Tree of Man,'" assumes that Arthur, because his marble is "nearest" to the knotted one in "complexity of colour and design," "approach[es] perfection more closely than any one else in the novel" - although union with the stone eludes him.⁶ Arthur's marble is red and green; Waldo's is colourless, Riemer remarks,

¹Jung, Psychology and Religion 98,112.

²Jung, Psychology and Religion 88.

³Jung, Psychology and Religion 99.

⁴Jung, Psychology and Religion 98,106.

⁵Jung, Psychology and Religion 21. See also p. 106: "The unconscious produces a new idea of man in loco dei, of man deified or divine, imprisoned, concealed, protected, usually dehumanized and expressed by abstract symbolism."

⁶A. P. Riemer, "Visions of the Mandala in 'The Tree of Man,'" Southerly 27 (1967): 7.

and therefore white and therefore inclusive of all colours, particularly Arthur's!¹ He also would have us believe that Waldo's mandala, because knotted, holds the secrets of the philosophers stone - the essence of divinity.²

First of all, Waldo's mandala is knotted because, like his penis, he is permanently erect and occludes his semen; second, Waldo's mandala is colourless, not white, and totally void of body because completely spiritual; third, as suggested earlier, Arthur achieves self harmony through a flesh/spirit homeostasis: transcendence via the mandala and orgasm via masturbation; and finally, Patrick White makes a complete mockery of Jung's colour system: gold/yellow: all the yellow people (mentioned earlier), Mr. Feinstein's clock (102), the sun (red gold) at the boat crossing (215), Leonard Saporta's teeth (250), and the steam over the Saporta gathering (309); red: Arthur's hair (32), Mr. Feinstein's concrete steps (113), and the rims under Waldo's eyes (202); green: Waldo's mouldy life and averted mind (26), Haynes' girlfriend's dress (188), Arthur's diverting duties (233), Mrs. Musto's baize door (235), and Arthur's skin when pressed against a window (241); and blue: Waldo's and his mother's eyes (120), Mrs. Brown's dressing gown (120), Waldo's shanks and skin (189, 202), Arthur's skin (117, 242), a swamp-hen (246), Waldo's serge (255), and the dogs and their testicles (117, 287).

True, White incorporates the four main colours in three of

¹Riemer, "Visions" 7.

²Riemer, "Visions" 5.

"Arthur's marbles or mandalas,¹ but there is no rhyme or reason to the colour imagery, except that colour, like language, is only a cultural sign for the physical world. Waldo can only see spirit, and that is the reason why he is so frustrated at not knowing the name of Dulcie's "Italian lake," which to her "meant less than their colours and gloss" (SM 132-3):²

'Shall you send me picture post-cards?' [Arthur] asked...

[Dulcie] would, of course. Written in coloured inks. In all the languages she proposed to learn.

Together they were making a joke of it (SM 246, emphasis mine).

White's satirical dig is highlighted by the multiple meanings of "Italian (and) lake": first, there is a pun on It/alian, "it" is the body and "alien"; second, Italian ocher is a synonym for Italian lake, a yellow pigment (that, as detailed earlier, has major significance in the novel); and last, a "lake" is both a red pigment and frolic.

Like Freud, Jung's main contribution was the recognition of androgyny and the relationship between woman, the unconscious, and the body. White's dispute with Jung stems from the patriarchal latency of the psychoanalyst's theory, the notion that compatibility (and social progress and normality) dictate the harnessing of the inner self (or unconscious) and the projection of the outer self (or consciousness): "Whenever an

¹Riemer, "Visions" 7.

²Note that "colour" and "gloss" make the anagram "our loss." In White, failure, lack, or loss are always indication of the body and/or its excretions. See failure in Glossary 1 of "The Vivisector."

impassioned, almost magical, relationship exists between the sexes, it is invariably a question of a projected soul image."¹ This is in direct opposition to Susan Griffin's insight that the male's projected soul image results in the woman's total effacement. (See "Voss," pp. 23-4.) To Patrick White, Jung privileges patriarchy and promotes phallic worship. Mrs. Musto's party is, literally and figuratively, the pièce de résistance:

[Waldo] could hear quite plainly the felt sound of tennis [penis] balls as they were struck thudding back and forth. The gathering of 'youngsters' [Jung steers], judging by its numbers, was fully assembled on Mrs. Musto's lawns. There was positively a smell of tennis [penis]. The four elect [erect] performers, each older than himself, it seemed to Waldo, were also far more adept, more graceful, if not better born [eugenics], at least wealthier. Young [Jung] men reaching overhead with their rackets. [money scheme] revealed their glorious ribs through transparent [all-pervading procreation] shirts. Delicious girls, in pearls of perspiration [ejaculation], appeared to be at it all their lives as they controlled their skirts in running to dish up a ball [fellatio]...

Waldo hoped to withdraw [limp], and did finally, to a less obvious position, behind a grazier [steer] of at least twenty, discussing rams [aggressive male intercourse] with two young [Jung] ladies...

How [the tennis ball] soared its slow white rocket [ejaculation/uc] above the black [lack/body/uc] cedars [arse/body/uc] into taut [erect/con] sky returning into ball [testicles] as [ass/uc] it plummeted [lump/body/uc] past [ass/uc] the black [lack/body/uc] cedars [arse/uc]. It hit the hard [erect/con] grass [ass/uc]. And bounced. It hit Dulcie in her burnt face [fellatio] (SM 87-9, emphasis mine).

As indicated, the tennis party is a patriarchal marriage game, and much later, when Dulcie is bestowed, like a fellatio-dowry, to Leonard Saporta, she senses that marriage renders her "deaf, dumb, and blind" (SM 155). Waldo, although homosexual, is

¹Jung, Jung:Selected Writings 104.

willing to play by the rules of phallic domination, offering marriage to Dulcie, but Arthur, refusing to validate the effacement of his identity, authenticates his homosexuality through camp, a morphological mutation.

But the problem with camp, as Andrew Britton submits, is that it only allows "one to remain inside oppressive relations while enjoying the illusory confidence that one is flouting them."¹ Camp becomes another intertextuality and only mimics the homosexual's already subculture status by remaining obscure and existing as a "deviant's" communication. Likewise Arthur, who appears homosexual, can never integrate into society, unlike Mrs. Musto who uses "Fairy Flour" as a façade for her molly house:

After the storekeeper had taught him to drive the buggy [buggery], and he was allowed to go round delivering the orders, Arthur felt more independent than before. To flick the flies off Treasure's rump [uc], as the bay mare clumped [lump/uc] and snorted [i.e., nose/ejaculation/uc] down the empty roads, her rear [uc] opening curiously like a passion fruit....²

He liked best of all to arrive with Mrs. Musto's order, crunching round the drive [intercourse] to the back [ass], where Louie arrived with the girls [TQV 94: a fellow homosexual], behind [ass] the virginia [i.e., anal virgin] creeper [TQV 136: a dishonest homosexual prostitute] and the plumbing [lump/flesh or bum]. After he had tumbled [bum] down, and gone inside, with the deal case full of groceries [TQV 100: genitalia], they would feed him cheery [sic ?] [TQV 21: cherry: anal virgin] conserve, or peaches [TQV 147: a gay nickname]

¹Gregg Blachford, "Male Dominance and the Gay World," The Making of the Modern Homosexual, ed. Kenneth Plummer (London: Hutchinson, 1981) 202.

²"Fairy," "flower" (i.e., flour), and "passion fruit" refer to male homosexuals. See Bruce Rodgers, The Queen's Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon (San Francisco: Levison McNally, Reno, 1972) 73, 78, 94. Subsequent references are cited as TQV. The fruit of anal sex is faeces.

in brandy [randy: lustful], or if he could get there earlier enough, voluptuous slices of boiled [oiled: i.e., lubricated] ham [TOV 24: ass]....

'Yes, madam [TOV 129: a person who leases her quarters for sexual purposes]. No madam, Louie breathed into the mouthpiece [pun: penis]. 'There is the ham [ass], madam, for luncheon, as we had agreed, hadn't we? Oh yes, madam. After the consomme [sodomy] jelly [TOV 52: semen] in tasses [asses] And the celery sticks [pun: sell sticks/penes] will taste [ass] lovely stuffed. And the marsala [arse] bomb [bum] to finish off with (SM 234-5).

The anal emphasis and everyone "sulking" and "making it up" does not describe a flour factory, and although camp subverts the dominant patriarchal culture, the sexualized language only acts as a subtext to Freud's or Jung's patriarchal dogma.

To declare opposition, as in camp, does not guarantee escape from culture's structure. That White has connected many ideologies poses the structuralist controversy of the word's social convention and inescapable centrality as signifier. When the critic points out the uselessness of words, he does not necessarily deconstruct them but rather engages in more structuralism. Does White, therefore, as critic and user of body-in-text, break from structuralism and move into the deconstructionist endeavour of showing the total absence of the word's meaning?¹ White would say no, as Richard Harland's view

¹Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 147, states: "you can be sure that if your own critical account of someone else's critical account of a text has left the tiniest grains of 'positive' meaning within its folds, someone else will come along and deconstruct you in turn." If the first criticism had been void of meaning, a second deconstruction would be impossible. That the critique could be deconstructed shows its structuralism - the "words" inability to escape infinite interlock!

clarifies: "body and organism [in the text] are being used essentially as terms for expressing the materiality of the Freudian Unconscious; and the materiality of the Freudian Unconscious is, once again, the very special materiality of signifiers signifying."¹ To Patrick White, nothing, signifiers nor signifieds, can describe the body or the unconscious. They have no meaning; and for this reason, in The Solid Mandala, the body is introduced in spaces, where meaning fades as if distributed along a conical plane until the only thing discernable is the flesh: the "can't tell": true deconstruction, where meaning has no meaning, not just more words.

The number of times that "can't tell" is the plea in The Solid Mandala makes their listing ridiculous, but mystery starts early in the novel (when Mrs. Poulter "can't tell" why Mrs. Brown had "thrown herself away") and persists to the end (when Mrs. Poulter shields her husband from Waldo's death) (SM 16,315). But the best way of showing how meaning wanes into nothingness is by looking at the sexuality of Mr. and Mrs. Brown and Mr. and Mrs. Poulter.

Like Waldo, whose cultural anomie surfaces as a "limp" and a "poor, pimply, stupid," and "foreign" appearance, George Brown is also a homosexual. His "limp," phallic and pedal, is corrected by a "surgical boot" which, like the classical pediment, provides an erect (or cultural) façade for his sexuality: "George" and "Brown," respectively, are camp for "homosexual" and "anus" (SM

¹Harland 169.

34,87,105).¹

Anne Brown also leads a double life, hiding behind the aristocratic hoopla of her maiden name, Quantrell: "can't tell"; and although "erect and cold" in Sarsaparilla, she had been a prostitute in England:

'We used to drive down to Tallboys [all boys] - that was before the family - before anything happened.' Mother liked to tell, and joined her hands closer on the kitchen [chien: Fr. dog]. 'It was quite a journey. Grannie [Adelaide (217): aid (to get) laid; Anne] could not endure carriages for any distance. They upset her pug [dog or prostitute]. Poor Grumble [bum]. Grannie was so kind to the dogs [TQV 133: ugly man]....Oh, and dogs, more dogs.' Her eyes would shine after sherry, particulatly after she took to the four o'clock [cock] sherry. 'The willowy [will: erect; ill:limp], bronze and golden breeds, snoozing [oozing/ejaculating] on the steps, amongst the lichen [chien]! And Mollie [moll: prostitute]. Mollie remained good, better than most who accept the status quo [statue/erect penis]. She had a hundred dolls [TQV 65: attractive person; dolly/penis]. I believe [lie/ untruth]. I believe we counted [cunted] them. Once she allowed me to tear up a Japanese doll [attractive person] because I decided I wanted to. It was the nanny [Anne] that made a scene'....

'Tallboys was an omnium gatherum! A shocking [cocking] architectural [arch/limp] muddle!' How he [Waldo] loved the language her mouth was conducting through a ritual of elaborate slovenliness [love]. The façade was Palladian [wealth]. They used to pour out elderberry wine for the huntsmen [cuntsmen] on frosty mornings (SM 164).

Mrs. Brown's doll is a "trick," not a miniature version of Mrs. Poulter's plastic one. But the question of why she marries George Brown, if indeed she does because she was "never a Brown," can be answered in terms of convenience, social norms, and Waldo's request for Dulcie's hand (SM 171). Another "can't tell" question is whether Waldo is really Mr. Brown's son. Mrs. Brown

¹Rodgers 18,95.

says that her husband's death has "no connexion, finally, with her children" (SM 72); Waldo considers himself an "accident" and "toy[s] with the possibility of his not being his father's son" (SM 67,161); and Mrs. Brown, who had "conceived in an adulterated tradition," tells of a "Waldo," "pronouncing it as though it had been some one else's name," who had loved the "Gothick (i.e., gothic/limp) Folly" and had died at Smyrna (SM 72,165). He had been at Tallboys, "gloved and sensual, and attended by salukis (i.e., a goodbye kiss) (SM 165, emphasis mine). She also tells Waldo that he "never knew [his] father," but which father is difficult to tell (SM 165).

But the importance of the "can't tell" is that it is beyond the conscious. The unconscious world or physical self exists in the novel as spaces with no meaning and no words to explain that lack, and because cultural meaning is extinguished in the flesh, the flesh is evanescent in The Solid Mandala. Mr. Poulter's homosexuality, for instance, is also inconspicuous. "Bill" is camp for "homosexual,"¹ but his role corresponds to the heterosexual patriarch. He is a "bugger" or "bull" (the active partner)² and is "virgin soil," being an anal virgin (SM, 146,142).³ He dramatizes his cultural act with "educated words" and a "thin" (or erect) appearance (SM 140,297); he disregards Waldo's "virginal" gait and attempt at friendship (SM 142); and

¹Rodgers 31.

²Rodgers 17,38.

³Rodgers 21.

he guards his homosexual identity behind a priapic house: an "oblong," "boat-shaped erection" in which the "fuchsias" (fuck ass) and "geraniums" (anus; animus) hide the brutal anal sex he has with his wife (SM 141,144,186): "There was the sound of what was probably Bill Poulter's belt slapping the end of the iron bedstead [bed steed], followed by the jingle of brass balls and dislocated iron" (SM 62, emphasis mine).

The Poulter's marriage is also one of convenience. Bill marries because he doesn't know how to darn or "put on a mutton-flap to boil," and Mrs. Poulter weds "because [Bill] was the only thing [erection] [that she] could think [erection] of," although she only discovered afterward what "she had got" (SM 257,297, emphasis mine).

With no way of ejaculating or releasing emotion, Mrs. Poulter "remained the same young [Jung] woman, of firm [erect] flesh and high [erect] complexion, but the Peace, a time when "dancing [i.e.masturbation]...came naturally," relaxed cultural rigidity (SM 144,184, emphasis mine). Thelma Herring argues that both Brown brothers are "accosted by a whore," but that is only a cultural preconception of open female sexuality.¹ Arthur is approached by a lady, "violet over grey," that "fetches out a screech from way back near her uvula [vulva]": Mrs. Poulter, who is described throughout the novel as being "pigeon coloured" or "mauve" or "purple" (SM 280,17,186,289); and Waldo is propositioned by a woman who wants to "root" with him "under oner

¹Herring 181.

those Moreton Bay ffiggs": again, Mrs. Poulter, who lives in a "houseboat moored in a bay of grass (SM 184,185, emphasis mine).¹

Important to note is that words become the author and father of meaning, not Patrick White, and the body, the "can't tell," is only the unconscious byproduct of the word's phallogocentrism. Words cannot certify the body because the unconscious is exactly that - unconscious, and any attached meaning is culture's diplomatic domination. The result of unchecked definition is infinite intertextuality, perpetual supplementation, and theoretical tautology - unless the flesh is accepted as non-definable.

Waldo, in continual fear of being physically labelled, is very anxious about the exposure of his writing, his "body [uc] of work" [con] which is "warm [uc] with "reason" [con]:

The minds of others appropriating paring 'hacking rubbing with a sandpaper of lies [i.e., critics and criticism] impairing invariably ossified [hard/erect] what had been tenuously personal. Was he vain to have lost faith in public [pubic] sculpture [i.e. hard/erect; culture]...

The vanity is that men believed their thought remained theirs once turned over to the public [pubic]. All those goggle eyed women reverent for their own reverence trailing past a sculpture [i.e., hard/erect; culture] of poetry and epigrams, and earnest young [Jung] people fingering IMPROVING ON because it is ordained that great works of art should be exposed.

¹After this scene, Waldo, naively sympathetic to Mrs. Poulter's loss of control and need for marital fidelity, buys her a "bally" (i.e., with testicles) plastic doll, which she twists upon with the aid of a "square of gelatine" (SM 299). See also p. 288: Arthur catches Mrs. Poulter "holding the naked doll against her bosom." But the plastic doll is androgynous. The saleslady, who thought Waldo "might enjoy the reality of plastic flesh," undresses the doll and then "buttons her up again in...the little lass's bubble nylon gown (SM 185, emphasis mine).

becoming what they were never intended for: done-by-the-public [pubic] sculpture [i.e., hard/erect; culture] (SM 117-8).

