

Australian's Novel Wins High Praise

From Our Staff Correspondent

NEW YORK, Aug. 14.—New York literary critics to-day highly praise a new novel, "The Tree of Man," by Australian writer Patrick White.

Their reviews appear on the front pages of book supplements — a rare achievement for an Australian.

"The Tree of Man" is the story of a couple who carve a homestead out of the wilderness, and of the family that grows up around them.

"It is a beautifully bur-nished novel," says Taliaferro Boatwright in the New York "Herald Tribune."

"Its Australian idiom is piquant rather than obscure, its style at all times consonant with its people and its subject matter.

"In concept, theme, and execution it is a monumental work, and the world it creates is far broader and more meaningful than its ostensible Australian frontier of the last half-century or so.

"Certainly, it is one of the finest novels to have come to us out of Australia."

James Stern, "New York Times," says that White towers over most other living authors "by his ability to supply, to lay bare the conscious, romantic, yet private daydream, the un-lived life."

He says: "Some, no doubt, will complain that this is a 'sad' book. It is.

"In it is all the sorrow and senselessness of living, the profound loneliness of mortal man, his cowardice, his cruelty, as well as his dignity, his indomitable courage, and the comedy, the fun his imagination is able to create.

"Many passages in this novel are as rich in humour as pages of Joyce's 'Ulysses,' as tragi-comic as the early plays of O'Casey.

"A tireless work of art from which no essential element of life has been omitted."

"Read Carefully"

William Bittner, New York "Post," calls White the Thomas Hardy of Australia.

He adds: "His subject is the land and the denizens thereof, and his focus on a man and wife, their children and their children's children, is a means of showing Australia in action and, more deeply, of showing the world in operation, given meaning by the presence of man. . . .

"Anyone would be a fool not to read this book carefully, running the excellent prose over his tongue and squeezing the meaning from every last nuance."

White, a fourth-generation Australian, born in 1912, was educated in England.

His first successful novel, "Happy Valley" (1939), won the Australian Literature Society's Gold Medal.

He worked on N.S.W. sheep stations after leaving school in England, and served with the R.A.F. in Egypt during the war.



PATRICK WHITE