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Abbreviations and editions of Patrick White's short stories cited in the thesis:

BO The Burnt Ones. 1964; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968.

C The Cockatoos. New York: Viking Press, 1974.

CHAPTER 1

Challenging the Social Myths

The social satire found in the short stories of Patrick White extends our understanding both of society and of mankind. The two volumes of stories published to date, The Burnt Ones (1964) and The Cockatoos (1974), reveal the Australian milieu with accuracy and penetrating insight. Many stories are sceptical of the values and traditions of modern society, sharply critical of the status-climbers and the materialists. White satirizes the snobbish and the greedy, yet sympathizes with those poor unfortunates who find themselves in an alien culture.

Chapter One discusses the short stories as they illuminate dominant myths about Australian society. White uses the techniques of satire and irony to criticize the simplistic beliefs in mateship, the cult of masculinity and the creed of egalitarianism. Chapter Two analyzes some of the comic and stylistic devices through which White gains satirical effect. By irony and cynical wit he ridicules social behaviour. The third chapter discusses the satirical targets in more detail, particularly his diatribes against the conformity and mediocrity of suburban life. In many stories he exposes the barrenness of those people who see no use for the life of the imagination. A major

theme of failed relationships is discussed in Chapter Four. White indicts shallow wives, inadequate husbands, and possessive mothers who have a malevolent influence on the happiness of their children. The final chapter examines the coexistence of bitterness and compassion in White's satire.

The cherished myth of mateship is exposed as sham in White's fiction.[1] His perception into the human condition reveals characters who are far removed from the stereotype of the easy-going Australian ready to make any sacrifice for a "mate." In general, White concentrates on the relationships of marriage rather than on male friendships and loyalties. In "A Woman's Hand," the mateship is a little sentimentalized. The sympathetic bond forged between Clem Dowson and Harold Fazackerley as schoolboys is still present in a tenuous way when they meet years later at Bandana Beach. As a boy Harold could confide in Clem, showing him treasured poems which he hid from the other boys, but their later friendship is much more superficial. Harold's wife, Evelyn, is the interloper who will not allow the friendship to develop. White deftly illustrates her jealous nature whenever Dowson seems likely to communicate with her husband. When Dowson explains to Harold how he spends his time, Evelyn knows that her presence is superfluous:

"I sit and watch the ocean," he answered Harold straight.

Harold appeared to find it a perfectly normal reply, and a gust of breath rose in Evelyn's throat as though to protest against an immoral act.

"But it's so empty. Most of the time, anyway. Except for some uninteresting ship. Ships are only interesting when you're in them," she managed to gasp.

Neither of the men noticed her.

"You're lucky to know how," Harold continued. Evelyn mightn't have been in the room. (C 18)

Evelyn is well aware that her superficiality grates on the honest simplicity of Dowson. White shows us Evelyn at her silliest on a visit to Dowson and his new wife when she enthuses over the marvellous sunsets to be seen out to sea. The Dowsons patiently explain that the sun sets in the opposite direction but that they enjoy the sunrise over the sea.

Evelyn finds the empathy between her husband and Clem Dowson disturbing. She tries to undermine Harold's confidence by suggesting that Dowson must be a homosexual because he worked on ships. He is vilified because he does not rank on Evelyn's social scale. In a revealing exchange, White indicates the basic difference in the outlook of the Fazackerleys:

"But what was he?" she asked. "A ship's engineer! Who retired to an Australian beach. And what? And nothing!"

"He probably hasn't lived a life of any interest himself. But absorbs—and reflects—experience."

Harold was almost choking on his own words. In the end he took out his pipe. (C 42)

When these ploys do not work, Evelyn meddles in Dowson's affairs until she achieves her dubious success with the marriage of Clem to Nesta Pine. Harold is so

spiritless that he complies with his wife's wishes although he has a premonition that Dowson will be suffocated in a marriage. He knows the truth about his domineering wife yet feels some kind of responsibility because he has helped to create her. Throughout the story, White demonstrates that there is some truth in the comment of an elderly lady they meet on holidays: "Anyone can see you are such mates"(C 93).

White writes perceptively of the "mateship" between another long married couple in "Five-Twenty." Ella Natwick always humours her husband, especially when he becomes an irritable invalid confined to a wheel-chair: "She laughed to keep him company. They were such mates, everybody said. And it was true. She didn't know what she would do if Royal passed on first" (C 170). Ella thinks of her husband as a Lochinvar who has rescued her from an unhappy spinsterhood. Her memories seem rather pathetic beside the reality of her grumbling sufferer. White shows this clearly when Ella hurries to pick up a newspaper Royal has dropped beside his sick-bed:

> But she couldn't distract him from her shortcomings; he was shaking the paper at her. "Haven't you lived with me long enough to know how to treat a newspaper?"
> He hit it with his set hand, and certainly the paper looked a mess, like an old white battered brolly.
> "Mucked up! You gotter keep the pages aligned. A paper's not readable otherwise. Of course you wouldn't understand because you don't read it, without it's to see who's died." He began to cough.
> (C 181)

A well-meaning customer in their shop had once told Ella that her husband was a "selfish, swollen-headed slob who'll chew you up and swallow you down"(C 177). His prediction proves accurate. The true principles of friendship such as selflessness, devotion and companionship are to be found only in the woman.

White uses a surrealistic technique to display Ella's grief after Royal's death. She hallucinates about a disfigured man who drives past the house regularly at five-twenty in his pink Holden. Instead of relieving her suffering, her imaginary involvement with the man adds to her pain. Even without knowing his name, Ella decides that she must have killed him by an excess of adulterous love. She cannot find a mate to replace her dead husband.

In "Dead Roses," the early friendship between Hessell Mortlock and Bill Scudamore is simply an embarrassing memory when they meet later. Bill is now clear-sighted about his former friend, and uneasy at the thought of a liason between Mortlock and his daughter Anthea. We slowly learn of Mortlock's insensitivity and miserliness through oblique references. For example, Anthea eavesdrops on a conversation between her parents which should have put her on guard:

> "He's your friend," Mummy was saying.
> "The old coot! Can't think what I ever saw in him."
> "But a successful man. Of some distinction."
> "Flattered a poor Brisbane clot."
> "And so considerate. Very few men of Mr Mortlock's age would take trouble with a young girl." (BO 37)

A mocking burlesque of mateship is depicted in Riders in the Chariot when Blue and his gang pretend to crucify the Jew Himmelfarb. Blue feels confident amongst his mates, knowing that he can guide their viciousness to his own ends. Blue's mother has planted the seed of the crucifixion idea into his mind. White shows that Mrs Flack and her friend Mrs Jolley can be regarded as mates in their sisterhood of evil. They sit together and fan the fires of gossip about the mysterious Jew, using him as a scapegoat for their own fears and frustrations. Himmelfarb is hated because he cannot and will not join their easy mateship. He horrifies his workmates by telling them that he will take Providence as his mate. Himmelfarb is sceptical of a brotherhood of men which may renounce him at will. The ideals of mateship which were supposed to have flourished in the loneliness of the bush or under the stresses of war do not thrive in modern society.[2]

The myth of masculine supremacy is closely linked with mateship. Aggressiveness, physical prowess and vigour are regarded in Australia as admirable masculine characteristics whereas shyness, delicacy and effeminacy provoke suspicion. Patrick White's male characters do not meet the popular requirements of virility. Ironically, the strong and predatory females exhibit the characteristics of the national male stereotype. In many of White's stories the timidity of the male

characters is paralleled by overbearing females. In "The Night the Prowler," a young girl is threatened with rape but she quickly reverses the roles and assaults the would-be rapist. The intruder, a small man, is terrified by her violence and begs to be left alone. Outraged by his impotence, Felicity Bannister hits the prowler until he groans for mercy. After sexually attacking him, Felicity forces the man to drink brandy and to smoke a cigar. The frightening prowler shrinks to comic proportions as we find out that he is an impotent, non-smoking teetotaller.

All her father's lectures on the sacredness of virginity have only served to make Felicity more rebellious. Glad of the excuse to break the engagement with her colourless fiancé, she tries to mortify herself by revelling in acts of shame and humiliation. Felicity reacts violently against the passive, feminine self created by her parents. By rampaging through prosperous homes, she attacks the bourgeois respectability of her own parents. White captures her bitterness when she smashes the photograph of an unknown man resembling her father: "In the end she was forced to break the glass protecting the expertly shaven smile of all soft, fleshy, successful men. The smile she tore like pasteboard. All men were soft"(C 151). White imaginatively illustrates the girl's rejection of the flaccid models she has been taught to respect.

In "Miss Slattery and Her Demon Lover," Miss Slattery literally wields the whip-hand over her Hungarian lover. At first she regards Tibby Szabo as an "odd, continental number" with strange European manners, a funny accent, and a humorous name. She is more impressed with his luxurious furnishings, the glass ceiling, the mink coverlet and the marble floors, than with the man himself. Miss Slattery quickly becomes the dominant partner in their relationship after a hilarious incident at a party. A grazier's skill with a stock-whip impresses the guests but his performance palls beside Miss Slattery's exhibition. The uncoiling of the whip brings back memories of her childhood and a surrealistic scene takes place with Miss Slattery stripped to the waist:

> Then, suddenly, Miss Slattery cracked, scattering the full room. She filled it with shrieks, disgust, and admiration. The horsehair gadfly stung the air. Miss Slattery cracked an abstract painting off the wall. She cracked a cork out of a bottle.
> "Brafo, Petuska!" Tibby Szabo shouted. "Vas you efer in a tseerkoos?"
> He was sitting forward.
> "Yeah," she said, "a Hungarian one!"
> And let the horsehair curl round Tibby's thigh.
> (BO 220)

Tibby is enthralled and urges her into a sado-masochistic relationship. White comically describes the progression of the affair as Miss Slattery complains that her arm muscle is growing larger as she satisfies her lover's obsession. Tiring of her role, she rejects the chubby Hungarian for a more conventional life. Sick of

whipping Tibby's fat buttocks, Miss Slattery plans to find a thin Australian who has none of the Hungarian's fetishes. The crack of the stockwhip had intoxicated Miss Slattery, reminding her of a childhood spent in the country. Her obvious delight in flailing the whip comically contrasts with Tibby's crooning of a folksong describing her as a "dear little dove"(BO 221). Both Miss Slattery and Tibby Szabo possess a combination of sadistic and masochistic traits.

The possessive Mrs Polkinghorn of "The Letters" dominates her son Charles, treating the fifty year old man as if he were a child. When Charles does finally revert to childhood, the mother is horrified: "As soon as he began to nuzzle at her, Mrs Polkinghorn threw him off. How did she deserve? Ever! Her beastly, her unnatural child!"(BO 241) She cannot understand her son's anguish or the growing disintegration which eventually leads to a complete breakdown.

White's physical description of Charles underlines his vulnerability. The narrow shoulders, thin waist and narrow dome of the head suggest Charles' frailty. In comparison, the fragility of Mrs Polkinghorn is merely superficial. The imagery of the roses shows her in her true role of executioner: "Presently she went down into the garden into the dew and spider-webs. She liked to visit it before the heat, to sever the

heads of roses. Thorns would tear at her silken wings, of a rose colour too, but she always won in the end"(BO 237).

Charles withdraws from life to protect himself from the fears which threaten to engulf him. His obsession with the letters is filled with macabre humour and suspense. The words seem to spring to life as Charles opens innocuous letters, threatening his existence. A harmless circular from a lawnmower manufacturer becomes a real machine flailing too close to Charles. He becomes the antithesis of a confident, relaxed man in control of his surroundings. White describes Charles' approaching breakdown as his mother changes into a feared machine: "her face had become a circular saw, teeth whirling, eyes blurred into the steel disc"(BO 240).

In "Clay," another misfit son and a domineering mother belie the myth of male supremacy. Clay moons around the house as a child, listening to his mother's continual moaning. A vivid dream about a dead cloud which lived under the sea provokes an angry outburst from Mrs Skerrit who fears her son is abnormal. To cure his behaviour she orders Clay's hair to be shorn close. Ironically, this encourages the neighbourhood children to beat him up with an old shoe because of his oddity. The recurring image of the shoe emphasizes the obsession of Clay's life. He is magnetized by a white bridal show which he has seen in his mother's wedding

photograph.

