Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1. Patrick White: a Life Background

Patrick White’s life is an example of divided loyalties that has had a relatively huge impact on many Australian writers. Australia has an environment and traditions that make it unique amongst other countries; this uniqueness as well as the vastly diverse nature provide the imaginative writer with enough food for thought. Patrick White’s grandfather settled in New South Wales in the 1820’s. Almost one century later and in 1912 when White was born the family had properties that stretched to the areas around Scone. Patrick was actually born in London and was brought up in Sydney; he attended schools at Moss Vale until the age of 13 when his parents decided to send their son to homeland (England) to study at Cheltenham College. The years he spent in Cheltenham were “very agonizing” and he often made mention of the place with sadness and woe:

Brought up to believe in the maxim: Only the British can be right, I did accept this during the earlier part of my life. Ironed out in an English public school, and finished off at King’s Cambridge, it was not until 1939, after wandering by myself through most of Western Europe, and finally most of the United States, that I

Satire is a sort of glass, wherein Beholders do generally discover everybody’s face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it.

Jonathan Swift
began to grow up and think my own thoughts. The war did the rest.

(Patrick White, Australian Letters 37)

He had indeed gone back to Australia after school and spent two years working as a jackeroo on a station near Adaminably and then somewhere in Walgett. His initial attempts at writing a story started when he worked as a jackeroo on different farms which gave him the setting for Happy Valley.

At King’s College Cambridge, he studied modern Languages and graduated in 1935. After finishing his university education he started to write poems, plays and novels. The first novel written in this period was Happy Valley which was rejected by many London publishers. It was Geoffrey Grigson a critic friend who eventually helped him to have Harrap publish his novel in 1939. This novel was published in the United States as was his next novel The Living and the Dead which was published in 1942. For some time during the Second World War, he served in the Royal Air Force as an intelligence officer in Africa, the Middle East and the Western Desert which culminated with a year in Greece. White suffered from asthma since childhood and by the time he was involved in writing The Tree of Man his asthma problem became so acute that he was confined to bed for a long time. His tiresome grappling with illness coupled with the lack of humanity that he saw in the Australian society of the time made him write:

All through the war in the Middle East there persisted a longing to return to the scenes of childhood, which is, after all the purest well from which the creative artist draws. Aggravated further by the terrible nostalgia of the desert landscape, this desire was almost quenched by the year I spent stationed in Greece, where perfection presents itself on every hand, not only the perfection of antiquity, but that on nature, and warmth of human relationships expressed in daily living. Why didn’t I stay in Greece? I was tempted to. Perhaps it was the
realization that even the most genuine resident Hellenophile accepts automatically the vaguely comic role of Levantine beachcomber. He does not belong, the natives seem to say, not without affection; it is sad for him, but he is nothing. While the Hellenophile continues humbly to hope. So I did not stay in my elective Greece. Demobilization in England left me with the alternative of remaining in what I felt to be an actual and spiritual graveyard, with the prospect of ceasing to be an artist and turning instead into the most sterile of beings, a London intellectual, or of returning home, to the stimulus of time remembered.

(Patrick White, *Australian Letters* 38)

The novel *The Tree of Man* was published in 1955 and became a big success in the U.S and in the Great Britain but not in Australia; the Australian critics generally did not approve of White and his works; a distaste which continues even today. Their reaction to the success of the novel in the U.S and England was mixed with hostility and surprise. Kenneth Slessor was among some of the few Australian critics who called it a “timeless work of art”. White’s next novel *Voss* which was published in 1958 received the same positive acclaim overseas and negative appraisal in Australia.

1.2. Contemporary culture and Adversarial Attitude

Patrick White is generally labeled as a modernist writer who can be studied from his critique of contemporary Australian culture. This of course does not necessarily mean that his novels are mere pamphlets of protest but that they are productions of a novelist who consciously uses an adversarial attitude in reflecting the society wherein he lived. He was always of the strong conviction that art can potentially play an important role in the positive transformation of human life. White’s critique revolves around a distinction between banal culture and serious art
which is made possible through the usage of satire. He further uses satire to demonstrate that strong art has spiritual qualities that gives it a transforming power. A conspicuous characteristic of White is that he has no positive view of society and in contrast to characters created by such varied novelists as Thomas Hardy, George Eliot and Charles Dickens whose characters find what they want in the communities they are born into his characters remain mute and desperate.

Moreover White’s return to Australia after the Second World War was a sign of his rejection of the old world’s metropolitan centers with their deeply embedded material cultures and social structures. What most annoyed him was the “banality” of the world around him. This world banality overview is written about while he was revising his novel *The Eye of the Storm*:

> I am now about two-thirds of the way through the second version of the novel; hating it at present; every word is a stone to be lifted painfully. I find it increasingly hard to convey ordinary objects (a telephone, say) or necessary moves (from one room to another) without being overwhelmed by the banality they have in everyday life- and particularly Australian everyday life.

*(Letters 391)*

White was overwrought with the fast erosion of human values and the process of dehumanization. To him the world markets system is a new global phenomenon that accelerates the process of despiritualization and deindividualization. He saw US as the leading culprit in the emergence of this grim dehumanizing process. In his visit to America in 1958, he characterizes it as a “horrifying kind of subcivilization, full of sudden gusts of fascism. The routine of living has been made so easy that the average person has lost touch with life, its primary forms and substances. I shall be glad to get out of it, even more glad that I am Australian…” *(David Marr, Patrick White, A Life 341)*. He shares the same view about London in his novel *The Living and the Dead* when he describes a group
of people who were waiting outside a station who "were settled down again to being emotionally commonplace. There was very little to distinguish the individual feature in the flow of faces. Certainly it was night, but even where a wave of neon washed across the human element, it uncovered no particular secret, just the uniform white, square or oblong, tinged for a moment with the feverish tones of red or violet" (The Living and the Dead 7). In this novel which is typical of a modernist story he portrays London people as soulless and devoid of emotions. The London underground as well as its streets are peopled by disgustingly repugnant crowds who are emotionally impoverished. The tragedy of human life is so huge that White leaves behind such ardent critics of modern life as D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce and Virginia Wolf for whom contemporary life is full of the instances through which people are bereft of their identities and souls. To him, contemporary modern life can produce human death and life makes people deindividualised and banalised. Here is a passage in The Living and the Dead which tries to delineate the characters' poignant feelings and emotions:

The light that touched him, the street lights that have no respect for the personal existence, shave his face down to the bones, left it with the expression of the street faces. The sockets of his eyes were dark. Two empty saucers in the bone. He remembered the face of the German woman, moments earlier on the platform, resting on her husband's shoulder in a last unseeing embrace. Or rather, you were drawn beyond the eyes of the little German Jewess into a region where the present dissolved, its forms and purpose, became a shapeless, directionless well of fear.

