Chapter Two

"Because the void I had to fill was so immense, I wanted to suggest in this book every possible aspect of life, through the lives of an ordinary man and woman. But at the same time I wanted to discover the extraordinary behind the ordinary, the mystery and poetry, which alone make bearable the lives of such people."

(Patrick White, The Prodigal Son

2.1. The Tree of Man

The Tree of Man is White’s first post-war novel; it is a reflection of his preoccupation with Australian history, myth and society. It is generally assumed that the main motivation for White to write a novel of such gigantic scope came from his loath at seeing the unbridled surge in urban development on Castle Hill in the early 1950’s. The increase in urban development ushered in the unwelcome news that people and communities who were living on fringes of bigger cities would not be left alone to live the life that they saw fit. The urban development and the materialistic thinking that supports it will eventually devour the mythical sanctuary that Stan Parker created in The Tree of Man; his house and his farm are at the end of the novel dissolved in the fast burgeoning world of new housing projects and development programs.

The Tree of Man is a novel that encompasses the entire lives of its main characters. White, by putting his characters in familiar historical contexts retells
some of the events that might have happened. It is more like a scholarly reinterpretation of some of the events in the past that are expressed through the language of story. And therefore, if one says that The Tree of Man is a serious scholarly work that attempts to better paint the Australian history, it would not be a far-fetched fact. Actually, as Susan McKerman suggests in her weighty A Question of Commitment: Australian Literature in the Twenty years after the War (McKerman 167), Patrick White tries to assume the role of a “social teacher” as he himself tacitly declared in The Prodigal Son. The Tree of Man is immensely significant if any serious study of White’s novels is to be conducted. In the first place, it is chiefly through this novel that he tries to reengage with Australia and what makes this novel more important than the other three is the sometimes incidental and comic satire that occurs in it. This satire emerges mostly because his satiric impulse and his writing impulse receive a poke from the fast-encroaching suburbs. The use of such satire in literature may appear to be out of place at a first glance but within the context of these mainly serious historical novels is another way of writing history and showing the force of historical developments such as urbanization and ensuing loss of rural land and community.

This chapter on The Tree of Man also analyzes the sources that White made use of in order to establish the historical authenticity of his work and it studies this satire in terms of the philosophy of the novel. The most significant aspect of White’s technique in The Tree of Man is to invest on the heroic qualities of the bushman-pioneer and the ANZAC. These qualities are summed up in the historically resonant character of Stan Parker. The place where Stan is located is the all-familiar setting of the Australian bush; then he is dispatched to the battlefields of the Great War. He is then celebrated as a typical hardworking but inarticulate Australian bushman-pioneer type. Stan Parker mirrors the model qualities of an Australian pioneer and ANZAC hero. In the mean time, White in this novel tries to transform Stan Parker by attaching to him an elevated sensibility that goes far beyond the limits of the legends. This heightened sensibility is a 19th century German tradition in origin which is commended by White in his autobiography:
“I spent the greater part of every vacation in Germany. I had to catch up on a language which, until I visited the country, I could never take seriously: comic, hedgehog words constantly colliding, syntactical structures to get lost in. Then while exploring the country itself I became obsessed by its Romantic literature, which in later life was dispossessed by my passion for the French. I moved drunkenly through German landscape, the black green of pine forests, and the austere, dead green North, scruffily with sand as it approaches the Baltic coast.

(Patrick White, Flaws in the Glass 39)

This natural and intimate Romantic sensibility not only gives Stan a mind of “more than ordinary sensibility” (Maack, Shakespearean Reference 131) but also creates in him a more complicated character than we would generally encounter in the characters of the socio-realist novels of the time. It apparently seems as if Stan Parker is similar to such rough and unpolished characters of Snow in Kylie Tennant’s The Battlers (1940) and Macaulay of The Shiralee (1955) by Darcy Niland but actually his romantic sensibility makes very different characters. The characters of Snow and Macaulay are the predominant models in the Australian literature prior to 1950’s and 1960’s. Despite the fact that these characters demonstrate certain human sensibilities in their relations with their fellow human beings they are not by any means equivalent to the romantic sensitivities emitted by Stan Parker. Patrick White’s Stan remains to some great extent similar to Henry Lawson’s Joe Wilson and His Mates.