Writing alone constitutes the body, but at the moment of interpretation, physicality is moulded into sculpture or culture: the hard, erect penis. Waldo insures the anonymity of his flesh by keeping his writings, including Tiresias a Youngish [Jungish] Man, under cover of a "David Jones" dress box (SM 191).

Understanding Waldo's death and the revolving door of language and reason hinges upon the multiple meanings of box { and more importantly, what Waldo calls the "D. J. box." } The abbreviation signifies music, i.e., dick jockey, or the Davy Jones' locker, which is "a grave in the sea."¹ The box, music, sea, and sleep/death are also correlated in the "Arthur" chapter, which is set "in the beginning" (before the Fall) where there is a "sea of sleep": Arthur "was sleepy and excited. He could only run his hands along the velvety [Eve/uc; elves/play/uc], of what was not, except jokingly, a box [seats: chair or ass/uc; ship/water/uc], floating in a sea of music" (SM 215 & 216-7). Intrinsic throughout is White's concept of the harmonious union with nature, accessible through dreaming/sleeping, music, dancing, and immersion in water. And that remaining within the self can also be achieved through masturbation, incest, and homosexuality,² in which the limping of the penis, rather than

¹Philip Babcock Gove, ed., Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Springfield: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1981) 578.

²For an explanation, see "Voss" p. 22.

just a deviation from erect productivity, is a celebration of the flesh. Arthur's childhood dream is an example: "Only in sleep the icebergs moaned....The Moons of sky-blue ice [cold/spirit/con] fell [limp] crashing down to splinter into glass balls [anal sex]" (SM 218). As well as being the formation of the blue mandala, the latter is also a clue to Waldo's unconscious integration with nature when he kisses the mirror or dons his mother's blue dress:¹ "How [Waldo's] heart contracted inside the blue, reverberating ice, at the little pizzicato [music] of the iridescent [id; descent/limp] fan as it cut complements [come/uc; men/con] to size and order [con]" (SM 192, emphasis mine).

When Waldo places his mother's blue dress in the D. J. box, he is storing away his unconscious (or any potential ejaculation) within his penis - although he clandestinely masturbates:

So that Waldo flung [masturbates] himself at the dress-box [penis] almost every afternoon with such passion he had torn off one of the cardboard [play/uc]; erect/con] sides [id/uc]. He sat with his papers spread out round him, weighted with scones [spirit/con] when the wind [spirit/con] blew. Mostly he corrected [erected], though sometimes, as his throat [penis] rustled drily [staunches: spirit/con], he would also write [masturbate] (SM 211, emphasis mine).

But Waldo cannot sustain his perpetual erection, particularly because his old age renders him intolerably "lusterless [dark/uc; lust-less]" and "bleeding [body/uc]" (SM 212). His fear of nature translates into a disgust of the flesh, and when he sees Arthur's poem, and especially the line, "my

¹Walsh 95, recognizes Waldo's incest but contends it is "perverse" and a "tragedy [of his] natural solipsism."

heart is bleeding for a viviseckshunist [living-sex-shun-ist]," he vivisects his own body: burns his own penis: "About four o'clock ["o" cock] he went down [limp], Tiresias a thinnish [erect] man, the dress-box [penis] under his arm, towards the pit where they had been accustomed to burn only those things [thin/erect] from which they could bear to be parted" (SM 212).

With his own castration he hopes to achieve pure spirituality, the same optimism implicit in the concealment of his papers in the D. J. Box. To Waldo "fire is the only privacy the thoughts of great men can expect. Allow them to be turned into sculpture [culture] and you are lost" (SM 118). Waldo chooses culture, but by burning the words or criticism and destroying the inherent flesh, he only commits suicide and, regardless of his flight from the body, returns to nature. He locks himself in an "o" pen and becomes what he is: Waldo, a "walled 'o'":

[Waldo] was entranced by Arthur's great marigold [i.e., Mary, of Arthur's poem] of a face beginning to open ["o" pen]. Opening ["o" pen]. Coming [ejaculating] apart. Falling [limp/uc].

'Let me go! Wald [walled]! Waldo [walled "o"]!'

As [ass] dropping [limp/uc]. Down [limp/uc]. Down [limp/uc] (SM 214).

But the circularity in The Solid Mandala is even more complex. During Arthur's quest for knowledge at the library, at the time he rejects Mrs. Pouter's sexual approach as a "tasteless incident," he "discover[s]" the "spirit," and "could not go too softly [limp]" (SM 280). For this reason, he believes he has "killed" Waldo, and although their intercourse is essentially

non-aggressive, "it was made plain as a bedstead [bed steed] [to Arthur] that the life, the sleep they had shared, must have been jingling brassily all those years with the hatred which only finally killed " (SM 310,305, emphasis mine). The language is identical to Mr. Poulter's rape of his wife (see "SM" p. 79),¹ and malevolent or not, Arthur assumes the active sexual role, the male spiritual one which kills nature.

Again, the complexity does not end there. Left to consider is the relationship between Arthur's sexual and social roles (after Waldo's death), the religious implication, and the global circularity therein. All of the latter are considered in the final section of the novel, "Mrs. Poulter and the Zeitgeist," which is divided, like the novel itself, into four sections. The first section, as "In the Bus" and the final two pages of the novel, is delivered from Mrs. Poulter's superego, her erotic adventures with the plastic doll rationalized in front of the social eye of the "telly" (SM 295). The viewpoint of the second section, is conveyed, as are the sections "Arthur" and "Waldo," through Arthur's ego - in which Arthur tries to situate his id (because he has all but lost his intellect) in the milieu of Dulcie's family.² The ego is also the point of view of the third section but, in this case, Mrs. Poulter's, in which she

¹Waldo is also raped. Johnny Haynes (anus), with his knife, "went prick prick prick with the point" until Waldo could feel [it] "bumping [bum] against the lumps [flesh] of gooseflesh [i.e. goosed; pun: ooze/ejaculate]" (SM 44-5, emphasis mine).

²Morley 203, believes that this section has an omniscient narrator.

intervenes between the social law, as enforced by Sergeant Foyle (foil-the-serge/ejaculation), and the id: Arthur's and/or her own.

Before showing how Mrs. Poulter's id equals Arthur's, the state of the latter's lost intellect must be addressed. Waldo's death does not simply eradicate Arthur's intellect because they are White's literary partners in androgyny. Arthur loses his social identity because he is defined by difference. Signifieds (and this is the Saussurian concept of language) "are not autonomous entities, each of which is defined by some kind of essence. They are members of a system and are defined by their relations to other members of that system."¹ In a social system which consists of the spirit and flesh (or two brothers holding hands), the death of one means the other has no more identity, and this is reason why Arthur, in "Mrs. Poulter and the Zeitgeist," records his own reflection as an "interminable face in shrivelled [Fr. she: uc] kid" (SM 307).

Mrs. Poulter recognizes Arthur's id, calling him "an aged man or crumpled child," the two periods of life which are the closest to nature and have the least cultural hold,² and after returning from Dulcie's, Arthur "s[its] down" while Mrs. Poulter performs fellatio (SM 310):

The positions of love did not come easy to her. But she slid down painfully to her knees, along his side,

¹Culler, Saussure 24.

² For an explanation of childhood or old age in relation to culture and nature, see "The Vivisector" pp. 112 & 119.

until by instinct [nature/uc] she was encircling her joy and duty with her arms - ritually, as it were.

And Arthur was considerably comforted when she was kneeling against him. The shots [ejaculation], which had at first pierced his heart and paralysed his spine, continued on into the duller regions of memory [nature/uc]....

He had the sniffles [come], however. So she wiped the nose [penis] of her little boy, her old man (SM 311, emphasis mine).

When Sergeant Foyle arrives, he notices "nothing of an indecent [descent/limp] nature," and while Mrs. Poulter is "wiping and coaxing that nut [Arthur or a testicle]," the lawman is reminded of the "sacrament" (SM 313). The oral sex, therefore, is likened to the eucharist ceremony, which is both cannibalistic and incestual.¹ This has a host (pun intentional) of meanings. First, Mrs. Poulter's identity as matriarch (she is a "woman who will cuddle a baby")² surfaces because of Arthur's id - just as Arthur's identity is contingent upon Waldo's (SM 313). Second, and seemingly contradictory, Mrs. Poulter, because martyr-like in her motherly role, is angelic and therefore spiritual: "stiff" or erect (SM 311). And third, when Waldo dies, Arthur is denied the spirit, but as a member of the homosexual subculture, he is denied the body - like Christ. Mrs. Poulter, of course, perceives Arthur as a "saint" and gets down on her knees to worship the phallus (SM 314). But by worshipping, cannibalizing, or limping the erect penis, she, like Arthur, determines, again through difference and her own matriarchal nature, cultural identity and

¹For explanation, see "Voss" pp. 22 & 44-5.

²Therefore, Mrs. Poulter's id equals Arthur's.

ultimately the spirits lost body - i.e., Waldo:

[Waldo's] throat open on the gristly apple. Torn by the throat.

Then their Scruffy sitting on the bed, he hadn't even noticed her, lowered his head, pulling at the other part of Waldo Brown, she wouldn't have hardly dared look if it hadn't stopped being real, as Scruffy pulled, pulled at the old soft perished rubber (SM 302, emphasis mine).

"Pull," pronounced in French is "poule," and therefore, like Mrs. Poulter, the dogs (female, unconscious, and natural) have a dyadic purpose: they devour the body, but they also divest it of spirit, eating both Adam's apple (or words acquired at the Fall) and penis.

The Word signifies spirit, which dictates phallogocentric interpretation, and when Arthur dances the centre of the mandala, "the blood running out of the backs of his hands, water [semen] out of the hole in his ribs [penis]," the cultural vision is of an apotheosis (SM 266). Excluded, as always, is the bleeding or ejaculating body, and because Arthur's "mouth [is] a silent hole," for "no sound was needed to explain" spiritual words, Arthur is of the flesh (SM 266). But denied the flesh, like Christ, he is also of the spirit.

To Patrick White, spirit is dependent on flesh, flesh on spirit, and rather than dance to an oedipal family where "permanent [parent] manhood" (erection and production) is exclusive, Arthur dances to a diffused family, a mandala where there is a flesh/spirit balance: he dances to the masturbatory love of himself: "to the moon [female/uc], anaesthetized by bottled cestrum [estrum/uc]," and to the "disc [music/uc] of the

orange sun [male/con] above icebergs [cold/spirit/con]"; he dances to the wifely (receptive but productive) love of Dulcie: to the "Star" [light/con; dark/uc], to the "flurries [snow/cold/con] of hydrangea-headed [flower/nature/uc; mind/con] music [uc]," and to Léonard Saporta and their "three-corner relationship" which, although reductive to both Dulcie and Arthur, circumscribes their common passivity; he dances to the motherly (secure but possessive) love of Mrs. Poulter: to her being a "statue [erect/con] of a woman," to the "rite of ripening pears [nature/uc]" and "suckling pigs [animal/uc]," and to the protective "walls of his circular forest [nature/uc]" - Mrs. Poulter's womb [uc]; and he dances to the brotherly/fatherly love of Waldo: to his "rigid [erect/con]" and "withering [dry/con]" self, to "words [con] and ideas [mind/con; id/uc] skewered [ewe/uc] to paper [ape/uc]," and to a "little comfort [uc] which gushed out guiltily" (SM 306,265-6).

Barry Argyle's comment that The Solid Mandala is "without the excitement that comes from language exploring new areas of experience" is a complete misrepresentation.¹ The novel is not written in "haste or bitterness"² but is a sensitive investigation of a structural and cultural autogenous language. Couched within the word's idiosyncratic purge of the body is an eclectic proliferation of intertextuality. This is not to say

¹Barry Argyle, Patrick White (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1967) 65.

²Argyle 65.

that Patrick White has not borrowed from Freud's or Jung's concept of the unconscious, but he has not embraced the elements of their encratic dialogue. To Patrick White the body (the "can't tell") cannot be written, but neither can the author write the text, for that is the domain of the word and its phallogocentrism. The only route to self-harmony is through a flesh/spirit balance - and Patrick White insists in The Solid Mandala that the body or the unconscious is not available to psychologists eavesdropping on patients "groaning under the pressure of sleep, their secrets locked prudently up, safe, until their spoken thoughts of farts, [give] them away" (SM 265). Without a handle on the anagram and its symbolic intent, the photographic detail of Hurtle's paintings and sexual encounters would be lost. This is one reason for the shift in methodology in "The Vivisector." The second is that this strategy shows the "word's" total interconnection and restricted etymology, while at the same producing innumerable points of subversion so that White's body can be heard.

The Vivisector

Veronica Brady reduces Patrick White's "sexual politics" to a "dialectical struggle between the two sides of the self."¹ Within androgyny there is a female/male contention, but that flesh/spirit ontology is only a microcosm of a global matriarchal/patriarchal struggle. Brady's understanding of discourse eschews the manifestations of control inherent in phallogocentrism and contraposes Michel Foucault's treatise that "relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic process, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter."²

In The Solid Mandala, the word, culturally defined, upholds divine right and authority over the natural (such as the body or women). This same pattern of domination is iterated in The Twyborn Affair (although that exegesis will focus mainly on the diachronic mutations of power as they have effected women and homosexuals) and The Vivisector (in which I emphasize

¹Veronica Brady, "Patrick White and the Question of Women," Who Is She, ed. Shirley Walker (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983) 180.

²Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980) 94.

phallogocentrism, White's system of signs, and the interstices in language that invoke the body).

Patrick White's vehicle for his theory of discourse is Hurtle Duffield/Courtney, autobiographer, although the true author, as mentioned, is the word. This necessitates a diadic research into The Vivisector. The first part, the three glossaries, is a syllogistic conspectus of White's flesh/spirit signs, and the second part is a thematic study of Hurtle's being and the sexual politics behind art, vivisection, whores, saints, Christianity, homosexuality, pornography, and transvestism.

Authors question moral and ethical givens by reassigning different values to different signs, but Patrick White rejects this cultural selectivity and gives all words phallogocentric privilege. Substantiating every word in White's system of signs is obviously too ambitious, particularly when symbols such as the killing/pleasure knife in Voss continually deconstruct (or revolve between opposite poles). Distinguishing the movement between nature/flesh/limpness and spirit/culture/erectness is more important, and then, Patrick White's style, the silent body hidden in gaps and spaces within phallogocentrism, can be concretized.

The body has no voice, but signs speak of an intrinsic value (which can be either natural and female or spiritual and male). Phallogocentrism, therefore, can be gainsaid, and Patrick White, by grouping symbols anagrammatically, evokes nature's idiom. Glossary 1 introduces his system of signs and interpretive keys;

Glossary 2 summarizes all of the word lists, but also focuses on many of the word plays; and Glossary 3 reiterates some of the thematic fabric of The Solid Mandala, weaves in some of the new leitmotifs (such as "afraid," "bird," "ring," and "vivisection"), and displays the very thread of Patrick White's foreign language.¹

Glossary 12

Act/S: See tall.

Afraid/N: See rub. See also Glossary 3.

Anal/anus/N: See beginning, come, lamp.

Animal/N: See rot.

Arch/N: See pain.

Art/S: Hurtle to Rhoda. "'I can't help it,' he apologized [pun: Apollo], 'if I turned out to be an artist'" (445). God/art: spirit. See also ease, wall.

Ass/N: See egg, pain.

Back/N: See egg.

Beginning/N: Hurtle of Hero: "In the beginning [i.e., nature], all her remarks were chattery and banal [pun: anal]" (323). Nature/anal.

Body/N: See end, fault.

¹Without a handle on the anagram and its symbolic intent, the photographic detail of Hurtle's paintings and sexual encounters would be lost. This is one reason for the shift in methodology in "The Vivisector." The second is that this strategy shows the "word's" total interconnection and restricted etymology, while at the same producing innumerable points of subversion so that White's body can be heard.

²All citations in all three glossaries appear in The Vivisector, although words such as "cannibalism," derived from the meaning of other words, and "cry," an anagram of acrylic, are included. Bolding (in the word lists or textual analysis) indicates at least one cross-reference. "Nature" is abbreviated as "N," "spirit" as "S". Finally, each listing in Glossary 1, in most cases, has a tripart presentation consisting of scene orientation, example (with word emphasis), and explanation (each word corresponding respectively to those italicized in the excerpt). For instance, under Art/S, "God" explains "apologized," and "art" refers to "artist."

Cannibalism/N: See rot.

Clothes/S: Hurtle of Caldicott's pictures: "[Hurtle] loathed what he saw. His only reason for wearing clothes [pun: loathes] could have been to appear clothed" (229). Hate/spirit/clothes.

Cold/S: "Hero had covered her head as protection [pun: erection] against the cold" (323). Head/erect/cold: spirit.

Cool/S: See head.

