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Dear Mr. Marr,

PATRICK WHITE : A LIFE

When this marvellous biography first came out, I read the reviews with great interest, but frugally postponed buying a copy until it appeared in paperback edition (being retired, I buy very few hardbacks) . Now that it has come out in paper, just a couple of weeks ago, I immediately bought a copy from our local Sherborne bookshop, and have been engrossed in it. I usually read in the evenings, and this was spread over several evenings. When I finished, I felt a bit lost, so much had you immersed me in the strange and rewarding life of PW. I wanted to write and say how much I enjoyed the book, but before I comment on the book, please let me tell you something about myself. (Also, let me say now that I am not expecting a reply, its just that the book meant so much to me that I did want to write this letter)

These personal details do not make me in any way a competent judge of your book, but they might explain why it did mean so much to me. First, I have read several of PW's novels; I now realise that there is much that I have not read, that I now wish to read, and also that I shall be re-reading some I've not read for years, and re-reading with more depth this time). Other factors which are, I think relevant:

**having spent two months, in 1990, after our retirement, in Australia, where we have friends and relations in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney (we hope to return for a longer visit in 1994);

**being homosexual, and being fortunate in finding my "twin" 38 years ago (I add that, while Bernard and I have had our share of storms, ours has thankfully been a much more tranquil relationship than that, apparently, of PW and Manoli);

** being a Catholic .1 I converted when an undergraduate at Cambridge, and have been interested in pursuing "links with a supernatural power");

**Being a social anthropologist (some of us compare our task to that of novelists in attempting to interpret other people's cultures and lives).

**having been an academic (both Bernard and I taught for many years at the University of California, Santa Barbara. I have, for example, some appreciation of all the work that went into you more than 2,000? - foot-notes);

** both Bernard and I being extremely interested in "the life of the imagination -books, painting, music, theatre" (a major reason for our retiring in England was because of these interests, we are often in London);

**growing up in South Africa (although I have not lived there for 45 years, I have experienced some of the sense of exile an .