. Clay's freakishness becomes more pronounced with age. An interest in poetry leads him to create a mysterious greenish-yellow being called Lova. At first Lova is more plant-like than human yet Clay finds her appealing beside the grey dullness of his wife. White shows that Clay's sick imagination sometimes verges on the ludicrous, especially when Lova suffers from halitosis and herpes. Gradually Clay becomes afraid of his Frankenstein creation. In the beginning Lova stays quietly inside the room where he writes poetry, inspiring his literary efforts. His creativity is reduced to a jumble of words: "At last my ryvita has turned to velveeta life is no longer a toast-rack" (BO 129). The rambling poetry makes sense only to Clay's confused mind. It satirizes the kind of literature which promises some profound insight yet lacks any real aesthetic merit. The everyday objects appear banal and comical when used to convey the intensity of Clay's feeling about life. The profundity is superficial, the thought meaningless. Clay's delusions become more grotesque and frightening until finally the siren creature lures him to his death. White's portrait of Clay is in direct contrast to the stereotype of the unfettered, ebullient Australian male.

The male characters in "Dead Roses" also help to dispel the myth of masculine supremacy. Bill Scudamore is portrayed as a shadowy figure, withdrawn from the life of his family: "a wry, skinny, silent man, who rose late, and breakfasted principally off newspapers. Late in the afternoon he would dawdle down to the Clarion office, and return to a refrigerator phase of life after the others had gone to bed"(BO 13-14). White shows convincingly that it is Mrs Scudamore who controls the power in the household, especially over the upbringing of her daughter Anthea. Although Bill Scudamore refuses to flatter his wife's social pretensions he does not intervene to save his daughter from marrying the desiccated businessman. Anthea's father finally escapes from the frustrating responsibilities of life through suicide.

Hessell Mortlock's appeal soon wanes as his new wife learns of his niggardliness. At first she does not recognize the tell-tale signs of his meanness: the second-hand roses, the re-set engagement ring. Anthea soon comes to see that his policy of moderation is simply stinginess. Entering Mortlock's home as a bride, Anthea finds the rooms filled with bowls of brown, dead roses, symbols of death and decay. She begins to understand why Mortlock's two previous wives and his sister had deserted. She heaves and strains to help her husband with the heavy gardening chores because she feels there must be some suffering to ensure her continued happiness:

'"Who wouldn't remain independent," Hessell Mortlock once remarked, "of all, bludging, hired labour!"'(BO 57) He is caricatured as a mealy-mouthed miser yet, ironically, Anthea benefits from his meanness by becoming a rich widow.

Barry Flegg in "Dead Roses" is drawn as a Pan figure, the personification of natural forces and instincts. He and Anthea meet as house-guests on an island where their characters are exposed in sharp relief. Anthea is timid about enjoying any experience which has not been sanctioned by her mother. Flegg is sophisticated and at ease with his sensuousness. He happily feeds the wild possums while Anthea feels threatened by the physical contact. On this occasion she is relieved at the chance of escape provided by her mother's nightly telephone calls.

During the stay on the island Anthea barges in on Barry Flegg as he lies sunbathing naked. Part of her feels attracted, yet she cannot rid herself of shyness and embarrassment. White makes the attempted seduction of Anthea seem slightly ridiculous. Although Flegg's masculinity is exaggerated, he is flawed by priggishness. This becomes evident when he explains his common origins like a self-conscious Mellors: "Dad's the stationmaster at Buckleboo. Mother used to clean out the toilets at the Black Bull before she married. They're

a bloody boring pair, but good"(BO 28). He treats Anthea as if she were an unruly child, suggesting that sexual relations would be just the course a Vocational Guidance Officer would prescribe. He bungles the seduction because Anthea breaks away in moral outrage, offended that she has not been treated with due respect. Many years later she meets Flegg surrounded by his family in Greece. He has lost the Lawrentian fire and seems like any jaded tourist trekking across Europe with a van-load of children. Anthea is smugly pleased at her new superiority because the memory of her former naiveté still rankles:

> While her hostess was boiling a battered aluminium kettle on a primus stove and buttering enough slabs of bread, the Flegg family disposed of themselves all around. A stool was produced for Mrs Mortlock, who was glad of it—on account of her dress. So there she sat, all of them looking up to her, and she began to accept it as her due. (BO 71)

White does not give Anthea long to exercise her regality before reducing her to a rather sad, middle-aged traveller.

Overt masculinity in Australian society is satirized in "The Cockatoos" through the fears of Mr Goodenough who thinks his son is unmanly when he simply shows a glimmer of sensitivity. He cannot see why Tim is entranced by the tinge of amethyst in an antique bottle: "It troubled the father: what if the boy turned out a nut? or worse, a poof—or artist?(C 267) It is

both amusing and ironical that he would prefer Tim to become a madman rather than a homosexual or an artist.[3] The boy wants to prove his masculinity early. He tests himself by cutting a cross on his arm and by screwing up the courage to spend a night alone in the park. His latent violence surfaces as he kills the defenceless cockatoo. In this episode White seems to suggest that the boy attains some aura of masculinity in his own eyes but it is gained at the expense of compassion. Tim shows no pity as he repeatedly hits the bird, even scalping it for the yellow crest.

There are few people in Tim's neighbourhood who can provide him with a model of behaviour. Mick Davoren, for example, is described as a failed man, yearning for his memories of the past. Mick found most satisfaction from the years spent as a sergeant-pilot in the Middle East during the war. He finds a similar freedom as an interstate bus-driver, enjoying the long trips and the flirting with the passengers. When the story opens, Mick is a door-to-door salesman, hawking around a miracle patent tin-opener. The arrival of the shrieking, boisterous birds injects new life into his existence. He becomes very possessive about the cockatoos, especially when his mistress tries to seduce the birds away. The cockatoos seem to represent all the wildness and freedom his suburban life lacks.

For years the Davorens had communicated only by written messages. Strangely, the birds reunite them: "they had discovered in this other silence the art of speech. Once he touched the back of one of her hands with an index finger, pointing out nothing they didn't already share"(C 292-293). For a short time they share a reverence and admiration for the birds until Mick is accidentally shot whilst trying to defend them. Both Mick and the young boy are aware that there is something mystical and magical about the presence of the cockatoos.

Another myth exploded by Patrick White in the stories is the popular Australian belief in egalitarianism. White's stories are filled with examples of snobbery, prejudice and bigotry. He is intensely aware of the complex relations between class, status, prestige and power. Snobbery still thrives in Australia and the social hierarchy has not been destroyed.[4] White's stories indicate that affluence and competitiveness have become the new creed of a materialistic society.

The social pretensions of Mrs Scudamore are satirized in "Dead Roses" when she pathetically reminds her daughter Anthea to feel confident as a guest because the family name appears in the social register. Once Mr Scudamore dies she is afraid to move into a smaller home in case her friends will stop visiting. She anticipates social discrimination after her daughter has separated

from Mortlock. Once Anthea inherits the fortune, her mother feels much more secure. She cannot believe that her daughter may not accept the money. Mrs Scudamore points out that Anthea served him loyally for ten years: "'But it is all yours,' her mother almost shouted, 'the whole quarter of a million—less what the probate people grab'"(BO 64). Anthea learns to recognize her mother's snobbishness yet later she adopts the same prejudices. White indicates this when she meets the Flegg family in Greece and is eager to buy the children expensive presents to demonstrate her wealth and superiority. A marked contrast is made between the two women: Anthea in her elegant, white dress and the relaxed Mrs Flegg in her stained leopard-skin pants. The narrator's sympathy remains aloof from both women.

Bigotry and status-climbing is attacked in "Down at the Dump." In this story Myrtle Hogben reacts to her sister's funeral as if it were a social outing intended to impress the neighbours. She judges the social standing of the mourners, pleased at the presence of a councillor but mortified at the appearance of an old vagrant. Myrtle is almost relieved at her sister's death, glad to be rid of the embarrassment she caused. Humiliated and angry, Myrtle forgets the real reason for being at the graveside:

> Myrtle Hogben was ropeable, if only because of what Councillor Last must think. She would have liked to express her feelings in words, if she could have done so without giving offence to God.

> Then the ants ran up her legs, for she was standing on a nest, and her body cringed before the teeming injustices. (BO 299)

Her mortification is complete when she leaves the ceremony and finds her daughter kissing the son of her undesirable neighbours.

In "A Woman's Hand," Evelyn Fazackerley is the epitome of snobbery. She is particularly envious of the title and property of a former employer, Lady Win Burd. The bitter memories of her early gaucherie are not easily forgotten and she is maliciously pleased once the Burds lose their wealth. Evelyn's insecurity is amusingly described by White: "'Oh no, Sir Dudley,' she might say. 'Thank you. Really. I'd rather not. Well, you see, not every Australian girl is at home on a horse. Just as,' she added with a little giggle, 'not every Australian speaks with an accent'"(C 25). It seems unfair to Evelyn that Sir Dudley Burd can sprinkle his speech with crudities whereas she is preoccupied with losing her accent.

Years later Evelyn plans to send Win Burd a discarded dress, happy to think of her own patronizing kindness. She feels both envious and condescending about Nesta Pine because of her superior social connections. Evelyn's foolishness is satirized when she admires Nesta's brooch. Her faux pas is exposed when Nesta explains that the jewellery was not a gift from the Princess but bought from an Italian souvenir shop. Preoccupation with

possessions does not alter as Evelyn grows older. On a vacation at a tourist hotel she immediately cultivates the wealthy widow of a grazier. Mrs Haggart's attraction lies in the chauffeur, the Cadillac, the diamonds and the kolinsky cape. White's technique of building up the details of Evelyn's status-seeking is very effective. After hearing of Clem Dowson's tragic death, Evelyn murmurs her regrets yet her emotion is short-lived. Her shallow nature is struck by the newspaper's revelation that Dowson was a member of the Perrotet family. She is more impressed with Clem's social standing and quite oblivious of the part her meddling has played in his suicide.

White's scepticism of egalitarianism can be noted in Riders in the Chariot when the foreman of the Brighta Bicycle factory reproves Himmelfarb for not possessing the easy familiarity of his co-workers: "'Something you will never learn, Mick, is that I am Ernie to every cove present. That is you included. No man is better than another. It was still early days when Australians found that out.'"[5] Ironically, these words are spoken directly after the attempt to crucify the Jew. Superficial friendliness cannot conceal the emptiness of Ernie's boast. The so-called classless society relies on conformity and uniformity.

Some of White's stories reveal a debased mateship in which friendship is based on self-interest rather than on principles of loyalty. Both Harold Fazackerley in "A

Woman's Hand" and Bill Scudamore in "Dead Roses" cannot recapture youthful friendships. White concentrates his attack on the dependent relationship of marriage, mocking the Mortlocks, the Fazackerleys and the Natwicks for their cruel parody of mateship.

White erodes the concept of the dominant male because his characters are usually haunted by some personal vision while the females make all the decisions. The feeble, afflicted Charles Polkinghorn or Clay indicate the way in which aggressive women have nurtured the Oedipus conflict in their sons. Both "The Night the Prowler" and "Miss Slattery and Her Demon Lover" portray young women whose vigour makes the male characters seem effete in comparison.

The wide range of social types who appear in the short stories ridicules the stress on equality in Australian life. White portrays a cross-section of people ranging from the Fazackerleys, who struggle to maintain a genteel standard of living, to the Hogbens with their grasping materialism. "Down at the Dump" strikingly depicts the social hierarchy of Australia. The Whalleys are at the bottom of the scale despite their debt-laden Customline; the Hogbens are bound in middle-class respectability, anxious to rise on the social scale. The Bannisters of "The Night the Prowler" are more secure in their wealth and status although they are

aware that the scandal of rape can affect their prestige. White presents a few unusual characters who refuse to fit into any social divisions. Felicity Bannister actively questions the assumptions of society; Clem Dowson unsuccessfully tries to maintain his solitude. Neither is interested in status-climbing or the march of material progress.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. Russel Ward explores the origins of mateship in The Australian Legend (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958).

2. C.E.W.Bean, The Story of Anzac: The First Phase, vol. 1 of The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 (Sydney, 1937), pp.6-7:

   "The typical Australian . . . was seldom religious in the sense in which the word is generally used. So far as he held a prevailing creed, it was a romantic one inherited from the gold-miner and the bush-man, of which the chief article was that a man should at all times and at any cost stand by his mate. That was and is the one law which the good Australian must never break. It is bred in the child and stays with him through life."

3. The studied abuse and mockery levelled at homosexuals is described in Craig McGregor's Profile of Australia (Hodder & Stoughton, 1966), p.62.

4. Donald Horne claims that "the belief in social hierarchy has been destroyed" (The Next Australia, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1970, p.104). Cf. McGregor:

   "The predominant sentiment of Australian society has always been egalitarian, but the society itself has never been so: there have always been fairly rigid class divisions, right from the first divisions between convicts and overseers, exclusivists and populists"(p.97).