This turnabout in characterization is a landmark shift in Australian literature which up to now was mostly involved in creating stereotypical characters. Stan can be considered a historical figure as much as the characters of Niland, Lawson, and Tennant because White in his novel puts Stan Parker in such varied purely
Australian activities as creating a big farm by working hard on a bush-ridden land, and participating in the First World War. It can be said that Stan Parker is a subjective version of Australian character type; however, White by historicizing Stan tries to assure his readers that he is just another Australian figure. The romantic sensibility in Stan Parker is of paramount importance because it gives the sense that there is more to life; and thus enough reason to show a lot of willingness in understanding and discovering. This new character presentation elevates the Australian literature and legend and gives a new value and definition to it. It is also an endorsement of White in the role of social teacher; his story is the history of the life of a typical Australian of the time Stan Parker. This historical story demonstrates to us the other layers of Australian life; it also shows a character that is more promising and artistically pleasing than those fighting in bushes or the Australian city dwellers.

Peter Beatson believes that *The Tree of Man* is an example of a quest by Stan Parker" (Peter Beatson, *The Eye in the Mandala* 96). Brian Kiernan is of the conviction that Stan’s quest is a search “for a vision of the meaningful totality of life” (Brian Kiernan, *The Novelist and the Modern World* 90). He possesses some similarity to Theodora of *The Aunt's Story*, Dr Halliday in *Happy Valley* and Elliot Standish in *The Living and the Dead* in being lonely; this state of loneliness causes his alienation from his wife and children. This discomfort of life does not, nevertheless, lead to despondency in him. His engagement with nature displays a positive affirmation of the potential of the mankind. This is highly underscored when at the end of the novel we see Stan’s grandson want to write a poem, “of a life, of what he did not know, but knew” and that he wants to “put out his shoots of green thought” so that “in the end there is no end” (Patrick white, *The Tree of Man* 457). This is one of the many facets that makes *The Tree of Man* a special novel amongst other White’s novels, a novel which aims at instructing us more about ourselves. *The Tree of Man* quite unlike the three other novels of White *Voss*, *Riders in the Chariot* and *The Twyborn Affair* is rather limited and incidental in the usage of satire; its satire mostly centers on young Thelma and her nouveau riche
husband Dudley Forsdyke and Stan Parker’s neighbors, the O’Dowd family. The Tree of Man, as his first post-Second World War novel, is a successful attempt to get back the kind of enthusiasm that he showed in satire and its subversive forms shown the literary sketches that he produced for the English Theater in the 1930’s.

In search of better life opportunities, Ray and Thelma Parker leave the bush for Sydney where Ray ends up in crime gangs and Thelma lands a relatively good job at a shipping company. Before long she wins the hearts and minds of the company management through her intelligence and hard work; she eventually improves her career when she is invited to work for a legal firm of solicitors. After some time she marries Dudley Forsdyke, a “bald and stomachy” (Patrick White, The Tree of Man 268) legal advisor in this same company. It is indeed from here where most of the satirical references to different social pretensions and affectations of the novel are made. Dudley is skillfully painted as somebody that he actually is not. The car that he purchases is an English make which does not divulge his real economic status; he says that the car is “neither old nor new […] neither elongated nor low and of a good negative color” (Patrick white, The Tree of Man 457). He is further derided for driving this car “with some dash” though he does not have this quality and soon will be wondering like “everybody” else in the neighborhood he married the girl Thelma (Patrick white, The Tree of Man 335).

In this respect Thelma is ridiculed even more than her husband Dudley. White, without intending, shows that Thelma’s fairness is not really important when he attacks her for her fair appearance. He goes on to describe her as a “pale skinny girl with noticeable elbows and the upper vertebrate visible beneath her oblivious skin” (Patrick white, The Tree of Man 336). Another instance of derision on Thelma occurs when her obsession with her hair is portrayed. She dedicates much of her time arranging her hair with “a passion” to make it “pale and disseminated gold” which is always kept “beautifully washed” (Patrick white, The Tree of Man 336). She seems to be constantly worried about her voice on which she had “worked and spent quite a proportion of her monthly salary” which in White’s words had become “cultured without strain and well modulated without discarding firmness”.
voice is the cause of constant and “endless irritations and even unpleasantness” amongst husband and wife which makes others close to Dudley feel sorry for him. Thelma is a country girl and a newcomer to Sydney’s high style life who is not as comfortable as she tries to show with the bourgeois life of Sydney society. She tries to improve herself socially by taking lessons in French and chairing different charity committees to make sure that things “follow a sequence” (Patrick white, The Tree of Man 338). Her sudden inordinate infatuation with literature serves as a yardstick to fathom the vacuity of her life; she holds literature books to disguise “her innocence”. And later she justifies her liking for anthropology and ethics as assets that would prove useful when her mother develops cancer at her old age and would require her rich daughter’s intimate attentions. With the increase of her material wealth, there is also an increase in her pretensions. For example, she would very generously donate money “to the church” and not to the parson who did not “fit her social status” (Patrick white, The Tree of Man 372). One of her likings is to give expensive presents to her parents; gifts which are “exquisitely remorseful and thoughtfully expensive” things. The irony of it is that the mother herself is always wondering what she is supposed to do with these things. White’s strong resentment of Thelma and her certain newly-acquired behavior makes her a social type. Thelma is constantly tormented by her social upbringing and this becomes especially more conspicuous when she visits her father’s house or in her own words the “abyss of her origin” in the country. This more sounds like a kind of hyperbolic and sentimental demonstration of her inner feeling about her origin.