(The Living and the Dead, 7)
To White, the material wealth that modern way of life has brought deprives people of an authentic human life and breeds stiff competitions, commercialism and superficiality.

1.3. An Introduction to White's Style

Patrick White's novels are recognized for their thematic and structural difficulties. Even though most critics commend White's genius and talent, several have written of the difficulty in reading his novels because of the multiplicity of symbols, myths, and allegories. William Walsh, for example, discussed White's "choking thickets of imagery" in his book, Patrick White's Fiction, and Robert Phillips called reading White "a bit like over-indulgence in chocolate mousse"; and Bruce Allen wrote in Saturday Review of White's "stylistic crudeness." However, Harry Heseltine in Quadrant asserted that "whether we like it or not, White's style is neither a cover over a hole nor an impediment in the way of full display of his abilities. It is in fact a direct function of his deepest response to life." Describing White's use of language, Walsh also remarked, "This is of such an individual sort that it stamps the work indelibly with the writer's personality and it is a form of that characteristic domination of his material which this artist invariably exhibits."

The publication of each successive novel afforded a new opportunity to observe his stylistic and thematic concerns in a slightly different context. As it became clearer that White was expressing a unique and genuine, artistic vision, the reservations voiced concerning his earlier novels were supplanted by fuller, more appreciative readings. White's 1973 Nobel Prize for literature was in an acknowledgment of his position as a major figure in contemporary literature. The Nobel committee's citation spoke of his "authentic voice that carries across the world." By the time of his death in 1990, a writer for the London Times was able to affirm that "without doubt The Tree of Man, Voss, and The Solid Mandala are among the most important novels of the century in any language; and on the whole his tormented oeuvre is that of a great and essentially modern writer." White's literary career as a novelist continued for almost half a century and produced twelve
novels, three collections of shorter fiction, three volumes of poetry, several plays, and a controversial autobiography. Some of the major thematic and stylistic elements that are peculiar to White and his works can be traced in his earlier novels: complex and frequent flashbacks, stream of consciousness narrative, use of uncommon syntax and abstruse vocabulary. Although he drew positive critical acclaim with the publication of his first novel, Happy Valley, which gained a gold medal from the Australian Literary Society in 1940, it was The Tree of Man which brought him international fame. R. S. Edgecombe in his Vision and Style in Patrick White diagnosed a "radical break" in style between White's third novel, The Aunt's Story, and The Tree of Man. Edgecombe eventually concludes that White's first three novels "seem to have been promoted more by an urge to be a writer per se than by an impulse to communicate a vision."

Although the obscurity of White's novels has led some critics' to label him as "unreadable", a majority have lauded his efforts. A. Alvarez in his Beyond All This Fiddle: Essays described White's isolation "an image of great beauty" and Shirley Hazzard in the New York Times Book Review described White's style as "rich, distinctive language, now stately, now mercurial, always borne on the civilizing tide of irony." D. Keith Mano wrote in the National Review: "It's as easy to be irked or bloody bored by Patrick White as it is to be astonished by him. If you cooperate, magnificence can be tedious, or tedium magnificent. White is, without conditional clause, brilliant and exasperating."

1.4. Patrick White: Religion, Spirituality, and isolation

Many critics are of the belief that White's basic orientation was religious and that he showed a tendency to take from a variety of religions and philosophies in order to explore his more important concern: man's search for meaning and identity in an apparently senseless and empty society. Inherent in White's consideration of spirituality in a mechanical and materialistic world was the concept of man's loneliness and isolation in a crowded society. Peter S. Prescott compared White to a medical pathologist, saying that he posed the questions, "What pox, what gangrene
do we have here? What rot will be extruded from this pustule?” White believed that even within the most basic societal structures man is alienated and alone and his need for meaning is ultimately to be found in the interior world, the world of the soul and imagination. In review of White’s The Tree of Man Robert Phillips wrote: “White's thesis is simply this: We are all alone in a chaotic world and only we ourselves can help ourselves during our brief tenure.”

White's theory of the duality of man was often shown through characters disintegrated in body but a spirituality which remained unimpaired. George Steiner wrote, “Incontinence, the worn skin, the sour odors of senility, the toothless appetites and spasms of the old ... lay bare the ignoble, perhaps accidental fact that the spirit is so meanly housed.” When in an interview White was asked if there was any continuing theme running through his work, he told Andrew Clark in the New York Times Book Review that his "dominant obsession" was the search for "some meaning and design" in what he described as "the tragic farce of life--to find reason in apparent unreason, and how to accept a supernatural force which on the one hand blesses and on the other destroys."

White's frequent use of the theme of isolation in his novels originated from his personal feelings of non-acceptance and alienation by his fellow countrymen. Several periods of expatriation came before his final return to his home country Australia. Ingmar Bjoerksten quoted him in his Patrick White: A General Introduction as saying:

"It was eighteen years before I dared to come back to Australia for the third time... I couldn't do without the countrysidel out here. I don't believe in a final break with the place one originates from. Only a temporary break ...to get perspective. You are shaped by the place you have your roots in; it has become part of you. Outside places don't shape you in the same way. This has nothing to do with nationalism. People are always the
same. This is what my compatriots find so difficult to understand.

Bjoerksten explored another possible cause of White's feelings of alienation: "For a long time he was dismissed as peculiar, pretentious, and irrelevant by his countrymen, whose restricted vision and whose limited experience of what human life has to offer he exposes time after time, while simultaneously attacking the holy cow that they so deeply revere: an uncritical materialism that never questions itself."

In expressing his theories of individual spirituality and alienation, White frequently used Jungian archetypes of religious symbols of Buddhism and Christianity and the collective unconscious. A recurring notion used in some of White's works involved the mandala which is a motif of Buddhist origin. According to Bjoerksten White made use of the Jungian interpretation of the mandala leitmotif to display man's own divinity, with man at the center of the circle rather than God. In a 1973 letter, White himself acknowledged both his early indebtedness to Jung and his more recent belief in the possibility of the existence of God: "I have great admiration for Jung and his findings, but I also have a belief in a supernatural power of which I have been given inklings from time to time; there have been incidents and coincidences which have shown me that there is a design behind the haphazardness."