5. Patrick White, Riders in the Chariot (1961; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), p.308.

CHAPTER 11

White's Ironic Vision

This chapter will discuss some of the techniques of satire which are relevant to White's short stories, especially the devices of wit, irony, parody and exaggeration. The mood is not always satiric, but White is frequently concerned with ridiculing insensitivity, status-climbing, and social snobbery.

White's critical attitude in the stories is neither savage indictment nor genial mockery of society's ills. Ronald Paulson has made some interesting observations about the different kinds of satirical tone, identifying the critical attitudes of Horace and Juvenal:

> With Horace the reader's experience is to feel complicity in the guilt; with Juvenal it is to feel repugnance at the evil. Satire always strives towards one or the other of these experiences: oneness with, or separateness from, the evil; complicity and guilt, or outrage; action directed toward oneself, or toward others; punishment of the guilty, or persecution of the innocent. Ultimately, as representation, they amount to the imitation of the foolish or evil man experiencing himself, or the morally sensitive man experiencing folly or evil.1

Patrick White appears to have the objectivity of Horace rather than the indignant concern of Juvenal. Sometimes it is possible to identify with the deviant he portrays and make some kind of self-discovery. More often, the reader feels detached from (even morally superior to) the

vices and follies presented. White's fiction is pervaded by a critical spirit which tends to be more detached than involved. In "Dead Roses" much of the satire is directed towards Mrs. Scudamore who has enveloped her daughter in a cocoon of respectability, protecting her from experiencing reality. At the island, the guests sit around after dinner, listening with detached amusement to the ritual telephone call from Anthea's mother. The conversation relayed from the mainland appears quite foreign to the life Anthea leads on the island. While Anthea's arms are growing red and chapped from the hunting, rowing and fishing, Mrs. Scudamore grumbles about the undersirability of dry skin. The other house-guests are also satirized by White. They secretly laugh at Anthea's naiveté yet their superiority is unfounded. Val Tulloch's guest list for the house-party at the island is planned with skilful strategy: the Furfields are invited because they are "good value"; Barry Flegg may bring about a change in Anthea (BO 11). She plots the scenario but her arrangements are undone when Anthea is recalled home by her mother.

The critical note of satire mocks the trite philosophizing and complacency of Mrs. Scudamore. She inhabits a world of clichés, rarely allowing reality to intrude. White pokes fun at her shallow belief in

happiness. Insulated in her bourgeois life, Mrs Scudamore sees no reason why anyone else should be unhappy. From her point of vantage the people who complain must be either morbid or neurotic, "if they were well provided for, and of a happy social level"(BO 12). Anthea is treated more sympathetically as she tries to survive the years of marriage to the hypocritical Hessell Mortlock. Pathetically, Anthea attempts to persuade herself that the sexless wedding night represents the ideal of happiness:

> The Mortlocks lay beside each other in the Beard Watson bed.
>
> He said, after putting his hand over hers, as though remembering she was a young girl: "We ought to get a good night's sleep. It's late. Then we'll wake fresher tomorrow."
>
> It was very reasonable.
>
> So she shuddered deeper into the unaired sheets, into an unexpected roughness, and recalled how she had escaped, by that same grace of reason, the brutality of sand.
>
> Mrs Mortlock cried very briefly and furtively for the happiness she was experiencing. (BO 45)

While we may laugh at her foolishness, we are aware of the pathos of her situation.

An ethical standard is one of the characteristics of satire. It assumes moral norms against which moral standards can be measured. In Gilbert Highet's view the purpose of satire is to describe vividly an object of attack so that the reader will be shocked into a perception of the moral truth, feeling an emotion which is a blend of amusement and contempt.[2] Hopefully, the reader will agree with the ethical assumptions of the

author. Some kind of moral judgement is implied in the very selection of an object of attack. Thus White ridicules Mrs Bannister in "The Night the Prowler" by clearly describing her shortcomings. Throughout the story we can be alternately amused at her social pretensions and contemptuous of her malevolent influence on her daughter, Felicity. Ethically, we reject Mrs Bannister's selfishness which prevents her from understanding Felicity's deep dissatisfaction and unhappiness. White offers some moral standpoint although this may not necessarily be related to his personal opinion.

White's satire implies some kind of ethical standard but he does not offer positive advice. There are few characters in the short stories who embody ideals of virtue or compassion. One of the exceptions is Daise Morrow of "Down at the Dump" who seems to illustrate the loving and sensuous aspects of life. She is considered a woman of loose morals by most of the residents of Sarsaparilla yet White suggests that she is simply warm and compassionate. He describes how she found old Ossie Coogan as he lay in a dirty horse-stall. Daise takes pity on the old man and trundles him home in her wheel-barrow, oblivious to the stares of the people along the road. She nurses Ossie without any thought of reward, directed only by her sincere

compassion.

White is not offering solutions to the problems he sees. He may lambast those who lack sensitivity and charity yet he is not bound to show how these faults should be corrected. Leonard Feinberg has neatly outlined some of the positive achievements of satire which could be related to White's short stories:

> By reading satire, one can see the ubiquity of social criticism. He may develop a sensitivity to subtlety. He will be constantly reminded that the conventional picture of the world is, to varying degrees, a false picture. Such reappraisal is refreshing and stimulating and healthy. These things good satire achieves. They are not mean achievements.[3]

White reminds us that the world of Mrs Hogben with its plaster gnomes and plastic ethics deserves close criticism.

Another essential characteristic of satire is described by Northrop Frye as "wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd."[4] "Clay" relies heavily on a blend of humour with a sense of the grotesque. Clay escapes from the tyranny of his mother's hold for a brief period although he quickly transfers his obsession to the bizarre Lova. Like his mother, Lova becomes increasingly dominant and possessive. Her visit to Clay's office is an exercise in vulgarity. As Clay becomes more embarrassed, Lova becomes more coarse. At first she plays some jazz on the piano but just when Clay thinks her performance is at an end: "She began to drum with her bum on the greasy buckled-up rashers of

keys of the salt-cured piano"(BO 132). The scene becomes even more ridiculous when we realize that Clay has created his own suffering: Lova is non-existent, the piano merely a lost item in his correspondence. The nightmare comes to an end yet his mother's image is finally triumphant. Clay's wife finds him lying dead clasping his mother's old wedding shoe:

> "I never ever saw a shoe!" she moaned. "Of all the junk she put away, just about every bit of her, and canaries and things, never a shoe."
> As Clay lay.
> With that stiff shoe.
> "I don't believe it!" Marj cried.
> Because everyone knows that what isn't isn't, even when it is. (BO 135)

The grotesque quality of the end of the story almost destroys the traces of humour.

Exaggeration, a form of the grotesque, is one of the main tools of White as a satirist. It may appear as the odd or the incongruous such as the extreme behaviour of Felicity Bannister or Clay as they reject the values of their parents. Their reactions to dominating parents are magnified to intensify the nature of their problem. The strangeness of Clay contrasts strongly with the ordinariness of his wife. While Clay wrestles with the difficulty of poetry writing, Marj worries about the flabby turnips sold by the local greengrocer. Exaggeration may appear as caricature in the form of Miss Slattery or Miss Docker who are ridiculed for comic or

satiric effect. White does not always present a realistic portrayal of emotions or characters. His satire is intended to instil a certain response in the reader; verisimilitude is of secondary importance.

White's use of exaggeration in the form of caricature is clearly seen in "Miss Slattery and Her Demon Lover." Tibor Szabo is represented as a comical foreigner who despises Australia's lack of civilization; Miss Slattery as a blunt, forthright Australian girl. White satirizes the opposing clash of manners between the extravagant foreigner and the provincial Miss Slattery. In her job as a market researcher, Miss Slattery is quick to notice and judge material possessions. She is impressed by the décor of Tibby's hallway, yet cannot recognize the imported marble:

> "Vinyl tiles?" Her toe pointed. "Or lino?"
> After all, she was in business.
> "Faht? Hoh! Nho! Zet is all from marble."
> "Like in a bank!"
> "Yehs."
> "Well, now! Where did you find all that?"
> "I brought it. Oh, yehs. I bring eversing. Here zere is nossing. Nossing!" (BO 209)

Tibby wants everything to be first-class (or Hungarian). Miss Slattery is not convinced that Australia is as uncivilized as Tibby would like to believe.

White exaggerates his foreignness by imitating his "Hoongahrian" accent. His bizarre pronunciation is brilliantly comic, especially when he abuses Australian manners: "Austrahlian-bohemian-proveenshul. Zere is

nossing veuorse zan bohemian-proveenshul"(BO 218). Miss Slattery finds his continental habits funny, yet somehow appealing. Although she likens Tibby's kisses to chewing on a cob of corn, she underestimates his powers of seduction. At first their sexual relationship is satisfying enough to minimize the basic differences between them.

Their conflict is displayed when Miss Slattery prepares a typical Australian dinner of a leg of lamb with vegetables. Tibby flings the meat into Sydney Harbour and dines on his own delicacies: "He had Paprikawurst, a breast of cold chicken, paprika in oil, paprika in cream cheese, and finally, she suspected, paprika"(BO 214). Seen through Miss Slattery's eyes, Tibby's meal is just as obnoxious. The Hungarian's lack of regard for Australian life is shown by his attitude to the sun-worshippers at Manly beach. He detests the prawn-coloured bodies in their mindless pursuit of leisure. His outburst against Australian insensitivity becomes tinged with irony once we learn of his masochism: "'Lof!' Tibby Szabo laughed. 'Lof is viz ze sahoul!' Then he grew very angry; he could have been throwing his hand away. 'Faht do zay know of lof?' he shouted. 'Here zere is only stike and bodies!'"(BO 217) Tibby's "love" is to suffer physical pain and

humiliation. At the end of the story, Miss Slattery again becomes the stereotype of the uncomplicated Australian girl. She rejects her debauchery for the security of the Australian dream: marriage and a washing-machine. She is prepared to settle for conformity and materialism in exchange for her eccentric life as lion-tamer to the willing Tibby Szabo.

John Burrows comments that White is "content to record manners rather than look deeply into the attitudes that manners signify."[5] I think White's skill is greater than Burrows suggests since the conflict of manners dramatizes the different attitudes of Miss Slattery and Tibby Szabo. Their contrasting opinions on food, love, materialism indicate their differences of judgement, temperament and upbringing. White deliberately makes their manners exaggerated, even farcical.

George Meredith points out the malevolent nature of satire in his perceptive comment that: "The laughter of satire is a blow in the back or the face."[6] Thus the description of Miss Docker's character in "A Cheery Soul" is amusing yet behind the humour is the chilling knowledge that her energetic charity has turned away most of the church congregation and contributed towards the rector's nervous collapse. Geoffrey Dutton indicates the inherent tragedy in the

comic situation: "Miss Docker not only commits but embodies the sin of militant virtue, of doing good to others whether they want it or not, and her ego does not let her approach expiation."[7] Miss Docker indirectly causes the death of the local rector. She is the Reverend Wakeman's personal scourge, a constant reminder that he must try to practise the virtue of forgiveness. In a desperate attempt to illuminate Miss Docker, he preaches a sermon on the sin of goodness. The analogy of the pumpkin encourages Miss Docker's crazy, literal mind to interrupt: "'Spray, spray!' Miss Docker insisted. 'Spray and pray! It is prayer that saves pumpkins, as every clergyman should know and preach'"(BO 186). Her hysteria has an evil influence on the rector yet she still prides herself on acting in good faith.

Satire injects the critical note while comedy simply laughs. Both, however, depend on an appreciation of the incongruous. Henri Bergson's view of comedy emphasizes the superiority we may feel over the less fortunate, laughing in derision at something encrusted on the living and natural.[8] Like Don Quixote, Miss Docker has adopted a mechanical code of behaviour which is alien to society. We laugh at White's status-climbers because they have adopted a set of values which are far removed from the simple and natural, although not necessarily alien to society. Myrtle

Hogben of "Down at the Dump" is constantly dissatisfied because of her social pretensions; the Whalleys have no such aspirations, content to lead a simple life. Mrs Hogben measures her social status by her husband's position as councillor while the Whalleys are happy in their job of scavenging through the dumps. The self-righteous and malicious inhabitants of Sarsaparilla cannot extinguish the message of love preached by the rejects of their society.

