

The Twyborn Affair By Patrick White Cumulative effects of this book (and any White novel) are a dense moving source of emotional complexity so insightful into well being human that slow explosions of epiphanies go off one after the other. Plus in The Twyborn Affair fringe sexuality and identity issues (PW was a rebellious cantankerous gay man in an especially challenging era) add an outsider's poignancy and at times an uncharacteristic raunch and even a disturbing dimension elevating the book above not only others in White's oeuvre but also Cormac McCarthy's and Nabokov's two writers whose presence is felt (by me anyhow) whenever I read one of PW's works. In fact I ended up being so moved that I burst into tears in a nails salon as I was finishing the book there to everyone's considerable embarrassment... This bawling session is a testimony to White's talent because I'm a tough audience when it comes to tears and even more so because the protagonist wasn't actually when you think of it properly done that well. To the extent we come to know Eddie/Eudoxia/Eadith we come to understand the complicated relationship between psyche and body in this individual who is at times care-free careful diffident sensitive and solitary. By the end of the book I was yearning for E to find an intimate to encounter that person who can be entrusted with her full sense of herself with her past and her hopes for the future. The first part was told from a variety of points of view most from what turned out to be minor characters but this approach gave the reader an excellent idea of who E was to others. Characters are often eating the grease smearing all over their hands and face and settling into their clothes; similarly women's make up is described as caked on running or otherwise causing problems. It has taken me a very long to get through the book though I decided to commit to getting through (and admittedly each part got easier to read; the first is the toughest I think). 0140186069 Patrick Victor Martindale White was an Australian author widely regarded as one of the major English language novelists of the 20th century and winner of the 1973 Nobel Prize for Literature. His fiction freely employs shifting narrative vantages and the stream of consciousness Patrick Victor Martindale White was an Australian author widely regarded as one of the major English language novelists of the 20th century and winner of the 1973 Nobel Prize for Literature. He became known as an outspoken champion for the disadvantaged for Indigenous rights and for the teaching and promotion of art in a culture he deemed often backward and conservative. Although he achieved a great deal of critical applause and was hailed as a national hero after his Nobel win White retained a challenged relationship with the Australian public and ordinary readers. Following White's death in 1990 his reputation was briefly buoyed by David Marr's well received biography although he disappeared off most university and school syllabuses with his novels mostly out of print by the end of the century. This lack of movement was frustrating and as I wasn't interested in joining the characters in masturbatory release I put this book away for another time when I may be a bit more patient in venturing through the remaining pages. i think it was the best circumstances in which to read the book; its mysteries and dreamlike meanderings completely free from descriptive and contextual blurb all explication left entirely to my own impressions. something about the sometimes languorous sometimes precise writing style and the lingering sense of mysterious motivations barely expressed by the characters was so reminiscent of the polite dutch people around me in their city full of strangeness and charm. in the end what is the meaning? well as with all great books there are many avenues to finding meaning and many sorts of meanings on display many points that can be found and many that are being made consciously and perhaps otherwise. The individual sections also call to mind endless books: the first third could be a Henry James novel only with Australian expats instead of American (and you know explicit gender trouble). Consider this sentence almost devoid of content but still breathtaking: Where the villa was situated there opened a view of the sea its hyacinth deepening to purple at that hour of evening islands of amethyst nestling in tender feathers of foam clouds too detached in every sense to suggest something physical only a slash of brash sunset to warn of the menace invariably concealed in landscape and time. or Note yet recovered from the storm of the night before the whole landscape had remained withdrawn in its sombre self the sea still streaked with oily black except when throwing itself against the promontory of rock or the strip of gritty plage it flashed a frill of underskirt which would have shown up white if it had not

been dirtied toning with grey concrete black asphalt the straggle of palms saw-toothed blades parrying the last of the wind a line of tamarisks their cobweb-and-dustladen branches a dead green at the best of times now harried to a kind of life overall the coastal spine covered with a scurf of dead grass and network of black vines. Twyborn's gender bending could have been gimmicky but the Tiresias echoes help to focus on the most important question here: can one embody a myth? And is human sexuality an adequate one? In the first world war Twyborn comes across a Captain who tells him about fucking a French woman. Twyborn's brothel which is consistently described as a convent-- here the brisk sound of [the assistant's] brown habit the rustle of her bunch of keys if not her rosary could be heard in the corridors. She doesn't know her son has died but she sits enjoying the birdsong as a bulbul cocked his head at her shook his little velvet jester's cap and raised his beak towards the sun. 0140186069 Timely yet dated this novel published in the late 1970s follows one character through three incarnations in the same lifetime the first of which is so persuasive that the second comes as a bit of a surprise. Still from the South of France to a sheep ranch in the Australian Outback -- described in gruesome detail -- to a brothel in decadent pre-WW2 London this novel sheds a light on the mysteries of gender and identity:

Patrick White was a consistently incredible writer and this book so far of those I've read is his best. ) The protagonist Eddie Twyborn through three incarnations slips in and out of name time geography and gender, 0140186069 The Twyborn Affair was a feat of linguistic fireworks: I loved immersing myself in the universe of White's language and from the second part of this 3-part-novel also became really involved with the narrative. We never really got deeply into his/her mind and she/he remained somewhat aloof somewhat unreal, I also thought White's social satire went a bit overboard lots of two-dimensional characters, And wow does he dislike women... Still the prose and the narrative twists and the dizzying variety of the novel's settings all make this book a very worthy read. 0140186069 This book is worth reading simply because the central character is a person worth knowing. Eddie Twyborn was assigned "male" at birth but lived much of life as a woman, While the book never focuses solely on the conflict of E's internal feelings and external expression of gender it is central to the story. It is a conflict of which only E (and eventually the reader) is aware. It is sometimes the driving force in decisions E makes and sometimes a secondary concern but the incongruent gender expression is never entirely absent: I appreciated that White never presented E as an object of contempt or pity. We see a person who is stuck in a life of compromise. E's story contains no moments of wallowing in angst but there is also never a moment of unadulterated joy, The times of deepest contentment seem to be when the character is alone working or recreating in the Australian outback: While not lacking for friends the reader comes to see that however E chooses to live as either male or female s/he is never truly known to others: Instead of the writing transporting me into the story and the time and place of the telling I felt instead that it was a barrier. I could feel the author straining for the sentence for the scene: Patrick White wanted to carry the reader away as much as I wanted to be transported: But I was always conscious of the author's efforts to do so and in the end felt the burden and strain of the writing. The second part of the book was entirely from E's point of view no shifts in the narrative. The third part of the book was still from E's point of view but in a more detached way. We also didn't see E from any external point of view and this I think contributed to the understanding of E's isolation, Really rather a brilliant approach by Patrick White but the strained writing made enough of an impression that I ended up with only a middling reading experience. Patrick White could care less for the voyage of the individual, It's far more interesting to watch identity and society shift and elide: I don't know that as a novel it was terribly satisfying but there were some beautiful sequences that made it a worthwhile read. It was a bit too Anglocentric for my tastes but I can imagine that any lover of the British modernists looking to branch out a bit might adore it, 0140186069 An Australian friend recommended that I read Patrick White and that the Twyborn Affair is the best, It's topical to read now though as transgender people are having a cultural 'moment' and are everywhere on TV and the media: For a book from 1979 to propose a three-part story following the protagonist's life as a

woman then man than woman it was long ahead of its time. I can see its merit and the way that Patrick White uses voice and different landscapes completely Australian and completely original. Rich Australians travelling and living in Europe the upper crust of society both there and in country NSW was interesting, And equally engaging was his lack of modesty or timidity about writing about sex and bodily functions. A home abortion in a brothel was one particularly graphic scene, But I found the writing difficult to read his exaggerated comical caricatures how brash their social interactions. Still it's all just a matter of taste that there were just a few too many factors that I didn't connect with in his writing and themes, He's a celebrated Nobel-winning author and a number of reviewers think this is his best book: Born in England while his Australian parents were visiting family White grew up in Sydney before studying at Cambridge, Publishing his first two novels to critical acclaim in the UK White then enlisted to serve in World War II where he met his lifelong partner the Greek Manoly Lascaris: Home again White published a total of twelve novels two short story collections eight plays as well as a miscellany of non fiction: Born in England while his Australian parents were visiting family White grew up in Sydney before studying at Cambridge, Publishing his first two novels to critical acclaim in the UK White then enlisted to serve in World War II where he met his lifelong partner the Greek Manoly Lascaris: Home again White published a total of twelve novels two short story collections eight plays as well as a miscellany of non fiction. His fiction freely employs shifting narrative vantages and the stream of consciousness technique: In 1973 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for an epic and psychological narrative art which has introduced a new continent into literature. From 1947 to 1964 White and Lascaris lived a retired life on the outer fringes of Sydney, However after their subsequent move to the inner suburb of Centennial Park White experienced an increased passion for activism, In their personal life White and Lascaris' home became a regular haunt for noted figures from all levels of society. In his final decades the books sold well in paperback but he retained a reputation as difficult dense and sometimes inscrutable: Interest in White's books was revived around 2012 the year of his centenary with all now available again. Sources: Wikipedia David Marr's biography {site\_link} The Patrick White Catalogue {site\_link} Eddie Twyborn is bisexual and beautiful the son of a Judge and a drunken mother. His search for identity self-affirmation and love takes us into the ambiguous landscapes sexual psychological and spiritual of the human condition: The Twyborn Affair So much to like here - and some deeply impressive writing - but something did not quite click for me. If I had more time and was not fighting the flu I would probably try to analyse why and write more of a review, 0140186069 Try as I might I could not get through this book and abandoned it after a hundred pages. There is beautiful literary writing here but that alone does not carry a novel: White seems to have pulled extensively from his life including the male Greek lover an aging one in this tale. Eudoxia the Australian hero (or heroine) dresses as a woman to hide his homosexuality and lives an idyllic life with the aging widower Angelos Vatatzes in a French villa: Golson and her husband are also vacationing in the same area, Golson too had once dressed up as a man and woman to go out to a part of town where single women were frowned upon and this event is seared across Eudoxia's memory: The Golsons are rich and the husband only signs letters and attends board meetings to keep his enterprise Down Under afloat, Vatatzes who was faithful to his first wife now dead fears that he will lose his youthful male lover: And Eudoxia is frustrated because Angelos cannot reciprocate his passion because "Passion and lust are as necessary as a square meal: Why? Because the book seems to go around in a circle of confused gender sexuality and identity. And masturbation is the only release for these self-indulgent and self-absorbed characters, The scenes are set pieces where someone is recollecting spying on or visiting someone else: 0140186069 i picked this up in a hostel donation shelf in amsterdam; it was missing both the back and front covers and the author was unknown to me. i knew nothing about it except that it was something to pass the time reading while high as my traveling partner slowly regained her health, reading the movement of the protagonist through periods as an australian jackaroo a brothel's madame a soldier in world war 2 france a transvestite, it felt at first like trying to figure out the narrative of a dream until slowly with no great defining moment everything made perfect and tragic sense, it was a move from