1.5. Satire: a Historical Background

The earliest definitions of satire come from Horace who was also its first great practitioner. In his *Programmatic Satires*, he provides his readers with his own theories of satire. He maintained that the duty of a satirist is to speak out freely and frankly and to seek to laugh men out of their vices and follies. Actually, a long tradition of Horatian satire originates from Horace’s pronouncements. The grammarian Diomedes' definition of satire says that it is a "verse composition that is defamatory and composed to carp at human vices" (*maledicium et ad carpenda hominum vitia*). He defines the satiric form in strictly moral terms and does not say anything about humor, wit, playfulness, fantasy and exaggeration.
A formal definition of satire would show that it is a kind of writing in either verse or prose which through reflection exposes the vices prevalent in society; another definition puts it as an “idea or an institution in which you use humor to show their faults or weaknesses” (OALD ; 1346-7). One important challenge that a satirist faces is to be able to incorporate both subtlety and variety in his satirical writing in order to engage the reader and keep him interested in the wit of the satirical work. Satire originated in the works of Menippus (300 BC) and in the comic satires of Aristophanes. Later it found its classical form in the verse satires of great Roman satirists Persius, Juvenal, and Horace. Following the Greco-Roman disintegration, both the Greek and Roman forms of satire were almost forgotten; they only survived in the dream allegories and the beast fables of the Middle Ages. The revival of satire in its modern form, or at least the most favored form of satire for two or three centuries, was done by two humanist writers and philosophers; Sir Thomas More (Utopia; 1516) and Erasmus (In Praise of Folly; 1515). The success of these two satirical treatises has certainly encouraged the 17th century English Augustan poets to revive the classical satire which soon appeared in the prose fictions of Jonathan Swift, Molliere, etc.

Satire has the propensity of taking new forms. The traditional definition of satire says that it is a genre which can maintain “a relationship between a certain form and certain content” (Anne Pender, Christina Stead Satirist 187). This definition of satire can be indicative of the fact that it is a mode subject to a lot of change due to the temperament and personality of the satirist. The fact that satire usually has a tendency to use other forms through time means that it no longer has a form of its own. Some critics have even suggested that the use of other forms such as parody, burlesque, irony, etc. in a work of literature is often so successful that it may be mistaken for that form. This can significantly contribute to the fact that satire is a mode rather than a genre which is not generally sustained throughout a novel like for example Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels. This in turn can make the recognition of satire in a literary work quite complicated.
The Oxford English Dictionary indicates that the term “satire” is derived from the Latin word satira, a variant form of satura, meaning “medley” (Oxford English Dictionary 867). It further adds that satura is the shortened form of the phrase “lanx satura” which means a hotchpotch or a full dish and that satire is usually either a poem or a prose writing in which the “prevailing vices are held up to ridicule”. In any study of the use of satire in a modern literary work, it should be noted that a writer may use satire without wanting to propagate any moral standards; the result is called black satire which is a common form of writing nowadays. At times, we laugh in such a work simply because everything is meaningless and there is no important meaning in anything. This kind of characteristic and attitude subscribed to satire stands in defiance of the established and traditional definition which insists that it nearly always attempts to be at the service of a moral vision which is ignored by some people and events known to the readers from their surroundings or it can zero in on more general human characteristics or on both of them. But satiric writings which are excessively topical or regional lose their impact quickly when the outside incidents are no longer shared by its readers. However, satiric works of literature that focus on higher and more lasting human experience and characteristics appear to be more popular and have a larger readership. One continuous struggle of a good satirist writer is to keep the reader interested through his wit. Because of this, the readers of a satirical work should possess a certain awareness of witticism of the author as well as the literary models and events being satirized. Unless such awareness and mastery exist in the reader, it will become cumbersome to follow the satire of a work.

Now given the fact that pivotal to what is usually called traditional satire is the presentation of a moral vision so that through the presentation of vice, virtue is duly promoted, it becomes quite obvious that this literary technique can take on various tones. Therefore, satire can come in various forms but it is always a satire so long as we feel that the author attempts to make us laugh and attain awareness at some human folly through humor. A satirist always faces the challenge of getting the moral message across to his audience with humor so that they are brought to an
understanding through laughter; in other words, serious matters are presented in humorous ways.

There is a general agreement among critics that the chief motive of using satire in a literary work is to attack. One of the staunchest proponents of this is Edmund Rosenhaim who writes that satire is an attack on discernible, "historically authentic particulars" (The Satiric Spectrum 316). This would practically suggest that socio-historically satire is referential. Some other modern and formalist critics share the same opinion with Rosenhaim; however, most of them go further than this and add that there is a moral code or standard in all satires. They emphasize that the harshness as well as the crudeness of language usually witnessed in a satiric work is at the service of correction and treatment and so give it the epithet of being both generative and corrective. Northrop Frye, for instance, says that a satiric work's norms of morality are "relatively clear".

A satiric work aims to attack a folly or a vice. For this purpose it uses wit to ridicule and seeks to persuade an audience that someone or something is ridiculous or is morally wrong and deserves criticism and in service to this end it employs fiction and exaggeration as its main tools. It does not, however, turn its back on the real world and its victims come from this real world since it proceeds by use of cleverly clear references to some moral standards or purposes. During the 1950’s and 1960’s many books were written about satire; amongst them there are two which have had a significant effect on any study of satire namely, Anatomy of Criticism by Northrop Frye and The Fictions of Satire by Ronald Paulson. The books published by such great and diverse critics as Alvin Kiernan, Edward Rosenheim, Robert Elliot, and Sheldon Sacks provided the terms through which a large number of non-specialist readers continue to read and evaluate satire. The few books that appeared on satire during the 1970’s, 80’s and 90’s largely followed the same books and did not introduce any new challenge to an already accepted definition of satire. In the 1960’s some literary specialists held unfinished debates in the Satire Newsletter with such topics as the “Concept of the Persona in Satire” and
“Norms in Satire” which did not prove to be sufficient in dislodging the traditional definition of satire.

Despite what was said about satire in the most recent decades, it seems that practical criticism of individual satirists has undergone some change and the general consensus that existed about satire is altering. It would now sound trite and stereotypical to point to Alexander Pope’s mixed motives and the ways through which Jonathan Swift disturbs and troubles his readers. The current criticism of satire would consider the old theoretical consensus on satire as insufficient. In a 1980 preface to a collection of essays, the editors emphasized that the writers of the essays tried to delve for “new definitions” of satire and move it “somewhat away from moral centrality” (Marjorie Barnard, The Four Novels of Patrick White 168).

Most traditional satiric theory plays up the notion that the satirist works in a world of clear boundaries and standards. To Kieman, the satirist sees the world as a “battlefield between a definite and clearly understood good which he represents and an equally clear-cut evil. No ambiguities, no doubts about himself, no sense of mystery troubles him and he retains always his monolithic certainty” (Cankered Muse 21-22) The greatest satire that Kernan talks about is the kind of satire which is unified by a “firm and definite understanding of the moral issues involved by the clear and consistent moral point of view” that he believes can be seen in Juvenal’s works.