Irony is one of White's main tools as a satirist. Many of his stories rely on the amusing reversal of the expected behaviour or situation. In "Willy-Wagtails by Moonlight" the irony is possibly too apparent when the tape-recorder plays back a session of love-making instead of the expected bird calls to the guests. The story is far from banal, however, because of the interesting character of Nora Mackenzie. Behind her vagueness lies a longing to realize her frustrated ambitions. Although she is absent from the room while the significant tape was played, Nora seems to suspect her husband's adultery. With fine irony (or disguised innocence) Nora grants Arch a reprieve: "'I've missed the willy-wagtails,' Nora said, raising her face to him, exposing her distress, like a girl. 'Some day you'll have to play it to me. When you've the time. And we

can concentrate'"(BO 88).

Most of the irony in "The Night the Prowler" lies in Felicity's reactions against the expected code of behaviour. She rapes the rapist, rejects the safe security of an engagement, and seeks out the misfits of society. Searching for some kind of solace or revelation from a dying old man, she is initially shocked by the basic crudity of his needs:

> He opened his eyes. "I was thinking of the days when I could still enjoy an easy piss. And stools came easy. That's the two most important things, you find out."
> Oh no, she musn't allow him to drag her down to his own level of negation and squalor; she needed him more than any of the others who had eluded her. (C 166)

Perhaps it is White's final irony that Felicity is eventually impressed by the old man's ability to urinate: "'That's something, isn't it?' She was so grateful for their common release from the myths to which they had become enslaved, she only slowly realized the hand she was holding in hers had died"(C 168). It seems a pitiful revelation. Here we feel both repugnance at the man's poverty-stricken situation and outrage that such squalor exists. The scabby, cancerous man lives amongst the rats and mould of an abandoned house, waiting patiently for death. It is the exact opposite of Felicity's comfortable home, an alien world which she has been trying to penetrate. She can still recognize a world

of beauty and spirit amid the abysmal realities of the old man's condition. He does not see the golden and rosy light yet she knows he is glad of her presence, if only to keep the rats at bay.

Much of what happens in "The Night the Prowler" is filled with ironic significance once we learn that the rape did not actually take place. As Mrs Bannister chatters on the phone, she gets an inspired idea on how the news should be divulged to Felicity's fiancé:

> "Felicity herself must tell. What could be more touching than for a young girl to confess the most shameful experience of all to her future husband? No honest man could fail to respond, and cherish her for life. What might rankle and turn to disgust if the parents told—you know, 'soiled goods' and all that—can only convince as frank courage if the girl herself takes the plunge."
>
> Mrs Bannister was so carried away she knocked off a silver salver left over from the days of visiting-cards and parlour-maids.
>
> "Of <u>course</u> . . . everything depends on Felicity. But I know my child, Madge!" (<u>C</u> 124-125)

Ironically, Mrs Bannister is wrong on every count. Her ideas are as out-moded as her antique salver and she has no conception of her daughter's real feelings. Her emotions are limited to worrying about the neighbours' opinions or of losing the socially desirable diplomat who is courting Felicity. Unknown to her mother, Felicity has few qualms about the "rape" and feels no compunction about freeing herself from the engagement.

The satirical portrait of Harold Fazackerley

in "A Woman's Hand" focuses on his failed potential. Harold's retirement is a period of waiting for a fulfilment which never comes. We know that he will never write the travel book or the articles for Blackwood's because he has become a passive observer of life. In Harold, we recognize the will to attempt a task but not the energy or determination to complete it. Harold realizes that he has dissipated his talents. Evelyn, on the other hand, never doubts her abilities. Her interference as a modern Pandar ruins two lives when Nesta becomes insane and Clem commits suicide. She is too obtuse and self-centred to understand that the two opposite souls would destroy one another.

"Being Kind to Titina" uses irony to highlight the changed relationship between Titina and Dionysios. Chosen to look after Titina because he is the kindest and steadiest of the children, Dionysios is the one who likes to tease and torture her most. He finds the awkward girl's presence cloying: "But Titina stuck. She stuck to me. It was as if Titina had been told. And once in the garden of our house at Schutz, after showing her my collection of insects, I became desperate. I took Titina's blue bead, and stuck it up her left nostril" (BO 197). His imagined superiority over Titina is completely revised when he meets her as a young, sophisticated adult. Dionysios becomes the "awkward

thing of flesh" that Titina used to be (BO 201). Titina bears no grudge for her earlier mistreatment and freely allows Dionysios to make love to her. Ironically, his pleasure is dashed when he learns that love-making is Titina's business—she is a whore.

The technique of parody, or mocking imitation, is found in the false charity of a do-gooder in "A Cheery Soul." Miss Docker is a parody of the Good Samaritan, insinuating herself into the lives of others with disastrous results. One of the unfortunate recipients of her charity asks: "Are truth and goodness the knouts from which we suffer most? She had even known such weapons turn at last on those who wield them"(BO 169). The people of Sarsaparilla need protection against Miss Docker's ministrations yet she is relentless in her mission to do good.

The Custances, in a calculated act of charity, invite Miss Docker to board with them. By many examples White shows why they were finally forced to send her away. Her interference knows no bounds as she gives unwanted advice on her "trick" with macaroni cheese or the best way to grow hydrangea. Before every meal Miss Docker takes out her teeth and silently reproaches Ted Custance when he is given the single piece of meat by chewing ostentatiously on her bread. Her aggravating habits even disturb the Custances in bed as they

listen to her loud transistor or to Miss Docker's snoring. When she asks to be called Gee, short for Gertrude, Ted's reaction is terse and predictable: "'I'm buggered if I will!"(BO 163). He has never forgotten that she knocked down a shelf he had grudgingly built for her, or her comment that his surly behaviour was the result of bad posture.

The motives of Mrs Custance are not entirely praiseworthy. She sees in the destitute Miss Docker an opportunity to "justify herself in the eyes of God"(BO 154). The basic selfishness and self-sufficiency of the Custances means they cannot share their home with Miss Docker. White suggests that both women fail the trial for goodness. Few people in Sarsaparilla realize that Miss Docker's loneliness makes her fasten onto the unfortunates in order to become indispensable and needed. The façade of the Good Samaritan hides a demanding, bullying egotist who will not see that her charity is sometimes harmful interference.

White describes Miss Docker at her officious worst when she meddles in the affairs of Mr and Mrs Lillie. The last days of Mr Lillie are made miserable by Miss Docker's unwanted charity. The dying man is a prisoner as she explains the process of digestion or brusquely fans him; Mrs Lillie is too numbed with grief to object. She can only smile as Miss Docker

lectures her: "'You, dear,' she said to his wife, 'are the kind that dispenses passive charm. I am the practical one. Perhaps there should be two women,' here she turned to laugh at her friend, 'in the life of every man'"(BO 171). Millicent Lillie cannot retaliate easily yet she does gain some satisfaction when Miss Docker is left behind as the funeral cortège drives by. The residents of Sarsaparilla remain oblivious to her distress, refusing to pick up Miss Docker as she runs along the ditch, calling them all by name. White suggests that the would-be Good Samaritan has met with her deserts:

> At one point she fell upon a knee, missing the jags of bottle, though tearing her stocking on an almost equally vicious stone. Then, when her surroundings had been reduced to dust and silence, and the hoarding which announced: 2 MILES TO SARSAPARILLA, THE FRIENDLY SUBURB, she began to walk back. (BO 177)

The "friendly" suburb is satirized by White because the residents show the selfishness they condemn in others. Encased in their cars, the drivers and passengers concentrate on remaining in the procession to the crematorium. Intent on burying the dead, they choose to ignore the cries of the living.

Miss Docker's aggressive goodwill prevents her from respecting the rights and privacy of others. She cannot understand why people do not want to receive her Christian love. Mrs Lillie accurately guesses that Miss Docker's goodness is a disease, her insensitivity a sickness. Throughout the story White shows that

more charity lies in the residents of Sarsaparilla than in the smug Miss Docker. Even a dog explicitly rejects Miss Docker's charity by urinating on her leg. The coarseness of the humour changes into an observation of human nature as Miss Docker rationalizes her predicament: "And dog, she saw for the first time, is God turned round"(BO 189). The tears fall yet she pretends they are caused by the wind, refusing to face the truth to the very end.

White's satirical flair is most striking in those short stories which reveal the failings of human nature and the follies of society. An ironic tone in "Dead Roses," "A Woman's Hand," and "Down at the Dump" is used to mock snobbery and criticize shallow values. The harshness of White's satire is tempered by the strong farcical element which is present in "A Cheery Soul" or "Miss Slattery and Her Demon Lover." Although we may laugh at the comedy of Miss Docker's uncontrolled bossiness or Miss Slattery's phlegmatic acceptance of life, we are also made aware of the underlying satire of manners. The device of exaggeration is shown in White's feeling for the grotesque in such stories as "Clay" or "The Letters" which are filled with bizarre images. Both satirize the domination of mothers who have distorted the imaginations of their children.

T.Inglis Moore believes that White writes the strongest satire in contemporary fiction:

> The satire runs with greater naturalness and surety than the more ambitious but chequered course of his poetic, imaginative, and symbolic writing. In the latter he is often unequal in his treatment and derivative in style, whilst his satirical flair maintains an even pitch and remains all his own.[9]

I agree that White has mastered the tools of the satirist in his short stories although this does not mean that they lack poetic imagination. On the contrary, the later short stories such as "Five-Twenty" or "The Cockatoos" are an excellent blend of White's symbolic and satirical writing.

Notes to Chapter 11

1. Ronald Paulson, ed., Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp.357-358.
2. Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), p.20.
3. Leonard Feinberg, Introduction to Satire (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1967), p.274.
4. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), p.224.
5. John Burrows, "The Short Stories of Patrick White," Southerly 24 (February 1964): 116.
6. George Meredith, "Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit," quoted in The Art of Satire by David Worcester (New York: Russell & Russell, 1960), p.88.
7. Geoffrey Dutton, Patrick White, 4th ed., rev. and enl., (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp.35-36.
8. Henri Bergson, "Le Rire: Essay sur la Signification du Comique," in Oeuvres (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959).
9. T. Inglis Moore, Social Patterns in Australian Literature (California: University of California Press, 1971), p.194.

CHAPTER 111

Satirical Targets

In a 1958 article entitled "The Prodigal Son," Patrick White indicated his satirical targets:

> Returning sentimentally to a country I had left in my youth, what had I really found? . . . In all directions stretched the Great Australian Emptiness, in which the mind is the least of possessions, in which the rich man is the important man, in which the schoolmaster and the journalist rule what intellectual roost there is, in which beautiful youths and girls stare at life through blind blue eyes, in which human teeth fall like autumn leaves, the buttocks of cars grow hourly glassier, food means cake and steak, muscles prevail, and the march of material ugliness does not raise a quiver from the average nerves.
>
> It was the exaltation of the "average" that made me panic most . . . .[1]

The same targets of mediocrity and materialism are attacked in his latest volume of short stories, The Cockatoos (1974). He relentlessly satirizes these features to expose the aridity of lives without intellectual, cultural or spiritual values.

White's hostile reaction to banality and the emptiness of materialistic values is clear. Like Randolph Stow and Thomas Keneally, he explores values often foreign to the mentality of most Australians. His fictional suburb of Sarsaparilla becomes the embodiment of the materialistic culture he despises, its inhabitants numbed by a spiritual malaise.

This chapter discusses some of White's satirical targets such as suburbia, materialistic values, the

national inferiority complex and social snobbery. White's creative evocation of the "Great Australian Emptiness" in the short stories is ruthlessly accurate. He suggests that the struggle for material possessions has led to a withering of the imagination, a suffocation of the inner life. In an interview made in 1973 White reiterated his earlier attitude: "The majority are certainly not all that interested in intellectual pursuits of any kind. They just want to muck around outside. To acquire larger motor-cars and make money."[2]

Much of White's satire is directed against the constricted viewpoints of those people who live in suburbia. He attacks a way of life which is marked not by dullness so much as mediocrity and conformity. The suburb of Sarsaparilla symbolizes White's concern for the "exaltation of the average." Life in suburbia spawns people like Myrtle Hogben of "Down at the Dump." Her self-satisfied version of the Australian suburban dream is "the liver-coloured brick home—not a single dampmark on the ceilings—she had the washing machine, septic, the TV, and the cream Holden Special, not to forget her husband. Les Hogben, the councillor. A builder into the bargain"(BO 291). Her plastic-covered plaster pixies are manifestations of her poor taste, stupidity, and spiritual malaise. Acquisitive and

selfish, Myrtle cannot envisage the revelation of "lovingkindness" possessed by her sister Daisy. Her pursuit of the materialistic ethic makes her insensitive to the feelings of others.