Come/N: Hurtle of the men at Mumblelong (pun: bum/n; long/erect/s): "Old men in particular, their veins [anagram: penis], and foreskins from which the former brazen [pun: raise/erect/s] stream [pun: come; anagram] had dwindled [i.e. limped] to an anxious [anagram: anus] trickle [pun: prick coming]" (364). Penis/form/erect: spirit. Come/limp/anus: nature. See also ease, hair/n, play, rot, shit.

Cry/N: See ease.

Dark/N: See egg, house.

Death/N: See ewe.

Descent/N: See water.

Down/N: See hair/n, lamp.

Ear/N: See ewe, ease, play.

Ease/N: Hurtle's dream of Rhoda: "White acrylic [anagram: cry; pun: come] tears [pun: come; anagram: ears/hearing] were squeezing [pun: ease/come] out of her rat's [anagram: art] eyes [i.e., seeing/spirit; pun: I]" (523). Come/hearing/ease: nature; Art/eyes: spirit.

Eat/N: See rot.

Eel/N: See ewe.

Egg/N: Rhoda to Hurtle: "'Eggs [i.e., beginning] and bacon [pun: back/ass] were always scrumptious [anagram: rump] at night" (446). Eggs/back/ass/dark: nature.

End/N: (1) Maman to Hurtle: "'Everybody in the end is weak" (156). Eve/nature/end/weak. (2) Hero to Hurtle: "'I work work, and am sick in the end" (324). Sick/end: nature.

Eve/N: See end, fault, owe.

Ewe/N: Hurtle to Rhoda, while in hired car leaving hospital: "'Few [pun: ewe/passive] - near [anagram: ear/hearing]-real [pun: reality/spirit; anagram: ear; pun: eel/limp], he said at last. 'My own funeral [death]" (551). Ewe/ear/eel/death: nature.

Eye/S: See ease, seeing.

Failure/N: See ugly.

Fault/N: Hero to Hurtle: "'Everybody has their faults [pun: fall/limp]" (346). Eve/body/faults: nature. See also pain.

Fellatio/N: See rot, set.

Fire/S: Hurtle lighting Maman's cigarette: "She held her hand to the cigarette as though they were lighting something as important as a bonfire [i.e. boner/erection]. The match lit up her face. It was becoming almost transparent with light" (164). Erection/fire/spirit/light.

Firm/S: See hand/s, hard, thin.

Flight/S: See wind.

Form/S: Hurtle of Nance: "[He] could only believe in his vision of her, which already that day he had translated into concrete [anagram: erect] forms" (188). Seeing/erect/form: spirit. See also come, tall.

Furniture/S: (1) Hurtle to Caldicott: "'I've always lived with other peoples furniture, except for a table I made myself at Ironstone [i.e., erect]. I think I'll learn something from living with this lot.' He picked [pun: pricked] out at random [pun: randy] and struck a finicking [pun: prick] rosewood [pun: erect wood] leg" (263). Furniture/table/living/erect: spirit. (2) Hero to Hurtle of her father's cousin: "'He locked up [pun: cocked: erected and staunch] the furniture" (324). Erect/furniture: spirit.

God/S: See art.

Hair/N: Hurtle of Nance's hair: "It was the kind of hair...which would always be coming [come] down [limp]" (184). Hair/come/down: nature.

Hair/S: See hat.

Hands/N: See pain, hand/s.

Hand/S: Hurtle of Kathy at concert: "She shook a firm hand with the con[-]ductor [pun: against duct: staunch], a limper one with the leader" (531). Erect/hand/staunch: spirit. Hand/n: nature. See also hand/n.

Hard/S: "Shuard [anagram: hard] was standing [erect] so firmly [erect] on his own [ownership] ground [land] he looked in no particular [anagram: art; liar/lie] direction [anagram: erection] while greeting Duffield" (534). Hard/stand/firm/own/land/art/lie/erection: spirit. See also hold.

Hat/S: Hurtle recounting what Olivia says of her hair : "'My hair's awful [pun: raw full or full of come], 'though from what you could see it must be perfect [anagram: erect]: as helmeted: [anagram: elm: i.e., erect and hard] as her helmet [i.e., protective cover: staunch] of a hat [staunch]" (286). Hair/s/erect/staunch/hat: spirit.

Hate/S: See clothes.

Head/S: Hurtle of Kathy: "She was again leading him, no longer by the hand, but stalking [pun: tall/erect] ahead [i.e., spirit] on her cool, propy [pun: prop/erect] legs" (432). Tall/head/cool/prop: spirit. See also cold.

Hearing/N: See ease, play.

Hold/S: Hurtle telling Rhoda to stop reading obituaries: "'Hold [staunch] hard [erect]!' he protested [pun: erected] at last. 'Who wants to read about death'" (609). Staunch/hard/erect: spirit.

Hood/S: See tall, wind.

House/S: "In front of them [Hero and Hurtle] the sea was both dark and restless, as opposed to the solid [i.e., erect] illuminated [i.e., light] house..." (324) Sea/dark/less: nature. Erect/light/house: spirit.

I/S: See ease, seeing.

Id/N: See ugly.

Jung/S: See perfume.

Lamp/N/S: Hurtle to Rhoda: "'The light' - he pleaded reasonably- 'you mustn't pass [pun: ass] judgement [anagram: urge] by- not even a street lamp [i.e., light/spirit; pun: limp/lump: nature];- a glimmer [pun: limb/limp] down [pun: limp] a lane [pun: anal]" (438)! Light/spirit/lamp. Lamp/down/anal: nature.

Land/S: See hard.

Less/N: See house.

Lie/S: See hard.

Light/S: See fire, house, lamp, wind.

Living/S: See furniture.

Loo/N: See ugly.

Man/Men/S: See mind, seeing.

Masturbate/N: See rub.

Mind/S: Olivia to Hurtle in letter: "...most men have minds and interests [pun: erect] which prevent [pun: not allow to vent or come: staunch] them from understanding [pun: limp]..." (340). Men/mind/erect/staunch: spirit.

Money/S: Mrs. Cargill, Hero's landlady, of tenants: "'I wonder why we let? For the money, I expect [pun: erect]" (371). One/erect: spirit.

One/s: See money. 4

Order/S: See tall.

Owe/N: Olivia to Hero and Hurtle: "'Even the best painters owe something to reality" (336). Eve/owe: nature. Erect/reality: spirit.

Own/S: See hard.

Pain/N: Hurtle of his "sexual routine [anagram: rut]" with Hero (376): "Perhaps the fault [pun: fall/limp] was his: he felt numb [anagram: bum]; his hands [pun: penis; anagram: anus] ached [pun: arched/limped] with possibly [pun: sibling/nature; sibyl/spirit] arthritic [anagram: arch] pains" (376-7). Fault/ass/hands/arch/sibling/pain: nature.

Perfect/S: Hero to Hurtle: "'I am to represent [pun: ascent/erect] perfection [pun: erection] for [Cosmas]" (351). Erection/perfection: spirit. See also hat.

Perfume/S: Nance to Hurtle of perfume: "'Oh, it's an old-fashioned scent [pun: ascent/erect] bottle. Some old thing I picked [pun: pricked] up [pun: erect] from a junk [pun: Jung] dealer who began to have tickets [pun: prick] on me'" (232). Perfume/erect/up/Jung: spirit.

Play/N: Kathy to Hurtle: "'Thank you for coming to hear me play" (533). Come/ear/play: nature. See also ugly.

Poor/N: Rhoda to Hurtle that Mrs. Volkov will be out of place at concert party: "Naturally the poor woman is out of her water" (532). Nature/poor/woman/water.

Prevent/S: See wall.

Prop/S: See head.

Reality/S: See owe.

Rib/S: See wall.

Rise/S: See up.

Roll/S: See set.

- Rot/N: Hurtle of Kathy's "breasts [i.e. nature; pun: beast/animal; eat: suck, cannibalism, fellatio]" (449). "He could see how rotten they might become [pun: ejaculate]..." (449). Nature/rot/come.
- Rub/N: Hurtle of painting: "The thought that he might never be able to convey something that was his and nobody else's brought on such an intense despair he masturbated [anagram: rut; rub] on the quilt [pun: guilt/original sin/n/s], and was at once afraid they might find him out however hard [erect/s] he rubbed [cleaned or masturbated] it [the quilt and/or his penis] with a towel [anagram: owe]" (158). Rut/sin/afraid/masturbate: nature.
- Rut/N/S: Hurtle to Olivia: "'You wouldn't know what brutal [pun: rut] is - to break [pun: limp] in on somebody's work! You wouldn't know what work is, beyond composing menus [pun: making men or erections]...' " (301). Rut as erecting/s and limping/n. Work as man/erect: spirit. See also rub.
- Sea/N: "Hero said: 'I have never lived any long time out of sight of the sea. I would not find it natural to live without it'" (323). Sea/nature. See also house.
- Seeing/S: Rhoda to Hurtle of Kathy's future teacher: "A name [anagram: man] was mentioned [pun: men], which conveyed [anagram: eye; pun: I] nothing [pun: thin/erect]" (508). Man/men/seeing/erect: spirit. See also form.
- Set/S: Hurtle, while on bus with Mrs. Volkov: "The bus rolled, and rollicked [pun: erect licked: fellatio] them on, past some dying trees [i.e., nature; anagram: steer/spirit] set [pun: erect] in concrete [anagram: erect]" (521). Roll/fellatio/tree/set/erect: spirit.
- Shapeless/N: See ugly.
- Shit/N: Rhoda to Hurtle of Kathy's teacher: "'Mr. Khrapovitsky [pun: crap] favours Vienna [pun: Fr. viens: come]'" (508). Shit/come: nature.
- Sibling/N: See pain.
- Sick/N: See end.
- Sin/N/S: See rub.
- Smile/S: Of Hurtle's smile: "The smile [anagram: slim: erect] was too mysterious [pun: steer, soul] (407). Smile/steer/soul: spirit.
- Solid/S: See house.
- Staunch/S: See hand/s, hat, hold, wall.
- Stand/S: See hard.
- Steer/S: See set, smile.
- Table/S: See furniture.
- Tall/S: Hurtle of Rhoda's cheeks which were of "stal[-]actite [pun: tall/erect; act (guise or hood)] order [i.e., form]" (523). Erect/hood/form: spirit. See also head.
- Tears/N: See ease.
- Thin/S: Rhoda's description: "She was so clean [pun: lean/erect]/None of the snot of Winnie and Flo. But her thin lips were firm [i.e., hard/erect], and probably spiteful" (31) Thin/erect: spirit. See also perfume.

Tree/N/S: See set.

Udder/N: See water.

Ugly/N: (1)"[Hurtle] never tired looking at the blouses of the older girls. It amazed him to think they would one day contain something as ugly and shapeless as Mumma's old tittybottles" (44). Ugly/shapeless/nature.(2) Hero to Hurtle: "'If I give you nothing but what is ugly and ludicrous, then I have failed,' Hero said gloomily" (359). Ugly/play/failure/id/loo: nature.

Up: Hurtle of Kathy's concert: "The finale almost woke them up [i.e., erect]: too brisk [anagram: rise: erect]" (531). Erect/rise: spirit. See also perfume.

Wall/S: Hurtle of concert patrons - subscribers: "Imprisoned [i.e., limp imprisoned] between the walls [i.e., staunch] of Mozart [pun: art], the subscribers [pun: scribe: word; scribe: theologian/spirit; rib: penis] were prevented [i.e., stop venting: staunch] from stampeding [i.e., coming] out" (529). Wall/art/word/spirit/rib/staunch.

Water/N: Hurtle of water in yard: "Puddles [pun: udder] of water deceptively [pun: descent] dimpled [pun: limp]" (489). Udder/nature/descent/limp. See also poor.

Weak: See end.

Wind/S: Hurtle of Hero: "Looking back, the rising [i.e. erecting] wind filling [i.e., erecting] her hood [i.e. act, guise], the classic light exposing her face, she gave the impression of being in flight [pun: light]" (323). Erect/wind/light/flight: spirit.

Woman/N: See poor.

Word/S: See wall.

Work/S: See rut.

Glossary 2

Balance/N/S: ring (i.e. boring, darling), round.

Copulation/S: biblical: crime, tempt (i.e., attempt, contempt, emptiness, temperament), sin; biological: ram (i.e., tramp), rut (i.e., brutal, crutch); social: war (i.e., towards)

Christ/S: alter, Christ (i.e., crisp, crystal, gristle, wrist), cross (i.e., across), offer (i.e., offering), sacrifice.

Ejaculate/N: burst, come, cream, cry, ease, emission (i.e., mission), exhausted, leaks (i.e., leak), milk (i.e., plait), mucus, oil, ooze (i.e., choose, loose, lose, shoes), pour, ran/run, saliva, secret (i.e. secrete), shoot, shot, smoke, soggy, soppy, spit, steam, stream, sweat, tears, unction (i.e., destruction, function), vent (i.e., eventually).

Erect/Erection/S: anagrammatic: perception, perfect, secrete; phonetic: architecture, connection, collection, correct, direction, effect, electricity, expect, intellect, object, perfect, prospect, protection, recollect, select, suspect; Cock: phonetic: block, chalky, chocolate, doctor, lock,

rock, shock, sock, stock; Penis: anagrammatic: pins (i.e., happiness) reins, veins; phonetic: peace, pianist, piece; Prick: anagrammatic: price; phonetic: kick, lick, quick, stick, ticket.

Consistency: during (Fr: dur: hard), firm (i.e., confirm), hard, rigor, solid, taut (i.e., taught).

Description: cold, form, high, huge (i.e., coughed, laughed), large, lean, long (i.e., along, belong, prolong), narrow, slim (i.e., smile), tall, thin.

Motion: add, advance, ascend/ascent (i.e., absence, accent, ancient, essential, opalescent, present, presentable, recent, sensed, scent), bloom, desire, elevate (i.e., relation, relevant, revelation), extent, forge (i.e., forget), further, lift, lurch, more, press, progress, prop, raise (i.e., raise), righten (i.e., frightened, right), ripe, rise (i.e., brief, bruise, frisk, risk, series, stories, surprise, tries, varied), roll, stretch, sum, swell, uncoil, urge (i.e., bugger, bulge, smudge, suggest, trudge, urgency), want (i.e., ant, aunt), yearn (i.e., urn). Note: desire, urge, want, and yearn are all synonyms.

Position: right, set, stand, stance, top, up.

Symbol: bird (i.e., ave: behave, have, wave), bone, dog (i.e., chien (i.e., Chinese, flinching, kitchen, watching), cur), fire (i.e., figure, finger, rise), line, member (i.e., remember), pole, ram, rib (i.e., dribbled, vibrated), rose (i.e., person, rouse, eros), spire (i.e., spiral), stag (i.e., stage), steer (i.e., sister), wire, wood.

Fellatio/N: ate, eat, lick (i.e., relic), lip, suck (i.e., destruction, success, struck, succumb).

Limp/N: phonetic: lamp, limb, lump; Body: anal (i.e., sandals), anus (i.e., anxious), ass, back (i.e., bacon), body (i.e., bloody, loo (i.e., bloom, gloom), bum (i.e., numb), cunt (i.e., cunning), dreck (i.e., fleck), end (i.e., last, latter), face (i.e., ass, faeces), pain, shit (i.e., shift, suit), sick, whore (i.e., Nance, entrance); Castrate: chop (i.e., psychopomp), cut (i.e., cunt), excise (i.e., exercise), lance (i.e., balance), lop (i.e., lopsided), pare (i.e., compare).

Character: failure, old (i.e., age), pain (i.e., explain, painting), shapeless, sick, ugly, weak.

Description: chubby, fat, flat, lithe, no longer, raw, short, soft, stump, thick.

Motion: arch (i.e., architecture, car), bend, bow (i.e., elbow), break, coil, collapse, dangle, descent (i.e., decent), dip, fall (i.e., fault), hang/hung, passive (i.e., accept), ply (i.e., imply), rot, sink, slack (i.e., black, lack), tire, topple, wither.

Position: deep, down, left (opp. to right/righten: erect), less, low, minor, owe (i.e., alms, debt, depths), sub, under (i.e., understand).

Symbol: bird, egg, cat (i.e., purr), death, eel, lamb, mater (i.e., material), mother (i.e., smoother), pit, sheep,

snake, tree, udder (i.e., cuddle).
Masturbate/N: gall (i.e., gallery), jiggle (i.e., giggle), master, stroke, rub.
Nature/N: afraid, beginning, black, blind, dark, ear (i.e., hear, dream), nee, play, past.
Character: unconscious (achieved by dancing, dreaming/sleeping, drowning, masturbation, music, writing).
Symbol: animal (i.e., anima), apple (i.e., appealing, appreciate), apple core (i.e., corner), body, breast (i.e., beast: eat: cannibalism/fellatio), cow (owe), death, ear, egg, ewe (i.e., the passive), Eve, flesh (i.e., fresh), id, ox, udder, water, woman.
Soul/S: anagrammatic: ambiguously, resolved, solicitor, soufflé, sound. **Culture:** dress (i.e., act, art, clothes (i.e., loathe/hate), guise (i.e., anguish, disguise), fence, hood, lie), I (i.e., eye, seeing/sight), money (i.e., once, one, honesty, monkey, ponce), own, pen (i.e., depend), perfume, reality, sign (i.e., ignore), verse (i.e., overcoat, overseas), world), word (i.e., ink (i.e., pink), work; **Men:** anagrammatic: accompaniment, refreshment; **Saint:** abby (i.e., baby, scabby), angel (i.e., exchange).
Character: cold, consciousness, cool, dry, intellect, life/live (i.e., evil, veil), logic, order, out, spirit, white.
Symbol: Christ, head, Jung, light (i.e., flight), man/men, mind, sign, wind, word, fire, God.
Staunch/S: (permanent erection): bound, bundle, cap, choke, congesting, control, convent, costive, harness, hat, hold (i.e., shoulder), keep, knot (i.e., know, not, note), prevent, resist, restrain, seize, tent (i.e., extent), tie, wait, wall.