From this viewpoint the satirist is confident of his moral position and assumes such a confidence in his readers too. What a satirist needs are the convictions that fixed intellectual ideas and norms can bestow upon him as well as the guarantee that he will be understood and appreciated by his readers. In John Bullitt’s words, satire can become “a vital form of literature when there is a fairly widespread agreement about what man ought to be”. Other 20th century theorists like Northrop Frye have advocated this view. Frye says that the moral norms of satire are relatively clear because satire assumes “standards against which the absurd and grotesque are measured”. Satire to him flourishes on certainty whenever a “reader is not sure what the author’s attitude is or what his own is supposed to be
we have irony with relatively little satire” (Anatomy of Criticism, 223). In contrast to Frye, Maynard Mack holds the belief that satire as a mode of writing should assert the “validity and necessity of norms, meanings and systematic values that are contained by recognizable codes” (Muse of Satire 840). He further adds that the task of a satirist is to delineate the sharp differences existent between virtue and vice, between good and evil and between what man is and what man ought to be. In order to make those differences more visible, the satirist should either simplify or exaggerate. According to Sheldon Sacks, in a satiric work every formal decision is “ideally designed to sharpen the ridicule on the object of the satire (Anatomy of Criticism 7) and Paulston insists that there is always a “strong sense of efficiency in satire and noting is done without a purpose” (Fictions of Satire 4). Now and almost after a generation, these unaltering assumptions about how satire works seem almost obsolete. If the job of a satirist is to make us sure that the established norms about good and bad and right and wrong are firmly in place one wonders how satire managed to impress so many mature readers or interested them. It would not be astonishing if readers taught to hunt for explicitly stated moral messages and clear distinctions between virtue and vice found even a satirist like Horace “obvious, pedestrian and boring” (Williams, Tradition and Originality 607).

It can thus be concluded that there is nearly always a bipolar moral pattern in almost all satires. In Pop’s Rape of the Lock we have the bipolar characters of Clarissa versus Belinda and Alexander Pope himself against Sporus in Epistle to Arbuthnot; in Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels we have the King of the Lilliputians against giant Gulliver. Samuel Johnson once said a person who thinks rationally behaves morally and so in a moral discourse the existence of contrary pairs are virtually unavoidable. It would be impractical to perceive of a virtue without identifying a vice. A whole spate of novels, dramas, and poems, despite their assertion that they do not indulge in satire, find the presence of opposing pairs useful in clarifying a moral issue or emphasizing a particular point. Instances of these binary existences are Edmund and Edgar in Shakespeare’s King Lear and Blifil and Tom in Tom Jones’s Tom Jones. The contrasting arrangement of two
opposite characters does not, however, constitute the moral wisdom of a satire. The bipolar method is actually one of the devices that a satirist may utilize. Going back to Pope, one can easily say that despite the fact that Pope and Sporus are depicted as opposites but in some noticeable ways they look immensely similar in Arbuthnot in which Pope the satirist emerges as a hero against the world of Horace Walpole. The perception that graspable moral standards are at the center of satire is similarly open to challenge. What we see in a satirical work is not a spotlessly articulated lecture or discourse on a moral theme.

1.6. Satire and Rhetorical Display

Satire is a common but mostly neglected mode of representation in the works of Patrick White. This dissertation explores the theoretical problems posed by Patrick White novels and then examines the genuine, rhetorical and political strategies of satires. In the literary works (texts) which were written during the former British Empire, satiric fiction occupies a prominent place. These works have come to be called postcolonial literature in English. There are a large number of postcolonial writers from Commonwealth countries who wrote novels that are satiric. A list of postcolonial writers from such countries who wrote satirically would include such people as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Margret Atwood, Patrick White, Mordecai Richler, and V.S. Naipaul.

1.7. Postcolonialism & Theories of Satiric Fiction

Satire, despite its prevalence and popularity, has not been thoroughly studied in a comparative and postcolonial context. And despite continuing debates among critics about satire and how it works; there is a unanimous agreement that is an “object of attack”. Edward Rosenheim claims that satire is an attack “by means of a manifest fiction upon discernible historic particulars”. In a further attempt to clarify the use of satire, Charles Knight in his famous book Satire writes:

Satire’s distinction from the genres it imitates lies in the unpleasant presence of such historical attack, and hence
refrentiality is central precisely because the identity of
the satiric referent, its independence, and the
transformation that occurs when satire may be said to
textualise it are major elements of the satiric message.

Critics such as Test and Kieman believe that “aggression” and “attack” are
the most important parts of satire and see it as a mode of oppositional writing whose
refrentiality is a function of its opposition. There is always to be found a targeted
victim in a satiric work; the victim can be a person, an institution or simply a
practice. Satire, as a literary practice, started in the classical period and reemerged
during the medieval and Renaissance literatures; it later became an important mode
of writing during the neoclassical era and became less popular in the 19th century. In
the twentieth century it again came to become popular with some certain writers,
especially those who wrote about politics and war.

Since satire happens in different forms in a text, it is sometimes called the
“borrower of forms”. To further clarify the point I make references to what James
Nichols and Michael Seidel say about different satiric modes and genres. Nichols
says, “Satire seems to have no distinctive forms of its own” and Seidel is of the
opinion that satire is a “mode rather than a generically fixed form; it can alter
potential in other systems of literary representation.” From an historic point of view,
it is apparent that satire is used in as varied forms as poetry, fiction, narration and
drama. Generic satire started with the formal verse satires of Juvenal, Horace and
Persius.

If satire is considered to contain the elements of provocation and inquiry then
it may share a boundary not only with polemic rhetoric but with ethical and
philosophical writing. By concentrating on the way a satiric work explores a moral
issue, one may run the risk of overstressing its moral importance which would lead
to the exclusion of some important elements. This means that one should also try to
think of satire as a rhetorical contest or performance. A satire that uses rhetorical
performance aims at winning the admiration of a reading audience; an admiration
which is not directed at the spirit and sharpness of its moral concern but at the
splendid wit of the satirist who like a rhetorician uses the language in a masterful way. Satire is commonly thought of as a rhetorical art which is persuasive; Northrop Frye, however, believes that rhetoric is not merely devoted to speech which is persuasive. In his Anatomy of Criticism he notes that “Ornamental rhetoric acts on its hearers statistically, leading them to admire its own beauty or wit; persuasive rhetoric tries to lead them kinetically toward a course of action. One articulates emotion; the other manipulates it”. He goes even further and says in the same book that “More often than we have acknowledged, satire makes use of ornamental rhetoric”.

