REALISATION THROUGH SUFFERING IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF PATRICK WHITE: VOSS, THE EYE OF THE STORM AND RIDERS IN THE CHARIOT

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ABSTRACT
Patrick White, the grand old master of Australian literature, is a novelist, a short story writer and a playwright whose writing is endowed with comprehensively tackled big themes. He was a genuinely aristocratic writer who views all intellectual activity in Australia with a sardonic eye, and the inner hollowness of Australian life is felt intensely in his fiction. According to Patrick White, the purpose of any work of art must not be simply pleasure giving, it must preach something to the individual. He himself defined the purpose of art as: “Art is a kind of innate drive that seizes the human being and makes him its instrument . . . It is something necessary for him to sacrifice happiness and everything that makes life worth living for the ordinary human being”. His vision is closely akin to the deep-seated nature of the spiritual yearnings of human beings and the need for recognition of the psychic potential of the human spirit of which the conscious rational processes are only a fraction of the totality. He was particularly sensitive to the precarious nature of human identity and his work continues to challenge our perception of ourselves and our reality. An individual construct himself, his subjectivity, through the operation of language on memory and received ideas. When these received ideas are under challenge, personal identity necessarily remains fragile. White demonstrates this fragility through his exploration of the relationships of the fictional protagonist.
Everything he has produced bears the impression of an authentically creative imagination; and nowhere is this creative power more apparent than in his treatment of the Australian scene. He has achieved in his novels a vision of life which is both distinctively individual and generally relevant, a vision which illuminates in a fresh, sometimes strange, but always revealing manner the familiar universe, and which at the same time adds a quickening and transforming element to our experience of it.
This paper entitled “Realisation through suffering in the select novels of Patrick White: Voss, The Eye of the Storm and Riders in the Chariot” is a study of White’s novels in which the protagonists achieve the vision of realisation by undergoing suffering. The suffering they undergo enables them to realise their strong self and opens up new avenues of positive hope for humanity.

KEY WORDS: Patrick White, Realisation through suffering