The fact of the matter is that it is not easy to disengage oneself from one’s childhood, particularly a childhood that one sees as an embarrassment. It is an abyss from which there is no escape whatsoever. Thelma is berated for her perception of her appearance; she says that her face is no longer “convincing to her even at its best”. White goes even further and rebukes her social milieu in a scene where her uncertainty in playing music causes her to falter “when discussing music”. The satire of the novel reaches its apex when the news of her father’s death comes. She is made extremely upset at the news simply because she cannot attend a dinner at
the Government House which coincides with her father’s funeral. She hopes that funerals in the “country and little funerals of simple and insignificant people that trail through the grass in hired cars and a variety of dreadful clothes are over very quickly” (Patrick White, The Tree of Man 372). This is the gift of the urban life which transforms a naïve country girl into a conceited and pretentious city socialite. In White’s satire of Thelma there are two important purposes: firstly he reproaches her aspirations for embracing the values of Sydney society and criticizes her for forsaking her innocent life in the country. Secondly, White uses Thelma as a character in the novel through whom he can parody the people of a society that are drowned in superficial values.

In contrast to the Forsdykes, the O’Dowds are treated differently; this is done by putting the O’Dowds within a comic and satiric context. Mrs. O’Dowd is a comic character who introduces herself as born “in a bog to be sure-sometimes those that knows nothun; that knows”. At the beginning of the novel she reveals that to her husband an indulgence in imbibing alcohol is a “gentleman’s pastime”. And it seems as though she has already reached a compromise about his regular alcohol drinking and has broadly accepted his self-styled theory of drinking inordinately. There are many instances of comic satire reflected in the personality of Mrs. O’Dowd; she mentions for several times that it is Mr. O’Dowd’s right to get “shickered periodical like a bastard or a lord discard the marines” while she herself is constantly tormented by the fear of breaking her legs and ankles on the alcohol bottles “floating around”. When she tries to tell Amy Parker how easily she can manage to find her house; she becomes darkly comic: “you only must look for a dead horse that he left there lying for a sign” (Patrick White, The Tree of Man 44-5). Mrs. O’Dowd’s satire is meant to produce laughter and ridicule at her husband for being an incompetent and hopeless pioneer who is only devoted to his rum. She becomes extremely comical when she tries to tell Mrs. Parker how her aching teeth were removed by a “traveling gentleman”; she says the so-called doctor encountered a lot of difficulty extracting the teeth simply because they were not teeth but “stomps”. She says though there was a lot of bleeding and even though the
“traveling gentleman” was as strong as a “bullock” in pulling out her last aching tooth it would not come out. It is near the of the novel where White gives a description of the farm the O’Dowds live on; the house which is on “a further stage of collapsing”; the wind “tortures the roof and when it tears a leaf of iron from a tree it flings it across the yard where it slaps a pig’s arse fairly hard”. Only then the iron is pond of “still brown water” which scares away a group of ducks to fly off in such a “groaning and quacking of animals that it was near murder”. This is both a satiric and comic account of the O’Dowds’ dwelling. Quite ironically all this remains unnoticed to the residents of the house except to the “blue dogs lifting their legs”. The O’Dowds’ family is portrayed in a comical way throughout the novel; they are a pitiably impoverished couple who find different ways for escaping the harshness of their life; Mr. O’Dowd finds an intoxicating solace in alcohol and Mrs. O’Dowd who makes her time by gossiping. This is a comical and idiosyncratic Irish family which is living a monumentally inept life on the new land. Mrs. O’Dowd in her idiosyncratic speech makes constant references to the fact that she was born in bog and that her husband has a great liking for grog.