Across the road from Myrtle live the Whalleys who care nothing for the trappings of materialism. Unlike Mrs Hogben's manicured lawn, their yard is bristling with useless junk. Another significant contrast is drawn between the lively dump of Sarsaparilla and the adjacent cemetery. The rubbish in the dump yields to nature: "But in many secret, steamy pockets, a rout was in progress: seeds had been sown in the lumps of grey, disintegrating kapok and the laps of burst chairs, the coils of springs, locked in the spirals of wirier vines, had surrendered to superior resilience"(BO 297). In the cemetery alongside, the coffins are spaced in neat rows, separated by their denominations. The children of both families meet in the dump, discovering a sensuality which is quite alien to Myrtle Hogben's ideas of respectability. Like Daise Morrow, the children find a vision of life which Myrtle can never hope to understand.

White's visionaries and vulgarians seem to be in two opposing and irreconcilable camps. The genuine searchers for truth are not mocked with the virulent

satire he confers on the smug. He implies that standards of taste and judgement are beyond the conception of those who buy the plastic, the disposable, or the ersatz copy. This contrast between the sensitive and the vulgar is illustrated in "Five-Twenty" where Ella Natwick loves her patch of garden, the small sooty lawn at the front of the house, yet her husband would like to root out the living grass and substitute a green painted concrete lawn. Their sorry version of the Australian dream is to sit on a verandah watching the congested line of cars crawl down Parramatta Road.

Ella's aspirations have always been modest. In her youth she is content to scrub and be a waitress at the Dixie Cafe while her presentable husband is invited to tennis parties at the grazier's property. When Royal manages a grocery store he likes to sell "superior" products, forcing his wife to convince the customers to stay. Her reward for a life of humility and devotion to her husband is to nurse a cantankerous invalid. Ella makes no objection.

White is primarily concerned with showing the isolation of those who have a vision or set of spiritual values opposed to the materialism of the majority. He does not place the "visionaries" into a rigid category but implies they belong to a universal

community who see farther than the secular Australian dream. They have glimmerings of another vision of reality. White does not lump all suburbia together as being devoid of interest or humanity. Andrew Taylor protests at White's treatment of the "non-visionaries":

> But his satire sometimes penetrates to the point of indiscriminacy or sheer destructiveness. It's such accurate observations as his that makes his targets more than mere targets. Yet the unmitigated attack that observation furnishes leaves me with the feeling that White sometimes lacks the charity he is condemning them for lacking. He evaluates his "heroes" by their subjective experience, Yet condemns the hypocrisy of the majority while seeming frightened to allow his sympathy to look too closely into their own subjective life. Could they all be found to be burnt ones?3

White is severe in his criticism of the "non-visionaries" but this is part of his strength. The vigour of his attack would be curbed if he were to describe the alleviating circumstances which made the characters hypocritical or insensitive. He does not imply that their minds and feelings are not worthy of consideration but he is more interested in attacking the principles of vice and folly. White's censure is reserved for those who have no self-realization. Unlike the "burnt ones" they do not suffer although their lives may be barren. Even the victims do not become heroes because society ignores them. Sympathy and pity for the outcast and the beleaguered visionary is a pervasive element in White's fiction.

All the stories in The Cockatoos reflect White's distress at the furtherance of material progress and the resulting lack of spiritual and intellectual life. In "A Woman's Hand," the bored residents of the expensive houses overlooking the Pacific Ocean are described: "The owners of the lovely seaside homes sat in their lovely worldly cells playing bridge, licking the chocolate off their fingers, in one case copulating, on pink chenille, on the master bed"(C 9). White's houses are reminiscent of Afferbeck Lauder's 'Strine' definition of the 'Gloria Soame': "A spurban house of more than fourteen squares, containing fridge, telly, wart wall carps, payshow, and a kiddies' rumps room."[4] Their plate-glassed houses are in direct contrast to Glem Dowson's ramshackle hut with the seaward balcony. Dowson can find contentment simply by contemplating the ocean while the Fazackerleys are in perpetual motion in their efforts to find peace of mind.

Evelyn Fazackerley refuses to admit that Dowson possesses the secrets of happiness because she cannot see the outward signs of his material success. She mocks Dowson's bachelor habits, snooping into his rooms, even checking the food he keeps in the refrigerator. Unable to appreciate that the house suits Dowson, Evelyn sneers at everything he owns, especially the wire contraption of the egg timer. Evelyn's blinkered vision is typical

of many of White's characters who cannot conceive of non-materialistic values and aspirations. The superficial Evelyn cannot understand Dowson's inner-directed nature or his communion with the natural world. Instead she sees his "thick, bristly fingers"(C 16), his stubbly head and his "coarse and clumsy body"(C 38).

White scorns mediocrity but he is well aware of the mystery and complexity which may lie hidden in the lives of ordinary men and women. A similar sentiment is expressed by Willie Pringle in Voss:

> The grey of mediocrity, the blue of frustration . . . . our inherent mediocrity as a people. I am confident that the mediocrity of which he speaks is not a final and irrevocable state; rather is it a creative source of endless variety and subtlety. The blowfly on its bed of offal is but a variation on the rainbow. Common forms are continually breaking into brilliant shapes. If we will explore them.5

The novels and short stories satirize those people who are content with mediocrity or who are ignorant of the "variety and subtlety" which can exist.

The suburban wastes of Sarsaparilla contain unexpected visionaries. Riders in the Chariot describes the fortunes of four exceptional residents of Sarsaparilla: a washerwoman, a learned Jewish factory-worker, an aboriginal artist, and an elderly, half-mad spinster. Like Daise Morrow of "Down at the Dump," they survive in a hostile environment.

Daise, another unlikely visionary, has a different outlook on life, valuing most the warmth of human relationships. Unlike many of the people in

Sarsaparilla, she is not involved in the contest for wealth and status. She happily lives in the house her sister terms a "pokey little hutch"(BO 291). In contrast to Daise's peace and contentment the new residents of the box-like homes erected on the site of Xanadu are beset by some nameless anxiety, aware of some void in their lives. Their uneasiness is typified in the routine of Sunday visiting, a suburban ritual:

> All of Sunday they would visit, or be visited, though sometimes they would cross one another, midway, while remaining unaware of it. Then, on finding nothing at the end, they would drive around, or around. Until motion became an expression of truth, the only true permanence—certainly more convincing than the sugar-cubes of homes.6

"A Cheery Soul" introduces us to further aspects of the dreary suburb, including the Sarsaparilla Sundown Home for Old People, the Anglican church and the home of the Custances. Each is filled with people trying to defend themselves against the hypocritical virtue of Miss Docker. In this story White shows compassion for the residents of suburbia. The old age pensioners wait for death in the former mansion of a cement millionaire, stirring their coffee essence "in the dusty shadow of luxury." The church loses more and more of its members because of the insidious presence of Miss Docker. We can only sympathize with the people of Sarsaparilla as they try to avoid Miss Docker by

cancelling the choir practices or by excluding her from the Bible study group. In this story White's satirical target is Miss Docker's hypocrisy, her victims are treated more sympathetically. Most are portrayed as vulnerable, kind-hearted, and essentially lonely.

A similar empathy for ordinary humanity is found in The Solid Mandala. Although Mrs Dun is pilloried, her spite is shown to be the result of ignorance and superstition rather than of some deep-seated malevolence. An inability to love or accept life makes her almost paranoiac about being assaulted. Mrs Poulter, on the other hand, is neighbourly and loving to all. She can appreciate the gift of Arthur Brown's dance of the mandala because of her understanding. The novel presents a relatively sympathetic view of Sarsaparilla.

In "Dead Roses," the mythical suburb becomes a centre for evil and decayed respectability. Anthea Scudamore-Mortlock's experience is representative of many others. In Sarsaparilla her greatest exertions are devoted to house-keeping for her niggardly husband. Outings to the Sunday service and to the homes of elderly women are the few interruptions to her stultifying existence. The neglected, brown, dead roses symbolize the lifeless quality of her marriage in the drab suburb.

Anthea's thwarted sexuality is freed in her fantasies about Flegg in the middle of a church service. She imagines the bodies of Flegg and his new wife lashed together by ropes of hair. Although she is able to play the role of the contented wife to her neighbours in Sarsaparilla, her frustrations eventually surface when she makes the effort to leave Mortlock.

The Polkinghorn family in "The Letters" are the dying aristocrats of Sarsaparilla. The mock grandeur of Ursula Polkinghorn's Tudor brick home with the landscaped garden provides a refuge from the real world. Flower arrangements, recalcitrant servants and a disturbed son are her chief considerations (in order of importance). The evil festers between the walls of "Wishfort" until the son withdraws into the safe world of childhood.

The wealthy Polkinghorn family tries to remain cloistered from life in Sarsaparilla. Charles has always been impelled by his mother to do what is socially acceptable. Educated in the right school, sent over to Cambridge to pursue a career in languages, Charles' future appears assured. A letter from his mother urging Charles to enter the family firm changes his plans. Mrs Polkinghorn turns her son into a pale imitation of her dead husband, Dickie. The only person who shows any kindness towards Charles is his Aunt Maud, a woman his mother considers

dowdy and simple. Charles can only communicate with those who make no demands on him. The post-mistress at Sarsaparilla or the gardener pose no threat. Cut off from ordinary society in the aptly named "Wishfort," Charles becomes a prey to the grotesque memories of his childhood.

The suburbs in White's short stories represent states of mind as much as residential area. In "Willy-Wagtails by Moonlight," the Mackenzies move to the affluent North Shore of Sydney where they soon adopt the social habits and customs of their neighbours. Even their dinner parties become predictable events, from the menu to the evening's entertainment. Their invited guests know that they will eat avocadoes stuffed with prawns, chicken mornay, and crêpes Suzette, and that they will have to suffer listening to the sound of bird calls on a tape-recorder. The dull routine of the evening is enlivened for the Wheelers when the notes of the wagtails are drowned by the sounds of the love-making of their host with his secretary. The superficiality of the dinner party is momentarily forgotten when Nora is confronted with her husband's infidelity. White indicates that the boring evening in the suburbs has undercurrents of tragic depths.

White reveals the banality of their suburban

life by concentrating attention on commonplace details: the reproduction Sheraton mirror, the cushions standing on their points, the Queen Anne walnut piecrust table or the beige wall-to-wall carpet. Their possessions need to match the Mackenzie's newly acquired wealth and prestige. The guests are also conscious of the fine distinctions which signify status in suburbia. Thus, Eileen Wheeler notices Nora's small, turquoise ring: "The Mackenzies were still in the semi-precious bracket in the days when they became engaged"(BO 83). Their world lacks vitality as they mimic the behaviour of their North Shore counterparts.

The nouveau-riche environment of the Mackenzie's can be compared with the wealthy yet claustrophobic surroundings of "The Night the Prowler." Felicity Bannister rejects the insularity of her background:

> It was a comfortable rather than a fashionable quarter: its large, undesirable houses, in Sydney Tudor, late Victorian Byzantine, Bette Davis Colonial, suggested wealth without flaunting it, just as the inhabitants agreed by the smiles in their eyes never to mention money, and the odd Jaguar or Daimler silently apologized. (C 131-132)

White satirizes the mock respectability of the neighbourhood which urges Felicity to rebel in acts of violence. Alienated from the values of her parents, she tries to find answers to her questions amongst the outsiders of society.

"The Night the Prowler" flatly rejects the values of the Australian dream. Before the confrontation with the prowler, Felicity had been her mother's pride because she could "distinguish instinctively between what was 'marvellous' and what was 'ghastly'"(C 136). Felicity changes in every way possible to protest against her conventional upbringing. She exchanges her job as an interior decorator for expensive homes to a shop-girl in a boutique called Pot Luck. Felicity cannot find the ultimate revelation she seeks in her new life-style. Her vehemence scares everyone away:

> If she ran after a mob of leatherjackets, trumpeting, "Hold on, youse! P'raps we got somethun to say to each other," the whole push made a smart getaway; while she continued in pursuit, whirling in the air above her head a bicycle chain she had won during another such encounter. (C 162)

The language and behaviour indicate her desperate need to escape from the rigid standards of her parents.

Felicity's bitter soul-searching is deftly handled by White although the final "revelation" from the old man seems somewhat anticlimactic to the reader. It is a statement of complete scepticism: "'I always saw myself as a shit. I am nothing. I believe in nothing"(C 167). Perhaps the essence of humility in the speech appears to Felicity when she

contrasts it with the beliefs of her pretentious parents.