Glossary 3

Afraid/N: To Patrick White, androgyny consists of a cultural, erect, clocked, spirituality: life; and a natural, limp, timeless, physicality: death. But the obsessive foreboding of death translates into an inordinate fear of the body, privileging the spirit. Vivisection, somatic sacrifice for spiritual exploration, is not dissimilar to the human condition and can be understood in terms of Alfreda (afraid) Courtney's disdain for physical abuse, although she herself "didn't care for animals [nature]. She had never kept them because she was afraid they might make demands on her time [spirit]" (142, emphasis mine). Although a woman, Mrs. Courtney is described as being "long and thin," erect, and she does not escape the cultural appropriation of nature, wearing a "fur coat" and contradictorily "organizing a ball [testicles] to raise [erect] funds for the Society [culture/s]" (36,134,34, emphasis mine).

Bird/N: As in all White's novels, symbols, like people, are androgynous, and what is basically natural also has a spiritual thread - and vice versa. A difference in polarity exists between the Courtney's bird taxidermy or Olivia's Faubourg (both discussed in bird/s) and the Duffields poultry:

The fowls [owe/nature] were fluffing [shaking feathers or farting] in the dust and sun....The white crook-neck [pun: cock, limp/n] thing [thin/erect/s], white [i.e., come] about the wattles [limp], stood [erect] around [round/ring] grabbing what and whenever it could, but sort [pun: rot/n] of sideways [pun: id/n] (9).

Here the description is physically orientated, with come, farts, and the id taking precedence over the spirit. See also bird/s and ring/n/s.

Bird/S: Cultural birds, or penes, are always erect and staunch, such as Mr. Courtney's "stuffed birds in glass cases" (26, emphasis mine). This anal sex image connotes erecting of the flesh and/or a spiritual erection inherently trapped in its own natural flesh.

Olivia's Faubourg is also a monument to rigidity and spirituality: a "crystal [Christ; tall/erect/s] bird" which is "perched [erect; fish/limp/n] on a crag [erect; anagram: arch/limp] of rose [i.e., raise/erect; anagram: eros/n]-quartz [art/n/s]" (317). See also bird/n, and ring/n/s.

Can Tell/S: See can't tell/n.

Can't Tell/N: The sign as source of the signifier/signified cannot escape the intellectual and cultural prejudice of meaning unless there are no words, as per the physical harmony in nature: the "can't-tell." In request of three paintings for an exhibition, Caldicott's forceful voice accuses Hurtle of a "slight indiscretion [small erection/penis or secretion/n]. Or was it so slight? He looked at Duffield: one could never tell" (219). One can't tell of the body.

On the other hand, what one can tell is of spirit and culture: "As [Hurtle] explored its form [s] with his hand he was relieved to be able to tell himself the ball [i.e., testicles] belonged [long/erect/s] to Angela [angel/s], not to Kathy" (422).

Christ/S: Because of His spiritual synthesis, Christ is portrayed as the penultimate male model, and He is concatenated with cultures intellectual emphasis, timed existence, and worded communication. These attributes are inherent in Mrs. Courtney's "stone [hard/erect/s] pen [word/s]" and "crystal [Christ; tall/erect] well" (51); Olivia Davenport's "perfect [anagram: erect]" "crystal clock [i.e., time/s; pun: cock]" (282); and Nance's interjection to Hurtle: "'Oh God,' she moaned [anagram: man/s] in a kind of mental [i.e., mind/s; anagram: men/s; tall/erect] revulsion [anagram: soul], 'when I think [i.e., mind; pun: thin/erect] of men'" (197). See also bird/s and Jung/s.

Dream/N: As discussed in Voss and The solid Mandala, dreaming or sleeping is one of the semi-unconscious states that resembles the deathlike, physical harmony of nature. When Rhoda retires to bed (at the Flint Street house), Hurtle finds her "arranged for death...rather than sleep" (456); and when Hurtle is in his twilight years, the thought of being limp weighs heavily on his mind: "There was also the nightmare [pun: Fr. mère; mother/n] he hadn't dreamt, but might have: his fall [limping/n] backwards [limp], through the railing [pun: ailing/body/n], off the block [pun; erect cock/s]" (614).

Hair/N: See Glossary 1.

Hair/S: See Glossary 1.

Jung/S: Because of Carl Jung's sexist approach to homosexuality and arbitrary assignment of cultural values on the unconscious (in dreams), he continues to be at the brunt of White's paronomasia. Words such as "jaunty (294)," "young (300)," "jungle (301)," "jingle (301)," and "juggling (341)" all refer to the psychoanalyst, but perhaps the most pointed scene is when Olivia uses a "crystal [Christ; tall/erect/s] jug [Jung]" to douse Muriel, "a young [Jung] girl, white as lard [hard/erect]," who is in the midst of a hysterical fit (299, 298). Another piece of hilarity is Hurtle's "cupboard [pun: up, board: erect/s]," "an increasingly [i.e., erect] cluttered [anagram: utter/word/culture/s] junk [Jung]- and store-room on the upper [up/erect] landing" (291, 360). See also Glossary 1.

Nose/N/S: Like hair, the nose can be either limp or erect, depending on whether the mucous is permitted to descend. While Olivia is watching Hurtle working on one of his versions of "Pythoness at Tripod," he caught "sight of Mrs. Davenport's reflection [anagram: erection/s], reaching [anagram: arching/limping/n] up [erect] through its abandon to pick [anagram: prick; pun: masturbate] its nose with one long [erect] crimson fingernail" (303).

Rhoda's nose has the same limp/erect oscillation: "the transparent tip [i.e., penis] kept its same gleam of gristle [pun: Christ/erect/s], while a chalky [pun: cocky] residue [i.e., come; pun: id/n] collected [pun: erected] around the periphery [anagram: ripe/erect]" (478).

Ring/N/S: The incessant swing between origin in nature, the limp penis, and existence in culture, the erect penis, is symbolized by the identical ancestral Duffield and Courtney rings. Hurtle's legacy is stored in Pa's box:

All these mysteries [pun: steer; rise/erect/s] were contained [pun: cunt or woman or come is staunch] in the box [pun: ox/n or cow/n]. And the ring. The ring had a sort [pun: rot/n] of bird on it, sticking [pun: pricking/erect] out its tongue [anagram: one/s]. The bird was cut [pun: cunt/n] off short below [pun: low/limp/n] the neck. What was left, looked as though it was resting [arresting/staunch/s] on a dish [pun:

she/n]` (11).

In the first sentence the steer and cow are juxtaposed, and in the last, the occluded penis is ready for fellatio and limpness. See also bird/n and bird/s.

Sea/N: In the example in Glossary 1, the sea is associated with nature, but like all of White's symbols or people, they are manifestly both natural and spiritual, as in Hurtle's description of the art patrons at his "Retrospective Exhibition":

As the monstrous black sea receded [limped/n], boiling [pun: oil/come/n], sucked through archways [arch/limp/n], frothing [rot/nature/s; thin/erect/s] round [ring/n/s] columns [erections/s] and buttresses [butt/ass/n; tresses: anagram: tree/n/s; steer/s], along [long/erect/s] cliffs [erect/s], a few pools were left behind [ass/n]: to trickle [prick; come/n] according [pun: core/n] to some law [culture/s] of water, in the same direction [erection/s] as the original [n] flood (596).

Sign/S: See word/s.

Vivisection/S: See afraid.

Word/S: Only with the Fall of Man does somatic harmony lapse into an interpretive and structural sign system where words are assigned arbitrary cultural values. When Boo offers her lost "slide [pun: id]" as an excuse for her delay under the Monstera deliciosa, although Hurtle is the real incentive, Mrs. Courtney, fearful of a sexual fall, advises her that she will have to be "resigned [re-signed]" to her loss in the "garden" (153): in the Garden of Eden, there are no signs, and the loss of innocence is inevitable.

The word, like all cultural symbols, is erect and staunch: "Rhoda lowered [limp/n] her eyes, ignoring [anagram: sign] words, as Maman [man/s] and her governess [pun: staunch/s] had taught [pun: taut/erect/s] her" (44, emphasis mine). See also Christ/s and Jung/s.

Writing/N: Writing (and reading), similar to dreaming/sleeping, masturbating, and playing music in White, are like natural excretions of the body which cannot be stopped. Although Rhoda keeps her "diary [diarrhoea/n]" "locked [cocked and staunch/s]," her writing affords release (139):

'I'm going to start a diary. I'm going to write in it everything [Eve/n; thin/erect/s] I do. And thoughts and things [thin/erect/s].' She was becoming [come/n] feverish [Eve/n: anagram: rise/erect/s] again. 'And secret [anagram: erect/s; secrete/come/n] things [thin/erect/s]' (113).

The Vivisector has ten chapters, but each successive two constitute a specific phase of Hurtle's generic development.

Chapters 1 and 2 reenact the Fall of Man, in which a natural, matriarchal, and physical harmony (where there exists an "indefinite dimension of time and space") is replaced by a cultural, patriarchal, and spiritual pursuit (where there exists "conscious perception" and a "logos").¹ With the discovery of the Tree of Knowledge came the awareness of good and evil and a connection (although unexplained) with sex.² The natural setting of the Duffield's yard, exempt of cultural advantages, represents the Garden of Eden. Here "crook-necked pullets" (or cocked and crooked/limp penes) stood "pecking" (or pecker-ing) at each other, and Hurtle

climb[ed] [limb/limp/n] up [erect/s] into the pepper tree where roosting [rot/n] fowls had whitened [i.e., come] the branches [anagram: arch/n]. He would sit rubbing [masturbating/n] off the crust [rut/n/s], thinking [thin/erect/s].... Sometimes [time/s] he looked at his pale thing [thin/erect/s] to help pass [ass/n] the holidays [holy days] he held [staunch/s] up [erect/s] the skin and it shrivelled back [i.e., limped] he didn't know what he groaned [i.e., orgasm] as the mourning [mourning/death/n] stretched out [i.e., erected/s] blue as turquoise [anagram: rut] smelling of chaff [i.e., rub/masturbate/n] and fowl shit. (VS 9,52).

As described in The Solid Mandala or Glossary 3 above, the nose (or phallus) has a potential natural or spiritual connotation, depending on whether mucus (or come) is permitted to descend. Pepper prompts sneezing or ejaculating and like the Tree of Knowledge before the Fall, the pepper tree represents nature and the shit/come physical harmony of the Duffields

¹Frye 108.

²Frye 109.

(duff/ass/n; field/n). At this time, Hurtle paints "Death" (VS 41). It symbolizes the unconscious (another element of nature) and depicts a lion's mane (the pubic hair) and an elephant's trunk (the limp penis). Miss Adams' (of Adam and Eve fame) argues contradictorily that an elephant is "large [erect]" and "gentle [gent/male]," but Hurtle disagrees: "'Not [knot/staunch/erect/s] always it isn't,' he corrected [erected/s]. 'It can trample [anagram: art; ram/s] its keeper [staunch/erect/s]...' (VS 41). So while the passivity of nature dominates the theme of the painting or the Duffield's yard, the potential aggressivity of culture and the erect penis await at the Fall: Hurtle's birth.

The transition from nature to culture is more a transaction, the body remolded into a commodity. Hurtle is sold (appositely by his mother) into culture: to the Courtneys (Court/nee); although the attraction for physical harmony (or thanatos drive) remains instinctual: "He would have liked to creep inside" his "Mumma's body" "to sleep tighter in warm wet love and white drool [i.e., come] of hens if she would have opened to him she wouldn't" (VS 76).

Within culture, the Tree of Knowledge acquires social status and a pseudo interpretive intellect: the chandelier - complete with the anagram, "lie-r." The "glass [ass] fruit [rut]," as Hurtle prefers to metaphorize, is his "secret [erect/s; secrete/n] thing [thin/erect/s]," not unlike the "soverun," which is his "secret yet most solid [i.e., erect; anagram: soul/s; id/n] belonging [long/erect/s]" (VS 25,42,43). Although both

natural and cultural settings, like human androgyny, are mixed, the uninhibited pleasure of the pepper tree is opposite to the "sovereign" erection of the chandelier.

Birth alone dictates cultural immersion, the partial reason for Hurtle's acceptance into the Courtney milieu, but he excels because he is the social epitome. He is "strong and beautiful" and, most important, he has a command of upper class diction, "speaking bookish" (VS 66,34). Rhoda, on the other hand is limped or lumped because of her "humped" back, and she reminds Hurtle of a "crooked-necked pullet [cocked but crooked/limp]" (VS 32,31).¹ Consequently she is a cultural anomaly, and like dogs which are vivisected on a board or women who are symbolically "punched" [i.e., physically effaced; punned] by a "planchette['s] [anagram: lank/erected/s; arch/n]" prediction, Rhoda is "corrected [erected]" by a "board [hard/erect] exercise [excise/castrate/limped/n]" (VS 118,33,36). In other words, Rhoda, although female and natural, is ipso facto unacceptable and forced to look "clean [lean]," "thin," and "firm": erect (VS 31).

Control of nature is also a dominant theme of Hurtle's "Pythoiness at Tripod."² The background of the painting is

¹Rhoda's hair is "pink rather than red," and her name, mispronounced as "Roder," summons up the image of a Rhode Island Red (VS 20,31). See also Morley 227, for a further discussion of Rhoda as "rodent."

²Pythoiness: i.e. snake/limp/n; anagram: pit/n: therefore snake, pit or penis in vagina; also anagram: oneness/s; Tripod (an erect apparatus): anagram: ripe/erect; pod/womb/n.

inspired by the Courtneys' vacation at St. Yves de Tregor,¹ a small resort on an estuary famous for mud and diarrhoea. The portrait is of a nude Rhoda washing her genitals. At first glance, Rhoda's depicted "botched [crotched] estuary [estrum]" is a sexist collocation of woman, and particularly the vagina, with mud and human waste, but sexist the painting is not because White's vision has no cultural bias of the body, women, come, or faeces (for they are, to him, all natural and all the same) (VS 131).² The dilemma of the painting is threefold: first, the sponge [water/n] Rhoda holds to "protect [erect] her privacy [privates] also serves to put out her "flame [fire/s; but also lame/limp/n]" (VS 131,132). Rhoda is natural, but also has a spiritual essence and/or a phallic urge, as the "estuary" (or estrum) and "botched [crotched] thing [thin/erect/s]" also indicate (VS 131); second, Hurtle ruthlessly erects Rhoda (as per vivisection, the planchette, or her board) on the "iron-legged [i.e., erect, but also egged] bidet" to "make amends...for his own enormities [erections]," but third, and this is perhaps even more frightening, Hurtle's drawing is only a palimpsest of birth: spirit or culture erecting the body or nature (VS 432, emphasis mine)!

After birth, life's next major obstacle is adolescence and

¹Yves: Eve; Tregor: tree (i.e., of knowledge); rigor/erect/s.

²Women as "shit" or "come" may seem like a put down, but remember Patrick White's leitmotif is androgyny. Beyond the spiritual cover, men are also guts-related.

early manhood, the "hurdles" of Chapters 3 and 4.¹ Sexuality is no longer an innocent celebration of the flesh. For instance, during Hurtle's pepper-tree childhood, his protean erogeneity with Dolly Burgess is instinctual and non-defined:²

He asked Dolly to show him her girls thing. It was still only a naked wrinkle. When he touched [ouch/orgasm/n], she began at once to gobble [pun: gob/come/n; i.e., hen, like Rhoda] and choke [pun: cock; but also come]; eyes popping. She had been sucking aniseed balls [i.e., fellatio]. She ran bellowing [low/limp/n] away. Because he was afraid, he would have liked not to think about it, but the scent [ascent/erect/s] of aniseed [anagram: anus, therefore, erecting of the anus or anal sex] kept coming [ejaculating] back (VS 45).

Hurtle's love with Boo Hollingrake³ has equal images of vaginal copulation ("struggling [anagram: rut; urge] thighs [high/erect]"), fellatio ("her tongue thin [erect] as a cigarette stuck [suck] between his lips"), and anal sex ("crescent [ascent/erect] moon [TQV 24: ass]"); but their sexual experience is a confrontation between the flesh and spirit, Hurtle "kill[ing]" Boo, and their consummation is achieved during the butchery of World War I where "outside the meticulous womb, men were fighting, killing, to live to fuck to live" (VS 153,163).