The O’Dowds are not alone in Australian fiction; such characters were previously created in the works of such diverse novelists as Henry Lawson and Miles Franklin. Nearly all Lawson, Franklin and White’s characters contain some similar qualities. Rudd, however, created characters that were solely comical whereas some of White’s characters in The Tree of Man are “comically” satirical. One suggestion here may be that we can see Patrick White as the son of a successful Australian ranch owner who is creating less prosperous and less resourced characters of the middle-class. Notwithstanding that White is not alone in such a treatment of a less-prosperous middle-class family; Miles Franklin also renders a scornful treatment of the M’Swat family in her My Brilliant Career (Miles Franklin, My Brilliant Career 45). Franklin may use a ironical voice in the novel but he is utterly critical and not comical or satirical of the M’Swats. Although White comes from a well-to-do background in comparison to the characters that populate his The Tree of Man he does not allow himself to use either a disdainful of contemptible
tone in the novel. Lawson, however, employs a relatively disdainful parlance in *A Day on a Selection* (Henry Lawson, 90). He describes M'Swats as a person who is too “shiftless and careless in putting up a fence which is decent enough or build a decent home and who knows almost nothing about farming” (Henry Lawson, *A Day on a Selection* 90). White’s satire is at times highly comical when it comes to the O’Dowds but this does not by any means implicate any sort of denigrating language; his characters are not made objects of comedy to the extent that Lawson and Franklin use in their works. He instead exposes them to his readers through satire. This said, one should admit that amongst other satirical characters of his novels under study in the current work, the O’Dowds are more comically treated than the others. The inclusion of laughter with satire is one of the main tenets of satire which defines it as both thought provoking and comical. Being comical does not necessarily entail derision and ridicule; it can be a sad smile at some horrible manifestations of human life which show themselves through a bitter laughter and this is the point where satire slides towards comedy demonstrating its power in producing laughter.

The use of comic elements somewhat ameliorate the callousness of the satire used on O’Dowd’s family in the book. This way White makes his satire more benign than the satire that he uses against the Forsdykes. This differentiation may simply serve as a hint that he wants to draw a comprehensible line between the O’Dowds and the Forsdykes. When it comes to the O’Dowds it appears as if White wishes to provide its readers with some comic relief scenes by introducing them as Australian stereotypes who, in comparison to the Forsdykes, may not prove to have a large impact upon the Australian society. This kind of attitude can also be traced back in the scene where Stan and Amy Parker decide to go and see the play *Hamlet* in Sydney. When Stan sees the actor who plays the role of the Prince Hamlet asks if it is “Hamlet with poor knees”. The question though goes unanswered because his mind drifts away to some other things:
Once he had known an old horse called Hamlet, a baby, no, an old brown gelding, a light draught, that belonged to an old cove, Furneval was it or Furness? who would drive through the village for groceries, flicking at the flies on Hamlet with the whip. That was one Hamlet.

(Mark Williams, *Patrick White* 20)

Mark Williams in his *Patrick White* believes that the two names of Furness and Furenval are playful allusions to two literary scholars of the 19th century who studied Shakespeare and philology. It seems as if White is suggesting that a highly rich play like Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* is beyond the level of understanding to its Australian audience. The name Hamlet merely makes him reminisce about a horse named Hamlet. Through this inappropriate appreciation of an artistic marvel White possible wants to say that people possessed only an unpolished intellectual prowess. It may otherwise be an affirmative nod to White’s familiarity with both Australian art critics and British literature which introduces us to White’s interest in literary play. It is also an introduction to the emergence of a subversive and often self-parodic kind of writing that is to become visible in White’s later works. The novel *The Tree of Man* is obviously a general presentation of the prospects for a rosier future which is secured through education and art. Such limitation may sound limited but is a positive affirmation of White’s conviction that good education could bring a lot of benefits to the Australians; that it could make them a better people if they knew about their past and could shape their future through education.