Satire from its earliest days was linked with public performances. Menippus, the founder of Menippean satire, was a skeptically humorous orator and Juvenal and Lucian were rhetorical performers. For centuries and from the classical time, both Juvenal and Lucian have been celebrated as icons of witty and oratorical satires. During the Renaissance and also in the later periods it preserved its close relations with public contests and cultural oratories; and satirists like Swift and Pope would use different occasions to reveal their rhetorical skills and expertise in satire instead of it as means of social improvement and reformation. The disapproving critics were of the opinion that satire was designed to “show the wit of the satirist than the means of delinquent’s reformation.” The traditional rhetoric is mostly based on Aristotle’s theory of satire. Aristotle thought that there were chiefly two major types of Satire; one was deliberative or didactic satire which meant to bring positive change in society and politics and the other was demonstrative rhetoric through which a satirist shows his skill and mastery in it. The audiences of a demonstrative satire are mere spectators who will eventually decide on the satirist’s skill. As Kenneth Burke says the demonstrative rhetoric in satire was originally used to win the spectators’ praise not for the subject matter but for the oratory itself. In the classical period both criticism and compliment played a special role in public gatherings; in such gatherings the ceremonial orator might give a tribute or a funeral oration or a prolonged complaint or lamentation but to critics like Edmund Burke
the so-called demonstrative satirist was independent from outside consideration and was involved in “delight in the exercise of eloquence as such.”

In Rome and some centuries after the magnificent growth of satire and rhetorical arts in Greece, rhetoric became interested in the exposition of the skill in performance and a display of linguistic expertise which in part was due to the fear of public debates on political matters. In Rome and almost from the first century, rhetoric became a fount of public entertainment and provided the potential satirists the chance to display their talents and ingenuity which would then guarantee their luck in securing a job as a lecturer if not as a government of Rome official. This does not mean that after the first century the demonstrative rhetoric in satire was only used for entertainment or that the employment of demonstrative rhetoric did not help in poking fun on people and situations that they thought should change for the betterment of society. It would be fatuous to try to prove as wrong the fact that Dryden deliberately tried to make Shadwell look bad. Similarly, Alexander Pope in Dunciad commends Swift and taunts the slow-witted people. Theses commendations and admonitions are a satirist’s irreplaceable accouterments. Satirists usually want to know what others think about their work; they, either explicitly or implicitly, try to illicit information about their skill in writing.

1.8. Satire, Time and Fiction

The identification of historical references, events and names is at the center of interest for editors and critics of satiric texts. During the Renaissance, for example, some people thought that satirists like Persius and Juvenal were intentionally unclear in an attempt to escape censorship and retaliation and possibly for following the proper satiric style. During the 1940’s and 1950’s and following the flowering of the school of New Criticism, there was more emphasis on satire’s autonomy and not its historicity. Satire was mostly conceived of as a mode mostly concerned with universal issues and not particulars. To new critics, the kind of satire that White uses in his works quite conforms to the definitions given since his writing is a mélange of various models, strategies and genres that involve different
emotions, language and perceptions reflective of human follies and failures. For this and many other reasons, it is quite interesting to know why satire in White, especially those written after the Second World War, should contain such a quality.

A sweeping overview of White’s life could certainly prove helpful. In the immediate years after World War II White did not produce any work; actually his first postwar novel was The Tree of Man, published in 1955. While in Australia, he resided in a place called Castle Hill not far from the city of Sydney. He started a life of self-sufficiency by growing his own fruits and vegetables and selling eggs and breeding Schnauzers and goats. Some critics interpret this as White’s attempt to reconnect with his motherland after being away for about 20 years. This affinity and closeness to the Australian land and rural life does not show that he does not want to disengage himself from Australian society or culture.

White in The Prodigal Son depicts a deep sense of meaninglessness in the Australian society and culture of the time. This experience of a new perception in the Australian society leads him to start writing again with The Tree of Man. It is in this novel that he actually starts using satire and its subversive forms. This inclination to turn to satire continues in his later novels his use and practice of satire on the one hand is the manifestation of his anger at Australian society and on the other is a playground for him to improve his writing style. Through writing White also strove to reconnect himself to a culture and people he felt he was committed to and simultaneously and equally disenchanted with. The novels of Patrick White are extensive narratives of diverse modes and expressions. They contain a myriad of attitudes and philosophies due to which they lend themselves to various interpretations and comments. This characteristic of his novels has been a target of controversies; many critics issued judgmental commentaries about his writings; labeling them as allegorical, satirical, and social, etc. This study will try to conduct a thorough-going analysis of satire and the quest for identity in White’s selected post-World War II novels. Indeed, in the literature that I reviewed I found very little that dealt with this aspect of White’s works. The epistemological concerns in the novels of White contain a thriving vein which starts from his first post Second
World War novel *The Tree of Man* and continue into his final prose fiction the *Three Uneasy Pieces*. It seems that the satiric as well as ironic aspects of his novels have been largely swept aside and ignored. This study is an attempt to show that the selected novels have strong traits of satire in them.

One of the hallmarks of White’s novels is their being immersed in religion, morality and spirituality; however, this orthodox trait has for quite some time come under meticulous scrutiny. It is now presumed that White in the later stages of writing actually does not show himself to be in that line. In *The Twyborn Affair*, for example, he tries to satirize his religious and spiritual depictions of the earlier novels. Upon his return to Australia, White endeavors to fulfill his wish for finding an identity in his home country, Australia. To do this, he makes use of satire in his works which provides him with the ability to satirize the characters that he despises or those whom he draws as entertaining and/or ridiculous. This generally takes place by the usage of such varied devices as sarcasm, irony and burlesque. A detailed study of satire in the works of White makes it apparent that he wishes to target the contemporary Australian culture and society. This can especially be witnessed in *The Eye of the Storm* (1970), and the *The Twyborn Affair* (1976). Some critics argue that novels such as the two above are direct responses to his own personal problem about his ability and prowess of being an artist. White’s use of the ontological and epistemological satire in novels is less conspicuous in his early novels but they become more manifest as we conduct in-depth studies on his later novels. From White’s nine post World War II novels, only four of White’s major novels will be studied in this thesis and it will be demonstrated that in such a novel as *The Tree of Man* (1955), for instance, the epistemological satire is quite limited but as we move along this feature receives a heavier treatment and occupies a more perceptible presence in his later writings. In *Voss* (1957), this feature appears more sporadically and in *Riders in the Chariot* (1961) there is a lengthier satirical treatment which runs throughout the novel.