But Hurtle's attraction for the womb still exists. The fellatio-chocolate (cock ate) that "trickled [prick; came] blissfully [orgasmic-ly]" between him and his foster mother is

¹Also, Hurtle is like Voss. They "hurt" (as victimizers) and are "hurt" (as victims).

²Dolly is a trope for "penis." See Rodgers 49. Dolly Burgess, of course, has a penis urge.

³Boo: afraid; Hollingrake: holy/s; rake/s]

cannibalistic, incestuous, and natural; and Mrs. Courtney's kisses and fondling of Hurtle's head, the "fruit [anagram: fire/s; rut/n/s] or goblet [gob/come/n]," offers the same erotic security, although Hurtle breaks the "caul" and goes to war (VS 123,168).¹

Hurtle returns from World War-I a "young [Jung/erect/s] man" devoid of his physical self, although his "lost touch" with the Courtney legacy predetermines the use of his "natural" name, Duffield (VS 170,279). He meets Nance Lightfoot, and he recognizes, from his wartime experience, that the route to power and wealth lies in the control of the body, or symbolically in this case, Nance's vagina: "He was forced to get down on his knees beside her in his half-dressed goose-pimpled state, to identify himself with what was at least a vision of his power: he didn't doubt he would translate the world into terms of his own" (VS 187). The result is his "Nance Spreadeagle." Hurtle getting "down on his knees...to light the gas fire," and Nance depicted as "the female form coaxing fire out of a grate" duplicates his subject's description of the positioning in the painting and her erotic meal (VS 195,191):

'They'll run you in,' she said. 'For doing a woman like that. With 'er bum cut in half. And tits hangun. What's she doin'?'

'Lighting a fire....Fancy you an artist!' She spoke through a mouthful of chicken [prick], wondering it seemed, whether to feel resentful [ascent/erect/s; full: i.e., of come] or to devour the artist along with the flesh she was gnawing off the bone [boner/erection/s] (VS 195-6, emphasis

¹For an in depth explanation of fellatio, cannibalism, and incest, see "Voss" pp. 22 & 44-5.

mine).

The painting affords a rear view of Nance, her breasts dangling between her legs and her anus and pudendum in close perspective. She is performing fellatio on Hurtle, and she is spread (or erected) like an eagle (a bird or phallus).¹

Brian Kiernan states that Nance's life is "less untrammelled by social rules and inhibitions";² and Peter Beatson submits that "love of the body and the individual is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for true spiritual love".³ Like Voss, Hurtle, although unknowingly, is questing for spiritual purity. The signifier of the anus as obscenity is only an arbitrary social construct and should not vilify women, but the cultural assignment of negative value to the body confirms male centrality and power and assures women's degradation and subjugation. Hurtle might profess (through his painting) truth, birth-like spirit overtaking nature, but interpretation (the word as opposed to the "can't tell" of the body) is culturally privileged and hence artificial.

Hurtle's relentless search for truth, or "rut" as anagrammatized, prompts him to abandon Nance and his social environment and emerge himself (not unlike Voss) in nature at the "edge of a gorge" (VS 216):

¹Wolfe 165, dismisses all of Hurtle's paintings as "abstractions": not "inductive, the patient, accurate translations of observed phenomenon to canvas."

²Kiernan 105.

³Beatson 47.

The rocks [cocks/s] might have been fired on a primordial occasion before it was decided to disguise the cleft [i.e., vulva/n] of the gorge [i.e., eating/fellatio/n] with its austere [steer/erect/s] fringes of vegetation [i.e., nature; pubic hair]. Not [knot/staunch/s] surprisingly [anagram: rise/erect/s], trees sown in rocky [cocky] crevices [i.e., vagina/n; anagram: vice] had taken the colour of ash, their leaves [Eve/n], narrow [erect/s] and listless [anagram: Christ-iless/n], but tough. Even [Eve] now, smoke [i.e., come/n] would unravel [ave/bird] in pungent [pun; gent/s] strands threading through the bush [i.e., pubic hair]. The whole of one night he stood by his unfinished house and watched [anagram: arch/limp/n] the gorge snap [i.e., snapper/vulva] and gnash at its own fiery blinds (VS 216, emphasis mine).

Hurtle, erect, penetrates the gorging, snapping, gnashing vagina, hoping to recreate the essence of life on canvas. He even paints a self-portrait, but his brushes, like "razors," have a dual eroteme (VS, 235). First, they are raisers (rousers or erectors) and second, like the fellatio or cannibalism of "Nance Spreadeagle" or the voracious gorge, they are castrators of the erect penis or spirit. Hurtle may erect or vivisect Nance's "shaved" [ave/bird] body, or he may like a God "create" Nance by spiritualizing the flesh, but in doing so, he returns to a limp or natural state, while the ejaculation, continuing the cycle, creates like a God or artist (VS 231,200).¹ "Hence all those

¹In The Madwoman in the Attic (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984) 4,13, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar situate patriarchal domination in the misogynist metaphor of penis as pen. As writer (i.e., Hurtle/artist), man is possessor of his creation, and women, with no place in the ontological process, are authored by men and acted upon as objects of property. In literature, women have been depicted using their "arts of deception to entrap and destroy men, and the [females'] secret, shameful ugliness...is closely associated with their hidden genitals..."(30). The treatment of the piranha-vagina topos is different in The Vivisector because the male is equally female and "filthy." Also, as Toril Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory (New York: Methuen, 1985) 62, points

dribbles [i.e., come; anagram: rib/penis] and flecks [erects] Nick [prick] the Greek had noticed on [Hurtle's] 'good [god] clothes', the hardened [erect] scales of paint he hadn't had time to scrape [rape] off his skin" [pun: kin: i.e., androgyny] (VS 188-9).

Hurtle may be a vivisector, artist, and God, as his aphorism states, but it is written on the inside of a dunny wall. Nance recognizes Hurtle's affiliation with the body, and exposes his "devilish" or womanly half (VS, 248):

The self-portrait, though toned down by the shadow to which it had been withdrawn [i.e., limp art], was sprouting [anagram: rutting/n/s] jagged diagonal [anagram: vaginal/n] teeth, womanly gyrating [anagram: art/n/s] breasts [anagram: beast/animal/n; eat/fellatio/n], holes for titivation by lipstick [lip prick: fellatio/n] and tongue and prick (VS 248).

Admitting the existence of his natural self, Hurtle rubs faeces over his painting and, symbolically, throws away his "grandad['s] [anagram: randy/s] solid [i.e., erect] gold [god/s]" ring. But by eliminating spirit he destroys life itself. Nance dies into nature, being reduced after her "fall" [limp/n; Eve/n] to an "old [n] bashed [assed/n] umbrella [anagram: bum/n; Fr: elle/she/n] on a dump [lump/n]," and Hurtle is figuratively killed, "croak[ing] after his moment of triumph [rump/n]" (VS

out, "it seems inconsistent" that The Madwoman in the Attic accepts the "traditional view of the relationship between author and text [as] hierarchal and authoritarian...[but] never once questions the authority of the female author." Patrick White would suggest the woman's pen is also phallogocentric, and the woman's body is the eraser (or pleasing castrator) of that patriarchal expression.

250,252).¹

Under Foucaultian logic, as offered in the introduction to "The Vivisector," "relations of power are not in superstructural positions, with merely a role of prohibition or accompaniment; they have a directly productive role, whenever they come into play."² In Chapters 5 and 6, Hurtle's mature years, nature, closest at birth or in old age, is farthest away and, hence, least influential. Spirit, being preclusive of the body, assumes cultural control, but that manifestation of power only stimulates the nascence of subcultures, ad rem Foucault. Patrick White situates Christ and the crucifixion (or effacement of the body)³ as the primordial power base and source of homosexuals, transvestites, pornography, whores, and saints.

Remember, first of all, Hurtle is "dead." To attain life, he needs spirit - or an erection. In the previous section, his lust for Nance is really a quest for her "concrete [anagram: erect/s]

¹The pun of "solid" as erect and the anagram of "man" in mandala make Jung the representator of the erection in The Solid Mandala, but equal to Hurtle's ring, the "solid" penis is inherently a "soulid" balance between the flesh and spirit. Also the "god" or spirit in "gold" is "old" and decaying, like nature.

²Foucault 94.

³Patrick White's reading is neither scriptural nor traditional in terms of Christian orthodoxy. It was for the "joy that was set before Him" that Christ endured the cross. Theological doctrine argues that Christ's motivations were not masochistic. The crucifixion was not imposed upon Him - nor was He passive in accepting that death. He said: "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me" (John 10, 17-18). Also, Christ is supposed to have appeared forty days after the crucifixion in a corporeal, "spiritual" body which enabled Him to both eat and be touched.

present [ascent/erect/s]: her chipped [hipped] lacquer [queer] look" (VS 223). Hurtle's spiritual desire is theoretically homosexual, and in Chapter 5, his life is restored by Cutbush: cuntbush. Hurtle "threw open" his "hairy" overcoat [lovercoat: anagram: verse/word/erect/s], and "leaned [erect/s] forward [for war], hands locked [cocked/s] between his knees, chin [Fr: chien/dog/penis/s] thrust [rut/n/s] at the growing [erect/s] darkness" (VS 257). Hurtle's "revived [Fr: vive/life/s] interest [anagram: erect/s] made the grocer shuffle his behind around on the bench [anagram: Fr: chien/dog/penis/s]," and he could soon "feel it trickling [prick-ling: i.e., coming] down his back" (VS 258, 259). Cutbush is not only the cuntbush, but he is also the "cut-bush" or castrated limp penis. After Hurtle abruptly leaves, Cutbush is left to "masturbate at the lantana," "watching the seed he was scattering in vain by moonlight on barren ground" (VS 262).

Cutbush inspires Hurtle's "Lantana [anagram: anal] Lovers [anagram: verse/word/s] under Moonfire [moon/ass/female/s; fire/spirit/male/n]." Ironically, Hero perceives the "moon is in one of its destructive [anagram: rut] phases [anagram: asses]," and a shocked Olivia protests that the "moon [ass] is shitting" on the lovers; but Hurtle's interpretation and Olivia's reaction reveal the theme of the art work:

'[Cutbush] 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 [anagram: live] are childlike beside the waves [ave/bird/n/s] of enlightened evil [anagram: live/s] proliferating [anagram: pro life: i.e., spiritually erect] from above; and he

usually ends [i.e., body/n] by destroying [anagram: rot/n] himself. He was unwilling to go any farther.

But Olivia was determined to add a last humiliating touch. 'Hurtle sees him, I think, as a damned soul in the body of a solitary masturbator.' Her crimson nail accused the trajectory [anagram: art; erect; ejaculatory] of milky sperm dribbled [anagram: rib/penis] across the canvas (VS 336, emphasis mine).

The anagram "rot" in "destroying" pans on the body's natural decay which is symbolized by woman or the physical ecstasy and harmony concatenated with the limp penis. Patricia Morley's literal understanding that "the body of a solitary masturbator suggests a damned soul" is a total misreading.¹ The soul (or spirit) is damned because it is partially a "dame," or woman, and the masturbator or natural celebrator of the flesh is "soul-itary". Androgyny is the theme; but who "usually ends by destroying himself?" Is it Cutbush because he masturbates? Is it Christ because of the crucifixion of the body? Or is it Hurtle because he limps after anal sex? All three are valid options. Who, then, is the "Divine Destroyer." Is it Cutbush because he accepts and transforms Hurtle's penis? Is it Hurtle because he erects Cutbush in the painting and during and after their sexual encounter? Or is it Christ who erects (or gives birth or life) to the human body by superimposing spirit on the flesh (of nature)? Again, the answers are all affirmative, but even more important are the theoretical ties involved. Is Christ a homosexual because, as a male, he erects (spiritualizes) and kills (limps) himself? Or is that a description of a masturbator? To Patrick

¹Morley 213.

White all "yes" answers are potentially true.

Coincidental to Hurtle's regained erection is his new found wealth and his decision to re-employ the Courtney name (VS 255, 268). Reflected in his painting is his "resisted objective" or "staunched erect-ive," which guarantees him cultural standing and an interview with his adolescent sweetheart Olivia Davenport, nee Boo Hollingrake. Like Hurtle, she keeps her world "divided, perpetually, and expertly": perpetually erect-ly; but as a female without a phallus, she endues her male role (VS 302):

For Olivia Davenport, [porter of an ave/bird/s] was dressed in a man's black suit, its austerity [steer/s] barely holding [staunch/s] out against the luxury of her figure. Over her travesty she was wearing a long, bottle-green cloak [cock/s] kept together at the throat by a silver [anagram: live/s; verse/word/s] chain. A shaving [ave/bird/s] brush stood erect [s] at the back of her Borsalino (VS 362, emphasis mine).

Robert Stroller "argues" that the male transvestite uses the degrading apparatus of female costume to convert 'humiliation' to 'mastery' by showing himself (and the world) that he is not 'just' like a woman, he is better than a woman because he is a woman with a penis.¹ Sandra Gilbert cites numerous literary works to advocate female transvestism as a rejection of fixed roles and women's subdued position.² Patrick White would agree, with the added stipulation that Olivia's "travesty" or transvestism is also a (Foucaultian) reorientation of power - a coup d'état of

¹Sandra Gilbert, "Costumes of the Mind: Transvestism as Metaphor in Modern Literature," Writing and Sexual Difference, ed. Elizabeth Abel (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982) 199.

²Gilbert, "Costumes" 206-219.

the natural self.

Instead of being accepted as a shit/come receptacle, the body is endowed with transcendent infinity. Olivia's first husband believed her a corporeal "secret [erect/s]," and to "please [ease/come/n]" her husband, she chewed on the hallucinogen, "coca": cock (VS 288). Hero is also given spiritual status. Cosmas, her "Lord and Husband," prefers prostitutes because he wants Hero to be a saintly "monument," "to represent [ascent/ erect/s] perfection [erection/s] (VS 385,351, emphasis mine). Like a cruel god, Cosmas imposes spirit on flesh. Both treat humans like a "bagful of cats" ready for drowning, both prevent the erect penis from natural ejaculation, and both are patriarchs like Hurtle's father: "Pa himself, veins [anagram: penis] blue in his knotty [knot/staunch/s] hands was helping tie [staunch/s] the neck of the sack [scrotum]" (VS 352,354).

Cosmas' off-handed drowning of cats (or spiritual occlusion of ejaculation) is the simulacrum of Hero's life and Hurtle's "Infinity of Cats," in which there was

an expression [press/erection/s] of truth [rut], on that borderline where the hideous [id] and depraved [ave/bird/s] can become aesthetically acceptable. So in the hot little dusk [lust]-bound [staunched/s] room, the man's phallus glowed and spilled, while the woman, her eyes closed, her mouth screaming [creaming/sperm filled] silent words, fluctuated [fucked] between her peacock [peeing cock: i.e., no longer occluded]-coloured desires [sire/s] and the longed [i.e. desire for long/erection] death [n]-blow [fellatio] (VS 361).

Again fellatio is depicted, and Hero's body, like Nance's, is a "work of art," erected and "creat[ed]" (VS 359,373). To Hero, however, the painting is simply "pornograph[ic]"; but if

pornography is male (and, hence, spiritual) control and manipulation of women and/or the body, then, to Patrick White, life itself is a pornographic creation (VS 360)! This accounts for exogenous search, such as Voss' trek in the desert or Hero's quest for "words" and saints in Perialos [pun: aerial/s], although any search for infinity ends in iconoclasm: "goat [horny]-troglodytes [anagram: rot/n]; the old man pissing against the wind; the procession [pro cession or cessation: for staunching/s] of mourners; a martyred Hero" (VS 388).

As it turns out, Hero's quest for saintliness is really a desire for the erect penis - the same as a whore's,¹ and like Christ who spiritualizes his own body,² Hero, ironically, is "m-art-yred" or erected, discovering that she must "learn to live with such dreck as I am: to find a reason [s] and purpose [purr/cat/come/n in a pose/art/s] in this dreck" (VS 392).

Hurtle's fate is similar. Successful extension into a spiritual state eliminates the body and results in death. Hurtle may be an artistic visionary, and he may transcend physical limitation, but his vision of John [pun: loo/n] of the Apocalypse [pun: apollo/s]" ends the same as his natural immersion in the

¹The saint is masochistic, killing her body to acquire spiritual purity. The whore is sadistic, killing the male erection, but if she kills all human spirit, she will, in the end, kill herself. At that point, is she a saint, and, more important, has the saint already been a whore? To Patrick White, saints and whores are part of a vicious circularity.

²One could argue that Christ's foreknowledge of his demise and resurrection constitute a voluntary spiritualization. For the Christian viewpoint, see "The Vivisector" p. 112.

gorge: he "croak[s]"; and whether Hurtle is a whore for selling his ejaculatory art or a saint for erecting the body, he is nevertheless a pornographer and like Christ (VS 392).