The emphasis on education and the achievement of redemption through the power of art are some of the most significant themes of the novel. Despite the fact that the novel promises a brighter future but the satire of Forsdyke and Thelma contradicts this idea. The young girl Thelma leaves his father’s farm in Durligai for Sydney which is full of dreams that in a faraway place like Durligai would never come true. Very soon she succeeds in making social and material progress largely by conforming herself with the lifestyle and values of Sydney society. The novel in a way censures in an exposing way the values and behaviors of mostly Sydney
society people as pretentious, exaggerated and affected and vacuous. The kind of life that Thelma leads in Sydney demonstrates that her former life values on the Durilgai farm were worthier. In Durilgai she used to have an honest and unpretentious life whereas in Sydney her life transformed into one full of hypocrisy, pretentiousness and superficiality. The implication that her past bush life is superior to her present life is a delineation of the fact that her life in the city is dreary and colorless; in other words, Thelma’s new path of life in Sydney is a reflection of the tension between the bush life and the Sydney life. This new course of life, however, does not entail a vindication of the idea of a more prosperous future but one of vacuity and hollowness. This portrayal of Thelma, in a way, is questioning the idea of progress in Australia in general and the fact that more is needed to be done on informing the Australians about their history. Her failure to progress mirrors the failure of the other characters within the novel. Her failure can additionally be indicative of the fact that human beings are essentially and accordingly lonely and helpless in the den of their psychological solitariness. Loneliness is a problem that can be traced in many parts of the novel. Amy and Stan do not have good and kind relations with each other; most of time the reader can easily see the lack or gap of communication between them and certainly there is no expression of love. Stan does not have a close friend whom he can trust and talk to and his discovery of God occurs late in the novel when he finds Him in a “gob of spittle” which is not of any use to him then. In a further unwelcome twist, his son Ray becomes a criminal and eventually murdered by his own fellow gang members. The pitiful story of the life of the O’Dowds is not much different from the rest of the characters who share no communication at all apart from reviling each other every time they want to talk: their struggle with their miserable life continues until the wife kills her husband evidently in a burst of anger.

In the huge plot of the novel one can see that the novel was quite successful in bringing together the satirical and historical elements side by side together. This worthy accomplishment since The Tree of Man is ostensibly not a stereotypical or a traditional type of novel. This means that it does not utilize an explicit language; it
is rich with biblical and social allusions with tinges of satire in them and this makes it very distinct from the conventional narratives of progress. Stan, a typical bush dweller Australian, remains boringly taciturn and inarticulate about his hopes and aspirations; his character does not prophesy a future of prospects for the Australians and hence the novel cannot in its narrative aspect be aesthetically delightful and agreeable since it actually substantiates White’s ontological ideology that most human interactions are absurd and so need to be redefined. Nevertheless, the novel remains aesthetically pleasing when it comes to its satiric aspects. Stan Parker’s grandson, for instance, will be writing his poem about the continuity of life and the fact that human beings in general and Australians in particular will have their redemption through the medium of art. Moreover, if considered from an aesthetic angle, terminating the novel through recourse to the language of poetry is pleasing. It may further be said that the novel is aesthetically enhanced through White’s subversion of Dudley and Thelma as husband and wife which are depicted as a social type. Thelma may be a case in point here; she is a naive girl from the country who is used by the novelist as a means to demonstrate the senselessness and irrationality of Sydney bourgeois society. The satire of the novel is thus amusing and funny because it provides some information about the Australian culture and society; it tries, at same time though, to admonish against the hazard of attempting to acquire an identity that is different from what the Australians really are. In this way the novel is a decent attempt to acquaint Australians with the hopes and aspirations of their forefathers; an acquaintance and a subsequent knowledge which can eventually yield a better future for them. Likewise, this can be presumed as a kind of acknowledgement of the past and its values.

In White’s next novel Voss there is a more sustained treatment of satire in comparison to The Tree of Man. The Tree of Man virtually acts as springboard for the employment of satire in White’s later works.
2.2. The Tree of Man: The Use of Form and Satire and Quest for Identity

