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## Postcolonial Evaluation of Patrick Whites Selected Fictions

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### Abstract

The goal of this research paper is to examine the postcolonial themes that are unique to Patrick White's novels. The rigidity that existed between the former colonies and the imperial centres is deftly shown in the novels of Patrick White (1912–1990). His writings on fiction turn into a risk for investigating colonial and postcolonial themes. In this research paper, Patrick White's fictions are the main subject and their growth in relation to postcolonial reading is examined. The debate mostly focuses on reading postcolonial theory and applying the theory-which is based on reading significant postcolonial theorists-to Patrick White's work. An important figure in Australian literature, Patrick White, has contributed to the growth of postcolonial literary studies. His works of fiction offer a variety of ideas and subjects to consider, offering a foundation for conversation and in order to better understand the postcolonial themes in Patrick White's work, this research study aims to investigate those subjects. The rigidity between the former imperial cities and the former colonies is expertly projected in Patrick White's literature (1912–1990). Exploring colonial and postcolonial issues becomes hazardous when it comes to his fiction. Considering Patrick White's fictions in light of the evolution of postcolonial reading, this research article centres on them. Readings from significant postcolonial theorists are primarily highlighted in the debate, along with the application of the theory to Patrick White's literature. The growth of postcolonial literary studies is aided by the work of prominent Australian author Patrick White.

**Keywords:** Post colonialism, hybridity, third world, orient, displacement etc.

### Introduction

#### Patrick White's Fiction

Patrick White is primarily recognised for his 1973 Nobel Prize in Literature, which he received in recognition of his contributions to Australian literature. Thirteen novels have been authored by him. Australia and its culture are the primary subjects of his fiction. He approached these topics with his own creativity, history, and viewpoint from personal experience.

Happy Valley (1939),  
The Living and the Dead (1941),  
The Aunt's Story (1948), and  
The Tree of Man (1955)

Are some of his books? Patrick White started writing the Australian novel by himself after returning to his home country in 1948. Mark Williams states that White's fiction from the post-war era "shows an increasing acceptance of the positive role of his country as a whole in his art."

In order to create his inventive fantasy, White also illustrates factual occurrences. *Voss* and *A Fringe of Leaves*, his two books, both address historical events in his total creation.

White depicts historical events in his novels through his inventive writing. White uses this to highlight Australia's importance during his time. In his fiction, he vividly describes

his time spent in Australia. Consequently, the main contribution he made to the exploration of colonial and postcolonial elements is his fiction.

#### Post Colonialism and Patrick White's Fiction

Literary studies are now subjecting the field of post colonialism to extensive examination. The past 20 years have seen a significant expansion and development of the discipline of postcolonial literary studies as new themes have been added. The study of literary practices "that characterise the societies of the postcolonial world from the moment of colonisation to the present day, since colonialism does not cease with the mere fact of political independence and continues in a neo-colonial mode to be active in many societies" makes clear that the term "post colonialism" refers to the period that followed the end of colonialism.

When analysing the colonial discourse seen in literary works, several themes and subjects associated with the coloniser are taken into account while overlooking the colonised. Consequently, the literary critical examination of colonization's impacts is made possible by postcolonial studies. When talking about the components of White's fiction.

White's fiction draws its energy from the perspective of marginality. White's novels such as *Voss*, *A Fringe of Leaves* etc. offer an important critique of colonial and postcolonial

expectations. *Voss* is certainly the apex of Patrick White's artistic achievement and here he brings in the aborigines, women both White and Black-as marginal characters. As rendered by White, these aborigines move on the margins of the dominant and imposing European settler colony. There is a remarkable incident in the novel wherein the aboriginal group plunders the expeditionary camp of Voss and finds only 'white' flour. This is a symbolic description of the entire futile process of colonizing a land. The aboriginal who takes the sack with great expectation is dirty literally with flour! The crumbly promise of Western colonialism is ironically portrayed by the novelist. The author satirically depicts the fizzled promise of Western colonialism.

*The Location of Culture* by Homi K. Bhabha (1991) examines how categories like "coloniser and colonised," "centre and margin," and "civilised and savage" are classified in the name of distinctions. This analysis sparks a lot of critical discussion and debate in the postcolonial theory discourse. Bhabha states, "It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance." The conflicting ideas of the coloniser and the colonised form a hybrid culture in the postcolonial globe.

With the release of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in the 1970s, the field of post colonialism studies garnered significant attention. In his work, Edward Said rationally and persuasively demonstrates how the west conducts a terrible propaganda campaign against the Orient, painting a skewed and unworthy image of the Oriental countries in an effort to establish its superiority over them and carry out various forms of colonisation.

"Disregarding, essentializing, and uncovering the humanity of another culture, people, or geographical region" is the foundation of orientalism. The West, or the orientalist, regards himself as the East's or the Orient's supervisor, mentor, and role model.

Said's *Orientalism* primarily contributes to the critique of the West's conception of the East or Orient. "The binary opposition between East and West is promoted by this study of the Orient."