Death, once again, leaves Hurtle in search of spirit. In the fourth section, chapters 7 and 8, old age, because of the new proximity of nature in death, prevents priapism. Instead of being virile, Hurtle "had started shrivelling": "he longed to give it, but didn't know how to" (VS 395,399). His immersion in nature (or limp state) explains Hurtle's reappropriation of the name "Duffield" and his passive homosexual experience (VS 400). A "printer [word/s] by trade [anagram: art], Mothersole "offer[s]" his "card" (hard or spiritual word) while on the "sturdy [stud/s].. ferry [TQV 78: fairy: homosexual]," and Hurtle, who "hadn't a card [erection/s] to offer in exchange," was "happy to receive the trust [anagram: rut] and friendship [i.e., friends hip] of this rather boring [i.e., anal penetration] decent [descent/limp: natural] man" (VS 399,400,402). Having kept Mothersole's "card," Hurtle is "born again" or erected, and like Cutbush, he masturbates:

Presently [ascent/erect/s] he went and stood at the stern [tern/bird/s]. He took out the printers card [hard/erection/s]. When he had torn [anagram: rot/n/s] it, he scattered [cat/come/n] the pieces [penis] on the water as Mothersole himself would have wished [anagram: she/n], if his ethos [anagram: eros/n; host/s] had allowed [low/limp/n]....Apart from Rhoda, who was ageless, why had he never painted a child? He had never desired to get [i.e., beget] one, but a work of art could be less of a botch [crotch]. Sitting with his hands locked [cocked], he was fidgeting [i.e., masturbating; anagram: id/n] to create this child [i.e., come] (VS 405).

Similar to Osiris' hermaphroditism and self-procreation,

Hurtle's self-inseminating masturbation and/or homosexuality with Mothersole (re)produces a "spiritual child," Kathy (VS 422). Two portraits are inspired: The first is of Kathy's plait, an erection of her hair which holds come: cat (i.e., Cosmas') and lait; and the second is of a "Flowering (i.e., erecting; but also "lowering" or limping] Rosebush [rose/raise/erecting; anagram: eros/n]," an erection of her bush or vulva (VS 411,425). Clearly, any interpretive work always privileges the erection, spirit, and god-like creativity, but the procreation of a child has multiple meaning. Hurtle is old; he is more passive; and he is approaching death. All three describe childhood and nature; and all three Hurtle has avoided throughout his life by attempting to staunch his penis. In an effort to prevent his seduction of Kathy, Hurtle assumes a let-by-gones-be-by-gones façade with the new found Rhoda: "at least by his sister's presence [ascent/erect/s] Kathy Volkov would be protected [erected/s] from debauch [anagram: arch/n] and himself from destruction [anagram: unction/come/n]" (VS 450). The strategy, as ironically stated, has an opposite effect, Hurtle's cohabitation with his sister, in itself incestual and natural, only serving to keep him erect and ready for the ineluctability of death - i.e., succumbing or coming or giving birth to a child. Hurtle's passivity, however, predetermines his female acquiescence of his "master [steer/s] piece [penis]," Kathy, who is "long" and "skinny": erect (VS 515,430):

[Kathy's] downy [limp/n] mouth was drifting over his; she seemed to have abandoned speech [word/s] for touch [n].

'Haven't you your music?' [Hurtle] tried to thrust [rut/n] her off with his thighs [highs/erect/s]; but the law

of nature engineered his failure [body/n]: she settled [set/erect/s] deeper.

'Yes, my music she breathed. 'Mr Khrapovitsky says I must study [stud/s] harder [erect/s].'

She was digging into his maternal, his creative entrails [i.e., anal sex; anagram: art;].

'Old enough to be your grandfather [pun: randy], he muttered [no words: n; but also utter/word/s] against her lips [i.e., fellatio/n].

But she didn't hear, because fire [s] and sea [n] were roaring through them: if only he could have halted [staunch/s] the other [her/come/n].

At least [eat/fellatio/n] he was, technically [anagram: etch/art/erect/s] the passive [n; ass/n: anal sex] one [s]; he could console [pun: soul/s] himself morally [orally/word/s] with that: he hadn't attempted [tempt/original sin/s] (VS 465, emphasis mine).

Freud believed sexual development passed from the oral stage (in which the sucking of infancy provides pleasure) to the anal period (in which control of defecation is erogenic) to the phallic phase (in which the "mature" libido focuses on the genitals).¹ That philosophy is debunked in The Vivisector, and as stated in "The Solid Mandala" pp. 66-7, protean erogeneity expands the body's function beyond just (re)production (or manufacture and work). Diversified physical pleasure, such as the oral, anal, and vaginal sex between Hurtle and Kathy, undermines power, the spiritual manipulation and control of the somatic self.² As well, Patrick White signals the human capacity to be both male and female. In the quote above, Hurtle is passive and maternal; and creative and paternal. He is "indeterminate," a major theme in the novel which surfaces in a discussion of

¹Eagleton 153.

²Morley 215, argues that Kathy Volkov "plumbs the depths of depravity in order to nourish the artist within herself."

Hurtle's collage:

Proper [prop/erect/s] said: 'Oh I like this! Will you let me have it, Mr. Hurtle Duffield?'

'No. I'm working [s] on it.'

'But when it's finished - after you've gone on from here and done whatever you have to.'

'No. I can't think there'll be too many [man/s] stages [stag/s]. Doesn't interest [anagram: erect/s] me enough. From the beginning, its too indeterminate.'

They still liked each other, however. They continued genuinely [anagram: urine/n] smiling; and Loebel couldn't interpret what was happening [pen/word/s].

What appeals [apple: Tree of Knowledge] to me is its tentativeness [tent/staunch/s], Proper was saying. 'I'd [id/n] like to keep it in a state of becoming [come/n]' - his chubby [i.e., fat/limp], quince [TQV 74: effeminate homosexual] face was taking an enormous [i.e., erect/s] risk [rise/erect] - 'before the music sets into architecture' (VS 461, emphasis mine).

Anagrammatically "architecture" is simultaneously "arched" (or limp) and "erect"; and is like music, which exists as continual ejaculation. That "indeterminate" state, as defined by Patrick White, signifies male infinite spirituality and/or female "can't tell" physicality: androgyny or bisexuality or homosexuality, the latter because the passive partner, although male, acts the female role i.e., Hurtle or Osiris.

All characters in The Vivisector are made "indeterminate," although specific attention will be paid to those so named (Rhoda (436), Caldicott (213), and Don Lethbridge (554)) as well as Cecil Cutbush and Olivia Davenport because they are equally emphasized in the novel for their non-conformity to cultural production orientated sexuality.

Hurtle's passive homosexuality parallels Cutbush's, and little else need be said about the latter except he is described by Mrs. Volkov as a member of the "third sex," a term coined in

Edward Carpenter's The Intermediate Sex which describes the necessity of non-fixed gender rôles.¹ Olivia Davenport, as discussed earlier, cannot be distinguished as either "man" or "woman" (VS 584). She is a heterosexual, engaging in at least two "wars" with Hurtle, and she is a lesbian, exhibiting the same "bite marks" or "love knots" as Hurtle received from Hero (VS 297,393). Rhoda is also bisexual. She shares "secrets [erect/s; secrete/n] and jokes [cocks]" with Boo/Olivia in an erotic bath; Mrs. Volkov "does [ooze/come/n] depend [end/body/n] on [Rhoda's] support [up/erect/s]"; and Don Lethbridge "come[s]...anytime Miss Courtney sends [ends/body/n] for [him]" (VS 593,533,608). As well, Rhoda, like Arthur in The Solid Mandala, indulges in bestiality, having been caught by Hurtle "screaming (creaming/coming/n] at one of her cats (VS, 483).² Caldicott, his name suggestive of colour and come - a calico cat - is, like the others, bisexual. "He had learnt about [ladies] by experience, some of it congenial [genital]," and he was Hurtle's "agent [gent] - and friend [end/n] - a dealer who took [him] up [i.e., erected/s], and stuck [suck/fellatio/n or fuck] to [him]" (VS 269,219).

¹Gilbert, "Costumes" 218. Ideally, no stereotypical male or female role can be assigned if there is continual displacement.

²Consider also Hurtle's tableau of Rhoda trying on her squirrel (pun: queer) coat: "In the silence, which followed he imagined Rhoda's hands, their hooked skin fumbling [bum-ing] with sensuous, virgin [urge] fur, and closed [oozed] his eyes automatically [tomcat], as if he might thus avoid [id] further [fur her] visions. Then she must have trodden [rod/penis] on a cat" (VS 486).

The last to consider is Don Lethbridge, although his bisexuality will be revealed in the analysis of the final section of The Vivisector, chapters 9 and 10, which center on Hurtle's death. "Stroked by God," Hurtle is drawn, erected, and vivisected - his body seemingly effacing in favour of exclusive spiritual transcendence, but the apoplexy eliminates Hurtle's ability to remain erect and is equivalent to stroking the penis or masturbating (VS 613):

'He's been unconscious [id/n] for two days. He's my brother. He's had a stroke [anagram: rot/n].'

'Arr!'

The noise vibrating [anagram: rib/penis/s; art/s] disintegrating [anagram: art/s] distributed [rib/penis/s] in pins [pun: penis] and needles [i.e., orgasm; nee/born/n] throughout his body (VS 549).

Limp, or dead, once again, Hurtle depends on phallic arousal for life. He hires Don Lethbridge, who is of "indeterminate sex" (VS 554). He is a "simple [limp/n] saint [s]," has a "girlish [n]" complexion, and looks like a "downy [limp/n] archangel [s] but also arch/limp/n]...on Hero's [eros/n] island" (VS, 564,554). As a female, Don performs fellatio on Hurtle: "the lad knelt and flowed [i.e. with come in mouth] around the dead [limp/n] fungus [fun gosse (Fr: penis)]; and as a male he "primed [i.e. arouses] Hurtle's "boards [i.e., hards]," offered him "pieces [penis/s] of masculine advice," and "washed [assed] him" (VS 564,565,594). Washing (assing and/or erecting) Hurtle's feet, Don is Christ-like, but so is Hurtle who, as in the Mothersole chapter when taking a "ferry [TQV 78 fairy: homosexual]" across the river of

death (i.e., Lethe of Lethbridge) to celestial spirit and life,¹
has a vision of his death and resurrection:

If he could have chosen, if, rather, he had developed the habit of prayer, he would have prayed to shed his needled flesh, and for his psychopomp to guide him, across the river, into and endlessness of pure being from which memory couldn't look back (VS 603).

Kathy (and now Don Lethbridge) are Hurtle's psychopomps, but what seems to promise an infinite and pure spiritual ending is also (as the emphasis indicates) a "chopped," castrated erection: natural physicality. Spirit is essential to Patrick White, but not more important than "The Whole of Life" and the gaps that "nobody recognize[s]" in the description of that painting, Hurtle's final words: obvi indi-ggoddd.² Missing is the letter "e." For instance, filling in the first gap would produce two French words: "vie," and "vien," the former meaning "life (s)," the latter, "come (n)." Insert the same letter in the second gap and "die (n)" and "egg (n)" emerge; and add "e" to the anagram "god (s)" and Hurtle's "ode (n)" is silently sung. Always there exists a flesh/spirit balance.

In birth, youth, and maturity, there is an exponential movement away from nature to spirit, although that process reverses in old age and death; but in death, as in birth or the crucifixion, spirit is superimposed on the body. Flesh and spirit exist together in an androgynous whole, but the balance is upset

¹Berg 154 & Morley 241.

²Weigel 79, notes that there is no period in the original published version.

because of culture's weighted dependency on logic and the word. Power hierarchies form, and ultimate control is a measure of how many bodies are subjugated and converted into a productive work force. Patrick White recognizes Freud's "Reality Principle" as a phallogocentric force that denies pleasure. In The Vivisector, all parts of the body are potentially erotic, and cultural labels are stripped of their pseudo-moral and ethical amnesty.

The most frightening hypothesis (and now this will sound like a contradiction) is that human existence is both a patriarchal macrocosm and a pornographic creation. This would make God ruthless - and not part of White's optimism. His belief is not conventional. He understands Christ not as an exclusive spiritual locus but rather as a flesh/spirit balance. Pornography and patriarchy attempt to make a pogrom of the body; perhaps contemporary religious institutions do the same, but White offers a utopia where sexual politics are understood and where "gaps" (the body) hold equal sway with words (spirit) on the page. To that education, Patrick White strives.

The Twyborn Affair

In The Vivisector, Patrick White renders the archetypal sexual politics inherent in the Garden of Eden; in The Twyborn Affair, he translates the patriarchal appropriation of that genesis into a historical and psychological labyrinth from which extrication is impossible. As in his other novels, human identity is socially controlled, preconditioned by "norms," and because of androgyny, the male world of mind, culture, and spirit is forever bound to the female existence of nature and body. In The Vivisector, Patrick White traces Hurtle's origin and death in nature and his middle years in culture. Each transition is effected by experiences which are related to the reader by an unreliable narrator, Hurtle. In the case of The Twyborn Affair, the fallible Eudoxia/Eddie/Eadith is the reader's only real source of information. Unlike Hurtle, E does not go through stages of development in so much as he shows himself locked within a patriarchal maze. With no clear character transformation, no author intrusion, and no language which isn't fraught with double and triple meaning, interpretation is a considerable challenge, but this is only true because the reader (and E) have been attuned to the stasis of predetermined cultural roles.

The Twyborn Affair is about a homosexual striving to justify his sexuality in terms of roles handed down by society. His task is impossible; and any deviation from traditional behaviour, his association with a "mad" Greek in rural France, his isolation from culture proper in Australian back country, or his mask as bawd in urban England, only typify E's always already incarceration in an aggressive, male orientated world. Any historical or psychological models available to E offer no true freedom for sensual (as opposed to spiritual) expression, and whether heterosexual or homosexual, "to enter, or be entered" is the only alternative, patriarchy's hold on mind and body culturally entrenched (TA 374).

Contrary to critical opinion, The Twyborn Affair is perhaps Patrick White's most aesthetically perfect work, although, in many respects, very dark. The structure and language reflect the sexual politics behind a male controlled panopticon. E cannot escape because patriarchy is ubiquitous, but the reader can demolish sexual prejudices through recognition of subjugating structures: White's theme and intent (of all his work).

To embrace the full artistic value of The Twyborn Affair, three elements of White's leitmotifs merit close attention. First, the archetypal split between nature and culture as symbolized by the fall in the Garden of Eden and rendered in The Vivisector is reiterated in The Twyborn Affair. Manifest in nature is the mother, animal or childlike innocence, emotion, unconscious harmony, timelessness, death, flesh, earth, water,

and the limp penis; and in culture, the father, logic, intellect, consciousness, cognizance of time, life, spirit, wind, fire, and the erect penis.¹

Second, in The Twyborn Affair, as in The Vivisector, characters continuously exhibit both natural/feminine and cultural/masculine traits, but all have modified their behaviour to act patriarchal roles. Perhaps androgyny can exist, but only in death and not in a "real" life such as E's.

Lastly, all three sections of The Twyborn Affair are static, each a malignancy of patriarchal domination. Eudoxia, Eddie, and Eadith may seem different, but they are all controlled by the same male hegemony, the same sexual politics. Therefore, an exegesis of this novel cannot be linear without being repetitive. Although sections one through three will be dealt with in order, diversions will facilitate following Patrick White's trail through the patriarchal maze.

In the first section of The Twyborn Affair, references to Byzantium and various Greek historical periods substantiate White's thesis of imposing and durable power structures. As A. P. Riemer has so eruditely indicated, a correlation exists between Angelos Vatatzes and Eudoxia and the period of Greek history between the fourth and fourteenth century when the Bogomils, infamous for sexual licence, were persecuted during the Angelos

¹For a more detailed explanation, see "Voss" pp. 9-10 & 13-14.

dynasty.¹ But locating a continuum of events and tagging names to fictional characters is impossible. Important to pinpoint are the overall political structures, the psychological motivations of historical characters, and the theoretical inconsistencies which they overlook. Three examples deserve careful attention, analysis of which will be withheld until all have been detailed.

The Bogomils, Riemer suggests, have been documented in the O.E.D. as a source of buggery or sodomy.² Part of the Christian Manichean sect, the Bogomils

held that the world is not a creation of God, that matter is not sanctified by grace, but a 'mistake', the work of a devil or an evil demiurge, and that it is to be scorned and despised...It is suspected [that the] Bogomils allowed unprecedented sexual licence to those members of the community who had endured a lengthy and rigorous period of purification. Such licence was allowed not as a reward, but as a sign of their having achieved utter contempt for the flesh: the indulgence in extreme eroticism, was supposed, in theory at least, to be an indication of the extent to which the initiate has kept himself absolutely aloof from all blandishments of the senses.³

Angelos Vatatzes seems to have taken his name from John Vatatzes who withdrew to Nicaea and built an economically sound and well administrated state after Constantinople fell to the Franks.⁴ The desire to restore the Byzantine empire is what

¹A. P. Riemer, "Eddie and the Bogomils - Some Observations on The Twyborn Affair," Southerly 40 (1980): 13.

²Riemer, "Bogomils" 12.

³Riemer, "Bogomils" 12 & 14-15.