The present work will at length try to prove that White was inclined to write about the irony of human life by immersing the works under discussion in satire;
this inclination in writing satirically comes from both his personal interest and his life experiences. In White’s autobiography, his letters as well as David Marr’s *Patrick White, A Life* there are numerous examples that show he was able to see and experience the human degeneration and preposterousness from an early age. For White there are many reasons for bringing satire in his works. The foremost being the sudden and all-spreading increase of modern life with all its abhorrent peculiarities such as materialism, consumerism and also the presence of a kind of literature which was more dependent on Britain and so devoid of a national and Australian identity. This happens at a time when some critics were of the strong opinion that Australian literature had indeed got an identity which was almost purely Australian in nature.

History, an important hallmark of White’s novels, occupies a special place in at least two of the novels studied in the current work. He derides time and history by transfiguring them through the effects and influences that such varied things as time, history, legend, myth, and tradition have on the characters of his novels. The historical repercussions of time can therefore be overheard in his novels which are then satirized and reflected. This study will also demonstrate succinctly that White’s early works are more in the instructive and didactic modes which mostly try to teach us about life. White in his early novels tells his readers in a relatively literal and didactic language through moralizing and philosophizing about existence and about life. To Suzan Lever, however, he gradually turns to a more figurative language which is quite naturally a precious asset in a satiric context. This quite sudden shift has two benefits for him; firstly he can, through this new possession, make fun of human beings for all their greed, cruelty and failings and secondly he invites his readers to witness his ability in penning detailed creative stories.

But where does this satirical strain come from? Delving into White’s personal life will show that Lizzie Clark, White’s childhood Scottish nursemaid, left an indelible impression on the formation of his character. This fact is mentioned both in his autobiography and also David Marr’s *Patrick White, A Life*. To White, Lizzie Clark is not only a “paragon of virtue” but an epitome of the Scottishness.
This exceeding adherence to Clark and her Puritanical views is of paramount importance in any study of White and his satiric works which zoom in on the moral norms of the Australian life.

Patrick White’s interest in using satire for reflecting on the realities of human life and conditions occur The Prodigal Son. This essay was written after Voss (1955) and before Riders in the Chariot (1961). In The Prodigal Son White deals with the harsh and psychologically traumatic life he experienced back in England and why he eventually decided to get back to Australia. The Prodigal Son also contains precious ideas about the values and greatness of art per se. It is actually in this essay that White suddenly talks about the plainness of Australian life and of what he calls the “boundless void”. But why should his novels make this quite dramatic shift? White returns to Australia in 1948 and he does not write any novel until The Tree of Man in 1955. During these seven years he lived in a small place near Castle Hill which is located on the suburbs of the city of Sydney. There he tries to become self-sufficient by growing vegetables, flowers and by raising poultry and sheep. This is generally interpreted as his attempt to reestablish himself with the land he had been forcefully weaned off in his childhood; now he needed this reunion and compromise. The marriage between him and the land where he was born took some years. He was 27 years when he got back to Australia, after being away from it for some 14 years. Although White, upon his return, started a secluded and simple life in the country, this does not mean that he cut himself off from Australian society or culture. He always had a shrewd observation of the fast growing world around him which provided him with insight and indeed it was through this connection that White came to see the emptiness and squalor that he writes of in The Prodigal Son. His understanding of this emptiness and void not only encouraged him to restart writing but to focus his writings mostly on satire and other subversive forms akin to it.

To attack is supposedly the main aim of writing a satiric work aims at. This is a general conception amongst critics, especially modern ones. This inherently means that satire should have social and historical references. On the other hand,
there are some other critics who emphasize that one can nearly always find some moral in satire, and that a satire wishes to correct and preach morality at the core. Northrop Frye for example argues that “satire’s moral norms are relatively clear by assuming standards against which the grotesque and absurd are measured’. This formalistic assumption of satire having only a corrective duty is however open to more argument. Undoubtedly Patrick White is the most celebrated Australian author of the 20th century. The fact that he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1973 contributed greatly to this although he had won international recognition some time before he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. It would be unwise however to see Patrick White as a purely Australian author. Although nearly all his novels are set in Australia or have Australian characters in them, they do not generally follow the Australian tradition like the stories of Joseph Furphy or Henry Lawson that are naturalistic stories about Australian bush life or the coming of the first immigrants to the vast land of fresh opportunities. This is not surprising since White spent most of his formative young life in England borrowing extensively form the writings of Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, etc. The irony is that despite all this he is considered a misfit in the main canon of European literary genre. He is a prisoner of two physically faraway worlds; he is neither Australian nor European and yet is both Australian and European. This in the long run creates a persistent ambivalence in him which gets a voice in his novels giving rise to a multitude of different feelings which eventually unfolds as satiric criticism and pessimism.

It will be attempted to show that the emotional and nervous tensions of the novels are the results of the spiritual conditions of the author, White. The fact of White being a repatriate author who tries to reconnect to his motherland (here Australia; up to the beginning of the 20th century people living in Australia called England home and/or motherland); it is now presumed that an ontological concern encouraged him to write The Tree of Man and Voss. The Tree of Man is a novel which tries to delineate the life of the common people and what such a life would involve; and Voss is a novel that leads to a self-realization about life. These two novels, in other words, try to establish the identity of a common Australian
character. The vast Australian continent is for White like Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County. Voss of the novel with the same name does not exist anywhere in the history of Australia and the place name Sarsalarilla cannot be located on any map of the country. The heroine of Voss, Laura Trevelyan says, “Knowledge was never a matter of geography. Quite the reverse; it overflows all maps that exist. Perhaps true knowledge only comes of death by torture in the country of the mind.” This and other examples show that White is amongst the few writers who gave birth to their own discernible countries of the mind where they could dwell and write.

There is a small number of critical works that deal with White’s satire and the question of identity in his novels. Some of the works which can however prove crucially significant in any study of Patrick White, specially the topic of my dissertation, are: Australian Writers and Their Work, Patrick White, and Patrick White, both by Geoffrey Dutton; Ten Essays on Patrick White by G.A Wilkes; Patrick White's Fiction, by William Walsh; Patrick White, by Simon During; Patrick White (Twayne's World Authors Series) by John A. Weigel; Patrick White Speaks, by Christine Flynn & Paul Brennan, (Editors); Patrick White, by John Colmer; and Patrick White: a general introduction, by Ingmar Bjorksten.

