

Australiana literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Solid Mandala The action of The Solid Mandala is divided evenly between Arthur and Waldo Brown. The first and last sections of the four-part novel, narrated from an omniscient third-person point of view, describe events before and after the climactic moment in the Brown brothers' lives. The two middle sections are narrated from each brother's point of view; both recount in quite different ways the story of their lives up to the fateful climax of their relationship.

Analysis

The Solid Mandala's crisis is definitely a well-known one; an old/new world: Same/Other conflict once again tends to generate a dedoublement, one that there is no mistaking this time, and one that, if only for the reason that Whites tributary insertion of Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov into his own text, is noticeably self-referring. Is its resolution of this crisis - if that is what it is - recognizable as well? To answer in terms of Whites theme of representation-at-the-margin a good number of his story White holds out an optimism of an Australian vernacular writing that will yet remain in touch with a parent European Writing (Wilke p 97).

Finally, however, what has seemed a bearable, if problematic relationship between Arthur and Waldo - and we are talking constantly regarding possibilities of representation - proves to be non-viable. As a replacement for of making for a productive synthesis, the narratives in the novel are known as " Arthur" and " Waldo" is but the same crisis of potentially aggressive confusion seen from somewhat different viewpoints. except the fact that white sees a number of positive sacrificial meaning at this point only obvious conclusion in The Solid Mandala is collapse or regression into an undifferentiated condition, into the extremely confusion of Same as well as

Other it has tried to reconcile: Waldo Brown, dead of spite, in addition to his non-identical twin Arthur, sent to a mental institution, and keeping just one of his four solid mandalas. The conflict never affected their relationship as Arthur said at one occasion "I'll kill," Arthur continued to bellow, "the pair of you bloody buggers if you touch," he choked, "my brother." (White p45) this showed how one brother protected the other

Bound together in conflict, Waldo and Arthur represent duality in totality. Separate yet whole, the brothers symbolize the two opposing halves of the self. White advocates the need for both parts as well as for balance between the two. For example, Arthur's insight—his almost visionary capability—is too otherworldly for this one: In the end, he is removed to a lunatic asylum. Still, White elevates Arthur's life-affirming stance over Waldo's philosophy of denial and his reliance on the intellectual faculty. They render him equally unprepared for living among other human beings: Except for Arthur, Waldo is essentially alone. The themes of twinhood and mandalic wholeness pervade the novel, as do other associated themes such as connection and communication.

The God

God in this novel is usually symbolized by objects Most precious to Arthur is his collection of glass marbles, of which four in particular are solid mandalas, the mandala being a symbol of totality and also the purported dwelling for a god. According to White, a kitchen table is love, is God, even, if one could get to know it. Because Arthur lives close to the things of the earth, he does come to know them, although for him it is a purely intuitive process.

Conclusion

White satirizes the narrow Australian mentality which condemns what it

considers unusual and, hence, threatening. His consistent establishment-bashing has won for White the enmity of many Australian critics as well as the admiration of readers in other postcolonial cultures where there are similar conflicts.

Work cited

White Patrick; the Solid Mandala. Penguin Twentieth Century Classics, 1994 p 45

Wilkes, G. A. “ An Approach to Patrick White’s The Solid Mandala,” in Southerly. XXIX, no. 2 , 1969 pp. 97-110