a description of a dream into the dream itself. by the end of the novel i felt as if i had looked through the author's eyes and thought the author's thoughts, the peace that some find in war the war that exists during peace. if i had to chose one of the above i'd say the first: Identity: what is it anyway?now a warning: this is dense dizzying poetic prose: he's quite different from those authors but they all share an occasional sort of impenetrability in the writing, well at least superficially impenetrable - the opposite of a quick and shallow read, wonderful stuff gorgeous and memorable prose but not for everyone i suppose. according to australians i met during the trip apparently Patrick White's novels are required reading back home but the kind that few australians ever actually get around to reading, a strange fate for the only australian nobel prize winner for literature! to be known yet unknown - so much like the protagonist of his fascinating novel: Here you a book about a woman who turns out to 'be' a man who prefers to live as a woman who decides to live as a man who (plot spoiler) dies, By the time you've read the back cover then you'll know we're already in Tiresias and Orlando territory, Twyborn is in Europe; in the central panel he's in Australia--so an inverted Lost Illusions in which the provincial (i: Australian) is in the centre (Europe) at the beginning and end of the book and returns to the provinces in the middle portion: The middle third is much the other big White novel I've read (Vivisector) in its attention to the Australian landscape and the business with Australian identity: The final third takes place in a brothel and reminds me at least of Baron de Charlus towards the end of Proust, I have no idea if White intended all of these echoes but I enjoyed them. Generally I'm bored silly by physical descriptions but White's a so musical and intricate that I compulsively re-read them. As a whole this book somehow combines the syntax of late James with the physicality (and repetitions) of D: As he went at it he had a vision like the wings of a giant cocky soft and at time explosive: Plainly he sees the woman as an angel but closes his story Don't know why I'm tellun yer this, and as they issued out of the individual cells under her charitable control, Throughout the novel the characters appeal to something that can work as their personal myth but rarely ascend/descend to organized religion: Curiously the only survivor of the second world war is M/me. Twyborn's mother who spends all of her time in church or reading a prayerbook, So in sum: great prose great thoughts no silly existentialism: One of the best novels I've read this year but certainly not for everyone. I read it cold with no sense of what was coming and found the first section puzzling until the second provided revelation: By the third section you can't help but be disappointed even saddened by this character's continuing need for evasion for concealment: History has caught up with the Eadie Twyborns of this world perhaps even liberated them. (He said the same thing in interviews. Sentences resonate with profundity. The structure is invariably surprising and original. You need to pay attention. Outstanding. The words seemed too laboriously chosen too thoughtful. I was intrigued by the construct of the book however. We weren't close in like we were in the second part. 0140186069 Misery! War! Sexuality! Anomie! Oh modernists.Echoes of Virginia Woolf throughout the entirety of the book. I wish I would have liked the book more though. The language is really florid. I think I'm unlikely to give him another go though. The pair returned to Australia after the war. The pair returned to Australia after the war. But I don't and I am so I won't. His mother Eadie's friend Mrs. Eadie and Mrs. In France Mrs. Golson spots the youthful "Mrs. Vatatzes" from afar and lusts after her. Pelletier the newspaper vendor by the beach spots Mrs. Vatatzes swiming nude and lusts after her. Even Mr. Golson has his eye on "her." And poor aging Mr."That's as far as I got. identity and its potential fluidity. self-affirmation. class and social conventions. masculine & feminine archetypes. an ode to landscapes both country and city. bourgeoisie vs. bohemia. lots of things. challenging. think Peake Pynchon Paul Scott etc. 0140186069 White is dense. The book is a triptych. In the two wings Ms.e. Also dense: White's prose. Crikey. H. Lawrence--while remaining pleasurable. And the ideas are dense too. About giant cockies. You'll think Im a nut case. An' don't think I'm religious!. Because I believe in nuthun. NUTHUN! This anecdote is followed by a passage about Mme. 0140186069

NOBEL PRIZE-WINNER  
**PAIRICK WHITE**  
THE  
**TWYBORN AFFAIR**

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