The Tree of Man is a story which endeavors to trace the path to enlightenment. It should be emphasized at the outset that Stan Parker, the chief character of the novel, is indeed engaged in a quest for the grounds of his beliefs. Despite this one should be wary and avoid making a general judgment as to the nature of Stan’s discovery. Even though many critics have studied the form and symbolism of the novel, it seems that there is need for an examination of the relation between Stan’s quest for identity and the form and the satire that White used in this novel. Almost all White’s novels have a complex form and structure and each and every novel requires the reader to be aware of his rigorous control of the formation of the narrative and the actions of the characters. There is an understanding that in the authoring process of the novel each step is carefully planned and that the story is moving toward a predetermined end. In planning the structure of The Tree of Man White tried to establish a profound relationship between form and meaning. The novel has a well-arranged plot in which events are carefully and chronologically arrayed beside each other. This chronological sequence spans over three generations starting from a small family living on a tiny patch of land to the formation of cities and then big suburban areas. This can be simply interpreted as a linear movement but within it and through it White demonstrates his skillful use of minor ironies and satire; he, however, does not try to strengthen these instances of satire and irony through comments or references. If White wanted to write a novel with an ordinary chronological organization then he might have decided to write stories similar to the ones which were written about early settlers mostly produced at the end of the 19th century. He could avoid using a cumbersome and complicated structure by following the examples of earlier Australian novelists who generally brought such clichés as flood, drought, and fire in their works. Patrick White also uses these in his novels but gives them a new treatment.

In a review of The Tree of Man, A. D. Hope protested that what White did was bringing all the old Australian clichés of fire, drought and flood into it. What
Hope probably missed to notice was the fact that White sees these as important happenings in the Australian typical daily life not far-fetched from reality. White makes these Australian commonplaces structural principles which bear symbolic relationship with the literal events. White’s presence in The Tree of Man is more conspicuous than, say, Voss or Riders in the Chariot. In the above two novels and also in The Solid Mandala and the Vivisector, White dexterously moves from one character to another showing his readers the particular attitude or attitudes that they might have. White quite deliberately tries to provide his readers with authorial comments about his characters. This purposeful attempt can specially prove helpful when it comes to Stan Parker who remains uncommunicative and taciturn almost throughout the novel. White gives a meaningful shape to the chronological sequence of the novel in a way which mostly focuses on Stan’s quest for identity; this happens through his emphasis on recurrent motifs, flashbacks, direct narration and structure of the novel.

Stan’s quest has a form which is shaped over the course of his life. He is open to embrace different explanations of the world and this openness as well as longing to know more about the world make him to ponder over such ideologies as Christianity and pantheism. Stan’s journey is one of illumination and coming to truth. It seems that some of his personal experiences tend to push him toward a denial rather than an affirmation of the existence of God. There is little in the novel telling us about Stan’s religious beliefs. When he is shown attending a local church service, we see him bewildered; one who is shown to respond to the sights and sounds of the outside world. He says that these could “perhaps have been the grace of God” (Patrick white, The Tree of Man 64). Stan does not provide a certain shape to his notion of God. In some parts of the novel, we see Stan preoccupied with his understanding of God and His presence.

Part III of the novel is probably the most noteworthy section of the novel in this regard; in this part he is not only preoccupied with God and Providence but with his conviction in God and the possible consequences of his rejection of it. There instances in the novel which confirm Stan’s continuous wavering in a belief
of God. For example, when he gets back home from War, he does not tell Amy that “he no longer believed anything can be affected by human intervention” (Patrick White, The Tree of Man 214). Stan is a character who makes his observations of the world around him “from the dream state of the sleeper” (Patrick white, The Tree of Man 216). To him only “some old women and nuns, and idiots” (Patrick white, The Tree of Man 218) are able to comprehend the reason for believing in God. To add to this, his awkward and at times bizarre relationship with his son is also to blame for his more than ever deteriorating relationship with God; he thinks that such natural disasters as flood and drought illuminate the opposite goodness and serenity of the many faces of God”.

Through historicizing the Tree of Man and giving it an epic aura, White attempts to draw on two significant legends of Australian identity which are early Australian settlers and the Anzac. Both qualities can be traced in the character of Stan Parker who becomes the idealized model of Australian identity. In order to make Stan a part of the Australian burgeoning community, he ascribes to him the disposition of the early nineteenth century poets, especially when it is related to the exaltation of the natural world. It can be said that White’s interest in history is an affirmation of his serious purpose of using art as a means of instruction and also learning; he tries to increase our ability in analyzing historical facts- and thus providing us with the chance of knowing more about ourselves. This high goal of teaching makes a social teacher of White. In order to make a didactic use of literature he engages in satire, comedy and literary play in The Tree of Man and Voss. The Tree of Man vindicates the aspiration that there will be a brighter future by delineating Stan Parker’s quest for enlightenment and identity. This novel also upholds the formalist theory that satire nearly always has curative intentions. If it is, therefore, claimed that White in a way is trying to mend the wrongs of Australian society through implementing satire in his works then it can be deferred that White’s satirical attacks are against Forsdyke and Dudley’s hierocracy and pretensions.