⁴John Coates, "Byzantine References in The Twyborn Affair," Australian Literary Studies 11 (1984): 510.

precipitated a downfall:1

On the one level, the Nicaean Empire was the period of realism and puritanism, of the sober canny use of resources, of commercial competence and good housekeeping. On the other it was an epoch which closed with a yielding to delusion and a movement towards tragedy. With the recapture of Constantinople in 1261 was born that Megalon Idea of a restored Greek Empire, in pursuit of which all that had been slowly built up was squandered. (The first definite statement of this inherent right, based on cultural superiority, of the Greeks to rule neighbouring peoples, was made by the usurper Michael Palaiologos in 1261. Angelos refers to him in a context of betrayal as 'that gangster Palaiologos' (TA 32).2

Riemer surmises that Eudoxia may have been consort to Emperor Arcadius (395-408), bringing about the emergence of sects like the Bogomils opposed to sensual pleasures,³ but neither Riemer nor Coates mention the possible significance of classical Greece and the sexual roles prevalent. Except for prostitutes, used for casual relations, and hetaira (ie. Eudoxia), used for long-term companionship by the wealthy, women, generally considered sexually baneful,⁴ were confined without social or commercial rights and exploited for procreation under the auspices of duty to the state.⁵ Classical Greece was a military regime. Never safe from attack, they attributed great importance

1Coates 510.

2Coates 511.

3Riemer 13.

4K. J. Dover, "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour," Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers, ed. John Peradotto and J. P. Sullivan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984) 147,149.

5Symonds 33.

to strength, speed, and endurance, and "the ability to resist and master the body's demands for nourishment and rest was normally regarded as belonging to the same moral category as the ability to resist sexual desire."¹ The acceptance of homosexuality, therefore, was understandable because women were not of equal status,² being confined, uneducated, and as a result, uninteresting.³ An army of lovers, bound together in honour and cause, were ideally the ultimate power and protection.⁴

However, a great rift lies between the sexual rationale and the theoretical reality of all three groups described; and close analysis of classical Greece will facilitate and expedite the understanding of the politics behind the Angelos dynasty and the Bogomils. Homosexuality, first of all, was always between an older man and a young boy, love based on beauty rather than pleasure, spirit rather than a celebration of the flesh. A great aberration was committed if the man sought sexual gratification to curb his lust or if the boy sought personal advantage or encouraged advances.⁵ Mention of their sexual relationship, even by the parties involved, was considered bad taste.⁶ Flesh was considered virile; the body was only the "temple of spirit," the

¹Dover 149.

²Dover 150.

³Symonds 33.

⁴Symonds 9.

⁵Symonds 14.

⁶Dover 151.

male form "the most perfect image of the deity."¹

But great gaps in logic are evident from the Greek abhorrence of effeminacy. "In so far as the 'passive partner' in a homosexual act. [took] on the role of a woman, he was open to the suspicion, like the male prostitute, that he abjured his prescribed role as a future soldier and defender of the community."² In some vase painting women are depicted with "a male waist and hips, as if a woman's body was nothing but a young man's body plus breasts and minus external genitals, and in many of their pictures of heterosexual intercourse from the rear position the penis appears...to be penetrating the anus, not the vagina."³ If homosexuality was the epitome of spiritual union, why was the partner effeminate, and why was the ephebe, expected to "marry and assume a family";⁴ if coition was for procreation only, why wasn't all homosexual and much heterosexual activity eliminated;⁵ and lastly, how can the gratification of carnal appetite be justified as spiritual? If in homosexuality one partner is always the active, the other always the passive associated with slave-like loyalty, where is the spiritual harmony? Male bonding to assure power over slaves and women, especially when advanced as a spiritual plenitude against the

¹Symonds 7,53,54.

²Dover 153.

³Dover 150, emphasis mine.

⁴Martin 8.

⁵Dover 154.

temptations of the flesh, is nothing but patriarchy. A rejection of the body, whether through mortification of the flesh or a devotion to that which is spiritually derived, is still pro culture/anti nature, and explains the false motivations behind the Bogomils' Manichean disregard for the body and the Angelos dynasty's delusions of cultural superiority over "inferior races."¹

That homosexuality was a part of classical Greek life does not preclude sexual prejudice, a theme that White emphasizes in the first section of The Twyborn Affair but undercuts with the homophobia in the rest of the novel. Also intertwined is the attraction and aversion for both mother/nature and father/culture, every human being a repository for both. Lastly, and most importantly, the oscillation between the two poles, although seemingly balanced, is in fact arrested within a patriarchal framework, personality only a mirror of the male psyche.

Susan Griffin has proposed that women, attempting to emulate the wealth and idleness of models, reflect the husband or father's image of power.² Her total dependence and "magnificence of style signify [male] magnificence of strength," and her identity, one of perfection and sculptural objectification, is only an icon of nothingness.³

¹Coates 512.

²Griffin 234.

³Griffin 234.

All the women in The Twyborn Affair are perfect examples, and even if wealthy or part of the social elite, they are nevertheless slaves: like foreigners (Australians, Greeks) or domestic workers (Teakle, Ange, Josephine, Mme. Reboa) chained to the patriarchal mentality. Joanie Golson, for instance, only seems to be independent. As owner of Sewell's Sweatfree Felt Hats, she gallivants over the countryside, but that freedom and idleness is only a mirror of Curly's image and language, "horrid" and "charming" words she overuses echo the misogynist perspective of woman as witch (TA 13). Curly's appraisal of her as "a good investment and luscious piece of flesh," his "treasure," and her own definition of marriage and "the heavy demands of sexuality" as "part duty, part economic," typify the elimination of body (and identity) for unemotional, productive logic (TA 90,15,92). Joanie Golson, with sweat "moustache" and superior than thou disposition over Teakle, Ange, and the "poor" Eudoxia, is a man (TA 15,51). "Lump[ing] her husband in with her very considerable material possessions" or taking inventory of her purse at the end of the novel pinpoint her primary interest (TA 12). Her "Christian Science," the ability to evoke child-like emotion, has a twofold advantage: enlisting Eadith's sympathy with crocodile tears, Joanie can slip back into the cloak of martyrdom, again, an effacement of identity, but paradoxically, by descending into child-like innocence, she fulfills her desire and need to enter the unconscious state of nature (TA 365).

In The Twyborn Affair, a bit of the child is always present:

Angelos is the "68 year old child" (TA 33); Ursula Untermeyer answers to "Baby" (TA 343); Boyd Ernest Golson is called "'Curly', the little boy's nickname" (TA 13); and everyone else in the novel is distinguished at one time or another with schoolgirl giggles or naughtiness, boyishness, or, simply, childishness. To enter and exit childhood, although subconscious or even convenient, is also the price of human existence, the burden of perpetuating mores without being cognizant to their social or sexual import.

Joanie Golson's "need for tenderness, romantic sunsets, and emotional conceits of a feminine nature" are genuine aspirations for nature and the unconscious, but her perception of Eudoxia as "graceful," "radiant," and "divine" is culturally power based, the woman portrayed as model or non-entity (TA 108,14,128). To be totally immersed in nature is to achieve death through the suffocation of consciousness, but to be entirely disembodied, transcended into spirit, is to be culturally successful but physically dead. Possession, therefore, erupts from two sources: from the mother towards her child or vice-versa; or from the father towards his son. In the case of the former, whether the mother or child desires to perpetuate gestation, the relationship, incestual, is possessive because of the implication of unconsciousness, and with respect to the latter, by recruiting the son into the spiritual world, the father vindicates himself, "linear movement," in need of the "other" to survive, denies the

son life.¹ (Ideally, homosexuality is of itself, and therefore unproductive and natural, but as explained later in the Angelos/Eudoxia relationship, possessiveness is still a factor.)

Yet whichever role Joanie Golson plays, and this is the crux of the matter, either "brooding" over Curly like a mother on a "giant egg," surreptitiously playing the part of a woman next to Eadie with corked on moustache, or acting like a giggly but independent child in the rotunda with Eudoxia, she is nevertheless on the patriarchal stage (TA 20). Her identity is defined in relation to, or in defiance of, men, and her attraction to Eudoxia, although from a natural sensitivity, is inseparable from her cultural allegiance. Horrified with Angelos' enema and its sexual connotation, she flees to "Curly, honesty, [and] Australia" (TA 115). Her suspicion of Eudoxia's disguise cannot be revealed because she would be admitting to the love of a feminine man and denying her patriarchal role, the sole part available: one which demands a woman to be a model, wealthy and idle, and one which denies knowledge of the body, the role of mother reserved to Mary and immaculate conception. The only way Joanie could have sex on a regular basis with a man and retain financial security is to be like Eudoxia, a hetaira, although that identity is also a male construct.

Eudoxia's cross-dressing points to social and sexual preconceptions. Joanie Golson's labels include "daughter, ward, wife, mistress" (TA 14). All the assumptions are at least

¹Martin 71.

partially true, although so is "mother/father," depending on whether E is considered male or female guardian of the child-like Angelos. On the other hand, as a 68 year old, Angelos is certainly surrogate father to the 25 year old E, but he is also a mother figure, his sun hat making him "look like an old woman" (TA 94). If there ever was an androgynous relationship, one in which possession is at least mutual, this seems to fit the bill, but the structure of their sexual activity and Angelos' concept of women dictate otherwise.

Angelos' real mother is almost nonexistent, reduced to an idle woman "playing cards in another part of town"; Anna, his wife, is a "professional saint" and "puritan" whose only "streak of sensuality" is "kissing an archimandrite's clammy white hand"; and Stavroula, his immaculate governess/mother who perhaps occupies Angelos' natural and incestual impulses, is also relegated to being his "only true saint and woman" (TA 96,25,97, emphasis mine).

Women are set up as goddesses. The body is replaced with an image of absence, and substituted for that nothingness is the male presence.¹ Eudoxia has been "created" a "doxy," but s/he is in Angelos' eyes also a "dear boy," fulfilling the classical Greek concepts of hetaira and young, beautiful, and effeminate male lover (TA 27,30,126). Both roles, the latter vicariously, segregate women and homosexuals and reduce them to subculture status. The adult male assumes the aggressive and dominant role

¹Griffin 217-8.

in society and sexuality while the woman is accorded passivity and non-being. As hetaira Eudoxia must obviously be the passive partner, but most important to recognize is her subjugated role as boy lover. She is always "receptive," Angelos "thrusting himself against [her]" (TA 39,31). When Eddie reverts to the role of Eudoxia by dressing up in Marcia's clothes, he is "contradictorily erect, awaiting the ravishment of male thighs"; when Angelos rants about his ancient past, Eudoxia ironically protests, "My Australian arse won't take any more"; and when Eudoxia attests that their minds and bodies "fit every bump [bum] to every cranny, and quirk [queer] to quirk [queer]," the reference is not to reciprocity but to the patriarchal relationship between the Quirks (TA 282,39,23). Reg prefers a doxy to his wife Nora, and although he is cited as a "decent bloke," that endearment is also assigned to Dick (phallic pun) Norton who rapes his daughter, Dot (TA 384,247).

Angelos is a copy of his ancient predecessors: like John Vatatzes, the Bogomils, and classical Greeks, he exalts spirituality to satisfy his sexual appetite and affirm male superiority. However, without Angelos, Eudoxia cannot vent his homosexuality in a contemporary society, and he cannot assure survival without the security of his crypto-father's "pension" (TA 119).

Angelos' death seems to precipitate change, but E is channelled into roles which he cannot perform: soldier and patriarchal son. In the second section of The Twyborn Affair,

Eddie searches for homosexual expression. He avoids the "sultana [anagram: soul]," Angela [angel/s] Parsons [i.e., minister/s] and the "pierrette [i.e., stone/s]," Margaret [Mary/s] Gilchrist [s] - women who accept subjugation (TA 140). Eddie wanders into a bar, and whatever his appearance, he is labelled a "Pom, or worse, a wonk": a homosexual.¹ His next stop is at a Greek restaurant where his phallic pun on "kephtehtes," meat balls, goes unnoticed. Any memory of classical homosexuality has been blotted out. "Law" and "wedding ring[s]" have taken the cultural forefront (TA 144-6).

The overlapping of the restaurant scene and Eddie's arrival at home convey society's uniform approbation of reason over emotion, Judge Twyborn's court room of law and Marian's tennis (penis) court of marriage the ironic manifestations. Counter productivity such as Eadie's or Eddie's homosexuality or father/son closeness under a "honeycomb [come] coverlet [love]" are aberrations (TA 158). Judge Twyborn expects the social structure to be upheld and himself to be vindicated, but Eddie's option of jackeroo instead of lawyer does not sever his ties with culture in so much as it complements an exogenous search, like Voss' or Ahab's.

Eddie's first impression of the Bogong emphasizes how people, sheep-like, are both victims chained to shelled structures, and followers, patronizing a parasitic, power system that makes them ill:

¹Rodgers 165.

Everything signalled arrival. The act of getting down to open gates, even the rustiest, the more resistant, the most perversely chained, gave the stranger a sense of belonging somewhere. A mob of sheep scampering in initial fright was persuaded to turn, halt, and observe those who were possibly not the intruders of its first impression. The phalanx of sheep stood firm, some stamping, coughing, everyone of them archaic inside a carapace of what could have passed for stone wool, down to a tinge of parasite moss suffusing its general dinginess. Winter was well on the way (TA 178, emphasis mine)..

Self-expression poses such a threat to the hegemony that the individual conscience is ingrained with fear and repulsion of pleasure and the body. In Pelletier's eyes, the nude swimmer is either a "folles Anglaise" or a "pederast-poet," and equally sexually deviant is the seaside trader's own "disgusting" and "regrettable" masturbation (TA 73,76). But Pelletier is as adversely affected by the power structure he proliferates as Eddie, the imagery in the following excerpt similar to the one above:

As [M. Pelletier] strode up and down outside the kiosk, thumping his ribs with blue flippers, easing his arthritis from his limb, coaxing his circulation back, working his tortoise-neck so that the rusty chain concealed in it began to grate less audibly, the storm seemed to expire in a series of turbulent gasps in his formerly tubercular lungs (TA 71, emphasis mine).

Nature's storm is the body's coughing reaction to cultural dominance. Warring as if in a shell is the androgynous self: the masculine, represented by landscape, is "cold," "bleached," "sculpture[d]" and hard, dry, and barren with "rocks"; and the feminine, symbolized by the sea, is soft, wet, "black," and although "suicidal [like] dreams," "harrie[s]" the "scurf of dead grass" on the coastline to a "kind of life" (TA 174,175,

72,74). One is chained to the other. Eudoxia's protest to Angelos, "If I weren't emotional, you'd call me a cold fish," explicates M. Pelletier's freezing flipper arms and the "spiritual refuge" he conceives away from his wife and family (TA 37,72). Translated bluntly his penis must always be erect, only ejaculate to procreate, but never reach orgasm!

In marriage, the man demands fealty and piety from women—the abused, slave-like disciples. Mrs. Tyrell, the archetypal mother always dressed in black and at home at funerals, brags that her daughters only lost their teeth after marriage, but she herself is only left with two "fangs," having been "kicked to pieces by a football team of sons" (TA 180,183).¹ That "women is only pack 'orses" circumscribes the subservience and selflessness of mothers and their total absence of authority or identity under phallic preponderance (TA 181). In Eddie's wartime flashback of a captain and farmer's wife, the sexual encounter seems innocent but the "explos[ion]" of a "giant cookie," the image of tobacco being "rammed and rammed" inside a "stinking crater," and the equine language of the intercourse explain the futility of protest in front of a phallic cannon:

I mounted and she let me in...It was not like I was just fuckin' a Frog woman with greased thighs. I reckon we were both carried, like, beyond the idea of orgasm. Just joggun along like it was early mornun, the worst of the frost just about over. As you doze in the saddle. The light as warm and soft and yellor as the wool on a sheep's back (TA 418-9, emphasis mine).

¹The "gaps," of course, represent the body. See "The Vivisector" p. 124.

The woman's identity is always raped. Marcia Lushington, for instance, reflects the image of her husband Greg who, like Curly on his extended vacations or Judge Twyborn on his business rounds, occupies his idle time and considerable wealth on eccentric voyages. She is "of the land" and knows it as a "source of economic returns" (TA 187,248). As a man, she uses Prowse as a wife for "stud" service, and as a woman, she fulfills her role as mother to her "cherubic" husband, Greg, and to Eddie, who immerses himself in the "re-discovered womb" (TA 289,219,240). But regardless of her natural role, she is a pawn to the male hierarchy, used by Greg, Prowse, and Eddie as a hetaira for carnal gratification and as a wife for self-vindication, each fathering at least one child.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in a rather astounding treatise on homosocial bonding, traces the use of heterosexual relationships for consolidating "partnership[s] of authoritative males."¹ Women (such as Marcia) are exploited, their value, as material exchange for control over other men, is fixed on the patriarchal market.² Ideologically, this would make patriarchy homosexual, in itself unacceptable to the productivity and hegemony of that power system. Coming to mind, of course, is ancient Greek homosexuality, and in contemporary society, the "random homophobic violence" which offers the disproportionate subversion necessary to consolidate control while at the same time

¹Sedgwick 38.