The attempt to create a psychological heaven is a way to escape all the harshness and cruelties of the world and in most of his novels we have psychological journeys into maturity and manhood; struggles which lead to different sweet and bitter experiences. In The Tree of Man, it is the family’s struggle to build an independent life of comfort which sounds like a chronicle of routine incidents which shape the life and the consequent behaviors of the characters. Almost all characters are under the influence of the environs and also the sort of coexistence which was common in mid-nineteenth century Australia. The Tree of Man, as the name itself suggests, can be a small tree which gradually grows up and becomes bigger; it can indeed stand for early Australians and the large influx of immigrants who rush into the new continent, mainly from Europe. And thus the novel can be a miniature of the lives, aspirations, interactions, and plight of the new immigrants to the new world. In the aforementioned novel and the ones which are the focus of this
study it seems that White's chief intention is to portray the life of a group of people who can be taken as representatives of the common people and humanity in general. The picture that we get of the life of this family is a gradual but inevitable decline into old age which at the end of the novel with the birth of Amy's grandchild, we are told will continue cyclically, which is a symbol of birth and rebirth. Love is not totally absent in their life but there is this lack of or inability to communicate with each other; this so-called inability to communicate remains as one of the main sources of the frustration of Amy Parker. The characters of this novel live together and live separately; they may be physically close but psychologically and spiritually they are detached from each other.

The first chapter deals with the sources White used and shows how he came by them. It also attempts to delineate how he uses these sources to historicize his narrative through the three characters of Voss, Mr. Palfreyman and Professor Topp. This chapter also demonstrates that White was not simply influenced by Alec Chisholm's Strange New World and Edward Eyre's Journal. White, instead, got his ideas for the novel from such historical figures as Ludwig Leichhardt, Isaac Nathan and John Gilbert. The reason why this chapter elaborates White's sources is to show the extent of his research and to demonstrate that his narrative and his characters are historically referential. This chapter will also show that it is through these pieces of information from the historical record that lead White to write satire in this novel. For White satire serves as an alternative for writing history, and the novel Voss plays an important role in the development of his satiric art.

In this chapter the author will also attempt to analyze the satire that extends from the mild ridicule that is an essential part of the comedy of manners with which the novel starts to the much pungent and sometimes wildly inordinate satiric description of Belle Bonner's dance party. This chapter also aims to show that the novel's satire mocks, ridicules, and targets the social conventions and codes as well as the excesses and follies of Sydney society. White's satire presents 19th century Sydney as a developing society but one whose elite -essentially the merchant class- is materialistic and self-indulgent almost to the point of decadence. White's satire
upholds the formalist view that satire has didactic intentions; and White is not only
telling us something about ourselves, about our history in general, but also about the
‘decadent’ history of the people in the past generation. Through this he seems to be
trying to admonish or at least invite us to reconsider our own behavior in these
terms.

Moreover, Voss’s expedition is a divine journey into the psychological
wilderness which will eventually merge body and soul. This is in line with the
Augustinian dualism which seeks spiritual freedom from bodily demands. Voss
presses his followers to choose “the infinite...which you sometime suspect you are
possessed over the inessential...the flesh”. At the end of the novel, he surrenders to
his own humility; that is to Laura’s body and his own mortality. The spiritual
journey and quest for selfhood ends in quenching the corporal need which so far
was repelled or reviled. Judith Wright sees the landscape of Australian literature
especially that of White, as delineating hope, liberty and “exiled anguish”. These
are some of the aspects which are evident in Voss. Voss launches a journey into the
unknown and the untamed bushes from the urban colonialism. The death of Voss
results in his utter disposssession; at home and with no body but himself and the
“souls of those who had died in the land”. Voss’s failure to establish a connection
with the Aboriginal people is actually failure in connecting with the people who
lived on the land for thousands of years portraying a serious struggle for a true
Australian identity. Riders in the Chariot brought to the fore White’s satric view of
modern society in general, and Australian middle-class society and culture in
particular. The novel is about four eccentrics who live in the suburbs of the city of
Sydney called Sarsaparilla which is an imaginary name. It is indeed believed that
the use of satire in this novel is mainly for the depiction of the vulgarities of modern
life. White’s use of satire in Riders in the Chariot is a means to tell us more about
ourselves, about the weakness and folly of human beings on all levels. And finally
this chapter will investigate the ways White uses to produce satire in this novel in
order to pinpoint the characters’ hollowness and the lack of identity. I will also try
to demonstrate the ways in which the main characters react to the squalid and
decadent world and not the ideal world when they are brought together. A majority of White critics see the main characters of Riders in the Chariot Mordechai Himmelfarb, Mary Hare, Alf Dubbo and Mrs Godbold as his favorite characters. The author sends each of them on a special errand which is essentially transcendental and religious in nature and in quest of their true identities. He (White) seems to hold a mirror to them and to help them in their quest for a true identity and in making a world of spiritual and moral strength.

The concentration of this chapter is on White’s use of satire in The Twybom Affair in order to show how this novel embodies a number of the characteristics and features of the three earlier novels that concern this study. The Twybom Affair opens with Mrs. Golson deriding the pretentious human social behavior -but deep inside it tries, in a way, to draw our attention to the general inclination of critics to read literature in terms of established, clearly defined genres. The Twybom Affair demonstrates how Patrick White reshapes his use of satire. What I will initially do is to show how White revisits his past works with a satiric glance. This novel actually invites us to recollect the novels that he produced earlier; such novels as The Tree of Man and also Voss; The Tree of Man is depicted as a rustic romantic novel and Voss is shown to contain strong streaks a comedy of manner. This chapter finally considers the changes in White's aesthetic and philosophic dispositions and it is also a depiction of the radical change that occurs in the nature of his satire. I will also argue that these alterations are the results of the kind of ontological concerns that first appeared in The Eye of the Storm.

Patrick White is a writer who uses devices, techniques, and strategies that have traditionally been associated with satire and its other subversive forms such as parody and burlesque. Since White in a majority of his post WWII novels turns to satire, it would be worthy to launch a serious study and analysis of the use of satire and its subversive forms in his novels. This study actually came out of what I perceived as a yawning gap in White criticism in which the use of satire goes largely unnoticed. The current work aims at identifying and elaborating a pattern of development that includes White's post 1948 major works. This pattern of
development begins in *The Tree of Man* and *Voss*. Both works delineate White's preoccupation with Australian history, myth, legend, and identity, and with the predominantly comic social satire. My research into White's sources for *Voss* shows him to be an author who draws extensively upon historical, 'real life' figures for his characters, and thus it shows the extent of his preoccupation with history and his interest in historical accuracy, while at the same time my analysis shows him to be an author who substantially transforms some of these figures by making them vehicles for satire. White not only engages with history as soon as he resumes his writing career in *The Tree of Man* and *Voss* but he also reaches out to satire as if to mediate the force of history that he confronts within that engagement.