The old man is seen through the credulous eyes of Felicity who sees the pathos of his aged, naked state. White gently satirizes the old man's plight as he lies smiling, thinking of the days when "stools came easy"(C 166). The peace of mind he has attained conflicts oddly with his miserable condition. He feels no need to justify his existence and remains untouched by the precepts of popular morality. Like many of White's "burnt ones" he accepts suffering and the desolation of the solitary state. In a similar way to Stan Parker of The Tree of Man, the old man finds some clarity of perception in the moments before his death, comforted by the presence of a caring person.

White's satire is socially and artistically effective because of his sure grasp of the local idiom and his authentic description of the social setting. In an article entitled "The Alienated Australian Intellectual," Jack Lindsay claims that White has taken "external Australian conditions and details" and infused into them "abstractions born from his English experience."[7] In the short stories, however, there is a concreteness of detail which suggests a close intimacy with the Australian environment.

White's use of language aptly mirrors the social setting. The crude slang of the Whalleys in "Down at the Dump" reflects their rough, haphazard life. He captures their colloquial vulgarity when they argue about the best time to drink beer:

> "Keep it, then! Mum Whalley turned her back. "What was the point of buyin' it cold if you gotta wait till it hots up? Anyways," she said, "I thought the beer was an excuse for comin'."
> "Arr, stuff it!" says Wal. "A dump's business, ain't it? With or without beer. Ain't it? Any day of the week." (BO 296)

The descriptions of the Whalley couple or the suburb of Sarsaparilla owe little to "abstractions born from his English experience." The basic conflicts described by White may have universal significance yet the characters and setting are firmly placed in Australia.

At the other end of the social scale from the Whalleys, the prim voice of Ivy Simpson reflects on a day of sightseeing in Sicily: "'I'm not saying that it wasn't interesting—the landscape—the archaeological sites. But could you, darling, suffer the Shacklocks?'" (C 218). Ivy is satirized simply by imitating her speech patterns. The truth is that Ivy Simpson paid little attention to the historical sites because she was so busily analyzing the American couple. White seems equally at ease conveying the coarse speech of the uneducated Whalleys or the affectation of the doctor's wife.

White draws some excellent satirical portraits of Australians abroad. The Simpsons who visit Sicily in the story "Sicilian Vespers" regard culture as something that can be photographed, labelled and then used as a conversation piece. Their insular attitude is summed up when Ivy "did not really care whether she saw San Fabrizio or not. Hadn't she and Charles read about it, and looked at the photographs, and discussed it rationally in their own home in Wongaburra Road? That was what mattered"(C 222). Ivy's sensual self is aware of the hypocrisy behind her interest in the church architecture at San Fabrizio. She had formerly suppressed the lustfulness observed in her father but it is provoked, and sated, by the American tourist she meets in Sicily. Under his influence, Ivy can act out her private longings in the sanctity of the church. The grotesque humour of the love-making scene heightens the satirical impact.

White satirizes Ivy's lack of honesty in examining her own motives. Beneath the veneer of sophistication, Ivy is wracked by nervous fears. She cannot forget that her sensual, artistic father thought she was an ugly child, devoid of charm. Her husband is more aware of the true self within as he tries to overcome the pain of a toothache which is ruining the

holiday for him: "What if all the patients who had brought him their forebodings as well as their actual cancers—what if Ivy were to realize that inside the responsible man there had always lurked this diffident, whimpering boy?(C 199) The social background of their lives in Australia, the golf playing and discussion groups, seem meaningless when they are cast on their own resources in Sicily.

Much of White's satire concentrates on those who suppress their natural instincts or who are unable to escape from the stranglehold of childhood memories. Anthea Scudamore of "Dead Roses" is a victim of both. Like the Simpsons, she travels abroad yet learns little from her experiences. Staying in the best hotels and shopping in the most exclusive shops become more important than what she actually sees in her travels. Whereas Ivy Simpson is mortified by her sexual awakening with Clark Shacklock, Anthea represses any feelings which might expose her vulnerability.

After her meeting with the Fleggs, Anthea fears that a young Greek is going to molest her. Wild impulses are quickly restrained and she flees to the safety of her hotel room with the security of a Frances Parkinson Keyes' novel. She feels safe escaping into the imaginary world of historical

romance. Anthea does not allow real life to invade the vision of happiness she has inherited from her mother. She finds that rigid respectability is an effective barrier against real experience.

Although "The Woman who wasn't Allowed to Keep Cats" is set against the backdrop of Athens, White's satirical targets remain the same as for the Sarsaparilla stories. There is a similar concern with the acquisition of material goods which becomes a substitute for life. Maro and Spiro Hajistavros visit their Greek homeland very conscious of their successful life in America. They quickly find that their possessions cannot erase the memory of their more humble origins, the "seven restaurants, the two Cadillacs, the apartment in New York, all eventually superfluous, as the victims were reduced again to Maro and Spiro, a couple of Greeks"(BO 247). The Hajistavros enjoy being fêted as returning millionaires by the more humble Greeks. They worry that the Alexious are not sufficiently impressed. To assert their superiority over the intellectual Alexiou couple, they insist on taking them for drives in their Cadillac. To Spiro, this somehow compensates for his lack of intellectuality but the driving trip does little to repress Kikitsa Alexiou's emotional outbursts on the nature of life and suffering.

The Hajistavros have a lot in common with Basil and Poppy Pantzopoulos of "The Evening at Sissy Kamara's." Basil is still conscious of his ancestry: "Basil touched his black pearl, the one he always wore in his tie. He had grown so flawless he could afford to forget his original grain of Piraeus sand"(BO 137). Like Spiro, he despises the pseudo-intellectuality of his wife's girlhood friend. Poppy has always admired Sissy Kamara's talent as a poet but her husband has a more cynical assessment of Sissy's ability. He reminds Poppy that the epic poem was recited to a group of women, most of them now dead and the theme forgotten. He is sceptical of Sissy's integrity, scorning her views on the sado-masochism of the Greeks. He finds the conversation on the brutality of the Greeks particularly distasteful because he has tried so hard to become a fastidious Athenian, rejecting all signs of his former coarseness.

White is very critical of all kinds of pretentiousness and vulgarity. There are few characters in the short stories to balance the satirical focus. Daisy Morrow and Clem Dowson are misfits in a society which judges by material success. Their simplicity and contentment set them

apart from the slavish materialists who continue to flourish after Daisy and Clem are dead.

The stories set in Sarsaparilla emphasize White's disgust with the cult of the average. In "A Cheery Soul," however, the residents of Sarsaparilla are treated with relative sympathy while the satire converges on Miss Docker's hypocrisy. "Dead Roses" exposes the sterile lives of the Mortlocks, shackled to their dull routine. The aristocrats of Sarsaparilla are mocked in "The Letters" where Charles Polkinghorn eventually succumbs to the smothering environment. Social pretensions of the wealthier suburbs are satirized by the tedious dinner party of "Willy-Wagtails by Moonlight," or by Felicity Bannister's anguish about her passive upbringing in "The Night the Prowler."

The stories which are set abroad attack the same targets. Thus, Ivy Simpson of "Sicilian Vespers" is the older counterpart of Anthea Scudamore as she fights against the responses of her real nature. The Greek stories of "The Woman who wasn't Allowed to Keep Cats" and "The Evening at Sissy Kamara's" constantly remind the reader of the Australian social context. Sissy's tinned dolmadakia or burnt veal is not so different from Nora Mackenzie's watery martini or

heavy crêpes Suzette. Throughout the short stories White demonstrates that the details of suburban existence do not vary.

Notes to Chapter 111

1. Patrick White, "The Prodigal Son," Australian Letters 1, 3 (April 1958): 38-39.
2. Patricia Brent, "Novelist Patrick White talks to Patricia Brent," Listener 25 October 1973, p.545.
3. Andrew Taylor, "White's Short Stories," Overland 31 (March 1965): 18.
4. Afferbeck Lauder, Let Stalk Strine (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1965), p.20. Cf. Mark M. Orkin, Canajan, Eh? (Don Mills: General Publishing, 1973).
5. Patrick White, Voss (1957; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960), p.447.
6. Patrick White, Riders in the Chariot (1961; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), pp.486-487.
7. Jack Lindsay, "The Alienated Australian Intellectual," Meanjin Quarterly 22, 1 (March 1963): 58.

CHAPTER 1V

A Satiric View of Intimacy

The characters in Patrick White's short stories are frequently entangled in relationships from which they cannot escape. Many are long-married, childless couples leading lives of dreary boredom. Even the ones who recognize this can rarely alter the habits they have acquired over a lifetime. In some families it is the children who suffer most. Both Felicity Bannister of "The Night the Prowler" and Clay are victims of dominating parents. Few relationships are described with tenderness; most are treated with contempt. The exceptions, such as the youthful innocence of Lum Whalley and Meg Hogben, are far outnumbered by the destructive relationships in these stories.

Most of the characters in The Burnt Ones or The Cockatoos do not possess the capacity for warm human relationships. White's decaying gentry or humdrum residents of suburbia are mocked for their insincerity and superficiality. The sterility of their lives is reflected in their barren marriages which survive only through lethargy. White appears to value those bonds between people which possess "lovingkindness," a word which denotes spiritual sympathy or caritas. The short stories concentrate

on relationships in which love is strangled or perverted; "lovingkindness" is an exceptional quality.

Domineering mothers, shadowy fathers, and neurotic children recur in White's stories. Usually unloved or rejected because of some inner complexity, they are unable to enjoy human companionship. Clay is happier with his fictional muse called Lova than with living people; Clem Dowson finds contentment by watching the sea. He pinpoints a common difficulty experienced by many of White's characters: "As for the human relationships of any importance, what is left of them after they have been sieved through words?"(C 65)

White writes about the lack of communication between parents and children with acute perception but with little sympathy. He illustrates the emotionally crippling effects on children who are moulded into copies of adult society. Anthea Scudamore as a young girl is the image of her mother, filled with the same snobberies and false ideas of happiness. Young Tim Goodenough in "The Cockatoos" shows early evidence of adult cruelty. He beats a cockatoo to death, scalping it for the sulphur crest which he wants to keep as a talisman. Tim's violence towards the defenceless bird parallels that of Figgis, who tried to shoot the birds as a neighbourhood pest. Those children who reject

the stifling influence of their parents sometimes find release in macabre forms of behaviour. Felicity Bannister, for example, becomes a night marauder who ransacks wealthy homes which resemble her own.

Oedipal relationships are common in White's short stories. Interestingly, P.R.Beatson has called The Burnt Ones "studies of mother-induced schizophrenia."[1] In "Clay," the mother rebuffs her son because she is willing to admit nothing but normality. Clay's imaginative stories mark him out as different. In her efforts to make him conform to the stereotype of the model son she clips Clay's hair; ironically, this makes his appearance more freakish. Her unpunctuated speech, a kind of verbal gargling, blocks out any response from her son:

> "There Clay a person is sometimes driven to things in defence of what we know and love I would not of done this otherwise if not to protect you from yourself because love you will suffer in life if you start talking queer remember it doesn't pay to be different and no one is different without they have something wrong with them." (BO 118)

The void left by his mother's death is filled with the mythical "Lova" who encourages Clay in his abysmal literary efforts. Clay's mind is obsessed with a wedding picture of his mother, especially by her white satin wedding shoe. The final victory of the mother's domination is not lost on Clay's widow who had tried to

eradicate all the physical traces of Clay's obsession:

> And that old shoe. He lay holding a white shoe. "I never ever saw a shoe!" she moaned. "Of all the junk she put away, just about every bit of her, and canaries and things, never a shoe!"
> As Clay lay.
> With that stiff shoe. (BO 135)

Like Clay, Charles Polkinghorn in "The Letters" suffers a total collapse which is hastened by the influence of an overbearing mother. Afraid of losing his loving godmother, Charles is unable to cope with the reality of his mother and reverts to babyhood. Ironically, the fears instilled into Charles as a child finally cause his complete breakdown:

> She was standing at the foot of the stairs. In white satin. Remember, she said, Charles, as he slowly descended, paying out the smooth rail through his hand, remember you are of an age where you must not open letters. Other people's affairs are their own. Besides, she added, you might discover something to hurt you. Always remember that. (BO 240)

In sealed letters Charles sees the dangers of poisonous secrets which will spread evil influences if they are allowed to escape. The paranoia of both Clay and Charles is made credible, although I would agree with H.P.Heseltine's remark that in both stories the pattern of the prose seems to be woven more from obsessive, emotional need than from satiric comment: "the almost hysterical tone spreads out so far beyond the necessary requirements of dramatization as to endanger the balance of the whole performance."[2]

The satiric comment is plain in "Down at the Dump" where Meg Hogben and Lum Whalley are isolated from the thoughts and values of their parents. The narrow conformity of Mrs Hogben cannot allow for any deviation in her daughter and she is shocked to see the stirrings of adolescent love. Lum Whalley's parents do not understand him yet their indifference is more welcome than the meddling of Mrs Hogben. Unlike most of the residents of Sarsaparilla, Meg Hogben is anxious to discover the sensuous quality possessed by the Whalleys and her Aunt Daisy. At the end of the story Meg has discovered something about herself which cannot be tainted by her mother's sneers: "The warm core of certainty settled stiller as driving faster the wind paid out the telephone wires the fences the flattened heads of grey grass always raising themselves again again again"(BO 316).