It is clear from the discussion above that White's fiction is postcolonial. *Happy Valley* (1939), *The Living and the Dead* (1941), *The Aunt's Story* (1948), *The Tree of Man* (1955), *Voss* (1957), *Riders in the Chariot* (1961), *The Solid Mandala* (1966), *The Vivisector* (1970), *The Eye of the Storm* (1973), *A Fringe of Leaves* (1976), *The Twyborn Affair* (1979), *Memoirs of Many in One* (1986), and *The Hanging Garden* (2012) are among his works of fiction that should be taken into consideration. The primary determinant of the decision was the ability to highlight different facets of White's handling of postcolonial elements in each of them. The researcher aims to analyse White's fiction by drawing on some of the insights offered by postcolonial theorists, including Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, Homi K. Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, and Edward Said. A comprehensive analysis of White's fiction from a postcolonial perspective does not yet exist. I will thus investigate the ways in which Patrick White's fiction presents postcolonial elements.

The Civil War, in all its horror, serves as the primary political battle in the melancholy family tale *The Living and the Dead*. The complex characters that drive the plot along are Brother and Sister Elyot and Eden Standish, as well as their mother Catherine. After her husband's marriage collapses, Catherine is left to raise the two kids. As a writer and critic in Germany, Elyot develops his skills yet still feels unique. Eden, a free-spirited person looking for purpose, comes to politics but ends

up paying for her decisions. Joe Barnett associates with Eden merely to fulfil his destiny. It's a novel about paralysis, mindless sacrifice, love, death, and 1930s politics; it's an intriguing window into the modern world.

The story takes set in *Happy Valley*, a tiny town in rural New South Wales, around the middle to late 1930s. It was once a booming gold-mining town, but these days it's a tranquil bush village with little activity. The village and some of its citizens are introduced to us in the first few chapters via the (cinematic) eyes of a hawk that is soaring high overhead. However, this creative touch is immediately handled in quintessential Australian style, with multiple characters considering taking it down. We get to know a number of important personalities in these first few chapters. Dr. Oliver Halliday, who is tired of Happy Valley and his wife, has moved in with Clem Hagan, the farm manager, to supervise work on the Furlow family's land. Among the women are Alys Browne, a possible spinster, and Sidney Furlow, a stunning but aloof local heiress. The Quongs, who are shopkeepers and the silent observers to the town's happenings, are also always present in the background as Chinese immigrant descendants.

Happy Valley is, on the one hand, a classic Australian story, complete with bushfires, remoteness, and searing summer heat. Everyone who has read Oz-Lit before will recognise the sense. Sidney's English suitor, a supporting character, expresses frustration with his lack of experience, saying, "There is something here completely foreign to anything I know, felt Roger Kemble, those hands that touch a different substance, and despising what I touch." (Text Classics, 2012, p. 167)

"Happy Valley turned into an oddly resilient crust on the dark dirt. You bided your time for it to peel off, revealing a pink patch beneath. You felt there was something especially twisted about it since you waited for it to happen and it did not." (Page138)

In a community where everyone knows one another, the arrival of a stranger (Hagan) is a major deal. The only entertainment options in the town are the bar, the weekly picture hall, and the annual races. However, what truly piques curiosity is when tired individuals begin to search for something to divert their attention from the tedium of daily life-infidelity is now quite fascinating.

The attempts made by a few characters to escape the town's oppressive gravitational pull are at the centre of the narrative. Vic Moriarty, the irate spouse of the ill village teacher, finds herself drawn to the brash Clem (who, like him, has his sights set elsewhere...). Dr. Halliday is searching for a transfer to Queensland because he is stuck in a loveless marriage with an elderly woman, but he gets side-tracked by a growing friendship. Alys Browne is waiting for her ship (or her shares) to arrive in order to flee to California. Many wish to get out of town, but it's unlikely that they'll ever be able to. The central love triangles in Happy Valley form the framework of the novel, but there is much more to appreciate. Among the fascinating group of people that White crafts is the enigmatic Quongs. The family is subjected to subtle and overt prejudice; they are despised by the Anglo inhabitants but are allowed to utilise them to supply everyday necessities. However, the White people are just passing through; they are the ones that live there permanently.

Though judging from a few place names and story features like the appearance of motor cars on the highways or the war against Germany, the time and location setting of *The Tree of Man* is ambiguous, however it should be New South Wales

between 1920 and 1955. Stan and Amy Parker are frequently referred to as just the man and the lady, which heightens the notion that the plot moves slowly and softly like the typical life of any farmer in the Australian outback. Even when natural forces strike the nation and demand action, unexpected turns and twists in fate are uncommon.

This is due to the fact that the author's main focus is on the Parker family-Stan in particular-and how they perceive life, one another, and themselves. The book has been described as a household story, a fairy-tale, or even folklore, but it's really more of a character or societal study of the Australian psyche that combines European civilization's legacy with the reality of living in a hostile nation. It's also a tale of struggling to find the right words to describe oneself and communicate with others, or to comprehend one's own inner self. In contrast, the author's writing is extremely poetic and full of potent imagery, which adds to the book's stunning and captivating quality.

### Conclusion

Hence, Patrick Whites' excellent, imaginative, and mature writing. The author does a great job at giving the modern social environment a beautiful shape and lots of detail. He has built a highly developed narrative style by utilising the novels' internal monologue, irony, imagery, metaphor, and symbols. Lastly, I have personally found some fictions to be among the most potent "unreadable" books I have ever read, both when I first read them when I was younger and even more so as I got older. I also know a lot of other people, both young and old, who are teachers and students in colleges and schools or who work hard to make ends meet when they would much rather read, and a lot of people who read for pleasure and education or, just plain, for their own sanity and insomnia in their homes, gardens, cities, and rural areas.

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