On another level, White expands his social satire in *Riders in the Chariot* through his attacks on the Hare family, Mrs. Jolley, Mrs. Flack, and Mrs. Chalmers-Robinson. More specifically, it depicts his use of the satirical devices, tropes, and strategies identified by Stephen Greenblatt in his study of the satires of Orwell. The development of White's satire continues in the form of the artistically self-referential satire by parody that he presents in *The Eye of the Storm* and in other often comical, typically playful literary allusions and signposts that he uses to stress that satire. White’s willingness to experiment eventually leads him to employ the techniques and strategies of post-modern degenerative grotesque satire in his penultimate novel, *The Twybom Affair*. This study thus reveals that White’s approach within this pattern of development was impulsive and experimental rather than determined and paradigmatic. This pattern casts White and his novels in a new and altogether different light by determining the changes of his writings as a result of his increasing and experimental use of satire. These developments ensure that White's satire, and consequently his writing generally, is not static but ever-changing and indeed evolutionary. It becomes clear that White only initially uses symbolism and allegory, that he inconsistently draws on religion and then comes to mock his recourse to it. White’s novels display a changing array of elements and features held in variable balance but also the nature of his satire itself changes so that his oeuvre develops in a way that reflects the great shift from modernism to
post-modernism that occurred in the second half of the 20th century. His writing is ever-changing, enquiring in new ways, in new areas, and not static as the still dominant orthodox readings of his work suggest.

1.9. Critical Literature Review

The first full-length critique about White and his works written before and immediately after the Second World War was done by Marjorie Barnard in 1956. The essay by Barnard does not treat White’s ironic voice or rustic comedy that engulfs O’Dowd family or the social satire that is evident in the Forsdykes in The Tree of Man and hence the reader should not expect to find explicit mentions of White’s subversive or satiric intentions. It does, however, give a readable introduction to his early novels and it will prove to be especially significant it will show what way the next generation of Australian critics used to criticize White and his works. Marjorie Barnard actually applies a comparative approach when she compares White’s first novel Happy Valley to Redheap by Norman Lindsay and Tiburon by Tennant in relation to the setting of the novel. In terms of technique Happy Valley is contrasted to the works of such varied novelists as James Joyce and Ernest Hemingway.

Barnard goes even further and suggests that a psychoanalytic approach can also be used to analyze White’s works since he seems to be distraught by internal tensions and “at war with himself” (Marjorie Barnard, The Four Novels of Patrick White 156-157). She also says that it is “fluid, sometimes arresting […] his idiom may be Joycean or it may reflect the repetitive, alliterative but cadenced characteristic of G. Stein, it features the broken sentence all bespeak the later focus on White’s language” (Marjorie Barnard, The Four Novels of Patrick White 159). She deals with another critical aspect of White’s novels, use of style and imagery and symbolism. Happy Valley, for instance, is patterned by White’s use of several “recurring symbols and incidents”; and The Aunt’s Story is depicted as an allegory of “a painful shifting image of frustration that is tied together by a labyrinth of recurring images” (Marjorie Barnard, The Four Novels of Patrick White 163).
She also strongly implies that *The Tree of Man* is both a metaphysical and religious novel. She argues that the pivotal characters of this novel search for an identity and a meaning for existence. Stylistically she finds unity in this particular novel; she says that *The Tree of Man* is woven of “many threads [...] of great moments, slow images, infiltrations and echoes” (Marjorie Barnard, *The Four Novels of Patrick White* 163). Additionally, she insists that this novel is a portrayal of “a world beneath the visible surface of the world” (Marjorie Barnard, *The Four Novels of Patrick White* 164) which is inundated with loneliness and pain and the fact that human beings are generally unable to comprehend one another. This is an instance of ultimate loneliness; White’s philosophy is that of loneliness and pain” (Marjorie Barnard, *The Four Novels of Patrick White* 164). Barnard’s argument that the underlying philosophy in most of White’s novels is of special significance not only because it establishes what may be called as the tripartite tenets of White and his philosophy but because a large number of the Australian critics took up the religious/symbolic/allegorical reading of his works that her discussion of religion, symbolism and allegory had initially evoked. The fact of the matter is that White’s early Australian critics did not concentrate on him mainly as a religious writer or on his so called religious philosophy. They instead concentrated on his use of imagery and symbolism which eventually led to a religious interpretation of his works.

When *The Tree of Man* was published the London literary magazines gave appreciative and enthusiastic appraisals of the novel. Morley, a London-based critic had sent copies of the New York Times’ article about White and his new novel to all “corners of the Commonwealth” (Marjorie Barnard, *The Four Novels of Patrick White* 163) and there was barely a review that did not look with praise and admiration at what had appeared in New York Times. White did acknowledge that the reviews about *The Tree of Man* were indeed wonderful, but he is said to have told a friend that the Australian reviews must be “the test of an Australian book”. (David Marr, *Patrick White: A Life* 307). A.D. Hope believed that White in writing *The Tree of Man* unsuccessfully tries to use a poetic language. Alec D. Hope was a teacher of literature at the University College in Canberra and at the time when he
wrote his criticism of White and his newly published novel *The Tree of Man*. His first book of English poems entitled "The Wondering Islands" was about to be published. A. D. Hope's idols in literature were Jonathan Swift, W. B. Yeats, Thomas Hardy and Alexander Pope. He taught the "crisp, direct English and wrote poetry in the Augustan manner. In the Australian literary landscape, which was then dominated by poets, Alec Hope was a large figure" (David Marr, *Patrick White: A Life* 307). For nearly twenty years he campaigned against the kinds of writings that writers such as James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence produced. He said, "I set my face against the muck-about-with-style novels, and made fun of them."

Hope praised the work's memorable characters, mocked the familiar farms and fires and floods and comic Irishmen of Australian novels, and flayed White's style with memorable ferocity; "When so few Australian novelists can write prose at all, it is a great pity to see Mr. White, who shows on every page some touch of the born writer, deliberately choose as his medium this pretentious and illiterate verbal sludge" (David Marr, *Patrick White: A Life* 309)

There are also many renowned critics who praised White's writings; amongst them are Michael Wilding and Brian Kieman who call him the "great Australian modernist writer" (Brian Kieman, *Patrick White: The Novelist and the Modern World* 81-103). Kieman argues that White in his novels is generally concerned about the general condition of the human beings and as a modernist writer he attempts to delineate the process of alienation in a "vulgar age" which is apparently devoid of human values. Wilding sees White as an elitist novelist who has a "superior but alienated sensibility over and above and beyond ordinary life". Satire in the works of White represent a bleak vision of humanity; and the selected works in this study deal with taboo subjects that are not necessarily comical, shrewd or amusing. Only
when a reader studies White’s novels from a satirical perspective will he be able to comprehend the significant role that satire plays in his novels. White can be mother-obsessed, misogynistic, elitist, and modernist; whatever epithet or description we may use to describe him and his writings we should first and foremost know that he was a social critic committed to bring some understanding and insight into the lives of his fellow human beings.