White implies that if compassion can be linked with sensuality, relationships need not be destructive. Daise Morrow has the confidence to flout convention by offering her love to the outcasts of society. Careless of the opinions of her busybody neighbours, she wheels an old drunkard home in a barrow she used for manure. Her "lovingkindness" is in ironic contrast to her materialistic sister who can only see that she died in a humble cottage, wearing a cotton frock.

"Down at the Dump" contrasts the earthy Whalleys whose job is to scour the Sarsaparilla dump, with the antiseptic Hogbens, representatives of bourgeois respectability. Predictably, the Whalley's yard is littered with dead batteries and musical bedsteads, objects of "commerce and mystery" whereas plaster pixies, covered with plastic at the first sign of rain, decorate the Hogben's lawn. There is some passion left between the Whalleys, undimmed by their drinking or the disapproval of neighbours: "Looking at each other their two bodies asserted themselves. Their faces were lit by the certainty of life"(BO 228). This vitality is a rare quality in the marital relationships described by White.

Some of White's most virulent satire is directed towards the institution of marriage. He is perceptive about those factors which can unite or estrange a couple. This is clearly seen in "A Woman's Hand" where the Fazackerleys stay united yet the more sensitive Dowsons are destroyed. White's forte lies in the satirical description of marriages which outwardly appear satisfactory yet inwardly ferment.

A short story published in 1945 called "After Alep" shows White's early technique. The obvious plot and melodramatic style tell the story of a young soldier posted abroad who learns of his wife's infidelity

through a letter:

> Dearest Fred, Something's happened that it's difficult to tell. I gone and done something you'll never forgive, as if I wanted you to forgive, I can take what I deserve. I been a fool, Fred, and it hurts like hell. Something come over me. I don't want to tell you all what's miserable and bad. Everything has lost its shape, and I don't understand.3

It is a world of muddle where the individual is buffeted by misfortune, unable to discern a meaningful pattern in life. White's later short stories show a more subtle probing of psychological depths.

"Five-Twenty" outlines a difficult marriage between a meek woman and her domineering husband. Although Royal's heart, hernia and arthritis have confined him to a wheelchair, he still exercises his dominance. All events in the story are seen through the humble eyes of Ella Natwick who does not realize the extent of her loneliness or the sterility of her marriage. In her simple way, Ella tries to remain cheerful and compassionate so that her husband will not be upset. White describes her barren life with gentle irony. Anthony Hassall comments on Ella's self-effacing nature and White's satiric restraint: "An inhabitant of the ageing inner suburbs, she attracts neither White's loathing for the bourgeois pretensions of the North Shore, nor his distaste for

the easy vulgarity of the outer suburbs as the Whalleys of 'Down at the Dump.'"[4]

When Royal dies, the attention Ella gets as a widow soon vanishes and she is left an elderly woman, lonely in her bereavement. Her dream about the man who passed by in the pink Holden quickly turns into a nightmare. Throughout her life Ella has become so accustomed to taking responsibility for other's faults that she blames herself for his death, afraid that she has loved the man too deeply. Although Ella is unable to revive him, White suggests that she has experienced a transformation: "She had seen turkeys, feathers sawing against each other's feathers, rising afterwards like new noisy silk"(C 196).

"Willy-Wagtails by Moonlight" makes another wry comment on adultery. Nora's marriage to Arch does not make her happy, especially when she suspects his infidelity: "She thought perhaps she had always felt alone, even with Arch, while grateful even for her loneliness"(BO 88). She is certainly alone in her appreciation of the pure notes of the wagtail's song. The guests are too stunned, or amused, by the revelation on the tape about Arch's adultery. Jum Wheeler is reminded of a sordid experience with a woman at the Locomotive Hotel; Eileen remembers a thin lover with bony wrists who had taken her behind

a barn.

Craig McGregor notes the double standard towards permissiveness in Australian society: "It is a fantastic situation, in which a society accepts a stern neo-Victorian morality as correct, transgresses it at every opportunity and then feels guilty about it afterwards."[5] In the story called "Sicilian Vespers" Ivy Simpson feels very guilty about her adultery with an American tourist. She pretends that Sicily made her imagine things, impairing her vision or "distorting what it actually saw into all kinds of perverse forms"(C 258). She admits that sometimes they were beautiful perversions but plans to get her eyes checked just the same. The wife of the American tourist is more realistic, perceiving that her husband can only form temporary attachments, whether in travelling, collecting paintings or in his personal relationships. Ivy sees their union in the San Fabrizio church as vulgar and degrading yet she cannot escape her own sensual instincts:

> Like two landed fish, they were lunging together, snout bruising snout, on the rucked-up Cosmati paving. She wrapped herself around him, her slimy thighs, the veils of her fins, as it had been planned, seemingly, from the beginning, while the enormous tear swelled to overflowing in the glass eye focused on them from the golden dome. (C 243)

Ivy feels safer in the haven of her marriage, sorting old snapshots and listening to tape-recordings of

their voices. She finds second-hand experience is much less demanding than a passionate response to life. Her sexual union with Clark Shacklock, the American, is marked by passion yet empty of any tenderness.

Like Ivy and Charles Simpson, the clinging Fazackerleys are in perpetual motion in their efforts to occupy the long hours of retirement. Symbolically, their last trip is to the Dead Heart of Australia. At this stage the jaded travellers are so accustomed to the vivid colours of life that they see nothing: "As they sat out their travelogue, they became so inured to technicolour, it was hoped they would not be startled if it ended in a flack flacker of transparent film"(C 94). Their marriage has the same dull routine.

As a schoolboy, Harold Fazackerley held the promise of creativity yet in his old age the possibility of reading the list of characters from Tolstoy's War and Peace is enough to exhaust him. Harold's potential is thwarted by his wife Evelyn, a scraggy woman who has no conception of his dreams or inner feelings. Their claustrophobic marriage endures in spite of Harold's moments of revelation: "She was his wife. If long association had turned that into an abstract term, it had not prevented the abstract from eating in as unwaveringly as iron"(C 74). Their varying reactions to Clem Dowson's cliffside home illustrate the differences

between their temperaments. Evelyn scorns its amateurishness and vulnerability whilst Harold is moved by the painful attempt to construct a house against all physical odds. Harold has sufficient imagination to appreciate Clem's seclusion and his ability to sit still and think; Evelyn believes he should get married so he can enjoy the benefits of "a woman's hand."

Although the arranged marriage between Nesta Pine and Clem Dowson was a disastrous failure, it had some moments of grandeur. Both are too quiet and Clem admits that two silences "can cut each other in the end"(C 73). Harold guesses that the ill-matched couple must have burnt each other up: "'But what does it matter, provided you blaze together—but blaze . . . —in peacock colours'"(38). It is a revelation which is quickly turned sour by the shrivelled presence of Evelyn. She cannot understand the level of experience lived by Clem Dowson so she dismisses its existence. Evelyn completely misjudges the characters of both Clem and Nesta. She does not recognize that the last thing Clem's ramshackle hut needs is "a woman's hand." White's imaginative description of the Dowson marriage is moving:

> Some soft but wise primeval animal used to turn gravely on his straw, absorbing from between the

> wooden bars a limitless abstraction of blue, and a giant satiny bird had settled and resettled her wings, her uncommunicative eye concentrated on some prehistory of her own.
>
> Fur and feather never lie together. (C 81)

White suggests that their mariage foundered because of the intensity of feeling between two alien souls. Unlike most of the married couples White satirizes, the Dowsons suffer from an excess of sensitivity.

The marriage of Constantia and Yanko Philippides in "A Glass of Tea" is full of the extremes of passion. Their love-hate relationship is affected by the twelve glasses which supposedly measure Yanko's life-span. Constantia's pampered Alexandrian youth makes it difficult for her to appreciate Yanko yet when they marry Constantia becomes obsessed with love for him. She risks her life to save the glasses during the Turkish War yet in moments of anger Constantia smashes a glass herself. She can forgive Yanko his affairs with the aristocratic bridge-playing women but not with her personal servant, the peasant Aglaia. White shows how Constantia's obsession finally destroys her. She cannot bear the intensity of her love or the knowledge of Yanko's deceit. Her husband looks back on his passionate life with Constantia with a mixture of admiration and regret. White suggests that Yanko is happier with the domesticity of the sturdy peasant than with his elegant first wife.

Anthony J. Hassall points out that all the short stories are concerned with "violent betrayals caused by the irruption of basic human cravings into a world which either ignores them, or builds to contain them institutions like marriage which are pitifully inadequate to the task."[6] In "The Full Belly," hunger obsesses a Greek family during the German Occupation, causing the weak to lose their conception of what is beautiful or worthwhile. Although they try to sustain themselves with the memory of a past life as aristocratic vagabonds of Europe, the harshness of reality intrudes. Only Aunt Maro refuses to betray the members of the family.

Costa is a musical prodigy but his music takes second place beside the overriding need for food. He is tempted by the greasy Mrs Vassilopoulo and a homosexual German corporal who offer him food in exchange for sexual favours. Torn between hunger pangs and his revulsion towards selling his body, Costa is almost reduced to an animal. He had earned eggs and tins of meat in the past: "Bach only titupped along beside the need to stuff your mouth with food. Always eventually transformed into that same slobbering beast, the spirit stood grinning at him in the Agora"(C 113). The story ends on a note of disintegration.

Costa finds his Aunt Pronoë guzzling at a plate of rice observed by the forgiving eyes of the dying Maro. When the old lady dies the family is consumed with guilt, the links of trust and affection broken.

"The Woman who wasn't Allowed to Keep Cats," describes a lesbian experience between two young Greek girls. Kikitsa seduces Maro in a mysterious feline manner: "'And you, chrysoula,' murmured Kikitsa through her teeth, 'are a kind of little, thin cat.' For a second, locked together, their thighs had something of the duplicity, the elasticity, of softest cat-flesh bundled together in the sun"(BO 275). Memory of the experience embarrasses Maro Hajistavrou when she meets Kikitsa many years later. Afraid of the animal sensuality which she senses in the woman, Maro takes refuge in the company of her dull husband.

Fortunately, Kikitsa Alexiou has a husband who can match her animality. He dismisses the cats which infested their apartment to a nearby wood of dusty pine trees. Apparently he knows how to seduce his cat-like wife in the manner she prefers:

> Was it Kyria Alexiou, then, who suddenly sprang on the stump of one of the martyred trees? Her teeth glittered in the moonlight.
> Long, long moments, passed.
> Then it was the kyrios Alexious who sprang. The scents, the cold draughts of air were quite intoxicating. The Kyrios sprang as though he had been wound up for it. How his trouser-legs streamed black in his wake. As the Kyria Kikitsa leaped away, as white by moonlight as the stump from which the resin had run. Anthoula did not exactly

see, but knew he had fastened his teeth in the nape of the white neck. (BO 282)

The sexuality of their relationship both repulses and attracts Maro. Secretly she envies their passion but does not have the courage to let it show. White reveals the difficulty of communication between marriage partners. As in real life, people rarely confront one another with the truth about themselves. Many evade the truth because they are afraid to expose their own vulnerability.

In "The Cockatoos," Busby Le Cornu is unwilling to reveal her true feelings. Instead she conjures up morbid, erotic fantasies which are never acted out in reality. She imagines making love to Olive Davoren or being seated in the garden enjoying a common love of music, while in reality she simply exchanges pleasantries over the gate. Busby's diseased imagination finds release in a lesbian fantasy: "Knees planted on either side of the skinny body, Busby stoops to lick with strong, regular, vertical strokes, the yellow belly. In particular, the scar in it"(C 297). A similar sense of disgust is conveyed by the descriptions of the albino lesbian, Snowy Tunks, in The Eye of the Storm. White's satire focuses on the revolting and degrading aspects of Snowy's destructive relationships. Little compassion is shown for the drunken Snowy as she

flirts with her girl friend in a grotesque parody of a lover. There is no warmth in the relationship, just a sensual greed.