²Sedgwick 51.

distorting any knowledge that male bonds are homosexual.¹

In The Twyborn Affair, Patrick White extends that logic to its ultimate circularity, postulating that homosexuality ends up being heterosexual. Marcia's attraction to Eddie's "fineness", that which Mrs. Tyrell associates with girls, is theoretically homosexual, her passive or natural self reaching inward (TA 182,185). But cultural preconceptions, Marcia's inhibition over having committed some "perversion" after Eddie alludes to his homosexuality or her disgust of Eddie's "invetera[cy]," provoke homophobia, even within the self (TA 221,228). Male or female, only the image of the aggressive male is ratified. As long as Eddie is emulating men, he is safe from corporal punishment, but when he swims "like a frog at the mercy of the current," he flaunts his passive and natural disposition, is labelled a "fuckun queen," and is raped with his face in the "chaff" by Prowse in much the same way as the captain mounts the "Frog woman" like a horse (TA 251,284,418). John A. Weigel describes the Eddie/Prowse "contact" as "rape-with-consent," but that is equivalent to contemporary, blind courtroom defence: the woman asked for it - meaning she was both wanton and requisite.² In rape, there is no consent because there is no option, and in Eddie's case, although the act is homosexual, the approbation of male/domination, female/subservience is clearly patriarchal.

¹Sedgwick 88-9.

²John A. Weigel, Patrick White (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983) 120.

"To enter or be entered" is the only non-choice, and phallic worship the only religion sanctioned (TA 314). To survive, women must eat the penis, food such as Marcia's pikelets turning into "flesh" and, after mastication, into a "trickle of cream" or "butter": ejaculation (TA 217,232). Women are always "fucked": sexually assaulted and duped, and the moth, metaphor for the penis, is "good bait" to catch the "bitches" (TA 281/328,198):¹

It's said to taste rich and nutty...Hunched above the crumpled poppy in her beige cleavage, [Marcia] had parted her lips on the strong teeth, in the gaps [body] between which the downy [limp] sacs of moths might have been disgorging [pun: gorge: eat] their nutty cream [i.e., come]. Marcia herself was not unlike a great downy moth irrationally involved in an obscene but delicious cannibalistic rite; in which she must involve some other being for his initiation or destruction (TA 219, emphasis mine).²

But of all the women in the novel, Marcia is the one who is most embroiled in male double standards. Like Mrs. Tyrell, her gaps are indicative of teeth (or the body) which have been knocked out (or eliminated), but as a moth or male with strong teeth, she demonstrates her masculine capability, most ostensibly, by keeping Prowse (his penis?) bouncing like a "ping-pong ball" (TA 294). But in her cannibalistic rite, "an appropriate trope for fellatio," her mind is being inseminated or created to reflect the male image.³ On the other hand, and this

¹All White's symbols are androgynous, and the moth or penis, by coming and limping, has the capacity to be like mother nature.

²For a review of the theoretical implications of the "gorging" vagina, see "The Vivisector" pp. 109-10.

³Martin 129. For an in-depth explanation of incest, fellatio, and cannibalism, see "Voss" pp. 22 & 44-5.

would vicariously support Sedgwick's logic; Greg's heterosexuality is theoretically homosexual because the ability to reproduce ends with his castration; which in turn is to say that even homosexual roles would not exist without patriarchal definition. The perfect example is when Prowse, anxious for reconciliation with Eddie, offers up his "passive yet quaking carcass" as a "sacrifice" (TA 296). Although Eddie is homosexual, he takes on a heterosexual role as male "vindicat[or]," and Prowse, usually the aggressive male, assumes the role of a subjugated woman (TA 296). Again, what Weigel understands as "consent" is only role modelling,¹ and because Eddie is "too passive," he becomes repelled with his act and flees Bogong (TA, 300).²

Important to note is that character in The Twyborn Affair is created fortuitously but also theoretically identical, although packaged differently by the same social structure. Eudoxia, a transvestite, encounters Angelos and becomes a hetaira; Eddie, the homosexual, rejects his father but ends up becoming a man; and Eadith, the eunuch, becomes the paradigmatic socialite wife. Like Joanie Golson (92), Marcia Lushington (283), and Ursula Untermeyer (346), Eadith never wanted to "dabble in sex" (TA 311). Her puritan abstinence, gainful disposition, and pretension to perfection, her beauty a natural asset, mirror the male image

¹Weigel 120.

²According to Rodgers 49, a "gong" is a penis. "Bogong" could mean "beautiful (beau) penis."

and predetermine her cultural superiority:

Leave alone her moral account, there was this material mansion which had taken possession of her, and which her taste was converting from a drab and musty barrack into a sequence of tantalizing glimpses [limps], perspectives [erect-ives], opening through beckoning mirrors to seduce a society determined on its own downfall [limp]. If it had not been so determined, the puritan in her might have felt more guilty. She might have taken fright if Gravenor appearing at her elbow had not suggested at intervals that he and his friends would pay from what was no more than a transformation of an ugly and unfashionable house into a thing of beauty.

So she accepted her own corruption along with everything else and started casting the play she had been engaged [ie., employed and married] to direct [pun: erect] by a management above or below Gravenor and his exalted friends... Her poor whores [Bobbie, Mercedes, and Annabel, were] a first essay in theatre. She set her sights on more subtle aids to depravity, such as would delight Gravenor's friends, and as she had to admit, Gravenor himself (TA 321, emphasis mine).

The collocation of purity and sex make Eadith the penultimate cultural "artist," simultaneously performing the roles of "abbess" and "bawd": "nun-whore" or wife (TA 323,328).

With no voice in society, women, for the sake of security, learn how to perform like slaves.¹ But they are only permitted to hold positions "under or over" (in White's language, "above or below") men and hence are always "outside the sphere of culture's hegemony" (TA 321).² As a nun, the woman is the perfect example of innocence, showing herself "incapable of learning," but when she exhibits the alternative, "carnal knowledge," she is labelled

¹Griffin 203.

²Gilbert and Gubar 19,

a whore.¹ In either case, the woman's body is isolated, nature is shunned, and the woman's super-ego becomes a mirror of the male psyche.²

Gravenor, although unassuming like Gurly Golson, Greg Lushington, or Judge Twyborn, supports the subjugating structure. Permanently erect, "Rod" is "cold," "dry," and hard ("calloused") like the Bogong landscape; he smells culturally "delicious;" and he has "orange [pun: angel/s] fur" identical to the "ape"-like and aggressive Prowse (TA 328,316,259,272,314). Marcia, sucking on her monkey fur at a restaurant, imparts women's phallic submission and characterizes Prowse's and Gravenor's clandestine use of women as whores. Eudoxia, an elite whore, is also faced with disguising herself as a nun, "wearing what could have passed for a habit," but the difference between her and Eadith is that the sexual limitation with Gravenor makes Eadith's "relationship, richer," socialites excluded from sexual activity (TA 17,408, emphasis mine).

In The Twyborn Affair, real whores (not hetairai) are sexually motivated and have little social aspiration. Lydia, a "religious" virtuoso, craves "pleasure," Annabel, also devoid of identity being an "artificial-real flower," is similarly sex starved, and Maisie, decked in "lifeless Arctic fox", and "monstrous heels," gives an "honest-to-God professional fuck" for

¹Griffin 213.

²For a discussion of the saint and whore as equivalents, see "The Vivisector" p. 116.

love (TA 330,312,362-3, emphasis mine). All to different degrees have disguises and elements of being virgin-whores, but their sexual activity coincidentally bars them from high social status. As in pornography, women's bodies, specifically Lydia's and Annabel's, are violently effaced, and Maisie, who is left destitute, is considered by Eadith to be in a better position than "housewives," the surrogate slaves (TA 369).

As a reflection of the wealthy patriarch, Eadith treats her whores like housewives. Gilbert and Gubar's concatenation of author and authority, man the god-like creator and owner of his object of art, parallels Eadith's bawdy house as her "work of art" (TA, 322).¹ "Her whores" are "jewels," "collectors' pieces" which she expects to "obey" (TA 322,327). With no identity or bodies of their own, the whores display "blank faces" and never "enjoy an orgasm," but like "politicians, butchers, [and] most artists," their "professional skill or artistic dedication doesn't prevent them expecting a material reward," the same true of housewives (TA 347,340).

But the illusion of perfection and wealth is what housewives can never accomplish and why socialites like Eadith are rewarded by men such as Gravenor. Again, Sedgwick's argument is apropos. As long as Gravenor doesn't know that his love is homosexual, he continues his homosocial bonds and subjugates subcultures. His fantasy, however, must be upheld or he would "reduce the whole baroque facade... to a rubble of colonial wattle-and-daub" (TA

¹Gilbert and Gubar 4,13.

355). But Gravenor is the "stick-in-the-mud," his penis penetrating his own depravity (TA 354). In his anonymous letter to Eadith (which excludes the possibility of response), he unconsciously affirms his belief in women's silent isolation and his own phallic superiority: "I can see your reproving face, your explosive jaw rejecting my assertion" (TA 426).

Although Eadith rejects Gravenor's approaches, she does not escape the default system which categorizes men as patriarchal fathers and women as hetairai, wives (whores), or socialites. Even when Angelos resembles an old peasant woman, or when Eadith is "invested" with the authority and arrogance of manhood" while Gravenor "meekly" dries the dishes in a "frilly waterproof apron," the structure has not experienced effacement, only mutation (TA 412, emphasis mine). In Eddie's dream of motherhood, children reject the unconsciousness of the womb; women are held "responsible for [the male's] unreasonable imprisonment"; and the penis is camouflaged by the blood (and violent subjugation) of a woman (TA 414). Any potential relationship to nature, death, or self-pleasure (i.e., homosexuality) is rationalized into a patriarchal belief in immortality and phallic creativity. That Gravenor resembles a woman is another reaffirmation of aggressive-male/passive-female roles as well as a natural extension of being, but he cannot accept androgyny without effacing his identity, although cultural "hatred and destruction" are reflexive (TA 414).

For this reason, all the cultural bigwigs, including

Gravenor, the Golsons, and Quirks, rationalize defection and inconspicuously watch the war they instigate against the body and its impurity. M. Pelletier, for instance, is "relieved when the outbreak of [Mme. Reboa's] ulcer gave him reason for ending a relationship," and Angelos' love for his enema is not a sexual clue but an obsession with keeping spiritually clean (TA 75). Joanie Golson's surveillance of Crimson Cottage, M. Pelletier's surreptitious glimpses of E swimming, and Eddie's eavesdropping on his mother and Joanie or on Marcia and Prowse all reflect patriarchal control and man as god-like voyeur. Eadith, however, best reflects the male psyche by concealing an "eye [in] each cell" of her brothel in the hope of extinguishing lust, but the corporal self can never be detached from the impurity of the body, Eadith's metaphoric boil an allusion to Mme. Reboa's ulcer:

She could not have explained how a common peep-hole becomes an omniscient eye...She would have liked to believe that, even if it did not purify, lust might burn itself out, and at the same time cauterize that infected part of the self which, from her own experience, persists like the core of a permanent boil (TA 329).

Whatever is not spiritually pure or cultural is both eschewed and randomly destroyed.¹ Denny, innocent to any social politics, is nevertheless astonishingly protective of the patriarchal family structure, reacting fiercely to Dick Norton's

¹The "permanent [anagram: erect] boil," like penis oil (come or the natural self), cannot be staunched. Also, Eadith's omniscient eye is an "ascent 'I'." She forgoes any physical pleasure (or natural limping of the penis), but her "I," a cultural, spiritual, and erect representation, ends up, ipso facto, embracing the phallus: "common peep hole": come/pee hole.

incest, but his motherly affection for his child is juxtaposed to how he is "fulfilled" and "compensated" after killing the "bloody mother" rabbit (TA 249). Violence against the anti-patriarch, women or homosexuals, is imbedded in the language. By naively referring to the mice he wants to kill as "little buggers," the mouse catcher, although as inwardly innocent as Gravenor or Denny, exposes his inbred homophobia (TA 314-5).

The patriarchal war is what flushes Eadith out of her "warren" (TA 419). She reveals her mask to Ada, dresses in men's clothing, but forgets to wipe off her make-up, in effect becoming androgynous. Walking through the "pandemonium [demon/n]"¹ of carnival (carnal) disguises in the streets of London while voyeurs peer through a "gap [body] in the star [anagram: arch]-painted ceiling" is Eddie/Eadith, her wedding march to her "mother's womb" interrupted by a shower of "metal [me tall/erect] confetti" (TA 428-9). Previously, "despair [pair/androgyny] running in the right direction [erection]" has simply guaranteed a role within patriarchy; now "despair running in the wrong direction" is caused by flaunting matriarchal preference; but the result is always death: to be totally spiritual effaces the body and to be totally natural erases life itself (TA 376,429).²

Band-aids are among the exotic items the brothel keepers hord and are Eddie Twyborn's last request. Although he accept

¹For an account of the body as devil, see "The Vivisector" p. 111.

²For a more detailed explanation, see "Voss" p. 9.

androgyny, he can never totally accept death in the womb and therefore reaches back for spiritual identity. The bandaid, like Mme Reboa's bandage, covers up the excrescences and natural decay of the body to which culture is so averse.

Eadie, also a homosexual, seems to accept E as both son and daughter, prescribing her own doom. Her androgynous identity, however, is culturally demarcated. Visions of drying her hair with Eddie after a shampoo can be understood in terms of Mrs. Tyrell and her mother who never wash the natural filth from their hair. As well, Eadie unconsciously slips when she associates Eddie/Eadith, an "interchangeable failure," with a "man's hands" able to stop up a drizzling tap: a penis (TA 431, emphasis mine). The images relate to water, the sea where Eudoxia/Eddie is immersed in nature and death, and to dryness - Bogong, where Eddie is trained to be a cultural, spiritual, erect man. Although Eadie is sincere, she does not understand the politics of language and apparently innocent social activity.

Preconceptions insure male domination, and in the last paragraph of the novel, the abundant masculine pronouns, vindictive laughter, and spiritual ascendance hide ejaculation and stress patriarchal control:

[Eadie] loved the birds [phallus]. As she dried her hair and waited, a bulbul [bull/s] was perched [erected: also pun, arched] on the rim of the stone bird-bath, dipping [pun: dripping/coming] his beak. Ruffling his feathers, he cocked his head at her, shook his little velvet jester's cap [i.e., cockscomb], and raised [erected] his beak towards the sun [male/s] (TA 432).

Patrick White's novels are confusing because his art is a

perfect reflection of a society which thrives on what is "tried and true." All the characters in The Twyborn Affair also perpetuate the same pseudo-morals. There is no real god or super-consciousness in the novel to confer with the reader or critic to insure that meaning is properly transferred from the page to the mind. Irony is a rather diluted term to describe White's method of evoking the satiric message behind a dominating structure that has so completely brainwashed the masses that even intellectuals ~~perceive chaotic writing within~~ The Twyborn Affair.¹

E's homosexuality can never be justified in terms of the roles handed down by a patriarchal society, and his passivity can only be channelled into women's stereotypes. Whether hetaira, whore, or socialite, the woman is a materialized subculture. The backlash, however, is that males, such as M. Pelletier, staunch their personal expression and end up within a shell separated from potential harmony.

Any human concord must be prefigured by a self willing to accept androgyny's natural and cultural being, and any new novel on the market today must contend (or at least rethink) the conflicts manifest in man's fall; or The Twyborn Affair will forever stand as both eccentric and esoteric.

¹See Weigel 124-5 for a listing.

Conclusion

Patrick White leaves no leaf unturned, and each microscopic slide offers a multi-dimensional biology. If nature is womb-like, physical, and matriarchal, and spirit is word-like, cultural, and patriarchal, then human beings are androgynous. This is the primary premise of Patrick White's novels, although his vision is of a prejudiced society in a perpetual struggle to discount the body and nature. White exposes the mutations of a power system out of control but in control of the flesh. His sexual politics point to the contradictions of "accepted" values, and he submits astonishing new insights on pornography, saints, whores, transvestites, socialites, and homosexuals. Meanwhile, Freud and Jung turn in their graves, mythical figures loom in tableaux, and Christ's words echo from the cross. White's opus is at the crossroads of psychological, historical, feminist, linguistic, and religious theory.

The problem for any student of White is the organization of this vast cross section of reference, particularly when an ironic voice whispers opposites. Without recognition of the pun and anagram, understanding White's fiction is all but impossible. What comes across as a transcendent harmony is a phallogocentric chaos, and what seems rational is rationale. The foundation of all the characters' interpretations (i.e., Hurtle's art, Voss' decision to trek across the desert, or Laura's tunnel vision of

self-sacrifice) is culture's conscious and conscience, although the cement of that is the "word's" structuralism. There is no escape; there is only the walled "o" (Waldo) - in which Arthur or Eudoxia/Eddie/Eadith find themselves immured. But recognition of the "gaps" (or body) between the letters expose patriarchy's spiritual prejudice and sexual politics and allow for a potential flesh/spirit balance.

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