White's treatment of intimacy in the short stories implies his recognition of the difficulty of establishing sympathetic bonds between people. He uses the apt metaphor of the "cat's cradle of human intercourse" to suggest the intricate patterns of communications which must be set up if people are to achieve satisfying relationships.[7] Many of White's characters cannot survive without the prop of marriage; few have the resources to enjoy the solitary condition.

The typical relationships in the short stories are destructive, unrelieved by moments of tenderness or affection. The ossified marriages of the Simpsons, Scudamores, Fazackerleys, and Davorens have many common features. All are examples of failed attempts at communication. Lacking the empathy to see what has gone wrong with their lives, the couples cling together for mutual support. They fear the menace of loneliness far more than the boredom of their marriages. Unlike Clem Dowson, they do not possess the inner resources to enjoy the solitary state. They batten onto one another through fear of loneliness or for material gain.

The barren mariages, the unhappy attempts at adultery, portray a sceptical outlook. White's scepticism, however, is based upon a profound knowledge of human nature. He appreciates the complexity of human relationships, recognizing that "lovingkindness" and compassion <u>are</u> rare qualities. In the short stories, he indicates that glancing communication may be the best that we can hope to achieve.

Notes to Chapter IV

1. P.R. Beatson, "The Skiapod and the Eye: Patrick White's The Eye of the Storm," Southerly 34 (September 1974): 221.
2. H.P. Heseltine, "The Burnt Ones," Southerly 25, 1 (1965): 69.
3. Patrick White, "After Alep," in Bugle Blast, ed. Jack Aistrop and Reginald Moore (London: Allen & Unwin, 1945), p.154.
4. Anthony J. Hassall, "Patrick White's The Cockatoos," Southerly 35 (March 1975): 8.
5. Craig McGregor, Profile of Australia (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966), p.65.
6. Hassall, p.8.
7. Patrick White, "The Prodigal Son," Australian Letters 1, 3 (April 1958): 39.

CHAPTER V

"The Burnt Ones"

White's sombre vision of humanity has evoked both praise and condemnation in his critics. Some applaud his comic sense, others brand him a misanthrope. In a review of The Burnt Ones, Charles Osborne pointed out the cold clarity of White's vision: "When so many writers are concerned to show us their enormous compassion for their characters, it is heartening to read one who creates, it seems, as easily and strongly from cold disgust as others do from love."[1] White's judgement of human frailty and failure seems harsh yet within many of his characters there is concealed the hope for another kind of existence. A polished comic technique in the stories urges the reader to reconsider White's so-called misanthropy. His gift for comedy hints at a deep sense of compassion for humanity.

An evident sympathy for the misfits in society is shown in the characterization of the aptly named "burnt ones," those charred by experiences in a materialistic world. White displays pity for the spiritual struggles or frustrated ambitions of the poor unfortunates. He implies that they are capable of gaining some understanding of serenity which is beyond the grasp of the selfish or egotistical. The

pity, however, does not extend to those who lack compassion in themselves.

The elements of cruelty, comedy and compassion can be traced in the short stories. White reserves his most bitter satire for those who lack sensitivity or who are tied to the values of a materialistic culture. The misfits are treated with a great deal of compassion although the satirist's barb is sometimes felt. Both The Burnt Ones and The Cockatoos show the dark side of White's vision. At the same time there are glimpses of some charity towards the human predicament, an acceptance of human frailty. Nevertheless, White's view of vulgarity and social pretension has not mellowed. The malicious portraits of Evelyn Fazackerley and Mrs Bannister in The Cockatoos confirm this impresssion.

The cynical and bitter note in the stories is balanced by the compassion he shows for the victims of society. The pity he exhibits for Kikitsa Alexiou or Daise Morrow in The Burnt Ones is also present for Clem Dowson, Maro Makridis and Ella Natwick in The Cockatoos. It is not a sentimental pity because the reader is made aware of the realistic nature of their plight. There are times when White's sense of charity is forced to the notice of a reader. Daise Morrow, for example, is glorified as her celebration

of love rises unheard by the mourners gathered about her grave. Here the feeling of authorial intrusion is unpleasantly strong, as if White were afraid the message would not be understood. He portrays the dead woman as a kind of spiritual comforter, a haven for the weak, but the technique is too obviously contrived. The biblical words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," resound throughout her cry from the grave:

> Listen to me, all you successful no-hopers, all you who wake in the night, jittery because something may be escaping you, or terrified to think there may never have been anything to find. Come to me, you sour women, public servants, anxious children, and old scabby, desperate men. (BO 311)[2]

Only the child Meg receives a glimmer of the message. The saintly image of Daise Morrow appears slightly ludicrous.

The characterization of Clem Dowson is more realistic by comparison, since he is described with all his human flaws. The reader is told of Clem's metaphysical speculations and also of his fussy bachelor habits:

> "Don't forget—in the bin for the dump," Dowson warned. "We have three bins," he was explaining to guests, "one for the dump, one for the compost, and a third for the incinerator."
> Then they were silent for a little, except for the slither and chatter of the remains of Nesta's cup, as she swept them into, presumably, the right bin. (C 68)

Although this view is presented through the biased vision of Evelyn Fazackerley, "presumably" touches the right note of gentle mockery. Both Daise and Clem are idealized portraits although White's wit is much stronger in the description of Clem. The imperfections in Clem make him a more realistic and sympathetic character.

The Burnt Ones contains outright moralizing about the evils of society and the dearth of love whilst The Cockatoos has more of the satirist's detachment. In the latter collection, even those in quest of happiness and fulfilment are revealed with their human weaknesses and foibles. White's sympathy definitely favours the enlightened or the visionary yet these people can still remain the targets of his satire.

A sympathy for human frailty is particularly obvious in the Greek stories. White's deep love for Greece is evident in his reservations about returning home to Australia after the second World War:

> All through the War in the Middle East there persisted a longing to return to the scenes of childhood, which is, after all, the purest well from which the creative artist draws. Aggravated further by the terrible nostalgia of the desert landscapes, this desire was almost quenched by the year I spent stationed in Greece, where perfection presents itself on every hand, not only the perfection of antiquity, but that of nature, and the warmth of human relationships expressed in daily living. Why didn't I stay in Greece? I was

> tempted to. Perhaps it was the realisation that even the most genuine resident Hellenophile accepts automatically the vaguely comic role of Levantine beachcomber. He does not belong, the natives seem to say, not without affection; it is sad for him, but he is nothing. While the Hellenophile continues humbly to hope.3

He seems to have solved this quandary by returning to Australia with a Greek friend and partner, Manoly Lascaris, and by using Greece as a setting for many of his stories. The six with a Mediterranean setting show a marked sense of compassion in comparison with the Sarsaparilla stories.

White's special feeling for Greece can be discerned in his poetic evocation of the landscape and his compassionate attitude towards the characters. Like Lawrence Durrell, White captures the beauty of Greece by juxtaposing the bizarre and the commonplace. In "Dead Roses" an amusing contrast is drawn between the natural beauty of the Greek landscape and the Australian tourists. Amidst the "smell of dust and roses, as sea and sky began to purple over, and shadow deepened dust at the roots of the pines," Anthea Mortlock in her stilt heels and Cherie Flegg in her leopard-skin matador pants appear absurdly out of place (BO 73). Anthea's alienation from the country is emphasized by her fear of being molested by a sinewy young Greek.

The Nile Delta is described through the eyes

of Evelyn Fazackerley. She hates the steamy landscape, the flies, the scorpions and, most of all, the Egyptians. Even the mango trees are "heavy with nauseating fruit" (BO 26). Dark red roses grow out of the Delta silt but it is obvious that Evelyn sees only the silt. By comparison, Clem Dowson's inward reflections make him self-sufficient and contented wherever he may be, whether it is on Bandana beach or the Mediterranean: "As he strolled about the grounds, the landscape was perhaps more indifferent to his presence, though he appeared unaware of it, planting his heels firmly as he walked, in no particular direction but the one in which his thoughts were leading him"(C 31).

Barry Argyle comments on the convincing nature of the foreign culture in "A Glass of Tea": "Chios, Smyrna, Athens, Alexandria and Geneva are involved, the differences painted by a habit, the shape of a house, or the punctuality of a bus, the deft economy reminiscent of The Aunt's Story."[4] At the same time, the contrast between the tale of passion and the Swiss respectability has an air of contrivance. In a series of rambling recollections the octogenarian Yanko Philippides relates the story of his wife, Constantia. Although their relationship is full of suffering, the couple possess an

nephew greedily fight over a bowl of rice, Maro makes no accusations although she prays that they will be able to forgive one another. She does not demand that others live up to her rigorous standards. Maro Makridis seems to be motivated by a sense of charity rather than any sado-masochistic impulse. She is an exception to Jane Lane's view that the "Greek characters tear up themselves and their nation with an ambiguous sado-masochism which seems to reflect the author's own feeling of his creations."[7] Maro's experience of suffering confirms her faith.

White champions the personal quest of those who dare to stand by their beliefs in a hostile world. He conveys the solitary nature of the quest and the loneliness of their vision. Many pilgrimages end in failure or disappointment. Thus, the protagonist of The Vivisector visits a shrine to gain enlightenment yet finds only excrement behind the altar. One of White's most emphatic statements on the nature of the vision is found in Daise Morrow's affirmation of the power of love:

> Truly, we needn't experience tortures, unless we build chambers in our minds to house instruments of hatred in. Don't you know, my darling creatures, that death isn't death, unless it's the death of love? Love should be the greatest explosion it is reasonable to expect. Which sends us whirling, spinning, creating millions of other worlds. Never destroying.(BO 311)

It is a personal vision rather than one which follows

a particular religious or philosophic school of thought. White does not attempt to provide a pat answer to what may be an insoluble problem. On the other hand, he implies that the visionaries possess some insight which is denied to most people.

There are no visionaries of the stature of Theodora Goodman or Elizabeth Hunter in the short stories. Perhaps this is because the novels can explore motivation and characterization in much more depth whereas the short story form is necessarily compressed. There are few characters amongst the ageing couples of The Cockatoos who experience any semblance of happiness or who find an outlet for their frustrated ambitions. Most find it difficult to see further than the confining boundaries of suburban life.

Bitter sarcasm and satire is loosed on those who persecute the "burnt ones." This is clearly shown in the caricature of Miss Docker who harasses the people of Sarsaparilla with her misguided acts of charity. Through the comic Aunt Sally figure of Miss Docker, White impels the reader to take a closer look at the nature of evil and suffering in society. His hatred towards those who commit the crimes is matched by his sympathy for the victims.

In a review of The Burnt Ones published in 1964, T.G.Rosenthal prophesied that:

> When Patrick White has got the Nobel Prize and the doctoral theses are being churned out, these stories will prove rich and fertile ground for the future analysts of his style and meaning for they are far from being simply his novels in miniature. They seem to be, not in any derogatory, but in a highly subtle sense, discards from his novels.8

Perhaps the themes in the short stories are similar to those in his longer fiction, yet the satirical voice is much stronger. There seems to be a heightened intensity in his satire of the arid lives in suburbia or the victims of a materialistic society. White's indictment of Australian society is harsh yet accurate. Although the status-seekers and the vulgarians are exposed to the brunt of his hatred, the short stories are not simply misanthropic reflections on the evils of materialism. White shows a deep compassion for the isolates and misfits and an understanding of their loneliness and alienation. The presence of such characters as Daise Morrow or Clem Dowson suggests White's optimism that there can be some escape from a suffocating and alien environment. Their qualities of humility and simplicity give them an inner contentment which cannot easily be crushed. In spite of the mediocrity and conformity White offers some hope that the life of the imagination and the spirit will endure.

Notes to Chapter V

1. Charles Osborne, "Australian Attitudes," Observer (London), 4 October 1964, P.28.
2. Matt, 11:28.
3. Patrick White, "The Prodigal Son," Australian Letters 1, 3 (April 1958): 38.
4. Barry Argyle, Patrick White (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967), p.76.
5. John Burrows, "The Short Stories of Patick White," in Ten Essays on Patrick White ed. G.A. Wilkes (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1970), p.172.
6. Patrick White, The Solid Mandala (1966; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), p.212.
7. Jane Lane, "A State of Mind," New Statesman, 9 October 1964, p.547.
8. T.G. Rosenthal, "White Heat," Australian Book Review 4, 1 (November 1964), p.6.

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